

An Analysis Of Failures Among The Students Of Selected
Public Junior High Schools Of Halifax, Nova Scotia.

A Thesis written in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the
Degree of Master of Arts.

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PREFACE

For several years I have worked in industry, especially in and around coal mines. In addition, I have taught at the Nova Scotia Institute of Technology, and I am presently teaching Junior High School. In every instance I have observed a wide variety of individuals who exhibited a general intelligence, and an aptitude for training, far beyond what one would expect considering their academic background.

My curiosity in this regard has led me to the topic of this thesis. It is an effort to determine the proportion of students who possessed average or better intelligence but failed to progress beyond Junior High School under the one track system in the city of Halifax, Nova Scotia, which is the locale of the study. The study will also attempt to discover whether or not these students are confined to one geographic or social sphere.

I wish to express my gratitude to Mr. A. T. Conrad, Director of Curriculum for Halifax City Schools, for the help he gave me in obtaining the statistics necessary for this study.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this dissertation is to study the patterns of promotion, failure and repetition of grades from Grade VII to Grade IX, in eight selected public schools from the four geographical areas of the city of Halifax, Nova Scotia. One Roman Catholic school and one Protestant school were chosen from each of the four geographical areas of the city so that they drew on approximately the same segment of the population. These schools, in this study, will be referred to as "sister" schools.

The selecting of geographical areas, rather than the political divisions of wards, was done because of the socio-economic development of Halifax during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and which still influences the socio-economic organization of the city today.¹ On this basis, the city may be divided into: (1) a South end where the highest income groups are found, (2) East end and (3) North end, where the lowest income groups are predominantly

¹P. R. Blakeley, Glimpses of Halifax (Halifax, N. S., The Public Archives of Nova Scotia, 1949) p. 204-213.

found, and (4) West end, where the middle income groups are predominant. Some correlation may be found between the percentages of failures and the socio-economic divisions of the city.

An attempt will be made to discover where failures have occurred in the school careers of the pupils in the grades and schools mentioned above. A tabulation will be made of the number of failures which occurred at each grade level, in each of the compulsory subjects, plus French. The subjects: Household or Industrial Arts, Art and Music, will not be tabulated as they are not considered to be 'core' subjects. If a student has failed more than once in Junior High School, an effort will be made to determine how many times he has failed since starting school. An effort will also be made to determine the extent to which repetition of a grade has enabled the pupil to proceed at a normal rate in the years that followed such repetition.

The material for this study has been derived from the records of final examinations for these eight schools over a five year period, 1960-1964 inclusive, and an analysis made of them in order to determine the incidence of failure and repetition of grades revealed there. The records involve 8,481 pupils, which is approximately 40 per cent of the total number of students enrolled in Junior High Schools of the City of Halifax for the period under study. This will not take into account those pupils who dropped out of school during the school year, but will include only those students who wrote final examinations.

It should be noted that the schools chosen in the west end of the city draw heavily for their intake on the children from the Canadian Army married quarters in this part of the city. No similar concentration of military personnel exists in Halifax as the Navy has its permanent married quarters in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia. It will be seen from this study, that despite the number of transfers into and out of this area, the percentage of failures are within the accepted range.

The statistics themselves are not sufficient, because there are many facts hidden behind the statistics which are most significant. It is generally accepted that 10-25 per cent of any normal class could be expected to fail in any given year. These percentages of course could vary from class to class depending upon whether or not the particular school in question uses "streaming" as a method of grouping. Students, who exhibit low achievement, are to a great extent spread, in fairly liberal quantities, throughout our school system; but one important point is that those pupils who fail one year, and repeat a grade, very often fail again within a year or two. They constitute the "poor" statistics. These are the pupils who lower the grading percentages, and the fact that they continue to fail, and to repeat grades until they reach the "drop-out" age, is frequently overlooked. They are, in many instances, discipline problems, and their difficulties may well be due to one or several of the following: a lack of confidence resulting from their failure; boredom arising from the repetition of barely understood material; to their long wait either for school leaving

age or for parental permission to abandon their pursuit of what they, if no one else, have recognized to be the impossible, namely: success in a purely academic environment.

The method used in this study was to secure final examination results covering five years, from 1960 to 1964 inclusive. These results were studied grade by grade and year by year, in an effort to learn what really happened in the educational careers of those students with low achievement, and who, among these students, are classified as underachievers. This method leads to a considerable amount of repetition, as each grade and each year were considered individually. In order to simplify the matter as much as possible, each grade was considered in each individual area, with tables and graphs.

An effort will be made to gain as much information as possible concerning those students who are classified as low achievers. It is from this unfortunate section of the student body that the "drop-outs" come. In our schools they are the "seat-warmers", and when they emerge into society they become that part of the force which is frequently unemployed, or worse unemployable, because of a lack of training and education. It is hoped to show, that under a one track system, these pupils have left the school system through no fault of their own, but simply because the school had nothing to offer them that was within their capabilities.

A system of file cards was used, and on each one was recorded the name, the year, and the grade of each failure which took place over the five years of the study. In addition, the intelligence

quotient of each student who failed was recorded. As the same student recorded a failure in succeeding years, this was marked on the card. During the first year or two, while the backlog of information was being built up on these cards, the number of second and third time failures would not be complete, because some of the failures took place in years prior to the beginning of the study. However, to offset this weakness, the records of grade six were reviewed in an attempt to trace backward the failures found in Junior High School during all five years of the study. It was found that some of the students had begun to flounder at the end of elementary school, prior to emergence into Junior High School.

It is also realized that for pupils who started school in the latter year or two of the study, the records will not be complete at the end of the study. These records will not be complete until these pupils have passed out of the school system at the age of sixteen, or until they have passed on to high school. It should be noted that pupils included in this study would make up only ten per cent of the total school population in Halifax City.

The results of intelligence tests are given as the intelligence quotient rather than as mental age. The functions and uses of tests of mental ability which have become a recognized feature in educational procedure are many; those as listed by W. A. Kelly are the following:

1. To aid in determining readiness to do schoolwork.

1

William A. Kelly, Educational Psychology, (Milwaukee, The Bruce Publishing Company, 1956).

2. To classify pupils in accordance with their ability to learn so that their tasks may be sufficiently difficult but still within their ability.
3. To aid in selecting for special instruction and treatment the slow learning, the retarded, and the mentally defective.
4. To aid in identifying pupils of superior mental ability.
5. To aid in the process of educational, occupational, and vocational counselling.
6. To aid in the diagnosis of the causes of learning difficulties and failures.

The limitations of these tests are well known, but they are still one important guideline in detecting who are the under-achievers from among the total number of pupils with low-achievement, and for this reason they are included in this study.

The substance of this study is not a mere pedagogical problem. It is a social problem of great magnitude. It is a social problem, because we have been failing in our responsibility to develop these people as useful citizens, and we have been compounding the already difficult situation in the world of work.

One of the biggest problems facing educators is in making use of the ability and limited talents of the below average pupils, who would not be able to do the work of the High School grades on even the slowest track of any multiple track system.

No one denies these people an education, but being chained to the same course as the academically inclined in lower grades amounts to the same thing. The need, apparent in this problem, is even greater than that of the more gifted. As educators we must keep uppermost in our minds the awesome responsibility with which we are charged. As long as we fail to provide for those who are the subject

of this study we have failed to measure up to the responsibility vested in us by society.

Some effort must be made to identify, and if advisable and possible, to separate these students from the normal stream of average pupils, because teacher time is consumed in dealing with children who cannot, or will not, fit the set pattern. The waste to the community is incalculable - many young people drift into society completely unprepared to make their way. In a grade apart, they could progress and develop to the maximum of their abilities under skilful tutoring.

In Halifax city a pupil cannot gain admittance to Vocational School without Grade IX as entrance qualification. Our vocational training institution is at the High School level, therefore there is no hope for these children in this area of training. Vocational education begins too late, and on too high a plane to benefit these pupils. Even the Federal Government's Vocational Trades Training School fails to fill the bill. Under the Occupational Trades Training, a candidate for admission must have at least Grade IX. For the Apprenticeship Trades Training he must have at least Grade VIII, and in half the offered courses at least Grade IX. Pre-Employment Training Program offers courses to students who are at least seventeen years of age and have Grade IX or better. It is plain therefore that there is nothing within these provisions which meets the needs presented by those students who are the concern of this present study, so that alleviation of their difficulties must come from within the educational resources of the City of Halifax.

One attempt by the City of Halifax to meet this challenge has been the adoption of a three year Junior High School program which is, in fact, already in being in some schools within the city. ¹ so that secondary education will be aligned along these lines:

- (a) Regular High School Program, to prepare students for more specialized education at the senior High School level.
- (b) Modified Junior High School Program, incorporating remedial instruction in basic skill subjects - reading, language, mathematics - for educationally retarded children. This involves two programs for those who do not demonstrate potential for completing senior high school programs - either an expanded program in industrial home arts and an adjusted program in other subjects, leading to Vocational education, or largely a program in industrial and home arts with a different program in other subjects and where possible part time work experience preparing for direct employment (a terminal high school program).
- (c) Auxiliary Program - a program of vocational and avocational training and experience designed to develop the full potential for employment and for responsible, satisfying lives of mentally limited children who do not have the minimum of low average ability required for regular or modified Junior High School programs. This appears to be a more realistic approach to the

¹ Raymond Simpson, (ed.), Education Office Gazette Halifax, N. S., Department of Education, Province of Nova Scotia) XV No. 2 (November, 1965), 4 - 5.

problem than a rigid one track system, and gives promise of handling individual differences in a more effective manner in the classroom.

