

DROPPING OUT: HOW DO WE KEEP OUR STUDENTS IN SCHOOL?

A Paper

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Every year many high school students make the decision to drop out of school. This problem has left high school counselors, administrators, and teachers wondering what they can possibly do to keep students in school. Through thorough research of the problem, I hope to develop strategies that educators can use to address the dropout problem. Last year in Stafford High School, School District 349, three students left our school without graduating. That fact has left us searching for answers. Therefore, my project is devoted to helping educators determine what is needed to help students stay in school.

Many times, students do not realize what they are giving up when they make the decision to drop out. It is also the focus of this project to enlighten students as to the benefits of staying in school and the risks of dropping out. Through education, it might be possible to help students and their parents make more informed choices about their education.

In searching for possible solutions to this problem, I hope to uncover information that is relevant to the current dropout problem we are facing at USD 349. Research studies concerning this problem may be the key to finding answers. In order to maintain accreditation, we need to find solutions to this problem that work.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

During their high school years, adolescents are growing and maturing. They are exposed to a multitude of experiences that are expected to help them develop into valuable members of our society. Many students find this a wonderful, yet challenging experience. However, for some students this can become an endurance test. In fact, “research has shown that early school leaving is the outcome of a long process of disengagement with measurable indicators that are present in the early grades” (Christenson, 2003, ¶ 1).

Research studies focus on the most common explanations for dropping out. According to Lee and Burkam (2003, ¶ 3), “these risk factors include social background, academic background, and academically related behaviors.” They also state that:

Social risk includes demographic factors associated with a higher likelihood of school difficulties: race/ethnicity, age, language-minority status, gender, family income, parents’ education, and family structure. Members of racial and ethnic minority groups drop out at higher rates than White students, as do those from low-income families, from single-parent households, and from families in which one or both parents also did not complete high school. Some scholars suggest that the cumulative process of school disengagement may begin as early as the first grade. However, most dropouts actually leave school sometime between the 10th and 12th grades, in part because the legal age for school leaving is 16 in most states (Lee & Burkham, 2003, ¶ 13).

Researcher J. Daniel House offers a different explanation. House (1999, ¶ 3) believes these factors are “students’ academic self-concept and their achievement expectancies.” He also found that “students who persisted in high school despite having low grades tended to show higher levels of self-esteem than did students who left school.”

In another study, Dunn, Chambers, and Rabren (2004, ¶ 6) identify the factors predictive of dropping out of high school as:

low socioeconomic status of the family; lack of books and other reading material in the home; level of schooling of the parent of the same gender as the student; low grades in school; teen pregnancy; prior academic failure; prior use of cigarettes, marijuana, and other illicit drugs; aggressive behavior; absenteeism, course failure, and peer influences; the number of school-to-school transitions in grades K-12; and school size.

Alspaugh (1998, ¶ 2) agrees that “socioeconomic status affects a student’s decision to drop out of school.” In fact, he feels that it is the most important factor in student dropout rates. Cassel (2003, ¶ 4) states that “the dropout problem can be attributed to a student’s general lack of personal development.” Lunenburg (1999, ¶ 5) found that “one year’s retention can increase the dropout risk by 45 to 50 percent and retaining students in two grades increases the risk as much as 90 percent.” Ark (2002) blames the problem on the fact that our schools have become obsolete and are no longer meeting the needs of all of our students. Another researcher found that dropouts “often were retained in earlier grades and have histories of chronic absenteeism and truancy” (Gallagher, 2002, ¶ 6). She also states that:

Dropouts are nonconformists, ones who are not afraid to challenge the system; others have described them as lonely and misfitting. Low achievement also has been associated with dropping out, although school records indicate that many nongraduates are of average ability. For many students, dropping out has become a family tradition (Gallagher, 2002, ¶ 7).

In another study, Vallerand, Fortier, and Guay, (1997, ¶ 2) have investigated the motivational model and state that:

Research on high school dropout behavior reveals that one factor in a student's decision to drop out of school may be motivation. The motivational model is made up of four parts. First, low levels of autonomy-supportive behaviors from critical social agents in the school system, namely parents, teachers, and the school administration, are hypothesized to undermine students' perceptions of competence and autonomy. Second, these low perceptions of competence and autonomy, in turn, diminish students' self-determined motivation. Third, low levels of self-determined motivation lead students to develop intentions to drop out of school. Finally, these intentions are later acted on, when it is possible to do so.

