A Study of Variables Related to Teacher Absenteeism in a K-12 School District

Dale F. Martin
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A STUDY OF VARIABLES RELATED TO TEACHER ABSENTEEISM
IN A K-12 SCHOOL DISTRICT

by

Dale F. Martin

A Dissertation
Submitted to the
Faculty of The Graduate College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the
Degree of Doctor of Education
Department of Educational Leadership

Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo, Michigan
April 1987
Teacher absenteeism is a serious problem in school administration. The costs of teacher absenteeism were estimated at two billion dollars per annum, according to a report published in 1981. Teacher absenteeism, like all forms of employee absenteeism, is a source of reduced productivity. Despite the seriousness and costs of teacher absenteeism, few studies of this problem have been completed.

In this study, reasons for teacher absenteeism in a K-12 school district were studied. Data from this study were compared to selective data from five medium sized school districts, with student population ranging from 3,350 to 22,845 students, located in Michigan.

Based on the data of this study, five major conclusions were made:

1. The demographic variables studied (age, sex, grade level of assignment) were not statistically significant, (p>.05).

2. School districts in Michigan were not using systematic procedures to monitor teacher absenteeism.

3. Reasons for teacher absence were similar in all school districts studied.

4. Systematic plans to reduce teacher absenteeism were not present or followed in the school district studied.
5. Special incentive programs to reduce teacher absenteeism were not offered by the school district studied.

A major recommendation of the study is that school districts should develop policies and systematic programs to monitor teacher absenteeism. School districts should make every effort to ensure that appropriate systematic programs are implemented that would have a positive effect on student achievement.
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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my mother, Viola. A haywagon accident ended her formal education in the seventh grade. Her love for learning never ended and inspired her son to reach goals many teachers thought were impossible.

Dale F. Martin
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Dale F. Martin
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Teacher absenteeism annually costs upward to two billion dollars; on any given school day approximately 200,000 employees, nationwide, don't show up for work (Lewis, 1982). In addition to the interruption of the learning process and financial aspects related to teacher absence, the expectation of attendance by both students and teachers must also be considered. Schools have a certain expectation for regular attendance of students and teachers and when this does not occur classroom performance suffers (Bamber, 1979). When a student is absent, schooling is disrupted for that particular student, but more serious consequences may result when teachers are absent. When substitute teachers are called in, it is usually on short notice, with little time for preparation. Substitute teachers are then little more than babysitters in the classroom. The apparent importance given to employee absenteeism by corporations is contrasted with the minor emphasis given this issue by school districts (Bamber, 1979).

A certain amount of absenteeism is inevitable; people become ill and emergencies arise that keep employees away from their jobs. Administration has an obligation to its teachers, students, and community to assure them that teachers are absent only when absolutely necessary. With this in mind, the administration should develop policies to:

1. Determine what the absenteeism problem is by keeping track of
absences,

2. Give supervisors special training on how to combat absenteeism.

3. Let employees know about the problem of absenteeism and the costs involved.

4. Try to discover specific causes of absenteeism and pinpoint where absenteeism is excessive.

5. Consider special incentives or recognition for employees with good attendance records.


Statement of the Problem, Research Objective, and Questions

In a given K-12 school district, (a) are there policies and procedures that are used to control or monitor employee absenteeism? (b) are there variables that need to be identified that improve the monitoring or control of teacher absenteeism? (c) what variables may be monitored to reduce absenteeism?

The purpose of this study, then is (a) to compile and analyze relevant literature on employee absenteeism, and policies and procedures used to monitor or control the absenteeism; (b) to identify the nature and frequency of variables related to absenteeism; and (c) to identify variables that may be monitored to improve absenteeism.

Eight research questions have been developed. They are:

1. Are school districts in Michigan monitoring or keeping track
of teacher absenteeism?

2. What are the reasons used for teacher absenteeism and are there differences by school district?

3. What is the average rate of absenteeism of teachers on an annual basis?

4. Are the rates of absenteeism of secondary teachers significantly different than the rates of absenteeism of elementary teachers?

5. Are the rates of absenteeism of female teachers significantly different than the rates of male teachers?

6. Is age a significant variable to be considered in the rate of teacher absenteeism?

7. Are there special incentives or recognition programs being offered by school districts to curb teacher absenteeism?

8. Are those teachers whose rate of absenteeism, in comparison to other teachers that appear to be chronic, being processed in a fairly administered disciplinary procedure?

Operational Definitions

Reasons for teacher absence from work are defined as cited in the Agreement between the Bay City Board of Education and Bay City Education Association (Bay City Public Schools, 1984-1985 through 1987-1988) are:

(a) 7.100 Illness The primary purpose of the sick leave allowance is to cover the absence of an employee from school because of personal illness, injury, or incapacitation sufficiently severe that it would make his/her presence in school inadvisable. Sick leave applies only to absences resulting from illness, injury or incapacitation of the employee and not absence caused by illness, injury or incapacitation in the immediate family, except as described in Article 8.000.
7.200 The amount of sick leave accumulated at the rate of eight (8) days per semester shall be ninety-six (96) days. Accumulated sick leave shall be reported monthly on the payroll forms and will be available in the office of the immediate supervisor.

7.300 If there is a question or doubt regarding the illness of an employee, the Superintendent may require a doctor's statement verifying the illness or may require the employee to submit a medical examination before sick leave pay is allowed. This sick leave plan applies to all employees of the Bay City Public Schools who are employed on a contractual basis.

(b) 7.500 Sick Leave Bank To afford the maximum protection against a prolonged illness, the following Sick Leave Bank shall be established for all employees of the District, and each employee covered by this Agreement shall participate as follows:

7.501 On September 6, 1966, each employee contributed one (1) day of his/her Sick Leave to the Bank. The Board of Education, in order to establish the Bank in the school year 1966-67, donated to the Bank 400 sick leave days. New employees shall contribute one sick leave day to the Bank from their first sick leave allowance.

7.502 When the Sick Leave Bank falls below 750 days, the Board shall assess each employee one (1) day of his/her sick leave.

7.503 Additions to the Bank may be made as required at the beginning of each semester according to the above limitations.

7.504 Upon depletion of a member's own accumulated sick leave, he/she must wait an additional fifteen (15) calendar days before drawing from the Bank. School days in the fifteen day waiting period shall be paid retroactively when a grant has been authorized by the Appeal Board.

7.505 Any employee on sick leave may apply to participate in the Sick Leave Bank by filing an application in the Superintendent's office.

7.506 A maximum of 180 days may be granted per appeal from the Bank.

7.507 Upon recommendation of the Appeal Board, additional days may be granted at the discretion of the Superintendent and the Appeal Board.

7.508 Persons withdrawing sick leave days from the Bank will not have to replace these days except as a regular contributing member to the Bank.

7.509 If it appears that an individual is abusing the above policy the Appeal Board may direct said individual to be examined by two doctors of the Appeal Board's choosing to determine if the illness or injury is valid. The Appeal Board will require such examination if requested to do so by the Superintendent.

7.510 The Appeal Board may grant or suspend sick days from the Bank. Their judgement and/or decisions will be final.

7.511 The Sick Leave Appeal Board shall consist of the four elected officers and chairman of the appropriate committee of the Bay City Education Association, the president of the
Administrators' Association, the presidents of the non-teaching organizations, two (2) Central Office Administrators, and the Superintendent or his/her designated representative.

7.512 No employee will be credited with sick leave allowance while drawing from his/her own accumulated sick leave or the Sick Leave Bank until he/she has reported back to work.

7.513 An annual report of the Sick Leave Bank will be published in the "Superintendent's Newsletter," including a statement of the number of days granted from the Bank, the number of days remaining in the bank, and the cost of the days granted.

(p. 12)

(c) 7.600 Maternity Sick Leave—Before a female employee will be granted sick pay for pregnancy, she must present to the Assistant Superintendent for Personnel and Employee Relations a written certificate from her physician indicating that in his/her opinion she is no longer able to regularly perform her work because of her pregnancy condition. Should Administration have any question about the inability to work, even if there is her own doctor's statement, Administration could then exercise the right to have her undergo an examination by a separate doctor engaged by the District. An employee must notify the Assistant Superintendent for Personnel and Employee Relations when the baby has been delivered. Then, before the third pay check following delivery is issued, the employee must produce another doctor's statement saying that she is unable to return to work and the medical reasons. If the Assistant Superintendent for Personnel and Employee Relations does not hear from her, the third check would not be issued and he/she will write a communique to the employee asking the status of the leave. If an employee desires to take a maternity leave without regard to her ability to work, that would have to be done under Article 8.500 of the Agreement, and would be a leave of one (1) year granted without pay. Provisions in the Master Agreement relative to extensions would still apply.

(pp. 12, 13)

(d) 8.201 Family Illness A maximum of five (5) days for critical illness in the immediate family living in the same household.

(p. 13)

(e) 8.2015 A maximum of five (5) days critical illness in the immediate family not living in the same household may be granted by the Assistant Superintendent for Personnel and Employee Relations at his/her discretion.

(p. 13)

(f) 8.202 Business Day Two (2) days for the conduct of personal affairs which cannot normally be handled outside school hours. A personal leave day cannot be used the day before or the day after a holiday or vacation period, the first or the last day of the school term, or the first day of a hunting or fishing season, except with justification in writing to the Assistant Superintendent for Personnel and Employee Relations. The Assistant Superintendent for Personnel and Employee Relations decision on the justification will be final.

(pp. 13, 14)
(g) 8.302 Emergency Day A maximum of three (3) days for emergency purposes to be granted by the Assistant Superintendent for Personnel and Employee Relations at his/her discretion.

(h) Funeral 8.303 One (1) day for attendance at the funeral services of mother-in-law, father-in-law, brother-in-law, or sister-in-law. Extension may be granted by Assistant Superintendent for Personnel and Employee Relations.

(i) 8.304 Jury Duty A teacher called for jury duty shall be compensated for the difference between the teacher's pay and the pay received for the performance of such obligation.

(j) 8.305 Court Appearance Court appearance as a witness in any case connected with the teacher's employment or the school or whenever the teacher is required to attend any proceeding.

(k) 8.306 School Related Meeting Approved visitation at other schools or attending educational conferences, conventions, or consultation service to colleges and universities.

(l) 8.307 Leave of Absence One (1) day to take the selected service physical examination. Extension may be granted by the Assistant Superintendent for Personnel and Employee Relations.

8.400 Leaves of absence without pay not to exceed one (1) year may be granted upon application for purpose of study and research or for any reason important to the teacher. A teacher shall return from such leave with seniority and sick leave accumulation enjoyed at the time the leave was granted and shall advance to the next step on the salary schedule. Extensions may be granted at the discretion of the Assistant Superintendent for Personnel and Employee Relations.

8.500 A parental leave of one (1) year shall be granted without pay. Extension shall be granted for each of four succeeding years upon application in writing prior to December 15, or March 1. A teacher returning from leave provided in this paragraph shall be placed on the next step of the salary schedule from which he/she went on leave and shall return with seniority and sick leave accumulations enjoyed at the time the leave is granted.

8.600 Leaves of absence shall be granted up to two (2) years to any teacher who enlists in the Peace Corps as a full-time participant. Such teacher shall be restored to employment with the District and shall be given the benefits of any increments, seniority which would have been credited to him/her had he/she remained in active service with the school system, provided, however, that such teacher shall make application for reemployment within ninety (90) days after discharge from the Peace Corps; and provided further that such teacher reports to his/her teaching assignment at the outset of the semester immediately following such discharge from service. Sick leave accumulation shall be same as enjoyed at the time the leave is granted.

8.700 Teachers who are officers of any Affiliate of the Association, upon proper application, shall be given leave of absence for the term of office without pay and teachers who are appointed
to its staff, upon proper application, shall be given leave of absence for one (1) year without pay for the purpose of performing duties of said Affiliate. Teachers given leaves of absence without pay shall receive credit toward annual salary increment on the schedule appropriate to their rank and shall accumulate seniority. Sick leave accumulation shall be same as enjoyed at the time the leave is granted. (pp. 15, 16)

8.800 Military, Reserve or National Guard leaves of absence shall be granted to any teacher who shall be inducted or called for period of authorized training or shall enlist for military duty to any branch of the Armed Forces of the United States until expiration of the first enlistment or the duration of the emergency. Such teacher shall be granted the leave of absence without loss of status, salary, seniority, and other rights or benefits.

8.900 A teacher elected or selected for a full-time public office which takes him/her from his/her teaching duties with the school system, shall upon prior written request, receive a leave of absence without pay for the term of such office. Such a teacher shall return with all sick leave accumulation and seniority enjoyed at the time the leave was granted. It is recognized that a teacher has the right to serve in, or be elected to, public office less than full time. However, such service shall not be permitted to interfere with the educational process and said teacher's contractual obligation.

8.910 A teacher having been duly granted leave under the provisions of 8.400, 8.500 and 8.900, must apply for re-employment on or before March 1, prior to the school term in which re-employment is desired or December 15 for the second semester.