CHAPTER II

STUDY OF STUDENT RECORDS FOR FIVE YEARS

Table No. 1

Summary of Grade VII Examination Results For Year 1959 - 1960.

Area	No. Enrolled	No. Passed	No. Failed	% Failed	Previous Failures
North	224	169	55	24.5	-
South	92	84	8	9.0	-
East	213	157	56	26.3	-
West	172	161	11	6.6	-
Totals	701	571	130	18.5	-

At this level students are introduced to two new subjects, French and Household or Industrial Arts. A pupil must therefore pass with a year's mark of 50 percent in English, Social Studies, Science and Health, Mathematics and at least one elective.

Of the 55 failures in the North area, 36 failed English, 46 failed both Mathematics and Social Studies, 41 failed Science and 30 failed French.

In the South area, there were 7 failures in each of English, Social Studies and Science, and 3 failed both Mathematics and French.

Among the 56 failures in the East area there were 38 failures in English, 48 failures in Social Studies, 33 failures in Science, 46 failures in Mathematics and 35 failures in French.

In the West area, 10 of the total failed in each of Social Studies, Science and Mathematics, and 6 failed in both English and French.

Household or Industrial Arts were not included in the statistics because they are not considered to be one of the "core" subjects. The highest percentages of failures were in the North and East areas, which are the geographical areas of the city where the largest percentages of low income groups are found.

Examination of subject failures clearly indicates a spread of failures which is so wide that one cannot attribute it to any one subject.

Table No. 11

Summary of Grade VIII Examination Results For Year 1959 - 1960.

Area	No. Enrolled	No. Passed	No. Failed	% Failed	Previous Failures
North	143	126	17	11.8	-
South	74	72	2	2.7	-
East	117	85	32	27.3	-
West	132	120	12	9.1	-
Totals	466	403	63	13.5	-

There are no new subjects introduced at this level, and the promotion policy for entrance to Grade IX is the same as previously presented for promotion from Grade VII to Grade VIII.

From the total of 17 failures in the North area, 5 failed English, 10 failed Social Studies, 12 failed Science, 11 failed both Mathematics and French. In the South area 2 pupils failed all five subjects.

In the East area, 18 failed English, 23 failed both Social Studies and French, 26 failed both Science and mathematics. In the West area, 10 failed all three of Social Studies, Science and Mathematics, 4 failed French and 5 failed English.

The percentage of failures in the East area is two, three and ten times greater than the percentage of failures in the North, West and South areas respectively. Examination of failures by subjects clearly indicates again, that no one subject can be held accountable.

Table No. III

Summary of Grade IX Examination Results For Year 1959-1960.

Area	No. Enrolled	No. Passed	No. Failed	% Failed	Previous Failures
North	55	51	4	7.2	—
South	76	71	5	6.5	—
East	72	60	12	16.6	—
West	124	115	9	7.2	—

Area	No. Enrolled	No. Passed	No. Failed	% Failed	Previous Failures
Totals	327	297	30	9.2	—

At the Grade IX level Latin is added to the curriculum as another elective subject. The grading requirements change, with the result that a student must pass with a mark of 50 percent in English, Social Studies, Science and Health, and two electives chosen from: Latin, French, Art, and Household or Industrial Arts.

Of the 4 failures in the North area, 3 failed Social Studies, 4 failed Science, 2 failed Mathematics, 1 failed French.

In the South area 3 failed both English and Mathematics, 5 failed Social Studies, 4 failed Science.

In the East area, 8 failed English, 10 failed both Social Studies and Science and 12 failed both French and Mathematics.

In the West area 6 failed English, 2 failed Social Studies, 3 failed Science and 4 failed Mathematics.

Many Roman Catholic Grade IX classes were still to be found in Saint Patrick's High School in 1959-1960, and this accounts for the low numbers of Grade IX pupils in other areas.

North, South and West areas have about the same percentages of failures, but East area in comparison, again shows a preponderance of failures. Student failures were not concentrated, but widespread among all subjects.

Table No. IV

Summary of Grade VII Examination Results For Year 1960 - 1961.

Area	No. Enrolled	No. Passed	No. Failed	% Failed	Previous Failures
North	204	164	40	19.6	3
South	97	89	8	8.2	-
East	221	167	54	24.4	6
West	157	146	11	7.0	1
Totals	679	566	113	16.6	10

Of the 40 failures in the North area 21 failed both English and French, 37 failed Social Studies, 27 failed Science, and 33 failed Mathematics.

In the South area 6 failed both English and Social Studies, 6 failed Mathematics and 3 failed both Science and French.

In the East area 36 failed both English and Science, 43 failed Social Studies, 33 failed Mathematics and 25 failed French.

In the West area all 11 failed English, 9 failed both Social Studies and Science, 8 failed Mathematics and 6 failed French.

Pupils experienced their greatest difficulty with Social Studies. Pupil failures in the other courses were about 20 percent lower than Social Studies, but widely distributed. The general failure rate shows a rate approximately 2 percent lower than that of the previous year.

The East area shows the highest percentage of failures, followed by the North area, and then West and East areas with much lower percentages. This shows a similar pattern to the preceding year 1959-1960. Of the 113 failures, 10 have repeated grades prior to this year.

Table No. V.

Summary of Grade VIII Examination Results For Year 1960-1961.

Area	No. Enrolled	No. Passed	No. Failed	% Failed	Previous Failures
North	187	156	31	16.5	4
South	80	76	4	5.0	—
East	156	112	44	28.2	5
West	169	156	13	7.7	2
Totals	592	500	92	15.5	11

There were 31 failures in the North area; 15 failed English, 30 failed Social Studies, 18 failed both Science and Mathematics, 10 failed French.

In the South area, 3 failed all four subjects: English, Social Studies, Science and Mathematics.

In the East area, 19 failed English, 34 failed Social Studies, 27 failed Science, 40 failed Mathematics and 21 failed French.

In the West area, 5 failed English, 9 failed Social Studies, 7 failed Science, 11 failed Mathematics and 2 failed French.

From the above, it is seen Social Studies and Science were failed by 76 and 73 pupils respectively; while only 55 failed Science, 41 failed English and 33 failed French. This grade level shows a failure rate two percent higher than the preceding year.

East area again shows the highest percentage of failures followed by the North area with slightly more than half the failure rate of East area. West and South areas have a small failure rate in comparison. Of the 92 pupil failures, 11 had failed previously.

Table No. VI

Summary of Grade IX Examination Results for Year 1960 - 1961.

Area	No. Enrolled	No. Passed	No. Failed	% Failed	Previous Failures
North	67	64	3	4.4	3
South	63	60	3	4.7	-
East	79	62	17	21.5	8
West	59	52	7	11.8	1
Totals	268	238	30	11.2	12

In the North area, 2 failed all five subjects. In the South area 1 failed each of English, French and Mathematics, 3 failed both Social Studies and Science. In the East area, 15 failed both English and Social Studies, 11 failed Science, 17 failed Mathematics, 19 failed French. In the West area, 5 failed both English and Mathematics, 4 failed both Social Studies and Science, 4 failed French.

Examination of failures by subjects at this level clearly indicates no clear preponderance of any one subject that can be held accountable. This grade shows a failure rate two percent higher than the previous year. The highest percentage of failures is again found in East area, followed by West area. North and South areas with almost identical failure rates show a rate only about one-third and one-fifth those of West and East areas respectively. At this level, of the total of 30 failures, 12 had repeated previously.

Table No. VII.

Summary of Grade VII Examination Results For Year 1961-1962.

Area	No. Enrolled	No. Passed	No. Failed	% Failed	Previous Failures
North	176	145	31	17.6	2
South	69	59	10	14.5	—
East	209	165	44	21.0	3
West	130	116	14	10.7	1
Totals	584	485	99	16.9	6

In the North area, 17 failed English, 23 failed Social Studies, 18 failed both Science and French, 22 failed Mathematics.

In the South area, 8 failed English, 10 failed both Social Studies and Science, 6 failed Mathematics, 3 failed French.

In the East area, 35 failed English, 38 failed Social Studies, 30 failed both Science and Mathematics, 26 failed French.

In the West area, 7 failed both English and French, 11 failed each of Social Studies, Science and Mathematics.

As with previous years, pupil failures are widespread among all subjects. East area has the highest percentage of failures, North area next, followed by South and West, the same pattern as previous years. The failure rate is approximately the same as 1960-1961, but approximately 1.5 percent lower than the year 1959-1960. Of the 99 failures, only 6 had repeated previously.

Table No. VIII

Summary of Grade VIII Examination Results For Year 1961-1962.

Area	No. Enrolled	No. Passed	No. Failed	% Failed	Previous Failures
North	185	157	28	15.1	2
South	91	76	15	16.4	—
East	163	125	38	23.3	9
West	155	137	18	11.6	1
Totals	594	495	99	16.7	12

In the North area 7 failed English, 18 failed both Social Studies and French, 17 failed Science, 24 failed Mathematics.

In the South area, 13 failed both English and Social Studies, 11 failed Science, 6 failed Mathematics, 8 failed French.

In the East area, 22 failed English, 26 failed Social Studies 36 failed Science, 28 failed Mathematics, 16 failed French.

In the West area, 11 failed English, 14 failed Social Studies, 12 failed Science, 15 failed both Mathematics and French.