Students often may not realize the consequences of their decision to drop out of school. A recent study by Olson, Gewertz, & Miller (2006a) identifies the following five facts students should be aware of:

1. Over a lifetime, an 18-year-old who does not complete high school earns about \$260,000 less than an individual with a high school diploma, and contributes about \$60,000 less in federal and state income taxes. The combined income and

tax losses aggregated over one cohort of 18-year-olds who do not complete high school is about \$192 billion, or 1.6 percent of the gross domestic product.

2. Individuals with a high school diploma live longer, have better indicators of general health, and are less likely to use publicly financed health-insurance programs. If the 600,000 18-year-olds who failed to graduate in 2004 had advanced one grade, it would save about \$2.3 billion in publicly financed medical care, aggregated over a lifetime.

3. Adults who lack a high school diploma are at greater risk of being on public assistance. If all those receiving assistance who are high school dropouts instead had a high school diploma, the result would be a total cost savings for federal welfare spending, food stamps, and public housing of \$7.9 billion to \$10.8 billion a year.

4. In the 2004 election, college graduates were nearly three times as likely to vote as Americans without a high school diploma.

5. High school dropouts are far more likely to commit crimes and be incarcerated than those with more education. A one percent increase in the high school completion rate of men ages 20 to 60 would save the United States as much as \$1.4 billion a year in reduced costs from crime incurred by victims and society at large.

“In 1998, approximately one-fourth of ninth-grade students in the United States dropped out before graduating from high school” (Alspaugh, 1998, ¶ 1). Stanard (2003, ¶ 4) found that “the nationwide graduation rate for the class of 1998 was 74 percent. By subgroup the rates were: White students, 78 percent; African American students, 56

percent; and Latino students, 54 percent.” However, in a more recent study, it was found that:

of the students enrolled in the 9th grade in 2002, an estimated 30 percent will fail to graduate in four years. That translates into losing about 7,000 students per school day. Also, the graduation rates are far worse for members of most minority groups and for boys (Olson et al., 2006, ¶ 7).

A study done by Viadero (2006, ¶ 2) also found that “currently the nation’s high schools are graduating only seven out of 10 of their students.” However, “there is limited literature comparing returning and nonreturning dropouts” (Wayman, 2002, ¶ 4).

It is clear that our nation is facing a serious dropout problem. However, there seems to be a wide range of possible solutions to the problem. In a recent study it was found that:

Students who were members of a school or community group were significantly less likely to be absent frequently, receive a failing grade, and drop out. Also, students who had one or more discipline problems, such as being suspended or expelled in the preceding year, being fired from a preceding job, or being arrested, were absent significantly more often and were significantly more likely to have failed a class and dropped out. These discipline variables were considered to be gross indicators of the students’ abilities to fit in and abide by rules (Dunn et al., 2004, ¶ 9).

According to Cassel (2003, 16), “scientific decision making is a possible solution.” He also states that:

One million of the two million prison inmates are high school dropouts. Eighty percent of these inmates are addicted to alcohol or drugs, and the success rate of addiction rehabilitation is low. Of all the things that an individual learns in a whole lifetime, scientific decision making serves to benefit one more than anything else. It is so critical to later success in life that it serves as the very best way to reduce delinquency and crime. Failure to provide scientific decision making skills to our youth must be considered to be child abuse of the highest order (Cassel, 2003, ¶ 3).

Lunenburg (1999, ¶ 8) found that “four creative strategies that may assist in dropout prevention include community-based organizations, case management intervention, school-within-a-school, and state imposed negative-sanction policies.”

In another study, the researcher states that:

It is apparent that as the attendance center size increases, the dropout rate also increases. The lowest dropout rates occur in districts with grade-level organizations of K-6, 7-12. The highest rates are found in districts with grade 10-12 high schools. It appears that the older students are when they make the transition from an elementary or intermediate-level school to high school, the more likely it is that they will drop out of high school. One of the strategies that some schools use to reduce their dropout rates is to increase their course offerings. However, the strategy of increasing vocational course offerings was not effective in retaining potential high school dropouts. When a school expands its course offerings, the student body is fractured into isolated groups. When students do not go from class to class with the same friends, the school climate may deteriorate,

and the students may be more likely to drop out. However, participation in athletics and fine arts—highly visible and prestigious activities—is related to student retention (Alspaugh, 1998, ¶ 6).