(m) 8.10000 Sabbatical Leave. 8.10100 Purpose - The sabbatical leave policy is designed to provide opportunity to engage in professionally related experiences which are likely to improve growth opportunities for students in the Bay City School District.

8.10200 Qualifications The applicant must possess a teaching certificate valid in the State of Michigan. The applicant must be a full-time employee who has been employed in the Bay City School District for at least seven (7) consecutive years. Absence from service for a period of not more than one (1) year under a leave of absence, with or without pay, shall not be deemed a break in continuity of service, but neither shall a one (1) year leave be counted in the total of seven (7) years required by this qualification. The applicant must not have been granted a sabbatical leave of absence from the Bay City School District during the seven (7) consecutive years of service immediately preceding current application.

(n) 26.405 Bargaining Unit Day—In addition to released time provisions found elsewhere in this Agreement, the Association shall be granted a total of forty (40) work days per school year without loss of pay for conducting Association business. Appropriate notice shall be given to the Assistant Superintendent for
Personnel and Employee Relations in advance so that substitutes may be secured. The requests for Association days shall be signed by the appropriate officer of the Association.

26.406—Additional days may be granted for Association sponsored meetings, conferences and conventions where the full cost, including substitutes is paid by the Association, with prior written approval of the Assistant Superintendent for Personnel and Employee Relations. Consistent with past practice, such approval shall not be reasonably withheld. The request for such days shall be signed by the appropriate office of the Association.

26.406—(o) 32.000 In-service Meetings

32.100 The Board agrees to hold no fewer than three (3) meetings per school year for the purpose of providing in-service and staff development activities. In order to (1) provide direct and continuous staff involvement in identifying needs to be met by staff development activities and in designing such activities, and (2) to maintain maximum flexibility to design staff development activities around needs and concerns which are likely to vary during the life of this contract, responsibility for planning and evaluating such activities rests with a standing committee (in-service and staff development) of the K-12 Instructional Council.

32.200 The aforementioned meetings shall be contract days and shall run from 8:30 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. including a lunch period not to exceed ninety (90) minutes.

(pp. 74-75)

Other operational definitions recognized by the administration of the single K-12 school district and not cited in Articles 7.100 through 32.200 are:

1. Compensatory time is when state and local governments are permitted to give their employees compensatory time off in lieu of immediate overtime pay in cash, at the rate of not less than one and one-half hours for each hour of overtime worked, but only pursuant to a collective bargaining agreement, or an agreement or understanding arrived at between the employer and employee before performance of the work. The regular practice of granting compensatory time off in lieu of overtime compensation in effect on April 15, 1986, shall be considered an agreement or understanding.
2. Vacation is when employees are paid to be absent from work at the discretion of the employee with approval of the immediate supervisor.

3. Lost time is when employees are absent from work for a non-compensated reason and are docked for the days missed. These docked days must be approved by the Personnel Director.

4. If an employee has been injured at work, is under a doctor's care, and cannot return to work without restrictions they are on worker's compensation.

5. Holidays are Christmas, Good Friday, Thanksgiving Recess, Memorial Day, and Labor Day. Jewish Holidays are considered holidays for those employees of this faith.

6. Absenteeism is the missing of scheduled work of a teacher for any of the above defined reasons.

7. Costs are (a) the financial money to replace individual missing from work, (b) the effect on students because of teacher missing from work, and (c) the effect on other teachers because of the teacher missing from work.

8. Administration's responsibility is to monitor or control absenteeism, determine the extent and cause of absenteeism in the schools, and make an effort to improve teacher attendance.

9. Rate of absenteeism is the amount a teacher is missing from work in relationship to the calendar year:

\[
\text{number of time teacher is missing from work} \quad \text{185 calendar days}
\]

Importance of the Study

"Teacher absenteeism is a disease approaching epidemic
proportions" (Lewis, 1981, p. 29). Lewis found that it was not uncom-
mon to see staff absenteeism approaching 10 to 15%, or an average loss
of 27 days per teacher per year. Reasons for this were: (a) lack of
direction from school board and superintendent, (b) incomplete board
policy, (c) failure to recognize the problem, (d) job dissatisfaction,
(e) incomplete records, (f) lack of attendance monitoring, (g) failure
to recognize good attendance, and (h) obsolete leadership.

The concept of decreasing work effort in the public sector was
highlighted in a study conducted by Winkler (1980). In all likeli-
hood, public sector absences are more expensive because they affect
both the employer and the individuals receiving the public service.
Winkler noted that absent teachers are replaced by substitutes who are
likely to be less effective in the classroom than the regular teacher.

A study on the effectiveness of substitute teachers was conducted
by Rawson (1981). There are many factors that hindered substitute
effectiveness. Some of these factors are: (a) low priority in the
school system; (b) lack of formal training, inservice, and orienta-
tion; (c) same rate of pay; (d) lack of fringe benefits; (e) differing
views of role expectations; and (f) lack of feedback on evaluation of
performance.

Studies conducted in the areas of business and industry as well
as the field of education are in agreement that a large financial loss
results from employee absenteeism. Employee absenteeism also results
in a loss of productivity (Kuzmits, 1979). Within the area of educa-
tion there appears to be a further concern in the areas of lost
instructional time and the quality of instructional time provided by
substitutes.
There is, perhaps, no more serious affront to the employment relationship than an employee's willful refusal to report for work as scheduled. Chronic absenteeism can and should be tracked and eliminated (Duff, 1985). Duff further contends that the surest way to insulate an attendance control system against adverse rulings is to make a fundamental distinction between absences that involve culpability and those that do not.

The U. S. Bureau of National Affairs (1981) policy guide states, "The first step in any program for controlling absenteeism is to keep accurate and detailed records of absences and reasons for them" (p. 111). These records can put at management's fingertips the figures necessary for computing absence rates, which in turn, make it possible to determine the extent of the problem in the organization.

Conceptual Framework of the Study

The purpose of this chapter has been to provide the following: (a) an introduction to the study, (b) a statement of the problem, (c) definitions for substantive terms; and (d) a statement of the importance of the study. This was done in an effort to develop a rationale for the study, and to provide pertinent background information.

Chapter II contains a description of related research studies and recommendations for practice based on that research. The review is divided into a study of employee absenteeism in business and industry as well as the public sector of teacher absenteeism.

The procedure and methodology of the study are discussed in Chapter III which includes a description of the data gathering techniques used in the study.
In Chapter IV, the analyses of the data gathered in the study are presented. Each research question is outlined, and the findings obtained for each question is explained.

The conclusions of the study and their implications are presented in Chapter V. Recommendations that may be useful for future research are also included.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

Why are some employees absent more frequently than others? Do variables such as age, sex, length of service, and grade level have an impact on employee absenteeism? How can school administrators who perceive a problem of teacher absenteeism effectively implement policies and procedures for controlling employee absenteeism? Management must establish as a priority the problem of employee absenteeism and actively seek a solution for controlling it.

Each organization, as a unique entity, should develop its own absenteeism control program (Kuzmits, 1977). When major problems of staff absenteeism occur, administrators often seek a cure for the problem without understanding the malady confronting them. A quick cure is not the answer. Four stages of change that are fundamental to curbing the absenteeism "culture" are:

1. Analyze the problem and set objectives
2. Introduce the program briefly to the organization's employees and secure involvement among top and middle-level administrators.
3. Implement the program on four levels—individual, group or work team, organization, and leadership
4. Evaluate the program and make necessary modifications for its extension or renewal (Allen & Higgins, 1979, p. 31).

What are school systems doing to control absenteeism? Very
little! The status of teacher absence control was studied in 20 New York and New Jersey school systems (Walter, 1977). The majority of these school systems did not have a teacher absence control program. Furthermore, written and verbal communication between teachers and school administrators was lacking in most of the systems.

Suggestions from the literature on employee absenteeism repeatedly urge administrators to establish policies that relate specifically to staff absenteeism or to revise existing policies. The Joint Business-Educator Project in Newark, New Jersey (Newark Chamber of Commerce, 1974, p. 10) developed the following district policy on staff attendance, calling it "one of the most important steps" in its Attendance Improvement Plan:

The board recognizes that good attendance is necessary and expected in order to maintain an effective school system. Therefore, the board encourages its employees to develop satisfactory attendance performance in pursuance of that goal. (p. 10).

One of the first actions the superintendent of the Merrick, New York, public schools took to reduce teacher absenteeism was to recommend to the school board that existing policies be modified to include criteria dealing with teacher attendance (Gendler, 1977). Stated organizational policies should be updated periodically, giving employees the rationale behind them. Possible statements that could be used in these attendance policies include: employees should be told that they are expected to attend work regularly and punctually, and the reasons why employee attendance is important to all those who deal with the company should be clarified (Gluyas, 1972). In Newark and Ewing Township (Newark Chamber of Commerce, 1974) school management made changes in certain provisions of the labor contracts.
with their employees and board policies that were contrary to a ruling by the New Jersey Commissioner of Education.

Absenteeism should be clearly defined. Standards for desired performance, which are different from policies, should be set from management's expectations of "maximum acceptable levels of absenteeism or turnover" (Clark, 1971, p. 64), and should be elaborated both orally and in writing. Standards should be set according to department experience (Clark, 1971). They are discovered when absence data are first compiled. As an example, if a department lost 10 employees in the past year from turnover and a company goal was set for reducing turnover by 20% in the next year, the department's standard would be eight terminations (20% of the 10 terminations from the previous year). This method can be applied to setting absenteeism standards as well. A key to effective standards is the involvement of the immediate supervisor.

A "breaking point" should be established to signal that the time for direct management involvement has occurred, e.g., a verbal warning after the third absence, a written one after the fourth, and discipline after the fifth (Dreyfack, 1970, p. 34). In one company, employees receive a warning slip after their first and second unexcused absences and are dismissed after the third. These three absences cover a one year period. This company maintained an absence rate of one-half of the one percent for 14 years using this method (Kearns, 1970).

A 1970 article in *Supervisory Management* advocated that "occurrences" (Dreyfack, 1970, p. 33), be used instead of days or hours for
absenteeism control purposes so that employees could combine a con­tin­uous period of absence for a single reason into one occurrence. For example, 3 or 4 half-day doctor's appointments could be counted as one occurrence. Six occurrences per year were considered to be a normal amount of time away from the job. Medical verification should be required after the sixth occurrence. The main reason for using this definition was to identify personnel with a problem of chronic absenteeism, not those who make advance notice for a legitimate reason. The same approach was suggested by Vroom (1964).

The concept of "programmed attendance," which involves peer group pressure to control absenteeism, should be considered (Sheridan, 1972, p. 29). For example, a single work group of 30 people determines a rate of absence agreeable to the organization, with employees allowed to distribute the days off and manage the program themselves. Absenteeism has been reduced drastically in some cases where this method has been tried.

A number of specific rules should be included in any attendance policy. Days off should be scheduled at least one day in advance. Employees should not be able to change absences to vacation leave after the absence has occurred.

In a study of teacher absenteeism in New York City (New York State Office of Education, 1974), a state review office recommended that the City Board of Education eliminate the 30 day grace period given to teachers before they must indicate how their absence should be charged, so that the preparation of teacher absence reports could be expedited. In certain cases, it may be advisable to require
employees to submit to a medical checkup or produce a medical statement from a physician or nurse. The organization may wish to provide this service for its own employees. Some organizations employ a public health or visiting nurse to check on an absence at home; however, Campbell (1970) warned that this measure should be used only in cases of suspected sick leave abuse, so that employees do not fear that the nurse is acting as a company "watchdog" (p. 48). The following provisions could also occur: have management call the employee if he or she fails to call in, which emphasizes management's awareness and concern; and identify "weekend-stretchers," "seasonal stay-aways," and absentees who are out because of personal problems (drinking, gambling, etc.), making an effort to help the employee correct these problems (Dreyfack, 1970, p. 34).

Specific, written disciplinary procedures for exceeding stated standards should be a part of an organization's absence policy (Kuzmits, 1977). A notice should be posted with a warning that employees who are absent for a certain number of working days without notifying their supervisor will be terminated. If an employee is absent for one day without notifying his or her supervisor, the employee and the supervisor should discuss the absence. Supervisors should record the first and second absences that they have not approved. If an employee stays away from work the third time without notifying the supervisor, it should mean termination. Likewise, when an employee submits a false reason for an absence, it should result in termination (Farrant, 1978). Employers should "clamp" down on lateness, tying it with absences (Dreyfack, 1970, p. 34). In a study of

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4600 manufacturing employees, permanent discipline proved to be a better way to reduce absence than either indiscriminate discipline or no discipline (Gary, 1971).

In contrast to these measures, there are indications that punishment may not solve absenteeism problems at all. Strict warnings about possible dismissal only lead to a few weeks of good attendance before the employee resumes the old pattern of absence (Robinson, 1974).