The results of this year showed an increase of 1.2 percent in the failure rate above that of the year 1960-1961, and a 3.2 percent increase above the year 1959-1960.

Although East area still had the highest percentage of failures, it was not as marked as in previous years. No effort will be made to explain or interpret these figures at the present time, but will be dealt with when considering the conclusions in chapter five. Student failures were highest in Social Studies, Science and Mathematics, by 25 percent more than in English and French. Of the 99 failures in all areas, 12 had failed previously.

Table No. IX.

Summary of Grade IX Examination Results For Year 1961-1962.

Area	No. Enrolled	No. Passed	No. Failed	% Failed	Previous Failures
North	154	141	13	8.4	3
South	71	67	4	5.6	—
East	85	51	34	40.0	10
West	177	158	19	10.7	6
Totala	487	417	70	14.4	19

In the North area, 7 failed English, 9 failed both Social Studies and Mathematics, 11 failed Science and 6 failed French. The

South area had 1 failure in both English and French, 4 failed both Social Studies and Science, 2 failed Mathematics.

In the East area, 19 failed English, 29 failed Social Studies, 31 failed Science, 32 failed Mathematics, 28 failed French.

In the West area, 9 failed English, 10 failed Social Studies, 11 failed Science, 14 failed Mathematics, 6 failed French.

Failures this year were found in higher concentrations in Social Studies, Science and Mathematics, as compared to the number of failures in English and French. There was a failure rate of 14.4 percent this year compared to 9.2 percent in 1959-1960, and a failure rate of 11.2 percent in 1960-1961.

This year shows an unusually high percentage of failures in the East area, when compared to the other three areas. No effort will be made to explain or interpret these figures at the present time. Of the 70 failures at this level, 19 had previously been retarded.

Table No. X

Summary of Grade VII Examination Results For Year 1962-1963.

Area	No. Enrolled	No. Passed	No. Failed	% Failed	Previous Failures
North	213	187	26	12.2	1
South	117	102	15	12.8	2
East	171	99	72	42.1	10
West	215	198	17	7.9	2
Totals	716	586	130	18.2	15

In the North area, 20 failed both English and Social Studies, 17 failed both Science and Mathematics, 11 failed French.

In the South area, 10 failed both English and French, 13 failed both Social Studies and Science, 6 failed Mathematics.

In the East area, 47 failed both English and French, all 72 failed Social Studies, 58 failed both Science and Mathematics.

In the West area, 10 failed both English and French, 12 failed both Social Studies and Science, 17 failed Mathematics.

Students at this level again experienced their greatest difficulty with Social Studies, followed by Mathematics and English. East area had the greatest percentage of failures, 42.1 percent, as compared to the other areas. Of 130 failures, 15 pupils had failed previously. The percentage of failures, 18.2 percent, shows a slight increase (1.3 percent) above the preceding year; but the failure rate at this level has not fluctuated more than two percent over the first four years of this study.

Table No. XI

Summary of Grade VIII Examination Results For Year 1962-1963.

Area	No. Enrolled	No. Passed	No. Failed	% Failed	Previous Failures
North	176	150	26	14.7	4
South	76	71	5	6.5	1
East	173	126	47	27.1	2
West	199	178	21	10.5	5
Totals	624	525	99	15.8	12

In the North area, 19 failed both English and Mathematics, 12 failed both Science and French, 16 failed Social Studies.

In the South area, 5 failed the three subjects: Social Studies, Science and Mathematics, 4 failed English, 2 failed French.

In the East area, 30 failed English, 39 failed Social Studies, 32 failed Science, 44 failed Mathematics, 25 failed French.

In the West area, 8 failed English, 17 failed both Social Studies and Science, 16 failed both French and Mathematics.

Examination of failures shows no clear dominance of any one subject which can be held accountable for pupil failures. The steady increase of failures of previous years reversed this year with a decrease of about 1 percent from the previous year.

Of the 99 failures at this level, 12 had failed previously.

Table No. XII

Summary of Grade IX Examination Results For Year 1962-1963

Area	No. Enrolled	No. Passed	No. Failed	% Failed	Previous Failures
North	160	142	18	11.3	12
South	68	65	3	4.4	1
East	208	157	51	24.5	9
West	132	103	29	22.0	7
Totals	568	467	101	17.8	29

Of 18 failures in the North area, 2 failed English, 8 failed Social Studies, 10 failed Science, 13 failed Mathematics, and 6 failed French.

In the South area, 3 failed English, Social Studies and Science, 2 failed Mathematics, 0 failed French.

In the East area, 10 failed English, 39 failed Social Studies, 29 failed Science, 47 failed Mathematics, 27 failed French.

In the West area, 17 failed English, 24 failed both Social Studies and Mathematics, 19 failed Science, 12 failed French.

Examination of failures shows the highest percentage of pupil failures in Social Studies and Mathematics, followed closely by English and Science. Since 1960 this Grade has shown a steady increase in failure rate. This year showed an increase of 3.4 percent above the preceding year, and 8.6 percent increase above the first year of the study. This year the highest percentage of failures is in East area, followed by the West area. Of the 101 failures, 29 have failed in previous years.

Table No. XIII

Summary of Grade VII Examination Results For Year 1963-1964.

Area	No. Enrolled	No. Passed	No. Failed	% Failed	Previous Failures
North	222	179	43	19.4	2
South	78	71	7	9.0	—
East	163	117	46	28.2	7
West	222	210	12	5.7	2
Totals	685	577	108	15.7	11

In the North area, 26 failed English, 39 failed Social Studies, 33 failed both Science and Mathematics, 24 failed French.

In the South area, 5 failed English, 6 failed each of Social Studies, Science and French, 5 failed Mathematics.

In the East area, 39 failed English, 45 failed Social Studies, 42 failed Science, 39 failed Mathematics, 30 failed French.

In the West area, 6 failed English, 7 failed Social Studies, 10 failed Science, 9 failed both Mathematics and French.

Pupil failures were found to be highest in Social Studies, Science and Mathematics, 94, 91, 85 respectively, followed by: French, 68 failures and English, 76 failures. The East area again had the highest percentage of failures, followed by the North area; this is consistent with preceding years. The percentage of failures is 1.5% lower than the preceding year. Of the 108 failures, 11 failed in previous years.

Table No. XIV

Summary of Grade VIII Examination Results For Year 1963-1964.

Area	No. Enrolled	No. Passed	No. Failed	% Failed	Previous Failures
North	208	188	20	9.6	2
South	99	97	2	2.0	-
East	133	106	27	20.3	4
West	223	195	28	12.5	6
Totals	663	586	77	11.6	12

In the North area, 14 failed both English and Science, 17 failed both Social Studies and Mathematics, 5 failed French. In the

South area, 1 failed each of English, Social Studies and Science, 2 failed Mathematics and French.

In the East area, 17 failed English, 26 failed Social Studies, 21 failed Science, 22 failed Mathematics, 15 failed French.

In the West area, 17 failed English, 23 failed both Social Studies and Science, 25 failed Mathematics, 14 failed French.

Examination of failures by subject show no clear preponderance of any one subject which can be held accountable. East area again shows the highest percentage of failures, followed by West area. This year shows a decrease in failure rate, at this level, of 4.2 percent from the preceding years which were consistently higher. No effort will be made to explain or interpret these figures at the present time. Of the 77 failures, 12 pupils had repeated previous grades.

Table No. XV.

Summary of Grade IX Examination Results For Year 1963-1964.

Area	No. Enrolled	No. Passed	No. Failed	% Failed	Previous Failures
North	154	136	18	11.6	8
South	73	68	5	6.8	—
East	124	94	30	24.2	9
West	176	138	38	21.5	4
Totals	527	436	91	17.3	21

Of the 18 failures in the North area, 11 failed English, 12

failed both Social Studies and Science, 14 failed Mathematics, 8 failed French.

- In the South area, 2 failed English, 1 failed both Social Studies and French, 5 failed both Science and Mathematics.

In the East area, 17 failed English, 21 failed Social Studies, 27 failed Science, 29 failed Mathematics, 19 failed French.

In the West area, 26 failed English, 19 failed Social Studies, 24 failed Science, 27 failed Mathematics, 15 failed French.

Examination of failures by subject shows that pupils had the greatest number of failures in Mathematics and Science, followed by English and Social Studies. This Grade level shows a failure rate of 0.5 percent lower than the previous year. Of the 91 failures this year, 21 have failed previously.

Table No. XVI

Summary of Examination Results for Grades VII, VIII, IX For Years 1960-64.