Ark (2002, ¶ 7) states that:

Our schools are not failing—they are obsolete. District policy, state law, and higher education all articulate their expectations in the form of credits, making it difficult for a high school to structure learning in segments other than blocks of 50 minutes each. We need to rethink our preconceptions about the 50-minute, discipline-based blocks of learning. Also, having after-school activities for students is less important than involving them during the regular school day (Ark, 2002).

It was also found that “students succeed in school when they connect with an adult or a subject” (Ark, 2002, ¶ 23).

In a recent survey, researchers found that:

Of 16- to 25-year olds who identified themselves as high school dropouts, nearly half said a major reason for dropping out was that classes were not interesting. Nearly seven in 10 said they were not motivated or inspired to work hard in school; two-thirds said they would have worked harder if more had been demanded of them; and 70 percent were confident they could have graduated if they had tried (Olson et al., 2006a, ¶ 25).

Rousseau, Samson, and Tetreault (2006, ¶ 4) state that “for a young person to find a place in the adult world, it is critical that knowledge acquired through education be successfully transferred to the job market.”

According to a recent research study by Martin (2002, ¶ 4):

In Oregon, steps taken by the Oregon Department of Education to reduce the dropout rate have included interviewing dropouts to find out why they are leaving, reporting dropout rates and related information of all secondary schools over the Internet, providing information on dropout prevention strategies to school administrators, and seeking descriptions, recognition, and funding for local dropout prevention efforts.

Olson, Gewertz, and Lloyd (2006b, ¶ 3) offered several options to help alleviate the dropout problem. These include: “building an early warning data system, starting sooner rather than later, focusing on transitions, and providing extra help.”

School District 349 reported two dropouts during the 2004-05 school year, which resulted in a dropout rate of 1.0 percent. Both of these dropouts were female (Kansas State Department of Education [KSDE], Stafford, 2006). The average dropout rate for the state of Kansas during the 2004-05 school year was 1.4 percent (Kansas State Department of Education [KSDE], State, 2006). Even though the dropout rate for our building was a little better than the state average, it is still a problem that needs to be addressed. Losing even one student to this problem is unacceptable.

CHAPTER 3 DESIGN MODEL

The design model I selected for my project was the ADDIE (Analyze, Design, Develop, Implement, Evaluate) model. I felt that this model was simple to follow, but provided the type of approach I needed for my project. Figure 1 below offers a graphic representation of the model's main components.

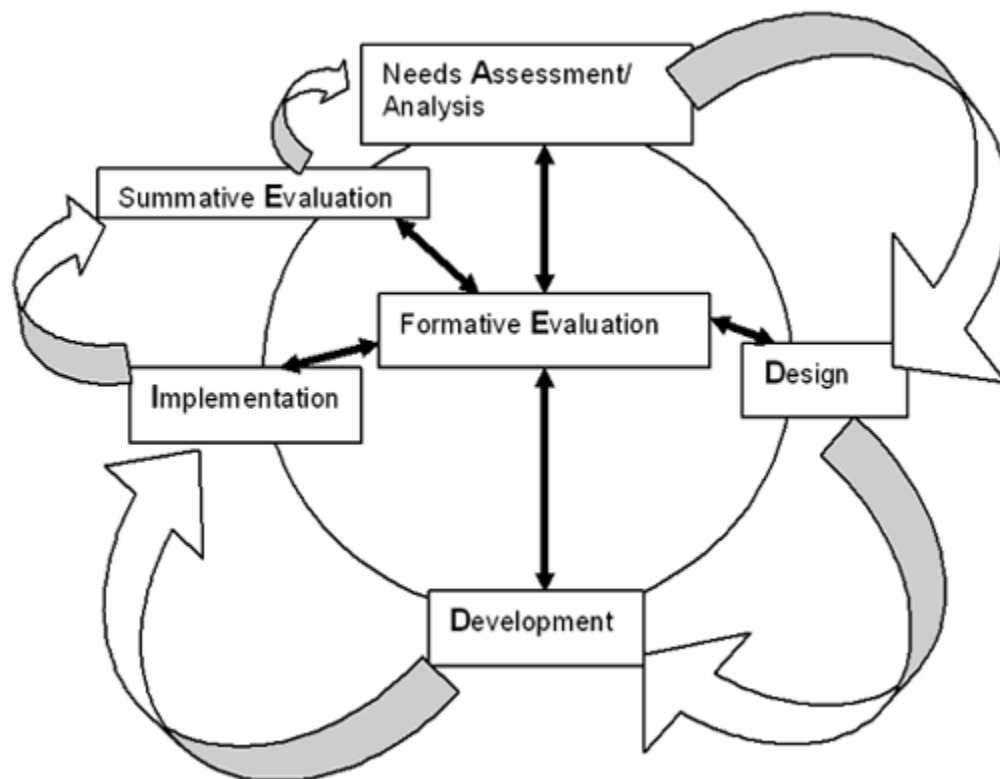


Figure 1
NOAA Coastal Services Center (NOAA, 2006)