Sanctions used in absenteeism control problems might cause some employees to circumvent the system by resorting to fewer but longer absences (Buzzard & Liddell, 1958, Nicholson, 1976, cited in Steers & Rhodes, 1978). When Western Electric fired 100 workers as part of a demerit system for controlling absenteeism, a wildcat strike resulted. The demerit system was replaced with a system of positive inducements. A study of absenteeism of New York City municipal employees found that departments with lower absence had relatively lenient policies for lateness (Heneghan & Sigmund, 1970). Lower absence rates have been associated with the use of strict control methods, such as keeping detailed attendance records, requiring medical verification for reported illness, and strict disciplinary measures (Baum & Youngblood, 1975; Seatter, 1961). However, Rosen and Turner (1971) found no such relationship.

Even though specific rules may form the backbone of an organization's absenteeism policy, exceptions to these rules should be allowed, depending on certain circumstances. The emphasis should be "to develop a workable plan in the interest of both employee and
management" (Lee, 1960, p. 11). Lastly, the National Education Association (Lee, 1960) advised that the provisions and administration of local absenteeism plans should be reviewed frequently by school management and teacher representatives to ensure the greatest benefit for the instructional program.

The business community regularly examines employee absentee rates and relates those rates to cost of operations and the loss of productivity. By comparison, it appears that the educational community has spent little time analyzing absenteeism and its relationship to cost of operations or productivity (the teaching of students). In this chapter, the literature concerning employee absence and its relationship to cost and productivity is reviewed in two categories: (1) literature related to business and industry and (2) literature related to schools.

Employee Absenteeism—Business and Industry

Taylor (1978) reported that wage and salary workers who normally work fulltime lost an average of 3.5% of their usual hours as a result of illnesses, injuries, and miscellaneous personal reasons. Nearly 7 of every 100 workers experienced at least one spell of absence during the reference week; illnesses and injuries accounted for most of the lost hours. Taylor went on to report that both the proportion of workers with an absence and the proportion of time lost were about the same in May 1978 as they had been 5 years earlier.

In 1981, Taylor reported that American workers with fulltime wage and salary jobs lost about 95 million hours a week as a result of
illnesses, injuries, and miscellaneous personal reasons. The overall level of absence had shown no trend. The amount of time lost fluctuated narrowly between 3.3 and 3.5% from 1973 to 1979; the percentage of workers absent varied between 6.1 and 6.7%.

At the close of the second quarter of 1983 (June), the U. S. Bureau of National Affairs (1983) reported that the rate of unscheduled employee absence for that quarter had dropped to an unprecedented low in BNA's quarterly survey, averaging 1.8% of scheduled work time. By comparison, job absence rates for the second quarter of 1982 and for the first 3 months of 1983 averaged 2.1% of scheduled work time.

Most public attention was focused on the total count of the employed and the unemployed, yet a large segment of workers who were counted as employed were not actually working. During a typical week about 5 million workers were absent from their jobs for the entire week because of vacations, illnesses, and other reasons and therefore are removed from the economic stream for that period (Leon, 1981). For more than two million workers who receive no pay for the missed week of work, that absence may have unwelcome personal costs as well.

The total number of week long absentees (paid and unpaid) at a given time increased substantially between 1950 and 1980, rising from 2.0 to 5.1 million. Although employment grew during this period, absences increased even more. As a percentage of the employed, absentees increased from 4.2 to almost 6%. Most of this change occurred in the 1950s and the late 1960s. A slight rise in absenteeism in the early 1970s had been largely offset by decline toward the end of the decade.
During the period from 1950 through 1980, the major reason for week-long absences was vacations. As shown in the following chart, vacations accounted for a large part of the absence data.

Table 1
Reason for Absence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason for Absence</th>
<th>1950</th>
<th>1980</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>With a job, but not at work</td>
<td>1,954,000</td>
<td>5,057,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacation</td>
<td>54.2</td>
<td>59.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illness</td>
<td>28.2</td>
<td>24.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bad weather</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labor dispute</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other reasons (child care, funerals, jury duty)</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>12.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Leon C. B. Monthly Labor Review, p. 18

The American Society for Personnel Administration (1981) has surveyed absenteeism in the United States since 1974. The Society reported the following figures related to absence from work and unemployment:

Table 2
Absenteeism Rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2.0%</th>
<th>2.2%</th>
<th>2.4%</th>
<th>2.6%</th>
<th>2.8%</th>
<th>3.0%</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
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<td>1977</td>
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### Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2.0%</th>
<th>2.2%</th>
<th>2.4%</th>
<th>2.6%</th>
<th>2.8%</th>
<th>3.0%</th>
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<tr>
<td>1980</td>
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<td>1981</td>
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<tr>
<td>1982</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Zager R. American Association for Personnel Administration, p. 12

### Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>5.5%</th>
<th>6.5%</th>
<th>7.5%</th>
<th>8.5%</th>
<th>9.5%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>1976</td>
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<td>1982</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: Zager R. American Association for Personnel Administration, p. 12

Employees are missing less time at work than at any time in recent years (Zager, 1983). During the period (1979-1983), absenteeism had dropped as unemployment had risen. With about 99 million Americans employed, the difference between 2% calling in sick and 3% doing the same is close to one million employees.

Not only do business and industry record absences in terms of the percentage of employees either working or not working, they are also
interested in the relationship of such absences to productivity. In a report prepared for the American Society of Personnel Administrators (1982) this point was highlighted as follow: "Absence may sometimes make the heart grow fonder—but never when you're running a company. Whether your employee has a genuine health problem, or one of attitude only, the end result is the same" (p. 2). Absenteeism problems mean not only lost time and money for the company, but also lost productivity. In a time of lagging productivity, absenteeism becomes an especially crucial problem.

The cost of national absence is estimated to be between $15 and $20 billion a year. Even if one chooses the "conservative" estimate of $15 billion a year, it still represents an awesome loss of productivity and a needless waste of human resources (Kuzmits, 1979, p. 30). As such, absenteeism relates to loss of productivity because a business must consider the costs associated with production losses, machine downtime, quality problems, and inefficient use of materials.

Some of the absenteeism and loss of productivity costs associated with sick leave are:

- Out-of-pocket expenses such as overtime, extra hours for part-time employees, and overstaffing
- Fringe benefits costs, which continue while the employee is absent
- Maintenance of an absent control system, whether it is effective or not
- Increased supervisory time, as a need develops to revise work schedules and to check the output of substitutes
- Lower morale as workers resent doing others' work, or higher turnover rate, more grievances, and increased tardiness
- Reduced productivity because more unscheduled work is done by
people who are less experienced or fatigued. (Kopelman, Schneller & Silver, 1981, p. 57).

In another report on employee absenteeism and productivity, the cost of absences was estimated to be in the range of $15 to $20 billion a year just in wages paid for days when employees are absent. Other substantial costs are the expense of training workers to fill in for absentees, disruption of production, which holds up deliveries, and, in many industries, perpetual overstaffing to minimize the effect of absenteeism. In the auto industry, absenteeism rates rise to 10 to 15% or even higher at certain times of the year. This increased absenteeism causes havoc with production, upsets quality control, and builds resentment among the workers who do show up and who must be shifted into jobs they might not know or like. The cost of "no shows" is recorded in tens of millions of lost worker hours every week, in idle machinery and unused plant facilities, in materials spoilage, and in delayed shipments to customers (Cruikshank, 1976, p. 39).

Concerning the relationship of absenteeism to productivity, those absences that are most devastating to productivity are the ones that occur on short notice or without any notice. Such absences do not allow the necessary planning to provide for a substitute or to re-adjust schedules, which planned absences permit (Feinberg, 1981).

Employees live in an absenteeism culture. Taking a day off and calling in sick is supported and encouraged by society. Many people's attitude is, "The time is coming to us" (Allen & Higgins, 1979). But these authors went on to ask, "What does this absenteeism culture cost?" The cost of absenteeism to American business is estimated to exceed $100 million a year. But this figure does not account for
losses in productivity resulting from workers covering for one another, missed deadlines, missed orders and meetings, lost opportunities, and other substantial costs. The authors suggested that the only way to address the problem of absenteeism is to recognize that it is a cultural problem and that, as such, a cultural solution is required (Allen & Higgins, 1979, pp. 30-34).

Employee absenteeism is not a new phenomenon. In a 1967 survey business managers in 100 large and moderate-sized firms reported some kind of problem with absenteeism (Johnson & Peterson, 1975).

For the private business sector it can easily be shown that, "staffing is a critical factor in any organization's ability to function effectively" (Rothman, 1981, p. 788). Human error and illness block the attainment of organizational goals and are thus major concerns of management. When plans for staffing and production are developed, consideration should be given to the absenteeism rate experienced in the company as well as to the sick leave benefit plan used (Rothman, 1981).

The reliance on employees for productivity was discussed by Hayes (1981). Hayes (1981) reported that, according to the Council on Economic Affairs, lack of productivity is "one of the most significant economic problems of recent years." Hayes stated that statistics from the National Center for Productivity and Quality of Working Life show that the past decade's productivity growth fell to an average annual rate of 1.6% half the 3.2% rate during the 20 year period from 1947 to 1967. In the first quarter of 1978 there was a productivity gap (the difference between the amount and the cost of production) of 17.3
points, the worst in recent history. One tends to forget that the definition of productivity is "output per worker" and that it is the worker who makes products out of inanimate resources. The employee is the key link to the production process. The employee's performance determines whether the limited inanimate resources are optimally used (Hayes, 1981, p. 35).

Even though human beings are the key to productivity, much of American industry regularly runs without its full complement of staff, resulting in a serious productivity gap. Moreover, although absenteeism directly affects productivity, it is rarely considered a serious problem. Thus a vicious circle exists, for absenteeism flourishes precisely where it is ignored (Hayes, 1981).

Employee Absenteeism—K-12 School Teachers

Staff absenteeism among educational personnel poses serious problems for effective school administration. Unlike many other occupations, teaching requires that classrooms be staffed at all times, either by the regular teacher or by a substitute teacher, to prevent disruption of the learning process and to maintain pupil supervision. From an instructional viewpoint, teacher absenteeism places a heavy strain on the continuity of student learning and the value of substitute teachers is continually questioned. From a financial standpoint, teacher absenteeism is expensive because the salaries of both the regular and the substitute teacher must be paid when the regular teacher is absent.

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In addition to the interruption of the learning process and financial aspects related to teacher absences, the expectation of attendance by both students and teachers must also be considered. Schools have a certain expectation for regular attendance of students and teachers, and when this does not occur, classroom performance suffers (Bamber, 1979). Even occasional absences cause some learning disruption, but frequent absences of students or a teacher can severely hinder academic programs. When a student is absent, schooling is disrupted for that particular student, but more serious consequences may result when teachers are absent. When substitute teachers are called in, it is usually on short notice, with little time for preparation. Substitute teachers are then little more than babysitters in the classroom. Absenteeism also has an economic effect on school districts: teacher absences cost schools money in hiring substitutes. Additional administrative expenses and record keeping costs are also incurred in hiring substitute teachers (Bamber, 1979).

Bamber contrasted the apparent importance given to employee absenteeism by corporations with the relatively minor emphasis given this issue by school districts. She indicated that corporations keep close tabs on employee attendance; absent workers are a loss of money to the company, and any rise in absenteeism is countered quickly with measures to reduce it. Yet in schools, where taxpayers foot the bill, it may be several years before citizens become aware of excessive absences.

Frequently absented classrooms could be one of the many factors contributing to declining test scores and increasing vandalism. In the
decade (1965-1975), teacher absences had increased dramatically in many American school systems, and when this occurs, costs, both financial and instructional, are incurred (Elliott & Manlove, 1977). The increase in teacher absence and substitute use was also noted by Bundren, who concluded that such increases appeared to be universal (Bundren, 1974). Many districts are not conducting studies relating to absenteeism, and such diverse methods are used to organize and report absentee data that the subsequent utility of the tabulated data is seriously limited. Few local school systems or states have collected and published absence data for teachers and other educational personnel according to the Educational Research Service, (1980a, p. 141). The service reported that the data that are available indicate school systems employed an average of 4.3% substitute teachers during a typical day in 1976-1977.

Teacher absence is more a fact of life than it is a sudden emergency (Drake, 1981). Generous sick leave policies and increased released time make it possible for a school system to be missing a number of regular faculty members each day. In fact, Drake stated, "published reports have shown that the statistically average student will have 10 of their total classroom days each year supervised by a substitute teacher" (Drake, 1981, p. 74). A substitute teacher is often thought of as the "spare time" of American education, the kind of resource used to "patch things up in an emergency, but then quickly put away as soon as the regular teacher returns" (Drake, 1981, p. 74). The saddest reality of all is that substitutes of every type, including the most qualified and dedicated available, are seldom instructionally successful because of their stand-in role (Drake, 1981, p. 74).
Theoretically, a substitute teacher is a certified and qualified professional who replaces the regular classroom teacher for the purpose of continuing the instructional program, maintaining discipline, and generally promoting the educational welfare of the students. Yet there is little relationship between the intention and practice of substitute teaching. The practice rarely reflects the theoretical definition, and substitutes usually fall into one of the following categories:

The Baby Sitter—Discipline is the priority. All energy is spent on keeping students quiet, and "busy work" is used to maintain an atmosphere of guidance.