NORTH AREA

Year	No. Enrolled	No. Passed	No. Failed	% Failed	Previous Failures
1959-60	422	346	76	18	-
1960-61	458	384	74	16.2	10
1961-62	515	443	72	13.9	7
1962-63	549	479	70	12.7	17
1963-64	584	503	81	13.8	12
Totals	2528	2155	373	14.7	46

SOUTH AREA

Year	No. Enrolled	No. Passed	No. Failed	% Failed	Previous Failures
1959-60	242	227	15	6.2	-
1960-61	240	225	15	6.3	-
1961-62	231	202	29	12.5	-
1962-63	261	238	23	8.8	4
1963-64	250	236	14	5.6	-
Totals	1224	1128	96	7.8	4

EAST AREA

Year	No. Enrolled	No. Passed	No. Failed	% Failed	Previous Failures
1959-60	402	302	100	24.8	-
1960-61	456	341	115	25.2	19
1961-62	457	341	116	25.4	22
1962-63	552	382	170	30.8	21
1963-64	420	317	103	24.5	20
Totals	2287	1683	604	26.4	82

WEST AREA

Year	No. Enrolled	No. Passed	No. Failed	% Failed	Previous Failures
1959-60	428	396	32	7.5	-
1960-61	385	354	31	8.0	4
1961-62	462	411	51	11.0	8
1962-63	546	479	67	12.2	14
1963-64	621	543	78	12.5	12
Totals	2442	2183	259	10.6	38

From examination of Figs. 2-1, 2-2 and 2-3, it is evident that East area had a consistently higher percentage of failures at all three Grade levels, and for all five years of the study. North area showed a decline in failures at the Grade VII and VIII levels, but a rise of 4.4 percent in the percentage of failures at the Grade IX level. The West area showed no significant rise in the percentage of failures at the Grade VII or VIII levels; but did show a rise of approximately 14 percent at the Grade IX level. South area showed their highest percentage of failures at the Grade VII and VIII levels, with only a slight rise in percentage of failures over the five year period at the Grade IX level.

Fig. 2-4, shows the combined Grade VII, VIII, IX examination results of the four geographical areas. In comparison to the other areas, East showed a markedly high percentage of failures. Over the five year period, North area showed a decrease of 4.2 percent in failures, while West area showed an increase of 5 percent, bringing both areas to approximately the same percentage of failures. South area showed a rise followed by a decline back to approximately the original level of percentage of failures at the beginning of the study.

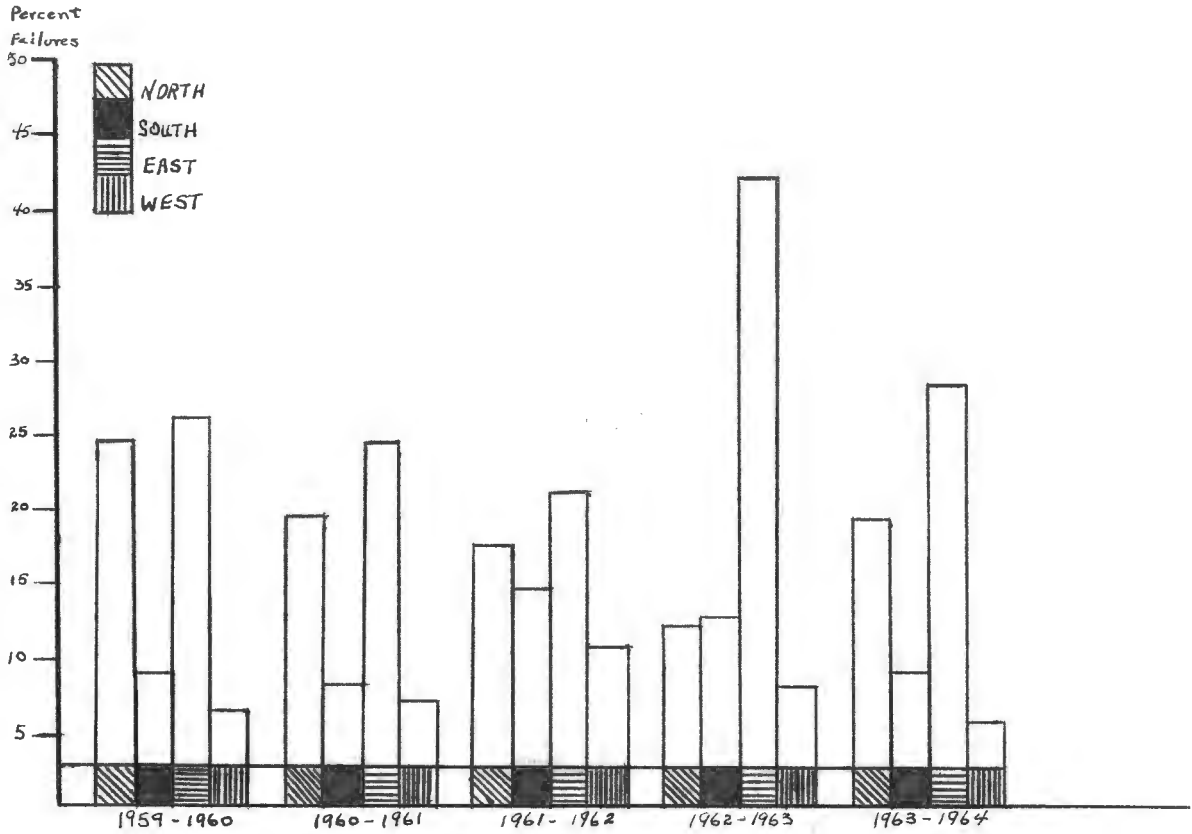


Fig. 2-1. Grade VII Examination Results 1960 - 1964.

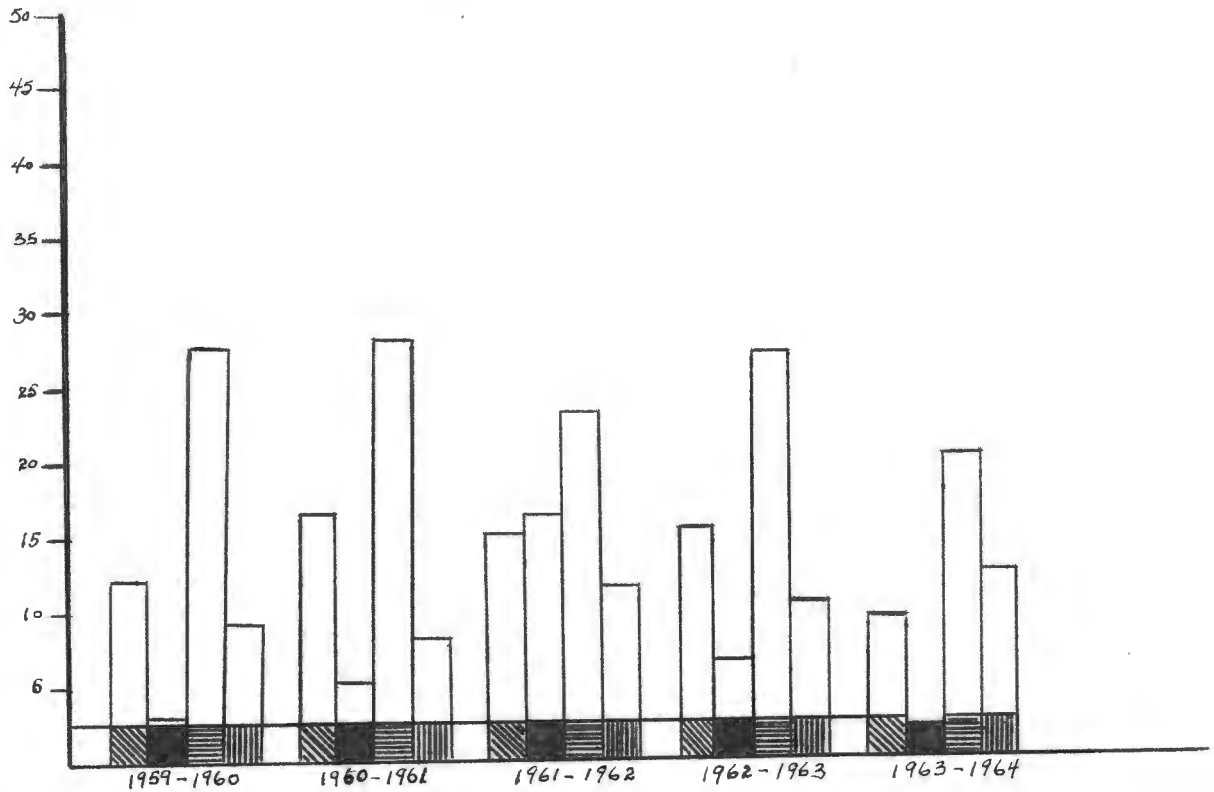


Fig. 2-2. Grade VIII Examination Results 1960 - 1964.