Each of the steps involved with the ADDIE process are interrelated and overlapping. They provide an effective guide for developing superior instructional programs.

Needs Assessment/Analysis:

The needs analysis for my project consisted of felt needs and then research into the extent of the problem in our school system. First, I met with our school counselor, principal, and superintendent. Each of these individuals felt that the prevention of students from dropping out of our school was a problem that needed to be addressed. They asked that I research the problem and offer possible solutions for our particular needs.

After meeting with these educators, I began to look at the school records for dropouts during recent years. I discovered that during the past five years, Stafford High School had a total of 26 students drop out, which is an average of 5.2 students per year. From this research, I decided that there was a problem that needed to be addressed.

I decided that designing an instructional program for the teachers of our school district would be the best strategy to address this problem. Getting information concerning the causes of dropping out and some possible solutions to the problem into the hands of the educators in our building would be essential to preventing our students from dropping out. Due to their heavy workload and lack of meeting time, I decided my training for the faculty would need to be short and concise. I wanted something they could view and then be able to review in their own time frame. It was decided that my method of delivery would be a PowerPoint© presentation. I would also develop a handout designed for prospective dropouts containing factual information about the issue of dropping out.

Design:

My first step in designing the instruction was to formulate objectives. I wanted the learners to clearly understand the purpose of the instruction. The objectives were written at the knowledge level of the cognitive domain, as follows:

Objective 1

To acquire knowledge and understanding of the reasons students have given for dropping out of high school.

Objective 2

To acquire knowledge and understanding of possible strategies for preventing students from dropping out of high school.

Objective 3

To acquire knowledge and understanding of the program/programs to be implemented in our school in order to discourage students from dropping out.

My second step in designing my instruction was to research the topic of high school dropouts and then review the literature. Finally, as part of my presentation, I wanted to include some relevant information that would have to be collected from recent dropouts from our school. Therefore, I developed a questionnaire to be sent to each of the 26 dropouts identified in my original research. Due to the involvement of human subjects in my research, it was necessary to obtain the approval of Emporia State University. I developed a survey instrument (see Appendix A) and an Informed Consent Form (see Appendix B) to be used in obtaining the necessary information from the subjects. This survey was to be anonymous, and any information obtained would be used without identifying the respondent.

Development:

The main focus of my project was to inform the faculty of Stafford High School about the dropout problem facing our school and other schools throughout the nation. Therefore, my course was developed in two parts. The first was a PowerPoint presentation of the research I conducted, and the second was a handout containing the information obtained from recent dropouts from our school.

Due to time restraints, the PowerPoint presentation was e-mailed to each faculty member for his/her review. Teacher planning periods vary throughout the school day, so it was decided that this would be the best way to include all faculty members. This allowed educators to view the presentation without interruption in their regular routine. The faculty members were encouraged to e-mail me with any questions or comments they had about the presentation.

A handout was prepared and placed in each teacher's mailbox containing the results of the survey (See Appendix C) concerning the viewpoints of recent Stafford High School dropouts. Again, each faculty member was able to review the information at a time convenient to them, and they were again encouraged to contact me with any questions or comments concerning the survey.

Implementation:

Local implementation of the training course was completed on November 7, 2006. All educators throughout the building were included in the course. This included elementary, middle school, and high school teachers, as well as administration and school board members.

Evaluation:

A summative evaluation was given to each educator. The evaluation was designed to assess whether or not the learning objectives of the course had been met. Each faculty member was asked to respond to five questions and then include any comments they had concerning the information presented to them. The evaluation (See Appendix D) was very important in determining the value educators placed on the information that was presented to them.

The results of the evaluation appear below.

<u>Question Number</u>	<u>Mean Score</u>
1	4.8
2	4.6
3	5.0
4	4.8
5	Comments varied

All responses rated a score above 4.0. The last question on the survey provided an area for faculty members to enter general comments and recommendations for the course. These comments will be taken into consideration and will be used to make improvements in the course.