The Bare-Minimum Teacher—Ease of preparation is the priority. A minimal amount of energy is spent on instruction. The substitute exercises little knowledge, skill, creativity, or authority. The materials and activities presented are chosen because they require a minimum amount of guidance.

The Improviser—Teaching does take place; however, it has little or no relationship to the standard curriculum. The substitute in this category replaces the regular teacher's lesson plans with a personal curriculum. (McIntire & Hughes, 1982, p. 702).

In a later study the authors noted that the average student spends seven days out of every school year with a substitute teacher (McIntire & Hughes, 1982). That comes to 84 days (nearly half a school year) during 12 years of schooling. The number of good substitute teachers is likely to decline just when the need for them increases, i.e., if the teacher shortage that many forecasters are predicting occurs, the most experienced and effective substitutes will obtain fulltime teaching jobs. The number of days to be filled by substitutes is likely to increase and that the shortage of capable substitutes threatens to become acute. (McIntire & Hughes, 1982).

In the Detroit, Michigan, schools, teachers averaged 12.3 days
off because of sickness in the first 167 days of classes in the (1979-1980) school year. Not only was valuable instructional time lost, but an economic loss of $10.3 million was also realized because the district had to pay the absent teachers for the sick days and hire substitute teachers, if possible "Absentee Teachers Boost School Costs, 1981 (p. 8).

In a later study conducted by the New York State Office of Education (1974), it was found that in the 1971-1972 school year the cost of hiring substitutes was $71.5 million for New York City. In addition to the financial cost of teacher absence, several other findings were noted:

Teacher absenteeism was greater in Title I schools than in non-Title I schools.

The $71.5 million represented almost 9% of the city's total expenditures for teacher salaries.

Substitute teachers were significantly less effective than regular teachers and specialists, and were even less effective than student teachers. Such a finding led to the remark that "a substitute teacher is no substitute for the teacher."

Absenteeism may create a harmful interruption in the continuity of education, which may affect the child's learning.

The absence of the regular teacher may also set a model for student behavior, a major problem in the New York schools.(p. 18)

In highlighting the lack of effectiveness of substitute teachers, the New York report stated that, in the last few years, many groups and individuals had critically appraised the performance of substitute teachers and noted that there had been little research to indicate their effectiveness. The report stated, "Conventional wisdom indicates that short-term substitute teachers seldom provide service to students at a level superior to a teacher aide or teacher assistant."

(p. 17)
The New York report went on to state that, in 1971, the Metropolitan School Study Council observed approximately 18,000 teachers and rated them for classroom effectiveness, by type. The Council's ratings are shown below:

Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean Score of Observations by Type of Teacher</th>
<th>Ranked by Classroom Effectiveness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean Score</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular teacher</td>
<td>6.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialist teacher</td>
<td>5.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student teacher</td>
<td>3.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substitute teacher</td>
<td>1.98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: New York State Office of Education, 1974, p. 18

The Metropolitan School study concluded that the substitute teacher's "being near zero leads to the conclusion that just nothing much was going on" (New York State Office of Education, 1974, p. 17). In the New York report the ranking of teacher effectiveness was summarized by stating that the abysmal performance of substitute teachers in contrast to that of the regular classroom teacher was evident. The low scores can only be interpreted as meaning that the substitute teachers in these classrooms function in the role more akin to that of a "babysitter" rather than that of a professionally trained educator. Either substitute teacher performance must be improved or alternative, less expensive methods of handling teacher absence should be initiated.

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In an earlier report on teacher absenteeism in the New York City Schools, absenteeism accounted for 1,500 uncovered classes daily—the equivalent of about 30 schools or one average school district (Zimet, 1973). In his study released in 1967, an average absence rate of 2.5% of the teachers was established. During the 1967-1968 school year, the rate rose to 6.4%; the following year it rose to 7.5%—an average of 4,500 teachers absent each day. Zimet noted that as parents view the effects of decentralization of the New York City Schools, one problem is the periodic absences of teachers and the presence of substitutes who frequently do little more than mind children.

To place some perspective on these rates of absenteeism, the Educational Research Service (1980b, p. 110) reported that literature concerning employee absence, in general, suggests a reasonable rate of absenteeism is from 3 to 6% of available work time. The service also reported that the average absence rate for all workers in the United States ranged from 2.9 to 3.5% in 1978.

In a study of teacher absenteeism conducted by the Pennsylvania School Boards Association (1978, p. v) the following findings were reported:

Pennsylvania's school districts are spending approximately $27 million annually for substitute teachers to keep their schools operating during period of short-term teacher absence and $88 million in total personnel costs associated with teacher absences.

The mean work absence rate increased steadily through the school year, with a year end mean rate of 4.75%.

The "average" teacher in Pennsylvania was absent a total of 8.2 days during the 1977-1978 school year.

Elementary teachers have a slightly higher absence rate than secondary teachers.
Female professional staff members have a significantly higher absence rate than male professional staff members.

More absences occur on Friday than any other day of the week.

Small districts (fewer than 200 professional employees) tend to have lower absence rates than do larger districts (200 employees or more).

The mean absence rate of teachers in Pennsylvania exceeds all major industry rates determined by the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics and is approximately one-third higher than the national average in the education industry.

Over five million hours of regular instructional time are lost due to teacher absences annually. (p. v)

A major finding of the Pennsylvania School Boards Association (1978) was that teacher absence had increased by more than 106% from 1962-1978. As a response to the increase in teacher absenteeism, and in an attempt to develop and recommend alternatives to current staffing practices that would benefit the total educational program for students, the report concluded with the following recommendations for school districts to consider:

**Controls and Procedures**

Local school districts should develop a "reporting off" procedure which includes direct personal contact with the building principal.

Building principals should maintain personal contact with the absent teacher during the period of absence and should speak directly with the teacher upon return to work.

Systems of reporting off and reporting back to work should avoid the impersonal approaches found in many mechanical methods which may stress efficiency and ease in reporting procedures but lack the personal follow-through necessary for adequate control purposes.

School districts should maintain accurate, current records on teacher absences which are available for review at the building level for personal consultation purposes.
A monthly absentee report should be available to each district which identifies comparative information on absenteeism rates for the district schools and programs.

School management personnel, particularly school principals, should not delegate supervisory functions to building secretaries or other support personnel in the development of reporting procedures.

School boards should develop and enact policies dealing with absenteeism, including appropriate disciplinary actions for abuse of such policies.

The responsibility for coordinating district policies, building regulations, data gathering, and supervisory review of absenteeism should be maintained at the central office level for effective control.

A standard method of recording reasons for absence, employment of substitutes, and medical information used to verify absences should be developed and maintained.

Procedures should be developed which clearly identify the responsibility of absent employees to keep district officials informed of their return to work status in order that timely contact with substitute teachers can be maintained.

**Personnel Management and Educational Practices**

Careful attention in the hiring process should be given the prior history of new applicants related to prior absence records or other indications which denote a potential high absence risk.

Orientation programs for new and present faculty should review the policies, procedures, and forms associated with absence reporting systems on a regular basis.

In-service training programs should be developed which review the role of the regular teacher and employed substitutes when absences occur in order to maintain continuity in the instructional process.

Approved substitute teachers should receive appropriate orientation and written procedures which spell out the policy expectations of the district, the role of the substitute, and the necessary interaction with the regular teacher and building principal in order to provide a smooth transition during periods of substitute employment.

Teachers who have been determined to have a high incidence of absenteeism should receive special counseling to determine the reason(s) for the unusual absence rate.
School districts should review scheduled educational activities which tend to have an impact on teacher absences (e.g., scheduling of faculty meetings, student assembly programs, group testing, inservice activities, etc.).

Consideration should be given to the yearly schedule of programs and activities to determine if the planned schedule contributes to the increased incidence of absence evident in most districts as the school term progresses.

Economic Implications

School districts should carefully review the reasons for absence, particularly the use of sick leave as enumerated in Section 1154 of the School Code, to ensure that payments made under this authority are legal and permissible.

School districts should review the provisions of collective bargaining agreements which allow for teacher absences. Limitations and controls of "time off" provisions should be carefully structured when such demands are made in the bargaining process.

Controls should be placed on the use of personal leave and other professional leave provisions which would limit the number of staff absences on a given day, or in a given month, for such reasons.

Consideration should be given to restrict use of personal and other professional leave provisions on Mondays and Fridays to discourage the "long weekend" on days which normally have the highest incidence of absence.

School districts should consider the effect of teacher absences in the development of building plans.

Consideration should be given to alternative plans for staffing absent positions to include the possible use of community volunteers, retired teachers, teaming with aides, honor students, and other educational resources which would permit greater flexibility in staffing and cost reductions.

Scheduling of staff for educational purposes which have direct contact with pupils should be given top priority over preparation periods, lunch assignments, or other non-educational pupil contact assignments when absences occur. (pp. 41-43)

Reporting that the real cost of teacher absenteeism is probably 5 to 10 times greater than the amount typically computed, school districts should introduce a record keeping system to track employee absenteeism (Lewis, 1982). Lewis reported that using such a system
would not only be cost effective for the school district, but would also improve the quality of education because it would increase the time classroom teachers spend with students.

School districts tend to overlook the true cost of absenteeism by considering only the daily substitute rate of pay as their cost. Actually, the cost is much greater when one considers such expenses as the absent teacher's salary; the salaries of administrators who must contact, instruct, and evaluate substitute teachers; and the money schools pay into various employee benefit accounts, such as retirement, disability, and worker's compensation funds.

In summary, Lewis suggested that, by using a computer, schools can develop employee attendance profiles that show clearly when and how often employees are absent. With this information, employees will also be able to work toward improving their performance, which will directly affect the amount of instructional time they are providing to students.

The National Association of Secondary School Principals (1979) reported that studies conducted in Las Vegas, Nevada; Merrick, New York; New York City; the northern suburbs of Chicago; Indiana; and California all found an increase in teacher absenteeism during the course of the studies. Some of the important findings related to teacher absenteeism were as follows:

Demographic factors including age, gender, salary, continuous employment, and marital status do not have a significant impact on the amount of absenteeism.

Absence has continued to increase since the passage of collective bargaining legislation, despite better pay, smaller classes, and more appropriate assignments.
The highest rate of absenteeism occurs the day before and day after the weekend.

High levels of absenteeism occur in school districts where there are low levels of faculty agreement toward the goals and policies of the community and school district. These high levels of absenteeism occur even in those school districts with high levels of material incentives and pleasant physical environments.

Low levels of absenteeism among teachers occur in those districts with high levels of community support and policy agreement, regardless of low levels of material inducement and unpleasant physical conditions faced by the teachers. In addition, the Pennsylvania School Boards Association (1978) reported annual job absence rates for 1977-1978 ranging from a low of 1.51% to a high of 7.3%, with an overall group annual mean rate of 4.7%. They also reported that the "average" teacher was absent a total of 8.2 days for the period from September to the end of May. This rate of absenteeism had an economic effect on the various school districts taking part in the survey. The cost of professional staff absenteeism involves not only the salary paid to the absent teacher, but also remuneration to a replacement in the classroom. This dual payment almost doubles the cost of a day's work for the school district, while the amount of work accomplished is generally decreased.

The concept of decreasing work effort in the public sector was highlighted further in a study conducted by Winkler (1980). Even less is known about public sector absenteeism than about absences in the private sector and that, in all likelihood, public sector absences are more expensive because they affect both the employer and the individuals receiving the public service. Absent teachers are usually replaced by substitutes who are likely to be less effective in the
classroom than the regular teacher.

Edwards (1982) evaluated several factors believed to be related to teacher absenteeism. He studied the teacher's own attitude toward interpersonal, intrapersonal, and environmental stressors and how these stressors affect pupil control, administrator and teacher relations, teacher and parent relations, and teacher-to-teacher relations. According to Edwards (1982), the findings of his study tended to indicate a need to:

- Study the school site situation from the administrator's position.
- Lower class size.
- Initiate fair and reliable discipline procedures.
- Increase school security.
- Work on problems related to drugs, weapons, and violence.
- Review administrative approaches.
- Bring teacher training programs in line with needs experienced in teaching. These programs should include: multicultural training, stress reduction methods, and time management. (p. 29-A).

Edwards said that although the tangible economic effect of these stressors approximated $9 million in the schools sampled, possibly of even greater importance than the tangible costs are concerns related to lower teacher or school morale, physical and mental disability, poor human relations, and poor social relations.

A study on the effectiveness of substitute teachers was conducted by Rawson (1981). He suggested the following factors often hinder substitutes' effectiveness:

- Low priority given to substitute teachers in the school system.
- Lack of formal substitute teacher programs such as orientation or inservice.
Same rate of pay for differing levels of experience.
Lack of fringe benefits or collective negotiations.
Differing views of role expectations for substitute teachers.
Lack of feedback and evaluation of substitutes' performance (p. 81).