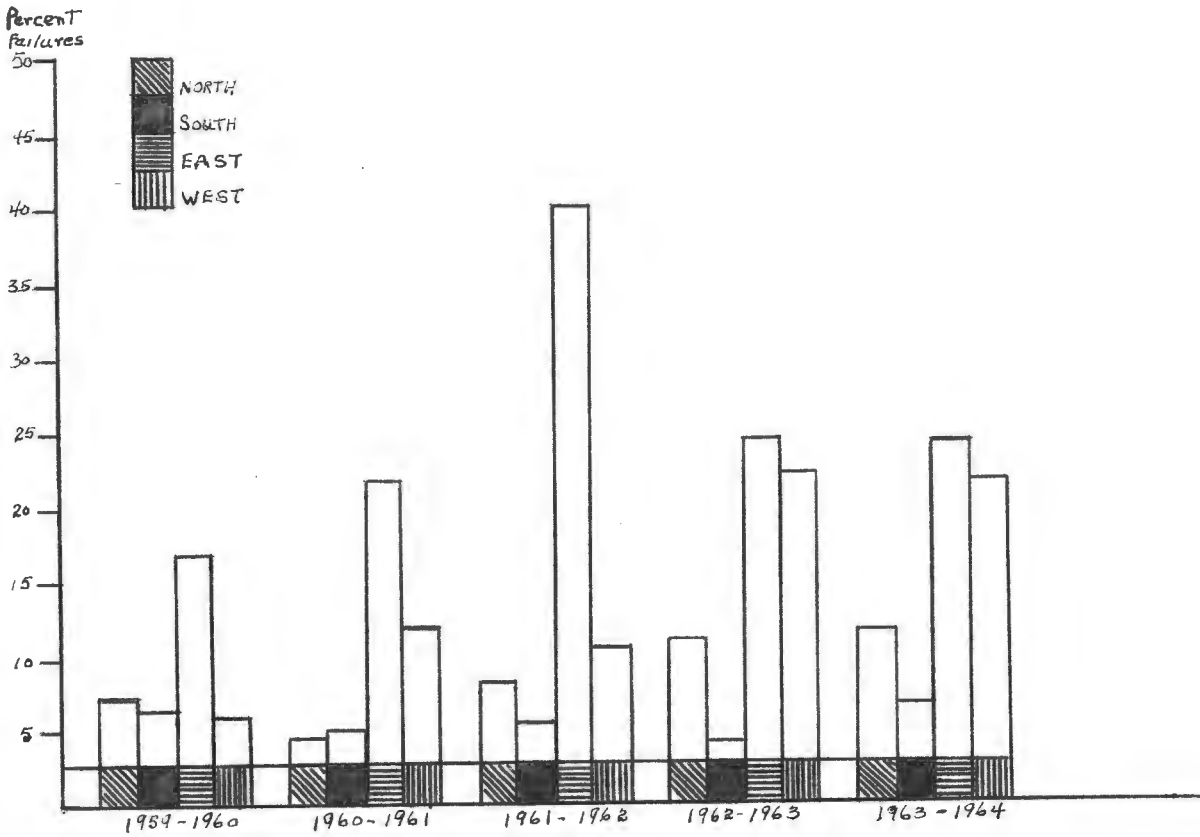


Fig. 2-3. Grade IX Examination Results 1960 - 1964.

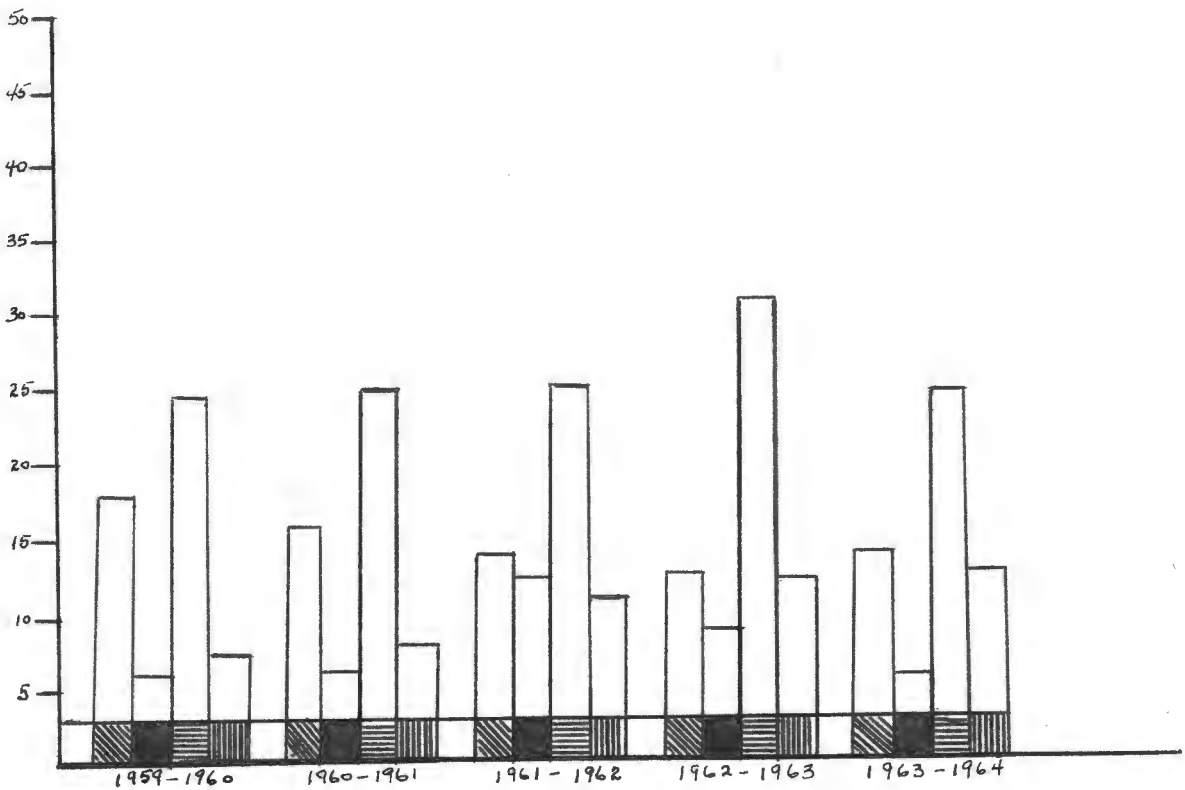


Fig. 2-4. Combined Grades VII, VIII, IX Examination Results 1960-1964.

CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS OF ACADEMIC RECORDS

Table No. XVII

Area-North: Failures by Subjects at the Grade VII Level.

Year	Total	English	Social Studies	Science	Mathematics	French
1959-60	224	36	46	41	46	30
1960-61	204	21	37	27	33	21
1961-62	176	17	23	18	22	18
1962-63	213	20	20	17	17	11
1963-64	222	26	39	33	33	24
Totals	1039	120	165	136	151	104

Table No. XVIII

Area-South: Failures by Subjects at the Grade VII Level.

Year	Total	English	Social Studies	Science	Mathematics	French
1959-60	92	7	7	7	3	3

Year	Total	English	Social Studies	Science	Mathematics	French
1960-61	97	6	6	3	6	3
1961-62	69	8	10	10	6	3
1962-63	117	10	13	13	6	10
1963-64	78	5	6	6	5	6
Totals	453	36	42	39	26	25

Table No. XIX

Area East: Failures by Subjects at the Grade VII Level.

Year	Total	English	Social Studies	Science	Mathematics	French
1959-60	213	38	48	33	46	35
1960-61	221	36	43	36	33	25
1961-62	209	35	38	30	30	26
1962-63	171	47	72	58	58	47
1963-64	163	39	45	42	39	30
Totals	977	195	246	199	206	163

Table No. XX

Area West: Failures by Subjects at the Grade VII Level.

Year	Total	English	Social Studies	Science	Mathematics	French
1959-60	172	6	10	10	10	6
1960-61	157	11	9	9	8	6
1961-62	130	7	11	11	11	7

Year	Total	English	Social Studies	Science	Mathematics	French
1962-63	215	10	12	12	17	10
1963-64	222	6	7	10	9	9
Totals	896	40	49	52	55	38

Examination of the above tables shows East and North areas to have the highest failure rates, and in addition it should be noted that considerable difficulty was encountered in the Social Studies. This pattern holds true throughout Grades VII, VIII, and IX with the exception of North area in Grade IX when both total failure rate and the Social Studies rate dropped.

From Grade VII upward, the content of History and Geography increases in difficulty, both in quality and quantity. Any lack of skill in the mechanics of reading thus will greatly inhibit the student in grasping social concepts. Indeed it is rather obvious that reading problems will affect all of the content subjects as well as problem solving in Mathematics. While no statistics are available on reading ability, it must of necessity play a large role in explaining the trend indicated above: namely, that a generally high failure rate and difficulty in the Social Studies go hand in hand.

At the Grade VII level, two new subjects are introduced: French and Household or Industrial Arts. Promotion to Grade VIII required that a pupil pass with a year's mark of 50% in English, Social Studies, Science and Health, Mathematics and at least one elective.

For the period under study, the usual promotion policy in effect was that if a pupil failed for a second year in succession,

he was given a provisional pass into Grade VIII. This policy had been adopted through tradition by most school Principals, consequently, it was only rarely that a pupil spent a third year in this or any other grade. This tradition has been built upon a philosophy: "that school promotion and retardation are being regarded more and more as recommendations for the best placement of the child and less and less as rewards or penalties related to standards of performance"¹.

It was felt by the Board of School Commissioners that teachers were becoming increasingly conscious of the responsibility involved in requiring children to repeat a grade, and that despite the then current interest in what is termed the ungraded elementary school, it was very likely that the grade system would continue to be used for some time to come.²

Table No. XXI.

Area North: Failures by Subjects at the Grade VIII Level.

Year	Total	English	Social Studies	Science	Mathematics	French
1959-60	143	5	10	12	11	11
1960-61	187	15	30	18	18	10
1961-62	185	7	18	17	24	18
1962-63	176	19	16	12	19	12

¹Report of Board of School Commissioners for the City of Halifax, N. S., for the year Ending December 31, 1964
(Halifax, N. S: Queen's Printer, 1964) p. 12.

²Ibid, page 12.

Area North: Failures by Subjects at the Grade VIII Level (cont'd)

Year	Total	English	Social Studies	Science	Mathematics	French
1963-64	208	14	17	14	17	5
Totals	899	60	91	73	89	56

Table No. XXII

Area South: Failures by Subjects at the Grade VIII Level.

Year	Total	English	Social Studies	Science	Mathematics	French
1959-60	74	2	2	2	2	2
1960-61	80	4	4	4	4	0
1961-62	91	13	13	11	6	8
1962-63	76	4	5	5	5	2
1963-64	99	1	1	1	2	2
Totals	420	24	25	23	19	14

Table No. XXIII

Area East: Failures by Subjects at the Grade VIII Level.