CHAPTER 4 RESULTS

The results of the survey sent out to recent dropouts of Stafford High School were interesting; however, only three of the 26 former students surveyed responded to the survey. Although this low response level was disappointing, it was expected. Using the results that were obtained, I looked into what solution/solutions our school might be able to implement to help alleviate our dropout problem. The one I chose to pursue was a mentoring program.

On October 29, 2006, I met with my building principal, and we discussed how to approach this task. We decided to put together a committee to begin the process. This committee would consist of one teacher who is already serving in a mentoring role, one teacher that would play the devil's advocate, one recent dropout who had responded to the survey, the principal, and me. I contacted all participants, and we met on November 6, 2006.

The first meeting of our mentoring committee went well. I developed an agenda (See Appendix E), and we began by discussing how a mentor for a student at risk of dropping out should be selected. It was decided that the mentor should be a teacher that would be willing to volunteer for the position. Next, we discussed how students should be selected for the program. It was decided that a student could enter the program if he/she had excessive absences or tardies, if he/she had failing grades, if a teacher or parent recommended him/her, or if he/she volunteered to be in the program. The next item the committee discussed was how long to keep a student in the program. It was decided that a minimum of one 9-week period would be required to assess how well the student was doing. It was also decided that the student should begin the program meeting with his/her

mentor a minimum of once a week and then the mentor and student could decide how often they needed to meet. In our school we have an LST period (study hall), which would be a convenient time for a student to meet with his/her mentor. Our discussion then moved on to activities that the mentor and student would engage in during their meetings. It was decided that mentors should review the student's current grades and/or absences and tardies with him/her. They should also work on improving the student's organizational skills and discussing any personal issues the student might want to share. The last item of discussion was about providing support for the mentors in the program. It was decided that they should meet as a group to discuss how well their mentor/student relationship was progressing. It was also felt that the mentor of a particular student should meet periodically with the teachers of that student to see if there was any improvement in the student's classroom performance.

The results obtained from my summative evaluation were encouraging. Most of the teachers surveyed felt that the information I provided to them did help in their understanding of why students choose to drop out of high school and what educators can do to encourage them to stay in school. They are interested in participating in the mentoring program and feel that it will be beneficial to our school.

As a service to our school, I developed a brochure to be kept in the counselor's office and given to any student who expresses an interest in dropping out of school (See Appendix F). This brochure is not designed to be used as a scare tactic, but is to be used to inform the student of the facts related to high school dropouts. Hopefully, the information provided will help the students make more informed choices concerning their future plans.

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I feel that I have learned a great deal from my project. I also feel that it has been very beneficial to Stafford High School. Through my research, I found that there are numerous reasons students decide to drop out of high school. Although the school cannot address all of these issues, such as low socioeconomic status, education level of parents, etc., there are issues we can address. Through the development of a mentoring program, we can help students develop more confidence in their own abilities and help them to see themselves in a more positive light.

Providing education to our teachers has helped them better understand our dropout problem. The educators in our building are interested in being part of the solution to the problem. They are willing to devote whatever time and energy is necessary to make a difference in the lives of our students.

Since my project is ongoing, I will continue to track the results of our efforts as mentors to our students. If problems occur in the structure of the program, we will address them as they are discovered and make any necessary changes. The administration and the school board of our school are interested in doing whatever they can to help make this program a success.

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Appendices

Appendix A Questionnaire

Cindy Austin
Stafford High School

Currently, I am working on my Master's project for Emporia State University. As part of this project, I am asking for your input on the following questionnaire. You may remain anonymous, but the information you provide is very important to the success of this project. I hope you will answer the questions as honestly as possible, and I really appreciate any feedback you can give me. Please return your questionnaire to me in the enclosed postage-paid envelope. Thank you for your time and effort.

1. During your school years, did you have any type of reading or attention problems? If so, were you retained in any grade?
2. Since the time you exited our school system, have you continued your education and/or received your GED?
3. When did you make the decision to leave school before graduation? What led to this decision?
4. Did your family support your decision to leave school early?
5. Did you have failing grades at the time you left school?
6. Were you absent from school often?
7. Did you take any vocational courses while in high school? If so, what were they and were they beneficial in helping you find employment?
8. Were you involved in any extracurricular activities while in school? If so, what were they?