Goodman (1980) examined declining teacher morale and increasing teacher stress in inner-city situations, in which racial isolation presents specific stresses that are different from those found in integrated settings. Goodman noted that poor teacher morale and the resulting teacher exit and absence in these schools also have enormous legal, political, social, and economic significance. The findings of Goodman's study demonstrated that black, white, and Hispanic schools possess different stress patterns from each other, and that by knowing these patterns one can anticipate an elementary school's stress characteristics by virtue of its racial composition. In citing some of the differences between schools, the author noted that administrative stress characterizes schools with large black populations, whereas schools with large white populations are characterized by stress brought on by parents.

Goodman (1980) listed several remedies proposed by teachers that would be expected to reduce stress and thus to affect the teacher exit and teacher absenteeism rates. Those suggested included:

Schools with large populations of white students request increased workers' compensation, and a desire for better communications with other teachers.

Physical security was a major concern in schools with large black populations.

Teachers at Hispanic elementary schools prefer more collegial
team control and a better working relationship with the administration (p. 30).

Goodman concluded that, from a policy viewpoint, any attempt to offer a uniform, districtwide stress management or morale enhancement program might be ineffective because of the unique stress patterns that characterize racially isolated schools.

In research examining possible factors related to elementary teacher absenteeism, Foster (1977) studied 10 elementary schools in New York City. He reviewed several factors affecting teacher morale, including teacher perceptions of rapport with the principal, the individual's satisfaction with teaching, and the teachers' perceptions of rapport among teachers. Foster concluded that:

The schools with high teacher absenteeism and low teacher absenteeism were related to percentages of low income and minority students in the total population.

Black and Hispanic students appeared to have a significant effect on teacher absenteeism.

There were no discernible effects on the average class means of the combined class reading and math achievement test scores in the school with high versus low teacher absenteeism in the school studies.

Morale among teachers in schools with high versus low teacher absenteeism did not vary in terms of teacher perception of: teacher rapport with the principal; his or her satisfaction with teaching; and rapport among teachers.

The percentages of teachers filing grievances did not have a significant effect on the ratios of teacher absenteeism in the schools with the high versus low teacher absenteeism (p. 42).

The relationship of selected factors and several areas of student achievement relating to students and teachers was examined by Beauchamp & Conrad (1976). In regard to teacher absenteeism and student achievement, findings indicated that teacher absence had a
negative influence in 4 of 11 subtest areas measured in total reading, total math, and total battery. That is, teacher absence had a negative influence on some portions of achievement but did not adversely affect achievement in most subtest areas. In a 1980-1981 study conducted in the 39 secondary schools in the Cleveland City School District, Zafirau (1982) found that teachers were absent somewhat less in those schools that had the highest student attendance.

Summary

Educational researchers agree that teacher absenteeism is a widespread problem usually ignored by administrators. In school districts that have approached the problem in a disciplined inquiry approach, methods to reduce and control absenteeism have been successful.

The need to control absenteeism has been established by several researchers. Recommendations include the establishing of board policy and administrative policies on employee absenteeism. Expectations should be made clear to employees and the rationale for these expectations. Written disciplinary procedures for exceeding these expectations should be a part of the policy. Positive incentive programs have been successful in reducing absenteeism. The involvement of the immediate supervisor is critical in implementing absence programs. A standard method for recording reasons for absence should be developed. Finally, the responsibility for coordinating district policies regarding absenteeism should be maintained at the central office level for effective control.
CHAPTER III

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Introduction

In relation to the research objective, eight research questions were developed. They are:

1. Are school districts in Michigan monitoring or keeping track of teacher absenteeism?

2. What are the reasons used for teacher absenteeism and are there differences by school district?

3. What is the average rate of absenteeism of teachers on an annual basis?

4. Are the rates of absenteeism of secondary teachers significantly different than the rates of absenteeism of elementary teachers.

5. Are the rates of absenteeism of female teachers significantly different than the rates of male teachers?

6. Is age a significant variable to be considered in the rate of teacher absenteeism?

7. Are there special incentives or recognition programs being offered by school districts to curb teacher absenteeism?

8. Are those teachers whose rate of absenteeism, in comparison to other teachers that appear to be chronic, being processed in a fairly administered disciplinary procedure?
An introduction to the study, definitions for substantive terms, specific information regarding purpose, and research questions for the study were presented in Chapter I. A review and summary of the related literature were outlined in Chapter II.

In this chapter, the design of the study and research procedures are described. The chapter is divided into the following sections: (a) Research Design, (b) Population and Subjects, (c) Development of the Instruments, (d) Data Analysis Procedure, and (e) Summary.

Research Design

The research design of this study consisted of three parts:

1. a case study of a K-12 public school district with a student population of 10,958.

2. a questionnaire/interview study of twenty-five school districts from the Middle Cities Association of Michigan, and

3. a sample of the middle cities districts selected by the process of jury using the superintendent's cabinet to select the sample most similar to the K-12 district studied.

The geographic area contained within the case study school district is 257 square miles with over 8,000 students being bused on a daily basis. Within this area of 257 square miles is a city of 45,000 inhabitants. The overall population is approximately 60,000. Over 25% of the district's inhabitants are 60 years or older. The major ethnic groups are Polish (the predominant group) and German. Since there are strong Catholic and Lutheran religious affiliations, over 6,000 students are educated in private parochial schools.
Known as "the beautiful city with a downtown," the east and west sides are divided by a river. It is a blue collar town, approximately 60% of the people fit this category. The major employer is General Motors Corporation with the school district being the second largest employer. Approximately 60% of the adults are high school graduates and 15% have attended colleges or have college degrees. It is known as a high labor cost and highly unionized town; General Motors and the city-county governments have contributed greatly to that reputation. The municipal unions are very strong, especially the firemen and police unions. The dominant news source in the community is the local newspaper. Outside the city limits, rural farm area exists. Much of the school district includes this rural area. The district consists of 3 high schools; 2 of them are class A (population of 1150 or more). Two of the high schools are within the city limits; the other high school is 11 miles from the city in a rural farm community. There are 3 intermediate schools and 14 elementary schools. The district has 1,100 employees with a teacher staff of 444.

Data were collected on teacher absenteeism of this K-12 school district for the school year 1984-1985. The population and subjects of this study are the 444 K-12 school teachers in the public school district described above. These data were analyzed for the purpose of answering research questions 3, 4, 5, and 6. Random sampling techniques were utilized. Computerized reports were utilized for data gathering and analysis.

For research questions 1, 2, 7, and 8, data were gathered from other K-12 school districts in Michigan. The sample K-12 school
district is a member of the Middle Cities Association of Michigan. Data were gathered from the K-12 districts in Michigan, that belonged to Middle Cities Association for comparison purposes as well as answering the specific questions stated above.

Policies and procedures on employee absenteeism from these districts were also gathered for the purpose of establishing a draft policy for the sample K-12 district.

Population and Subjects

As already noted, 444 K-12 school teachers in the single public school district above were studied. All teachers (444) employed as full time K-12 teachers by the district were included in the study for part of the data. Data obtained were categorized according to these population strata: (a) elementary school teachers (K-5), (b) middle school teachers (6-8), and (c) high school teachers (9-12).

The K-12 school district teachers report reasons for absences on a computerized payroll as well as an NCR Reason for Absence Form. (see Appendix P) There are 20 reasons for absence that can be reported. A teacher must fill out a Reason for Absence Form which is submitted to his/her immediate supervisor for signature. This reason for absence is then marked on payroll. The payroll form is computerized to enable the data to be categorized, itemized, and analyzed.

Reasons for absence are divided into two categories: (1) contractual sick leave and personal leave that shall be granted according to contract, (2) non-contractual reasons that are permissory and
can be controlled by administration. (See Table 5 and 6)

### Table 5
**Categories "Shall be Granted"**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category I</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A - Court Appearance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B - Business Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D - Funeral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F - Family Illness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H - Religious Holiday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I - Illness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J - Jury Duty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M - Maternity Leave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P - Bargaining Unit Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S - Sick Leave Bank</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 6
**Categories "Permissory"**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C -</td>
<td>Workers Comp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E -</td>
<td>Emergency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K -</td>
<td>Leave of Absence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L -</td>
<td>Lost Time/Docked Days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O -</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R -</td>
<td>Released Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T -</td>
<td>Comp Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V -</td>
<td>Vacation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X -</td>
<td>School Related Meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Z -</td>
<td>Non-School Related Business</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To determine what the rate of teacher absenteeism is for the K-12 school district, the entire target population of 444 teachers was used. This rate of absenteeism was compared to other school districts within the Middle Cities Association.

The second part of the sample was selected from the Middle Cities Association of Michigan. The Middle Cities Association is a group of 25 school districts who have formed an association to explore common problems, practices, policies, and procedures. This association was organized by and is directed through Michigan State University. Some of the similarities in these school districts are student population, staffing organization, racial ethnic considerations, and financial considerations. The list of member districts are:

Ann Arbor Public  Kalamazoo Public  Plymouth-Canton Community
Battle Creek Public  Lansing  Pontiac
Bay City Public  Marquette Public  Port Huron Area
Beecher Community  Midland Public  Saginaw School District
Benton Harbor Area  Monroe Public  Southfield Public
Buena Vista  Muskegon Public  Traverse City Area Public
Flint Community  Muskegon Heights  Willow Run Community
Grand Rapids Public  Niles Community  Ypsilanti Public
Jackson Public

A jury of 4 members of the single K-12 school districts' Superintendent's Executive Cabinet selected five of the 25 middle school districts as being most like the school district being studied. These 5 school districts are (1) Saginaw, (2) Lansing, (3) Midland, (4) Flint, and (5) Jackson. The 5 school districts were used to make comparisons in relation to teacher absence rate, policies, and other variables analyzed in the sample K-12 school district.

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Development of Instruments

Instruments needed to be developed for this process to gather the data that included: (a) a reason for absence form that corresponds with the payroll attendance sheet, and (b) computerized payroll sheets with 20 reasons for absence listed. From these instruments, data were available to analyze categories for reasons for absence. Computer printouts were available for administrators to do the following analyses: (a) review individual employee printouts, (b) compare building attendance with other buildings (elementary staff, intermediate school staff, and high school staff), (c) itemize and categorize reasons for absence (Personal Business Days), (d) compare most severe employee absence to perfect attendance, (e) monitor day of the week report, (f) monitor monthly report, and (g) monitor time of the year report.

A general questionnaire was prepared to make comparisons of the K-12 district with 24 other similar districts (Middle Cities) within the State of Michigan. The purpose of this questionnaire was to determine if other school districts had Board of Education policies and administrative policies on employee absenteeism. The review of the literature implied that most school districts would not have policies developed.

Questions asked were developed in coordination with the review of literature and the suggested inclusions for policy development (U. S. Bureau of National Affairs, 1981). Questions were also developed through the practical experience of an attempt to form a policy for the researcher's K-12 school district in 1981. Since 1981
many experiences and lessons have occurred which led to questions specifically related to variables such as age, sex, and grade level.

A sample questionnaire was piloted with the cooperation of the personnel director of the Saginaw Public Schools. Questions related to reports, call in systems, teacher shortage, and corrective disciplines with a result of this process. Questions in relationship to reasons for absence and availability of data were developed through the review of the literature, the practical experiences, and the piloting process.

Preceding the piloting process the questionnaire was discussed at a Middle Cities meeting of personnel directors. Suggestions and comments for input were received. The questionnaire was then sent to the personnel directors of the 24 Middle Cities school districts. (see Appendix B) Followup letters and telephone calls were placed in order to secure satisfactory returns from the questionnaires.

Data Analysis Procedure

Each research question was analyzed individually. Data were interpreted by using graphs and charts of each category. Data in the K-12 school district were compared to data gathered from the sample (5) middle cities school district and wherever possible to the 24 school districts.

The research design was as follows:

1. Collect data on 444 teachers in the district in regard to absenteeism,

2. Develop and send out a questionnaire to 24 middle cities districts,
3. Determine a sample of 5 districts of the middle cities districts most similar to the K-12 district being studied,
4. Compare data and policies gathered with the K-12 district being studied, and
5. Develop draft policies for the K-12 district.

Summary

In this chapter an overview of the methodology for the study has been presented. The research design, population, the study sample, and procedures of data analysis have been outlined. The purpose, and related research questions have also been reviewed.
CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Analysis and Evaluation

The findings of the data analysis are contained in this chapter. The results of research in regard to the eight research questions are presented. The eight research questions were developed as a basis for policy development for monitoring and improving teacher absenteeism in a K-12 public school district.