Year	Total	English	Social Studies	Science	Mathematics	French
1959-60	117	18	23	26	26	23
1960-61	156	19	34	27	40	21
1961-62	163	22	26	36	28	16
1962-63	173	30	39	32	44	25
1963-64	133	17	26	21	22	15
Totals	742	106	148	142	160	100

Table No. XXIV.

Area West: Failures by Subjects at the Grade VIII Level.

Year	Total	English	Social Studies	Science	Mathematics	French
1959-60	132	5	10	10	10	4
1960-61	169	5	9	7	11	2
1961-62	155	11	14	12	15	15
1962-63	199	8	17	17	16	16
1963-64	223	17	23	23	25	14
Totala	878	46	73	69	77	51

There were no new subjects introduced at the Grade VIII level, and promotion to Grade IX was dependent upon fulfilling the same requirements as given previously for promotion from Grade VII to Grade VIII.

Examination of the above tables shows no clear cut pattern emerging as to cause of pupil failures. When viewed as a comparison of subjects this is true, but it is not true when areas are considered as Social Studies and Mathematics were failed to a greater extent by pupils of East and North areas. The low failure rate in French could be misleading since not all of the students who failed included French in their course of study.

Table No. XXV.

Area North: Failures by Subjects at the Grade IX Level.

Year	Total	English	Social Studies	Science	Mathematics	French
1959-60	55	0	3	4	2	1

Year	Total	English	Social Studies	Science	Mathematics	French
1960-61	67	2	2	2	2	2
1961-62	154	7	9	11	9	6
1962-63	160	2	8	10	13	6
1963-64	154	11	12	12	14	8
Totals	590	22	34	39	40	23

Table No. XXVI.

Area South: Failures by Subjects at the Grade IX Level.

Year	Total	English	Social Studies	Science	Mathematics	French
1959-60	76	3	5	4	3	0
1960-61	63	1	3	3	1	1
1961-62	71	1	4	4	2	1
1962-63	68	3	3	3	2	0
1963-64	73	2	1	5	5	1
Totals	351	9	16	19	13	3

Table No. XXVII.

Area East: Failures by Subject at the Grade IX Level.

Year	Total	English	Social Studies	Science	Mathematics	French
1959-60	72	8	10	10	12	12
1960-61	79	15	15	11	17	19
1961-62	85	19	29	31	32	28
1962-63	208	10	39	29	47	27
1963-64	124	17	21	27	29	19
Totals	568	69	114	108	137	105

Area West: Failures by Subjects at the Grade IX

Year	Total	English	Social Studies	Science	Mathematics	French
1959-60	124	6	2	3	4	0
1960-61	59	5	4	4	5	4
1961-62	177	9	10	11	14	6
1962-63	132	17	24	19	24	12
1963-64	176	26	19	24	27	15
Totals	668	63	59	61	74	37

Latin is introduced at the Grade IX level, but approximately 2% only, of the 2,177 students who wrote final examinations in Grade IX over the five year period, included this subject as one of their electives.

The grading requirements at this level were that a student must pass with a year's mark of 50% in English, Social Studies, Science and Health, and at least two electives. The final mark which was obtained by a student in Grade IX represented 20%, 30% and 50% respectively of the first, second and final marks. The pupils of this grade were promoted on the basis of two groups of examinations set within the school, and a final group set by the Superintendent's office.

From the above tables it can be seen that all four geographical areas again showed a similar pattern of student failures. This pattern showed no particular subject to which student failures could be attributed, as they were widespread among all subjects.

Further comparison of the individual statistics of each area will be discussed in the conclusions of this study.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF INTELLIGENCE TEST RESULTS

The results of intelligence tests are given as the intelligence quotient rather than as mental age. The 1960 revision of the Stanford-Binet test, while it continues to employ I. Q. terminology, no longer provides for the computation of this score in the old way - that is, by dividing M.A. by C.A. Instead, the examiner uses tables that show directly how different a child's score is from the mean, or average, of a representative group of children his own age.

The inclusion of intelligence test results in this study is an attempt to show the relationship of general intelligence to final examination results. The intelligence test results were recorded for the 1,332 pupils who failed during the five year period of the study. This number represents 15.7 percent of the total sample of 8,481 pupils.

Table No. XXIX

Area	Total Tested	Scores Above	Scores	Scores	Scores Below
		100	91-100	76-90	75
North	373	9	198	78	88
South	96	3	55	26	12
East	604	15	294	149	146
West	259	7	145	55	52
Totals	1332	34	692	308	298

From these statistics it can be seen that 606 pupils were in the range of I. Q. below 90. Pupils who have an I. Q. of 80-90 are certainly educable, but usually only in ranges of difficulty that are below those taught under our one track system. Every school included in the sample taken reports pupils in this range, and in the grades under study. Related to the intelligence level has been the frequency of repetition.

170 failed on 2 or more occasions.

115 failed on 2 occasions.

30 failed on 3 occasions.

14 failed on 4 occasions.

11 failed on 5 occasions.

It is of interest to note that if the group who failed in 3 or more years is taken separately, the average I. Q. is 74.

"Streaming" of classes was a procedure followed in some form by all but three of the schools included in this sample. The concern

which remains over these pupils throughout the whole school system, as evidenced by the current interest in implementing the multiple track system, proves that "streaming" is not the sole answer to the problem of how best to accommodate these students so they may achieve their maximum potential.

On a percentage basis, North area had 28 percent of the failures and 27.3 percent of those with I. Q.'s below 90.

South area had 7.2 percent and 6.2 percent.

East area had 45.3 percent and 48.6 percent.

West area had 19.5 percent and 18.9 percent respectively.

The lowest percentages, as well as lowest numbers, are to be found in the South area. North and West areas have approximately the same pattern, with East area showing the highest numbers of failures, and the highest percentages.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSIONS

1. There is evidence that the benefit derived from the repetition of grades is not sufficient to allow the students to progress normally thereafter. It has been found that some pupils who repeat grades are still not able to continue at a normal pace in the succeeding years. This situation was prevalent in all areas except South. It has also been found that many "drop-outs" occur among those pupils who showed repeated failures previous to, or during Grade IX. Many file cards became inactive at the seventh, eighth and ninth grades, indicating that the pupils had only advanced to this point on reaching the school leaving age of sixteen years, or higher.
2. Those pupils showing more than one failure are found almost exclusively among pupils who are classified as slow learners or retarded on the basis of I. Q. tests given. It was found that among 170 pupils showing more than one failure, only 4 showed I. Q. scores of over 100. One hundred and forty-nine of these showed scores below 90. There is evidently a remarkable degree of correlation between test results and examination results.

3. Failures occurred less frequently, as the pupils advanced through the grades, in both North and South areas. The five year averages for North area were: Grade VII - 18.6 percent failures, Grade VIII - 13.5 percent failures and Grade IX had 8.6 percent failures. For South area, the average failures for Grade VII were 10.7 percent, for Grade VIII - 6.5 percent and for Grade IX - 5.6 percent. Over the five year period in East area, the average percentages of failures remained approximately the same for all three grades. In the West area, the five year failure rate was: for Grade VII - 7.58 percent, Grade VIII - 10.3 percent and Grade IX - 13.7 percent. Thus in all areas except West, we have a stable or decrease in failure rate even though there is an increase in the complexity of the work; the opposite situation to what would normally be expected.

4. At the Junior High School level, the number of failures in all subjects remaining fairly uniform, with the exception of Social Studies and Mathematics which run about 20 - 40 percent higher than the others.

In the North area 290 failed Social Studies, 280 failed Mathematics, over the five year period, in Junior High Schools included in the study; whereas only 248 failed Mathematics, 202 failed English and only 183 failed French.

In the South area 83 failed Social Studies, 81 failed Science compared with 69 failures in English, 58 failures in Mathematics and 42 failures in French.

In the East area, 508 failed Social Studies, 503 failed Mathematics, compared with only 449 failures in Science, 370 failures in English and

368 failures in French.

In the West area 206 failed Mathematics, 181 failed Social Studies, 182 failed Science, compared with only 149 failures in English and 126 failures in French.

5. Where optional subjects are offered, failures do not tend to occur as frequently as among other subjects. Failures in French are 20 - 50 percent less numerous than failures in most other subjects. Pupils may be promoted without passing French, provided they do pass industrial Arts. Since failures in Industrial Arts are not numerous, many students do not include French in their curriculum, and this probably explains why the number of failures is so much lower than the other subjects.

6. The number of students taking Latin is so low that it must be a subject only selected students are permitted to take; and this is a direct result of "streaming" of classes in our schools.

7. The exceptionally low rate of failure in Household or Industrial Arts would indicate that this subject should have a special classification and not be considered an optional subject. In this study, it was found that over the five year period, North area had a total of only 16 failures, South area only 9 failures, East area 111 failures and West area 30 failures in the above course. Compared to the other areas, East again shows a disproportionate number of failures. The above failures in this subject in Grades VIII and IX averages only about one percent a year. It would probably be more suitable to have this subject carried as an extra by those students who are to follow the academic course, and as an

optional by those who are to follow non-academic courses.