9. Do you feel that there was anything the school could have or should have done to keep you in school?

10. Do you feel that a mentor could have helped you stay in school?

11. Have you ever been in trouble with the law?

12. If you had it to do over again, would you still make the decision to leave school early?

13. Are you currently employed? If so, where?

14. Where do you see yourself in five years?

15. What advice would you give to students currently considering leaving school without graduating?

Appendix B
Informed Consent Form

INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

INTRODUCTION

The Department of Instructional Design and Technology at Emporia State University supports the practice of protection for human subjects participating in research and related activities. The following information is provided so that you can decide whether you wish to participate in the present study. You should be aware that even if you agree to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time, and that if you do withdraw from the study, you will not be subjected to reprimand or any other form of reproach. Likewise, if you choose not to participate, you will not be subjected to reprimand or any other form of reproach.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study is to identify, via anonymous survey, the reasons high school students have for withdrawing from school before graduation and any suggestions they may have in helping to keep other students from making the same choice.

PROCEDURES

Assessment materials will include the use of anonymous survey responses to gather the needed information. Surveyed subjects will not be identified and all data gathered will be kept confidential. The survey will be administered to former students of USD 349 who have made the decision to leave school before graduation. The data collection process will take approximately six weeks. Subjects will not be harmed in any manner as a result of the study. Participation is voluntary and a signed Informed Consent Form will be used and maintained on file. This study will take place from October 2006 through November 2006. Collected data will be kept in a locked cabinet.

RISKS

No risk to subjects is anticipated in this study.

BENEFITS

The benefit will be to identify the reasons students have for leaving school before graduation in order to improve the knowledge of how to address this issue in the school setting.

INFORMATION TO BE COLLECTED

To perform this study, the researcher will collect data about your opinions. The information will be obtained from your participation in a survey to be administered at the beginning of the study. Information will be recorded anonymously and survey participants will not be identified in any manner. All collected data will be safeguarded and maintained in a locked cabinet.

CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT

Your name will not be associated in any way with the information collected about you or with the research findings from this study. The information collected about you will be used by: Cindy Austin from Emporia State University, Emporia, Kansas, Dr. Armand Seguin, members of the committee evaluating the project, and officials at ESU that oversee research, including committees and offices that review and monitor research studies.

CANCELLING THIS CONSENT AND AUTHORIZATION

You may withdraw your consent to participate in this study at any time. You also have the right to cancel your permission to use and disclose information collected about you, in writing, at any time, by sending your written request to:

Cindy Austin
50116 NE 80th Street
Preston, KS 67583
caustin@stafford349.com

PARTICIPANT CERTIFICATION

“I have read the above statement and have been fully advised of the procedures to be used in this project. I have been given sufficient opportunity to ask any questions I had concerning the procedures and possible risks involved. I understand the potential risks involved and I assume them voluntarily. I likewise understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time without being subjected to reproach.”

Subject

Date

Appendix C
Results of Questionnaire

During the past five years, Stafford High School has had 26 students drop out. These students were sent a questionnaire requesting their input on the issue of dropping out. Unfortunately, only three former students responded. Following are the results of the survey.

Question 1: During your school years, did you have any type of reading or attention problems? If so, were you retained in any grade?

Respondent #1: No.

Respondent #2: I had trouble keeping up, but I never got held back a grade.

Respondent #3: Yes, I had a problem with remembering what I read if the article was long and still have that problem. No, I was not retained.

Question 2: Since the time you exited our school system, have you continued your education and/or received your GED?

Respondent #1: No, but I am going to.

Respondent #2: I am still going to school at the Learning Center.

Respondent #3: I'm trying to go to the Learning Center for my diploma, but I'm also working full-time.

Question 3: When did you make the decision to leave school before graduation? What led to this decision?

Respondent #1: When my health problem got bad and my stress level became too great for me to handle. Also, some teachers and the principal aided in my withdrawing from school.

Respondent #2: While I was in school. I just left because a teacher made me really mad. It made me uncomfortable to be around the teachers.

Respondent #3: My senior year, I attended about ten weeks and I kept having a problem with English and History on comprehending and couldn't seem to get any help from the teachers.

Questions 4: Did your family support your decision to leave school early?

Respondent #1: Partly.

Respondent #2: No, my mom kept telling me to go back to school.

Respondent #3: Yes.

Question 5: Did you have failing grades at the time you left school?

Respondent #1: No, all As.