Review of Data Analysis

Data were gathered on 444 K-12 public school teachers for the 1984-1985 school year. Using computerized printouts that correspond with computerized payroll sheets and Reason For Teacher Absence forms, data were analyzed in the following manner:

1. The 20 specific reasons for absence that a teacher may claim (Table 9) as a reason for absence,

2. Categories of reasons for teacher absence: (a) mandatory—"shall be granted" category I, and (b) permissory—category II,

3. Grade level reasons for teacher absence: (a) elementary teacher reasons for absence—(K-5), (b) intermediate teacher reasons for absence—(6-8), and (c) high school teacher reasons for absence—(9-12),

5. Reasons for teachers absence in relationship to age from: (a) age 25 to 45, and (b) age 46 to 66.

A pilot questionnaire was sent to 24 Middle Cities school districts to gather and analyze data in relationship to research questions one through eight for comparative analysis with the single K-12 school district. Data were also gathered from 5 of the 24 Middle Cities school districts through follow-up questionnaire interviews. These districts were Saginaw, Lansing, Midland, Flint, and Jackson. These districts were selected by a jury of the K-12 single school district's Superintendent's Cabinet members who selected the 5 Middle Cities Districts most like the K-12 school district under study. Factors considered by the cabinet were student enrollment, current operating expenditures, grade level configurations, ethnic figures, and area covered by the school district.

Research Question One

Are school districts in Michigan monitoring or keeping track of teacher absenteeism?

In the 24 school districts surveyed by the questionnaire, 18 responded by letter. The 6 districts that did not respond were contacted by follow-up letter and telephone call. All 24 districts were given an opportunity to respond. With 24 districts contacted, only 6 were able to respond to most of the questions asked in the questionnaire. Only 25% of the districts contacted had Board of Education
policies in regard to teacher absenteeism. Only 20% of the districts had administrative policies dealing with teacher absenteeism. Twenty-nine percent of the districts presently have a computerized payroll system capable of tracking teacher attendance. Only 3 districts could provide data on average rates of teacher absenteeism for the past 5 years. None of the districts had, or kept, data on teacher absenteeism for the past 5 years. None of the districts had, or kept, data on teacher absenteeism by grade level, sex, or age. Most of the districts, 73%, require reason for absence forms to be completed by employees. Only 50% require administrator approval of teacher absences. A large percentage, 85%, provide a centralized call-in-system to report teacher absenteeism.

Table 7
School District Requirements: Teacher Absenteeism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Require reason for absence form</th>
<th>Notice to immediate supervisor</th>
<th>Administrator approval</th>
<th>Administrators reports</th>
<th>Administrators counseling</th>
<th>Corrective discipline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>72%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Very few school districts in the Middle Cities Association are doing any monitoring or tracking of teacher absenteeism. The Lansing, Ann Arbor, Flint, and Bay City Districts appear to be the leaders in this effort.

Research Question Two

What are the reasons for teacher absenteeism and are there differences by school district?

The K-12 public school district uses 20 reasons for absence to report teacher absenteeism. These reasons are further divided into two categories: (a) Category I "Shall be granted"—administration has a mandatory grant by contractual agreement and cannot control directly these reasons for absence and, (b) Category II "Permissory"—administration has some control of these reasons for absence.

In analyzing 444 public school teachers according to reason for absence by category, the following data was obtained:

Table 8
Reasons for Absence Data
1984-1985

Category I "Shall be granted"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Court Appearance</td>
<td>.0007%</td>
<td>.0058%</td>
<td>.0037%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B Business Day</td>
<td>.0445%</td>
<td>.0721%</td>
<td>.0742%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D Funeral</td>
<td>.0114%</td>
<td>.0384%</td>
<td>.0270%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F Family Illness</td>
<td>.0391%</td>
<td>.0358%</td>
<td>.0604%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 8—Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-I- Illness</td>
<td>.2687%</td>
<td>.3158%</td>
<td>.2638%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-J- Jury Duty</td>
<td>.0027%</td>
<td>.0085%</td>
<td>.0062%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-M- Maternity Leave</td>
<td>.0357%</td>
<td>.0000%</td>
<td>.0000%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-P- Bargaining Unit Day</td>
<td>.0010%</td>
<td>.0064%</td>
<td>.0054%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-S- Sick Leave Bank</td>
<td>.1484%</td>
<td>.0138%</td>
<td>.0018%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>.8275%</td>
<td>.7232%</td>
<td>.7428%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>.8275</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>.7232</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>.7428</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[2.2935 \div 3 = .7646\]

Table 9

Reasons for Absence Data
1984-1985
Category II "Permissory"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-C- Workers Compensation</td>
<td>.0000%</td>
<td>.0000%</td>
<td>.0032%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-E- Emergency Day</td>
<td>.0041%</td>
<td>.0042%</td>
<td>.0040%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-K- Leave of Absence</td>
<td>.0094%</td>
<td>.0085%</td>
<td>.0000%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-L- Lost Time/Dock Days</td>
<td>.0341%</td>
<td>.0042%</td>
<td>.0130%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-O- Other</td>
<td>.0018%</td>
<td>.0010%</td>
<td>.0013%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-R- Released Time</td>
<td>.0164%</td>
<td>.0171%</td>
<td>.0124%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-T- Compensatory Time</td>
<td>.0002%</td>
<td>.0042%</td>
<td>.0040%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-V- Vacation</td>
<td>.0080%</td>
<td>.0000%</td>
<td>.0000%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-X- School Related Meeting</td>
<td>.0956%</td>
<td>.2453%</td>
<td>.2185%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Seventy-six percent of all teacher absenteeism in the 1984-1985 school year was in category I "Shall be granted," the three major areas in this category were: (a) Religious holiday—27%, (b) Illness—28%, and (c) Sick Leave Bank—5%.

In category II, "Permissory," the rate of absenteeism was 24%. In this category, the three major areas were: (a) school related meetings—19%, (b) released time—1.5%, and (c) leave of absence—1.7%. One out of every 5 teacher absences in 1984-1985 were granted by administration for released time purposes. Further, there was a 10 to 12% difference between elementary and secondary teachers in category I and II reasons for absence. This was due primarily to sick leave bank grants for long term serious illness.

In the questionnaire sent to the 24 Middle Cities districts, reasons for absence did vary. Out of 14 school districts that kept reasons for absence data, all of the districts used the following reasons: (a) Court Appearance, (b) Business Day, (c) Workers' Compensation, (d) Funeral, (e) Family Illness, (f) Illness, (g) Jury Duty, (h) Lost Time/Docked Day, and (i) School Related Meeting. Only one district did not use the following: (a) Leave of Absence, (b)
Maternity Leave, and (c) Released Time. Only two of the districts did not use the following: (a) Religious Holiday, (b) Bargaining Unit Day, and (c) Sick Leave Bank. Three of the districts did not use: (a) Emergency Days, (b) other, and (c) Non-school Related Business. Vacation and Compensatory Time were not used by seven districts. Reasons for absence that other school districts used that the K-12 district did not were Staff Development, Marriage and Graduation of Family Members, and Conferences and Workshops.

There are differences between school districts as to reasons for absence given by teachers. However, the differences in the Middle Cities group do not appear to be many. Some of the differences are only semantic in nature. The possibility exists that common reasons for absence could be agreed upon by the Middle Cities group which would allow for better monitoring and tracking of teacher absenteeism.

Research Question Three

What is the average rate of absenteeism of teachers on an annual basis?

Using data obtained from the computerized payroll the average rate of absenteeism for the K-12 district is shown in Table (10).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>District-wide</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>15.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>19.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>12.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>11.46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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The rate of absenteeism in this district has had a range of 8.1 days in 1982-1983 to 15.5 days in 1984-1985. Furthermore the table clearly shows a decrease in absenteeism from 1979-1980 up to 1982-1983. Since 1982-1983, absenteeism has increased significantly. What has caused the decrease and then the increase? In 1980-1981 the district attempted to develop an administrative policy for monitoring and controlling employee absenteeism. In 1981-1982 the policy was implemented. In 1982-1983 a perfect attendance policy incentive program was established. In 1983-1984 the program was stopped by the Board of Education because the cost of the incentive program ($35,000) was too high. Since that time the data speaks for itself.

Only 3 of the 25 school districts were able to provide average rates of teacher absenteeism for the years 1981-1982 through 1984-1985. Table 11 compares those 3 districts with the K-12 district.

Table 11
Average Rate of Teacher Absenteeism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Days/Year</th>
<th>District &quot;A&quot;</th>
<th>District &quot;B&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>8.25 Average</td>
<td>8.56 Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>8.30 8.57</td>
<td>8.05 8.79 8.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>8.16</td>
<td>8.44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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The range of teacher absenteeism varied in the four districts from a low of 7.97 days to a high of 15.5 days per year. The overall averages of the four districts varied from a low of 8.25 to a high of 12.82 days per year. The overall average of the four districts was 10.14. This average is deceptive in that only four districts were capable of responding to this data.

Of the four districts, two were very stable. One district varied 2.7 days one of the four years. However, the K-12 sample district's
capable of responding to this data.

Of the four districts, two were very stable. One district varied 2.7 days one of the four years. However, the K-12 sample district's data illustrates two areas of concern:

1. A decrease from 1981-1982 to 1982-1983 of 1.8 days per year only to change the next three years.

2. An increase of 8.1 days per year to 15.5 days per year from 1982-1983 to 1984-1985.

Research Question Four

Are the rates of secondary teachers significantly different from the rates of absenteeism of elementary teachers?

A random sample of 214 teachers was conducted of teachers of the K-12 district. The size was determined from Determining Sample Size for Research Activities, by Krejcie and Morgan (1960). One hundred seven elementary teachers and one hundred seven secondary teachers were selected from the district's K-12 seniority list. Using the last three digits from a random numbers table and corresponding these three digits to a teachers' three digit seniority number, computer payroll printouts were selected for the secondary (107) and elementary (107) teachers. Table number twelve illustrates the results.

Table 12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons for Absence</th>
<th>Elementary Teachers (K-6)</th>
<th>Secondary Teachers (7-12)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Days</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 12—Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Reason for Absence</th>
<th>Elementary Teachers (K-6)</th>
<th>Secondary Teachers (7-12)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Days</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Court Appearance</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Business Day</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Workers' Compensation</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Funeral</td>
<td>25.5</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Emergency Day</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Family Illness</td>
<td>92.5</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Religious Holiday</td>
<td>648.0</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Illness</td>
<td>570.0</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>Jury Duty</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>Leave of Absence</td>
<td>32.0</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>Lost Time/Docked Days</td>
<td>154.5</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Maternity Sick Leave</td>
<td>69.0</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>Bargaining Unit Day</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>Released Time</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>Sick Leave Bank</td>
<td>259.0</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>Compensatory Time</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>Vacation</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>School Related Meeting</td>
<td>235.5</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Z</td>
<td>Non-School Related</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Totals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Days</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>2284.5</td>
<td>1329.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average Rate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>19.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>11.075</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

H = 28%  H = 29%
I = 25%  X = 25%
S = 11%  I = 25%
X = 10%  B = 7%

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Elementary teachers averaged 19.03 days per year in 1984-1985. This compares to the secondary teachers who averaged 11.07 days per year. There was a 7.96 days per year difference between the elementary and secondary teachers. This difference equates to 50% difference of annual sick days offered to employees by the district. There is a significant difference between the absentee rate of elementary and secondary teachers in the K-12 district with the rate of secondary teachers being significantly lower.

Examining the reasons for absence carefully, major differences in reason for absence from elementary to secondary do not appear to be significant. Elementary teachers were absent 28% of the time for religious holidays, secondary the percentage was 29. Illness was 25% at both levels. Released time at the secondary level was 25% while at the elementary level it was 10%. Secondary teachers used more business days (7% to elementary teachers' 4%). Elementary teachers had 7% lost time or docked days while secondary teachers did not have any. Other reason for absences appear to be relatively the same.

In examining statistics on teacher absenteeism for the K-12 district for the years 1979-1980 through 1984-1985, table thirteen illustrates the results.

Table 13
Average Rate of Absenteeism (Teachers)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Days Per Teacher</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>15.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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### Table 13—Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong> District:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>By Level</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Elementary</strong></td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>19.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>K-5</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intermediate</strong></td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>12.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6-8</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>High School</strong></td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>11.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>9-12</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the past six years the elementary teachers have exceeded the absentee rate of secondary teachers. The average rate of absenteeism over the past six years for elementary teachers has been 13.26 days per year. The secondary teachers averaged 9.96 days per year over the span from 1979-1980 to 1984-1985. From these data, there is a significant difference in the rate of absenteeism of elementary and secondary teachers with the elementary teachers' attendance being significantly higher.

Only one school district of the 25 Middle Cities school districts had data available on secondary and elementary teachers absenteeism rate. In that district secondary teachers averaged 8.04 days per year to elementary teachers 8.94 days. The results from the 25 districts in this regard were inconclusive due to lack of data availability.