8. The number of students who are below average in intelligence, and the number who are classified as retarded on the basis of test scores available is exceptionally high. This would appear to be so despite any particular weakness in the testing program. The total number of students who failed at any time during the study was 1332. The I.Q. test results for these students showed that 45.5 percent had I.Q. scores below 90, and 22.3 percent had I.Q. scores below 75. Even making allowances for such factors as group testing and environmental influences, the figures must be considered to be of some significance.

9. Special classes for retarded children are already in existence in Halifax City. In view of the percentage of pupils with I. Q. below 90, consideration should be given, either to expanding such special classes, or to ability grouping of all grades so that special attention may be given to these pupils who are obviously mentally handicapped. This could also involve special schools.

10. There is an obvious need for a re-organization of the Junior High School program. Halifax City, at the present time, is considering the possibility of extending the multiple track system downward from the High School level. Pilot programs are presently in operation in selected Junior High Schools. This re-organization should be geared to upgrade those pupils with I. Q. range between 80-90, who obviously do not fit into the present one track system, and whose only remedial work at the present consists of repetition of grades.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The result of the study would indicate the need of the following changes in the present system:

1. The establishment of more classes, or possibly even separate schools, not only for retarded children, but also for other educationally handicapped children in Halifax City. It is apparent from the statistics that all areas of the City, with the possible exception of the South area, need expanded services to deal adequately with the numbers of pupils repeatedly failing under our present system. We see from the I. Q. statistics that the majority of these pupils have intelligence quotients between 75 and the low 90's, too high to be admitted to the existing classes for retarded children, but not bright enough to cope with the curriculum under our one track system.

At the present time, these "slow learners" are still being returned year after year to the same classroom situation, which is obviously useless to them. To date, the only function being carried on which could be considered to be in any way remedial is the repetition of grades, and the results given in this study prove that this is not a remedy. It has been found that pupils continue to repeat grades until they become too big, too old, or too troublesome for the group they are with and then they drop out of school.

In 1964, from a total pupil population of 4,397 in the Junior High Grades in the city of Halifax, 30.4 percent or 1339 pupils were older than normal age. For a total pupil population, for all grades, of 18,191, there were only 287 pupils in auxiliary classes and 24

pupils in crippled children's class, representing 1.1 percent of the total student population. In the same year, 250 students left school¹ to take employment. Statistics in the present study also substantiate these statistics for the whole city.

From these statistics, it is obvious that revision of our present one track system is long overdue. Yet, according to the Comprehensive School Program proposed by the Education Act, anything other than the regular program in academic subjects up to the end of Grade XII, is at the discretion of the local School Boards. At the present time, Halifax City is conducting a pilot program in three schools at the Junior High School level, testing the feasibility of implementing the Comprehensive School Program.

2. The appointment of Vocational Guidance Directors for the Common Schools. It is possible that if even one such person were hired (full time) to supervise guidance and counseling in each Junior High School, and another was employed to handle the Primary to Grade VI group in every school, a workable minimum of guidance would be provided. This is a development which has taken place in most Canadian provinces between 1925 and 1950, according to Dr. C. E. Phillips. Dr. Phillips goes on to state: "Of primary importance for counsellors and to some extent for teachers are psychological

¹ Report of the Board of School Commissioners For the City of Halifax, N. S., for the year Ending December 31, 1964
(Halifax, N. S: Queen's Printer, 1964) p. 33-35.

understanding, ability to administer and interpret tests, and above all a clear perception of the function of guidance - not to direct but to enable the boy or girl to decide".¹

Included in the basis of the general framework for a comprehensive secondary school system, as prepared by the Department of Education of Nova Scotia, is the following principle: " A well organized system of educational and vocational guidance in each area of the province must extend from elementary school through high school to provide adequate knowledge of student aptitudes, interests and abilities and adequate occupational information to ensure that

(a) the program and courses recommended for each student are those from which he can profit most; and

(b) the courses offered relate to the changing needs of the community and province".²

The development of such a system of guidance has not yet begun in the schools of Halifax City. At the present time, however, in Halifax City, there are guidance counsellors, working full time at the Senior High Schools, and half-time at the Junior High School level. Most writers in the field consider that there should be one guidance counselor for every three hundred pupils. The exact ratio in Halifax City is probably closer to one per thousand.

¹ C. E. Philips, The Development of Education in Canada (Toronto: W. J. Gage and Co., Ltd., 1957), p. 445.

² Raymon Simpson (Ed.), Education Office Gazette, (Halifax, N. S., Department of Education, Province of Nova Scotia) XV No. 2 (November, 1965), 3.

A program of testing is at present carried out, at certain stages of the school career of each pupil, in the City of Halifax. The tests are of such a nature as to reveal the intelligence, aptitude and weakness of the pupils. There is a great need to identify specific strengths and weaknesses which may be used as a basis for guidance, to determine the elements and subjects which provide specific learning difficulties. Such diagnostic tests should yield detailed information concerning the capacity and accomplishments of the child, and provide the teacher with specific information concerning the needs of the child. The location of the difficulties of both individuals and classes in any given subject is one of the most important and most helpful procedures in teaching. Such diagnostic tests would also indicate the extent of specific remedial and corrective instruction which will be needed. But remedial teachers can only tackle a section of the problem and one of their most effective functions has been as advisers and disseminators of ideas and information about methods and materials. Their work is needed, but preferably as a supplement to that of special classes or special schools, not as an alternative.

3. A comprehensive attack on the problem is needed, extending special educational treatment into the ordinary schools. It would be a pity if the potentially fruitful concept of a broad category of educationally sub-normal pupils did not gain acceptance. In the first place, it is illogical to make good arrangements for the most severely retarded, and neglect, often through pressure of circumstances, those only slightly less retarded. Many delinquents and social misfits are drawn from this latter group whose experience of

school has not had real meaning for them. In the second place, a more comprehensive attack on backwardness should result in earlier detection of children needing special schooling as well as a clearer recognition of which children are most in need of it.

Our present arrangements for backward children often fail to observe the maxim: 'a stitch in time saves nine'. A crucial time for meeting with backwardness is before or at the Grade III level, i.e. from ages 7 to 9 years. At this stage, remedial or opportunity classes should be set up to deal with children who have fallen behind either because of earlier illness, absences or late maturing, as well as mental slowness. There is also a need for remedial help for children who, although quite intelligent, may be failing generally in school work or have difficulties in certain subjects, especially in the middle grades. The intelligent school failure needs his problem investigated and dealt with thoroughly as soon as possible, i.e. before continuing failure sets up wrong habits of learning, or intensifies unfavourable attitudes which are such a marked feature of the older backward child in Junior High School. There is a real need for special attention to these children who are capable of a higher level of performance than the usual run of slow learners. In addition, therefore, to special classes in the middle grades, i.e. grades 4, 5 and 6, there is a need for the specialist remedial teachers operating as part of the psychological service to the school, but working for at least part of the time, in and with the co-operation of the schools.

Moreover, the gap between the average pupil and the slow-learner widens with age. The result is that most secondary modern

schools need a teacher who is responsible for the education of backward children. He should be capable of taking on the teaching of the most difficult educational problems of two, possibly three, age groups, or of taking one of several special classes. But he needs also to be a person who has the knowledge and experience to be able to advise on the methods and curricula for all the work with the slower children. It follows that he must have qualities of personality as well as knowledge, and such people at present are in short supply. It should be possible to remedy this with an increase in the number of training courses for teachers of backward children.

4. If nothing else, a program of ability grouping of students should be undertaken in those Junior High Schools where enrolments are sufficiently large to permit this. In the schools involved in this study, this would be possible in most grades. Ability grouping at least makes it easier to adapt instructional materials and methods to the individual pupil, thereby stimulating bright pupils and encouraging the slower learners, with the result that achievement is increased and failure reduced. The main purpose is to bring together for instructional purposes those pupils who represent approximately the same educational and mental status, and who are capable of progressing in the subject at about the same rate. Those pupils who are found by the testing program outlined previously to be in the group generally classified as "slow learners" should be removed from regular academic classes and grouped together in special classes with pupils of similar ability. These pupils should then be supplied with every available piece of remedial equipment, audio-visual aids and

teaching machines; which could possibly help them. These pupils should, of course, be in groups small enough to ensure the individual attention of the teacher. In order to do this, class enrollment would have to be drastically reduced. Under these conditions it is possible that some of these pupils might escape the cycle of failure and frustration to which they have been subjected by their inability to follow the normal academic course in the ordinary classroom. At the present time they are being returned year after year to the same classroom situation which is apparently useless to them.

5. Hence there is a need for special educational measures to ensure for these children the maximum progress of which they are capable in the traditional three Rs, and, no less important, in other developments - practical, personal and social - which are valuable in adult life. Attention to these children is justifiable on humanitarian grounds to prevent personal unhappiness and the stigma of educational and social failure. If added justification be needed, more utilitarian reasons can be advanced. First, the community needs the fullest development of its human resources, not only in those capable of development of higher skills, but also in those capable of routine tasks which are equally essential for the maintenance of social organization. Secondly, the cost to society of mental ill-health and delinquency which can result from educational failure may well be greater in the long-run than the cost of developing adequate means of special educational treatment in childhood. The number of children involved varies from place to place, from one district of a city to another and from school to school. The type of provision also varies,

partly for the reasons already stated, but also because of the nature of backwardness and its principal causes.