Respondent #2: Yes, because I stopped going to school before I dropped out.

Respondent #3: Yes.

Question 6: Were you absent from school often?

Respondent #1: Yes, for gastrointestinal reasons and doctor visits.

Respondent #2: Yes.

Respondent #3: Somewhat due to the teachers in English and History.

Question 7: Did you take any vocational courses while in high school? If so, what were they and were they beneficial in helping you find employment?

Respondent #1: No.

Respondent #2: Yes, but it didn't help me with a job.

Respondent #3: Yes, woodworking and small engine mechanics. No, this is not the line of work I went into.

Question 8: Were you involved in any extracurricular activities while in school? If so, what were they?

Respondent #1: Drama and Forensics. I don't know if that counts. Nothing other than that.

Respondent #2: No.

Respondent #3: Yes, High School Choir and Men's Vocal Group.

Question 9: Do you feel that there was anything the school could have or should have done to keep you in school?

Respondent #1: Nothing, other than be more understanding and cooperative.

Respondent #2: Make it more fun for the students.

Respondent #3: Yes.

Question 10: Do you feel that a mentor could have helped you stay in school?

Respondent #1: No, I left for medical reasons.

Respondent #2: Yes, but you can't have one unless you are in special education classes.

Respondent #3: Yes.

Question 11: Have you ever been in trouble with the law?

Respondent #1: Never.

Respondent #2: No.

Respondent #3: No.

Question 12: If you had it to do over again, would you still make the decision to leave school early?

Respondent #1: Yes.

Respondent #2: No, because it was the stupidest thing I have ever done.

Respondent #3: Yes, until some teachers would have been changed and help would have been there.

Question 13: Are you currently employed? If so, where?

Respondent #1: Not currently.

Respondent #2: No.

Respondent #3: Yes, auto parts counter man.

Question 14: Where do you see yourself in five years?

Respondent #1: Married to my boyfriend and maybe a stay-at-home mom.

Respondent #2: I really want to be a nurse or a doctor, so I'd probably be in school still.

Respondent #3: Possible Assistant Manager for the company that I work for.

Question 15: What advice would you give to students currently considering leaving school without graduating?

Respondent #1: Just make sure you really consider the consequences and can handle them as they come. Also, try to at least get your GED.

Respondent #2: I would tell them not to leave because it's hard to get back into school and it's stupid to drop out.

Respondent #3: Don't do it unless there is a real bad problem at the school with teachers, students, etc.

Appendix D
Summative Evaluation

Your feedback is very important to this project. Please take a moment to complete the End of Course Survey. This survey is designed to provide vital information to the facilitator on the value of the course.

Rate your agreement with the listed statements using a scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

1. This training course has increased my knowledge and understanding of the reasons students have given for dropping out of high school. _____
2. This training course has helped me to acquire knowledge and understanding of possible strategies for preventing students from dropping out of high school. _____
3. The information contained in the course was arranged in a logical and easy to follow manner. _____
4. As an educator, I found the information contained in this course valuable. _____
5. Comments concerning improvement to the course.

Appendix E
First Meeting to Implement Mentor Program

IMPLEMENTATION OF MENTOR PROGRAM

I. Mentor

- A. Who?
 1. Teacher
 2. Volunteer

II. Mentee

- A. Who?
 1. Student
 2. Volunteer, recommended
- B. How Determined?
 1. Absences and Tardies
 2. Grades (Ds and Fs)
 3. Referral

III. Activation

- A. How long to continue?
 1. Minimum of one 9-week period
 2. Until the student is meeting school requirements
- B. How often to meet? When?
 1. Minimum of one time per week
 2. Student/Mentor decide
 3. Meet during LST
- C. Case load per teacher (maximum of 2)

IV. Activities

- A. Review of Grades (PowerSchool)
- B. Review of absences and tardies
- C. Work on organizational skills (daily planner)

V. Communication for mentors

- A. Mentor to mentor
- B. Mentor and staff of student

Appendix F
Brochure



QUOTES FROM
RECENT STAFFORD
HIGH SCHOOL
DROPOUTS

THINKING OF DROPPING OUT?

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If you had it to do over again, would you still make the decision to leave school early?

Answer: No, because it was the stupidest thing I have ever done.

What advice would you give to students currently considering leaving school without graduating?

Answer: I would tell them not to leave because it's hard to get back into school and it's stupid to drop out.

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Make sure you know the facts!