*Research Question Five*

Are the rates of female teachers significantly different than the
Using the same random sample techniques for male and female teachers as was established for secondary and elementary teachers, two hundred forty teachers were selected (120 male, 120 female) from the same K-12 school district. Table number ten illustrates the results:

Table 14
Rates of Teacher Absenteeism (Male and Female)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol Used</th>
<th>Reason for Absence</th>
<th>Male Teachers</th>
<th>Female Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Days</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Court Appearance</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Business Day</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Workers' Compensation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Funeral</td>
<td>38.5</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Emergency Day</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Family Illness</td>
<td>101.5</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Religious Holiday</td>
<td>440.5</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Illness</td>
<td>296.5</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>Jury Duty</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>Leave of Absence</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>Lost Time/Docked Days</td>
<td>101.5</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Maternity Sick Leave</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>Bargaining Unit Day</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symbol Used</td>
<td>Reason for Absence</td>
<td>Male Teachers</td>
<td>Female Teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Days</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>Released Time</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>Sick Leave Bank</td>
<td>101.0</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>Compensatory Time</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>Vacation</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>School Related Meeting</td>
<td>259.0</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Z</td>
<td>Non-School Related</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td></td>
<td>1542.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Rate</td>
<td></td>
<td>12.85</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>H = 29%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I = 19%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>X = 17%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Female teachers in the K-12 sample district were absent 17.48 days per year in relation to 12.85 days for male teachers. This makes a difference of 4.63 days per year or 29% of the annual sick leave allotment for teachers. As was the case with secondary and elementary teachers, reasons for absence because of sex did not seem to vary greatly. For example, holidays for males was 29%, for females 27%. Illness for males was 19%, while for females it was 26%. This area had the largest variance.

Not one of the school districts surveyed kept data on teacher absenteeism according to sex. In telephone conversations with personnel directors in six different districts, the directors speculated that females were absent more than males but did not have
data available to support their claims.

Data would suggest, in the K-12 district, that there is a difference between the average rate of absenteeism of female teachers and male teachers. Female teachers appear to be absent more than male teachers, however the data is not supported by other data from other districts, and there is not enough data from the sample districts to say that the rate is significant.

Research Question Six

Is age a significant variable to be considered in the rate of teacher absenteeism?

Using the same random sampling technique, 120 teachers 25-45 were selected from the sample K-12 school district as were 120 teachers age 46-66. Table 15 illustrates the data results.

Table 15
Rates of Teacher Absenteeism
Age Groups 25-45 and 46-66

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Reason for Absence</th>
<th>Teacher Age 46-66</th>
<th></th>
<th>Teachers Age 25-45</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Days</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Days</td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Court Appearance</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Business Day</td>
<td>83.5</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Workers' Compensation</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Funeral</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Emergency Day</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Family Illness</td>
<td>41.5</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>87.5</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Religious Holiday</td>
<td>516</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>639</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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The average rate of absenteeism of teachers age 46-66 was 16.629 days per year. The average rate of absenteeism for teachers age 25-45 was 19.604 days per year. Both groups average rate of absenteeism was higher than the district average rate of 15.5 days per year. One conclusion might be that the age span was too wide a gap. The age span also did not consider teachers age 22-25 and 67-70. Further, research might be better to use smaller age spans covering the entire teachers'
might be better to use smaller age spans covering the entire teachers' age range. Unfortunately the statistics merely show that there is a difference of rate of absenteeism between age groups 46-66 and 25-45, and the age group of 25-45 was absent from work more.

Data again were not available from Middle Cities school districts to compare with the sample district. Middle Cities personnel directors again speculated that younger teachers were absent more than "old timers," but did not have data to support this claim. Therefore whether age is a significant variable to be considered, in the rate of teacher absenteeism, cannot be determined by the data secured.

Research Question Seven

Are there special incentives, or recognition programs, being offered by school districts to curb teacher absenteeism?

In a survey to the 25 Middle Cities school districts the following question was asked:

Does your school district provide: (a) employee recognition for perfect attendance, (b) incentives for teachers to improve attendance, (c) incentives for administrators to improve staff attendance? Out of the 15 Middle Cities school district responding to questions "a," 13 did not provide employee recognition for perfect attendance while two did. In both districts the incentive was payment of one additional paid personal day. With question "b," 6 districts out of 15 had incentives for teachers to improve attendance. The incentive in all 6 districts was a payout at retirement for accrued sick days. Question "c" did not have one district, out of 15, who had established
incentives for administrators to improve staff attendance. Very little is being done in the Middle Cities districts to establish or provide incentive programs for staff to improve absenteeism.

Research Question Eight

Are those teachers whose rate of absenteeism, in comparison to other teachers that appear to be chronic, being processed in a fairly administered disciplinary procedure?

In the survey sent to the 25 Middle Cities districts, the following question was asked:

Does your school district require: (a) reasons for absence forms to be completed and signed by employees, (b) administrator approval for all teacher absences, (c) notice to the immediate supervisor if a teacher is going to be absent from work, (d) administrator reports on monthly, semester, or yearly basis on staff absenteeism, (e) counseling sessions to be conducted with employees who have excessive absenteeism, and (f) corrective discipline for those employees who continue to be excessively absent?

Eleven Middle Cities districts, out of 15, required employees to sign a reasons for absence form. Eight districts, out of 15, required administrator approval of all teacher absences. Nine districts, out of 15, required notice to the immediate supervisor if a teacher was going to be absent from work. Five districts, out of 15, required administrative reports on staff absenteeism on a monthly, semester, or yearly basis. Five districts, out of 15, required counseling sessions with employees who have excessive absenteeism. Finally, 8 districts,
out of 15, required corrective discipline with employees who were excessively absent. The response to this survey question was alarming, confusing, and disturbing. Ten of the 25 districts did nothing at all. In those districts that did, only 73% required reasons for absence forms to be completed by employees. Are these districts as cavalier with student absenteeism as they appear to be with employee absenteeism? Sixty percent of the districts required reasons for absence forms to be completed by employees. Are these districts as cavalier with student absenteeism as they appear to be with employee absenteeism? Sixty percent of the districts required notification of absence to immediate supervisor. Only 33 used counseling sessions with their employees to improve absenteeism. Yet, 53% of the districts were using corrective discipline for excessive absenteeism. None of the districts requested or asked for a definition of "excessive absenteeism." From these results, the vast majority of Middle Cities districts do not appear to be monitoring, tracking, or attempting to control absenteeism.

Evaluation

From the results of the survey sent to the 25 Middle Cities districts, and from follow-up telephone calls, only 6 districts appeared to be interested in, or capable of, answering questions on employee absenteeism. Very little appears to be happening in the area of teacher absenteeism in the Middle Cities districts of the State of Michigan.

A summary of the answers to the research questions, is as follows:
1. Are school districts in Michigan monitoring or keeping track of teacher absenteeism? Response was inconclusive. The vast majority of Middle Cities districts are not monitoring or tracking absenteeism at this time.

2. What are the reasons used for teacher absenteeism and are there differences by school district? Most school districts use the same reasons for absence. There appears to be little variance and this could be attributed to semantics. The possibility of a regional or state-wide reason for absence form would not be out of the question.

3. What is the average rate of absenteeism of teachers on an annual basis? The results were inconclusive.

4. Are the rates of absenteeism of secondary teachers significantly different than the rate of absenteeism of elementary teachers? In the K-12 sample district elementary teachers were absent significantly more than secondary teachers. Results from the Middle Cities district were sparse and therefore insignificant. This question and factors that affect the differences in rate of absenteeism of secondary and elementary teachers would be a topic for further research.

5. Are the rates of absenteeism of female teachers significantly different than the rates of male teachers? In the sample district the female teachers were absent significantly more than their male colleagues (17.48 - 12.85). Results from the Middle Cities districts were insignificant.

6. Is age a significant variable to be considered in the rate of teacher absenteeism? Results from the sample district and the Middle
Cities districts were inconclusive. This was caused by the age span being too broad and lack of data being available in this area.

7. Is there a special incentive or recognition being offered by school districts to curb teacher absenteeism? At this time incentive programs to improve teacher absenteeism are not being offered by the sample school district or the middle school districts.

8. Are those teachers whose rate of absenteeism, in comparison to other teachers that appear to be chronic, being processed in a fairly administered disciplinary procedure? The results to this question were inconclusive.

In seeking answers to the previous eight research questions additional questions emerged. Do reasons for absence vary greatly? Can categories be established for reasons for absence that administration may control? Do these reasons for absence vary building by building and level by level?

Using data gathered from the sample district, Tables 16, 17, and 18 were developed:
### Table 16

**Reasons for Absence Data (Elementary)**

| Elementary Buildings | A | B | C | D | E | F | H | I | J | K | L | M | O | P | R | S | T | V | X | Z |
| 1                    |   | 11|   |   |   | 3.0| 21.0| 30.0|   |   |   |   |   |   | 7.0|   |   |   |   | 14.5|   |
| 2                    |   | 15.5| 4.5| 10.5| 43.0| 75.5|   |   |   |   |   |   | 2.0|   | 28.0| 18.5| 1.0|   |
| 3                    | 1.0| 18.0| 6.0| 7.0| 105.0| 127.5|   |   |   |   | 90.5| 5.0| 1.0| 11.5| 20.5|   |   | 19.0| 1.0|   |
| 4                    |   | 8.5|   | 2.5| 40.5| 24.5| 1.0|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | 31.0|   |
| 5                    |   | 4.0| 4.5| 5.4| 42.0| 11.5|   | 1.0|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | 8.0|   |
| 6                    |   | 21.0| 2.5| 23.0| 185.5| 175.5|   | 18.0|   |   | 1.5| 18.0| 16.5|   | 5.0| 50.0| 5.0|   |
| 7                    |   | 16.0| 5.0| 3.0| 14.5| 84.0| 100.5| .5| 27.0|   | 1.0| 23.5|   |   |   |   |   |   |   | 21.0|   |
| 8                    |   | 5.0|   | 12.0| 27.0| 30.5|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | 18.0|   |   | .5 |
| 9                    |   | 32.5| 8.5| 4.0| 13.5| 312.0| 185.0|   | 32.0| 4.0| 63.0| .5|   | .5| 55.5|   |   |   |   | 116.5| |   |
| 10                   |   | 9.5| 3.5| 3.0| 20.0| 33.0| 39.0| 6.0|   |   |   |   |   |   |   | 2.0|   |   |   |   | 13.5|   |
| 11                   |   | 1.0| 7.0| .5| 8.5| 35.0| 62.5|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | 3.0| 17.5|   |   | 18.5|   |
| 12                   |   | .5| 21.5| 8.0| 5.0| 22.0| 67.0| 181.0|   |   |   |   |   |   | 30.0| 2.0|   |   | 1.0| 32.0|   |
| 13                   |   | .5| 4.0| 4.0| 2.0| 9.0| 32.0| 30.0| 11.0|   |   | 1.0|   |   |   |   |   |   |   | 11.5| 1.5|
| 14                   |   | 10.0|   | 15.0| 86.0| 66.0|   |   |   |   |   |   |   | 43.0| 5.0|   |   |   | 147.0|   |   | 21.5|

**TOTALS**: 3.0 183.5 0 47.0 17.0 161.0 1133 1106 11.5 39.0 140.5 147.0 7.5 4.5 67.5 611.0 1.0 33.0 393.5 9.0
Table 17
Reasons for Absence Data (Intermediate Schools)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intermediate Buildings</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>H</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>J</th>
<th>K</th>
<th>L</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>O</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>V</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>Y</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td></td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>58.0</td>
<td>63.5</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>60.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td></td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>96.0</td>
<td>139.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>101.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>58.0</td>
<td>83.0</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>67.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>67.5</td>
<td></td>
<td>36.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>33.5</td>
<td>212.0</td>
<td>235.5</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 18
Reasons for Absence Data (High Schools)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High School Buildings</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>H</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>J</th>
<th>K</th>
<th>L</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>O</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>V</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>Y</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>51.5</td>
<td></td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>323.5</td>
<td>215.5</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>190.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>51.5</td>
<td></td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>85.0</td>
<td>129.0</td>
<td>139.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>93.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>34.0</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>102.0</td>
<td>116.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
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<td>5.5</td>
<td></td>
<td>120.0</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>137.0</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>111.5</td>
<td>594.5</td>
<td>437.0</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td></td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>23.0</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td></td>
<td>493.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
These tables produced the categories: Category I, which used contractual language "shall be granted" and, Category II, "permissory" which allows for administrative control. (Tables 8 and 9 illustrate these categories.)

Absences building by building were also researched. The following tables illustrate the results:

Table 19

Elementary Reasons for Absence: Average Absenteeism by Elementary Buildings
1984 - 1985

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elementary Building</th>
<th>Totals</th>
<th>Number of Teachers</th>
<th>Average Absenteeism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>86.5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>198.5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>617</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>26.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>128.0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>71.5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>671.5</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>25.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>296.0</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>93.0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>833.5</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>23.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>109.5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>153.5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>357.0</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>15.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>106.5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>17.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>393.5</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>28.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4115.5</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>19.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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### Table 20

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intermediate Building</th>
<th>Totals</th>
<th>Number of Teachers</th>
<th>Average Absenteeism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>236.5</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>420.0</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>279.0</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>935.5</strong></td>
<td><strong>72</strong></td>
<td><strong>12.99</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 21

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High School Buildings</th>
<th>Totals</th>
<th>Number of Teachers</th>
<th>Average Absences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>858.5</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>569.0</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>418.5</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>1846.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>161</strong></td>
<td><strong>11.46</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Finally, looking at the data level by level and category by category, the following table illustrates the results:
Table 22

Reasons for Absence
1984-1985

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Total Absence</th>
<th>Average Teacher Absence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>1846.0</td>
<td>11.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>935.5</td>
<td>12.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>4115.5</td>
<td>19.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>444</td>
<td>6897.0</td>
<td>15.53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Category I  II

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>II</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The additional questions and data that emerged will be helpful in formulating a policy for the K-12 district.