The provisions of the general framework for the elementary school program of the comprehensive school system, as proposed in Nova Scotia, provides for the development of the basic facility in reading and writing, in listening and speaking, and in understanding and working with numbers and arithmetic processes, built around practical courses in reading, oral and written expression and arithmetic. They suggest that the program should, as early as possible and as fully as possible, identify and provide specially for children with mental and physical handicaps and for those who have unusual abilities. Begun at age five, this program would be for most children a seven year program, under a non-graded school system. This system should prove to be a worthwhile experiment in attempting to meet the problems of the "slow-learner".

6. Before special classes of any type are established, the School Board should embark on a program of education for the general public concerning the nature of the various classes or programs set up. Such a program should be designed to remove insofar as possible the stigma which is attached to attendance at remedial, retarded or some other form of special classes. Such a program may require the services of a professional public relations expert or a top-notch advertising executive. The object would be to inform the general public of the need for such classes, or program, and the benefits to be derived from them. The public should also be informed as to the harm which can come to pupils who continue in ordinary classrooms where activities

are beyond their ability. A good public relations program could become the strongest force in the establishment of a satisfactory program in the area. Ross and Stanley, in treating the subject of public relations, have this to say:

"It is one of the fundamental beliefs of a democracy that reliance can be placed on an enlightened public opinion. It is to achieve this end that public schools are maintained. But it is erroneous to assume that the responsibility ceases when the formal period of instruction ends. In a changing world, the continued enlightenment of the adult population is increasingly recognized as a major responsibility of a democratic society. No individual or group can be expected to think or to act intelligently on anything without the necessary information. To supply this information about the school is the objective of the public relations program."¹

7. Reorganization of the course of studies at the Junior High School level. The tests which have been used up to the present time indicate that some students in what is referred to as the retarded group, and many in the "slow learner" group, actually reach the Junior High School in ever increasing numbers. It should be obvious therefore, that teaching, (or trying to teach), such subjects as : French, Latin and Algebra to this type of pupil, in the present school set-up is impossible. There is no doubt that these subjects should be

¹ G. C. Ross and J. C. Stanley, Measurement in Today's Schools, (Englewood - Cliffs, N. J., Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1954) p. 415.

removed from the course of studies for this group of pupils.

Similarly also, the English Literature taught in the ninth grade would be in the same category, and it is especially useless to this type of pupil in any case.

8. Under our present system in Halifax City, the reorganization of the Junior High School curriculum should include the extension of the multiple track system, as is proposed by the Nova Scotia Department of Education, from the High Schools downward into the Junior High School. This multiple track system is presently in effect in the High Schools of the City. Such a plan, extended to the Junior High School, would make courses available on a non-academic track, which would be different in content and volume from those now offered. The subject matter must be changed to suit the capacity of the pupils. Present courses in English Grammar now taught in Junior High Schools are of little value to the below-average pupil, and much of it is beyond their comprehension. Courses should and are being planned for these pupils, which will contain material of a more practical nature. More time will be made available for such basic operations as reading, simple composition and letter writing. The Science and Social Studies programs offered in the present curriculum contain far too much material to be covered by the below-average pupils. Such courses should be revised to meet the needs of the pupils, and scaled down in volume to more reasonable proportions. For the girls of this group, a completely different course would be needed than is presently in force. In the field of Mathematics, the removal of Algebra is advised, and in its place, what might be of far greater value to

these pupils would be a further expansion of the present sections of the Arithmetic course covering money, banking, interest rates, discounts, loans and credit buying. Two programs, for those who do not demonstrate potential for completing senior high school programs - incorporating adjusted instruction in basic skill subjects and providing in addition, according to abilities, interests and needs, are being introduced under the comprehensive scheme; either an expanded program in industrial and home arts and an adjusted program in other subjects, to give bases for vocational choice and to prepare for direct employment, apprenticeship in a trade, or one year of general senior high school education preparatory to either apprenticeship or employment; or largely a program in industrial and home arts with a different program in other subjects and where possible part time work experience preparing for direct employment (a terminal high school program). In addition, this scheme advocates a program of vocational and avocational training and experience designed to develop the full potential for employment and for responsible, satisfying lives of mentally limited children who do not have the minimum of low average ability required for regular or modified junior high school programs. If implemented properly, this scheme appears to be worthwhile trying.

These pupils should be informed, as well as their parents, concerning the training available in various institutions, the entrance requirements, the job opportunities available after completion of training, and what long term prospects are in each field. In the Halifax City Schools, this aspect of supplying information, is

being handled very efficiently at all levels by the guidance counselors.

9. With the multiple track system already in our High Schools, a student may arrive at the end of the ninth grade with at least six different paths opening before him for the following year. (1) If he is of sufficiently high scholastic standing, he may go into an advanced academic course geared for top students; or (2) he may go into a standard academic course which is also college preparatory in nature; or (3) a Commercial High School course which may also lead to University. The general program is designed for those who lack either the ability or interest to undertake university courses with profit and satisfactiin but who demonstrate ability to undertake, at post-secondary school level or at post-compulsory school age, training for occupations through vocational, trade and technical schools or who require a general high school education for direct entrance into occupations in which training may be secured on the job. This program is similar to the university-preparatory program in subjects offered, but differs in aims and content within various subjects. It leads to a high school certificate and includes the following two types (4) Standard, (5) Commercial, (6) He may enter a Vocational School offering courses leading to advanced trades and technical work. Finally, the pupil may also enter a Trade School, but this has its limitations. The pupil must decide, with the aid of his parents, at the end of the Grade IX course which path he will follow. If he is to make a proper choice, he must be informed, and this can only be done through a meaningful Occupations Course in the Junior High School.

At the present time, in the Halifax City Schools, a reasonable amount of information is available through the Guidance people and this situation is steadily improving.

It is not felt, nor is it wished to imply, that the above suggestions would lead to a full solution of the problems which were disclosed by the study. There is as yet no unanimity of view about how ordinary schools can best make arrangements for their backward children, and that how this can be done must be found by experiment. It is felt, however, that these are problems which have been too long neglected, and which must soon be attacked. A beginning must be made at the Junior High School level and below, and for Nova Scotia, and Halifax in particular, the comprehensive school system seems to be the scheme which will receive the most support, both from all levels of government and the general public.

The keystones of the comprehensive system appears to be:

(a) abandonment of the old, university-oriented straight academic high school program; (b) gearing the system to the students, rather than the opposite; (c) an expanded vocational education program; (d) most important, a well organized system of both educational and vocational guidance, extending from elementary school through high school; (e) curricula planned in relation to the changing needs of the community and the province; (f) administration of the whole educational program in an area by a single authority, wherever possible.

One very important change is the additional educational services to be supported by the Provincial Government. Beginning with the school year 1966-67, a local school board will be able, if

it so decides, to provide with Government support instruction by specialized teachers, at any level, in music, art or handicrafts. Similarly, specialized instruction in physical education, shareable under the present arrangements in Grades 7 - 12 only, will be shareable for the elementary grades as well. Included for the first time also will be the costs of psychological and testing services and of school library services. Another change permits school boards, to engage specialist teachers of all kinds for special instruction in any of the regular academic subjects, over and above the number of teachers normally permitted in relation to the number of pupils enrolled. These specialists, rather than being teachers on regular staff, but working in conjunction with the regular classroom teachers, they will be in a position to add materially to the effectiveness of their schools' programs.

There is one risk involved with the setting up of the comprehensive school system, and that is, the parents have the final say in what course their son or daughter will follow, and this could prove to be a serious obstacle to its success. It can be difficult for a parent who has consciously or unconsciously planned a university preparatory course for his child to accept the fact that he belongs in a commercial course. Similarly, a parent who has envisioned his child in a practical, steady trade might balk at being told the student has a definite bent toward art, law or medicine and should go on for further specialized training. However, one bright note, in the areas where the program has already been experimented with by the Department of Education, the report is that in almost every case parents have

shown a desire to co-operate with the school and to do what extensive testing has shown is probably best for the child. There are, of course, many potential areas for mistakes, but these should diminish with increased experience, and the senior program, in fact the whole program has been made flexible for this reason.

The key to success in this kind of program will be the teacher. As the content of adjusted programs must be extremely flexible, so must the methods of presentation. Teaching methods must be imaginative and appealing to the pupils. Teachers should adjust the depth of treatment to the understanding and ability of the students as individuals, and proceed at the students own rate of assimilation and understanding. In all ways possible, the interest, initiative and sense of involvement of the individual pupil should be stimulated by the provision of concrete learning situations related to his own experience. Nothing could sabotage the program more effectively than textbook oriented teaching with regular page study assignments to 'cover the book'.

The ideal to which everything and everyone should strive for is "the guarantee of equality of educational opportunity to every child", but this cannot mean equal education, because the harsh facts of Nature decree that all of us have not the necessary intellect to succeed at every given hurdle. Nor does Nature equip us all with the same interests in the same degree. The fact remains that we have a large and growing number of pupils who cannot successfully attack the present Junior High School program. This, in itself, is not necessarily a bad thing. But to give a child nothing at the end of ten

to fifteen years of schooling but a card stamped "failure" seems to pre-condemn him before society has had an opportunity to measure his ability. We must offer them something which is within their ability, and which will offer them some hope for the future. The course should equip the pupil with self-respect - something which pupils, of this type, at present do not have. Such self-respect cannot reside in a person who in adolescence is a proven and admitted failure. The course should aim to prove to these pupils, and to society, that such people are, after all, useful, and deserving of opportunity. In short, it is hoped the comprehensive school system will produce of these pupils, who make up too large a proportion of our total school population to be ignored, a useful and purposeful element in the society of the future.

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