Summary

The findings clearly support the review of the literature. Very little is being done in the Middle Cities Districts on teacher absenteeism. (Lewis, 1981) stated little was being done in relationship to absenteeism. Reasons for this were: (a) lack of direction from school board or superintendent, (b) incomplete board policy, (c) failure to recognize the problem, (d) job dissatisfaction, (3) incomplete records, (f) lack of attendance monitoring, (g) failure to recognize good attendance, and (h) obsolete leadership. In looking
at the responses from Middle Cities districts, the vast majority of these reasons are applicable. Not one district submitted a board of education policy or administrative policy in regard to teacher absenteeism. The vast majority fail to recognize the problem and have incomplete records. Only a small minority appear to be monitoring attendance.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The purpose of the study was to (a) compile and analyze relevant literature on employee absenteeism, (b) to identify the nature and frequency of variables related to absenteeism, and (c) to identify variables that may be monitored to improve absenteeism. While working on this purpose, a related purpose was to develop a draft proposal for an administrative policy to monitor teacher absenteeism. Eight research questions were developed in relationship to the purpose. In an attempt to be able to compare data, a group of 25 school districts called the Middle Cities were selected. The reason for this choice was that the K-12 school district was a member of the Middle Cities districts. A questionnaire was sent to all 24 Middle Cities districts. All 24 districts were contacted and responded either by filling out the questionnaire, sending a letter indicating data not available, or responding by telephone to questions that could be answered. With the exception of a few minority Middle Cities districts, data were not available for comparison purposes.

Using the K-12 school district's Superintendent's Executive Cabinet as a jury, 5 Middle Cities districts were selected on the basis of being most like the sample school district. Follow-up with these 5 Middle Cities directors was conducted in person and on the
telephone with these directors. As was the case in the pilot survey, very little data were available.

After answering the 8 research questions that were developed, a review, of the review of the literature, was conducted. The purpose of this second review was to begin formulating a draft policy for a program for monitoring teacher absenteeism. This draft program was then developed and expanded to include a draft program for monitoring sick leave and employee attendance.

A follow-up procedure was to seek input from the districts' 8 employee unions, administrators, and board of education members, on the draft policy. Attorneys were asked for input and advice. The firm of Allsopp, Fitzgerald, and Kolka (the sample school district's law firm), the firm of Smith and Brooker, the firm of Thrun, Maatsch, Nordberg, and the firm of Luce, Basil, and Collins, were involved for legal advice and revision. The Middle Cities personnel directors were asked for input. A final revision was drafted. Board of Education support and district implementation occurred after the draft-revision stage. Hopefully, the K-12 school district will have a district-wide policy for monitoring employee absenteeism in the 1988-1989 school year.

Conclusions

Lewis (1982) proposed that the first step in combating the problem of employee absenteeism is to show everyone the extent to which absenteeism affects the schools. Lewis suggested developing a computer produced employee absenteeism profile for each employee in
the school district. The sample K-12 district, through the research and development of this dissertation, is now capable of providing such a profile. (see Appendix H)

Hayes (1981) pointed out that absenteeism is rarely considered a serious problem, and therefore absenteeism flourished when ignored. Hayes proposed that management should create a positive, rewarding, productive environment where people feel impelled to appear regularly and perform as best they can. Hayes formulated the following plan to develop attendance oriented staff:

1. Be committed to attendance,
2. Give recognition to those who report to work every day,
3. Don't be overstrict on time rules,
4. Pay personal attention to your employees,
5. Show people the importance of their work (p. 32).

Based on the data gathered on the sample K-12 district, it is obvious that the five suggested recommendations of Hayes are not occurring. Furthermore, none of the Middle Cities districts appears to be following most of these recommendations.

Scott and Markham (1982) wrote:

Although there is a large amount of research dealing with reasons why employees are absent, there is surprisingly little written on the effectiveness of basic control policies and practices used to deal with this problem. When managers talk with us about implementing a particular absenteeism control program, they often have not given any thought to their overall strategy or to how a new control method might affect other personnel practices (pp. 73-76).

With this thought in mind, particular attention was given to the survey questions of the Middle Cities districts. Both the data received on the questionnaire, as well as follow-up questions on the
telephone, supported the idea that strategies have not been developed to control methods for employee absenteeism.

In another study related to absenteeism, Allen and Higgins suggested that every organization is a culture having its own cultural norms that constitute the expected, supported, and accepted ways of behaving. These norms are mostly unwritten and tell people the way things really are. They went on to state that absenteeism has its own subtle but complex norms, and the norms in the following areas influence people either to work or stay home, thus helping to create the absenteeism culture.

1. Leadership commitment. Managerial commitment to attendance goals and its views toward absenteeism do have an important impact on attendance.

2. Leadership modeling. What leaders say about absenteeism is often less important than the way their behavior is viewed by other organization members.

3. Recognition and compensation systems. Employees frequently remark that there is no advantage in reporting for work every day, because no one seems to care. A supervisor reduced absenteeism by 40 percent when letters were written for personnel files at the end of each six month period of perfect attendance, with copies sent to conscientious employees.

4. Organization policies and procedures. Regulations can sometimes cause more problems than they prevent. Sometimes they actually get in the way of good attendance practices. Being five minutes late, even for a good reason, is often looked on less favorably than taking a sick day.

5. Supervisory interpretation and implementation of policies. The personal link between employees and supervisors can be used in shaping a program. One supervisor tried a positive approach to absenteeism by starting a telephone follow-up to absent employees, expressing concern for the cause of their absence and offering help to them and their families.

7. Employee orientation and training. Attendance norms are established the first day on the job. In a supermarket with low absenteeism, the importance of good attendance and exposure to high-attendance employees were stressed during orientations for new cashiers.

8. Performance appraisal. Performance appraisal procedures can boost good attendance practices. If attendance rates make a difference in raises and appraisals of performance, and if employees are aware that this information is part of ongoing performance appraisals, attendance patterns are affected.

9. Health factors. The connection between health and absenteeism is often overlooked or narrowly defined, with little attention being paid to alcoholism, drug abuse and other stress-related factors.

10. Job satisfaction. Boredom on the job is frequently ignored; little attention is paid to making the job more interesting or explaining its importance within the organization framework.

11. The relationship of attendance to specific events. Vacations, holidays, meetings, training sessions, and other events influence the rate of absenteeism. For an organization to improve the existing absenteeism culture, Allen and Higgins suggested a systematic effort must be based on:

1. Involvement of employees at all levels. From the chief executive officer to the new employee, involvement is crucial. Each has some kind of direct impact on an organization and contributes to the modeling, rewarding, or supporting of attendance norms. Involvement means more than assigning tasks. Since everyone is affected by change, everyone must participate in shaping change from goal setting at the start to final implementation.

2. Results orientation. Baseline and periodic measurement of attendance, productivity related to attendance, and attendance norms produce data that can be clearly communicated to the entire organization.

3. Sound data. Accurate program analysis and record keeping assures getting the sound data a program should be based on. This information enables managers to make higher, quality decisions in setting attendance goals.

4. A positive focus. Punishment intensifies resistance. Giving managers the tools to recognize and reward employees who maintain good attendance records stimulates cultural change.
5. A systematic approach. Change must be concerned with the factors that influence attendance norms so that managers can improve their skills and build a more effective organization.

6. Follow-through. Since the change process is an ongoing participatory commitment, management has the opportunity to periodically review, renew, and sustain attendance goals. (p. 32)

There is an obvious need for a systematic approach to monitor and improve teacher absenteeism. The literature is overwhelming in the support and need for a program or system to control teacher absenteeism. Tied with the literature research on the effectiveness of substitute teachers, the published reports on excellence in schools, time on task considerations, lengthening of the school day or school year, educators cannot afford to continue to put teacher absenteeism and systematic control methods on the "back burner" (p. 33).

The findings of this research indicate that little is being done in the Middle Cities in Michigan to monitor or keep track of employee absenteeism in K-12 school districts. Reasons for absence are generally accepted by school districts and in most cases are very similar. Average rates of absenteeism differ by school district. Variables that impact teacher absenteeism appear to be numerable. Sex, age, and length of service do appear to have an impact on teacher absenteeism. Incentive programs are not being offered to reduce teacher absenteeism. Discipline policies are erratic in working with teacher absenteeism. School districts are negligent in their responsibility to assure students of their district that the teachers who are hired to provide them the very best educational opportunities possible are presently at work to accomplish this task. The fact that all of these districts have student attendance policies, yet neglect to establish teacher attendance policies, is interesting and incredible.
Recommendations

School districts should make every effort to ensure that appropriate programs are implemented that would have a positive effect on student achievement. A program to monitor and track teacher absenteeism is an example. Many plans could be developed for a school district on overall strategy for dealing with absenteeism. Minimally, the strategy should include:

1. Develop a computerized system to keep track of absences;
2. Determine a general consensus on reasons for absence;
3. Determine what the absenteeism problem is, if any;
4. Attempt to discover specific causes of absenteeism;
5. Define excessive absenteeism;
6. Pinpoint areas where absenteeism is excessive;
7. Train supervisors in how to combat absenteeism;
8. Inform employees about the absenteeism problem and costs involved;
9. Consider special incentives or recognition for employees with good attendance records; and
10. Make sure chronic offenders are counseled and disciplined, if necessary, in a thorough and fairly administered disciplinary procedure.

Other suggestions would include:

1. Organizing an employee attendance committee composed of individuals from all employee bargaining units;
2. Continuously review absence data in many different ways: (a) individual employee, (b) bargaining unit, (c) building, (d) sex, and (e) length of service;
3. Develop evaluation criteria to measure the effectiveness of the program;

4. Develop a program for use of substitutes including a substitute handbook;

5. Consider inservice training for substitutes in the following areas: (a) effective teaching methods, (b) discipline, (c) school climate, and (d) district expectations.

6. Establish substitute advisory committee to address concerns of both substitute and classroom teachers.

7. Develop a list of building substitutes on a regular basis;

8. Establish personal communication network between absent teacher, substitute, and building administration;

9. Recognize buildings or staffs with outstanding attendance records.

This research was designed to examine teacher absenteeism within a K-12 school district with the related purpose of establishing a district program for monitoring teacher attendance. Implications for other school districts should be clear. Very little information related to teacher absenteeism is being gathered and analyzed. The topic of teacher absence is of such importance, both from an economic and educational impact, that a plan should be developed that expands the overall knowledge of the topic to include several school districts. Possibly a statewide organization could develop a study that could examine many districts with the overall goal of developing consensus and consistency. This would allow for standardization of data collected. Comparisons district by district could then be made.
Suggestions for Further Research

This research was limited to the study of teacher absenteeism in one K-12 school district. Variables of sex, age, length of service, and level of teaching were considered. Further consideration was given by comparing data from this K-12 district to a group of 24 K-12 districts in Michigan called the Middle Cities Association. Future research might include a study of only one variable and its effect on teacher absenteeism. One example might be, is there a relationship between pupil absenteeism and teacher absenteeism? Assuming that a program for monitoring teacher absenteeism is established in the K-12 school district, future research might be conducted on the control program, incentive programs, and their effect on the average rate of absenteeism. Research might be conducted on a specific reason for absence, e.g., released time. How much time is being provided to professional staff for inservice training and how does this relate to teacher absenteeism?

No one study could hope to answer all the questions related to teacher absenteeism. Little has been accomplished in this area and a great amount of research needs to be completed. This study is a first step in the process of beginning a "Program For Monitoring Sick Leave and Employee Attendance" for the K-12 sample school district. (see Appendix I) Assuming that a program for monitoring teacher absenteeism is established in the K-12 school district, future research might be conducted on the control program, incentive programs, and their effect on the average rate of absenteeism. How much time is being provided to professional staff for inservice training and how
does this relate to teacher absenteeism? Consideration of the relationship of absenteeism and employee turnover and retention could be studied. The relationship of teacher absenteeism and student achievement would be a good topic for study. Research in the field of teacher absenteeism has many avenues left to explore!
APPENDICES
Appendix A

Questionnaire
Q U E S T I O N A I R E

T E A C H E R  A B S E N T E E I S M
K-12 S C H O O L  D I S T R I C T

O N L Y  F U L L - T I M E ,  K - 1 2  T E A C H E R S


Yes__ No__ 1. Does your school district have a Board of Education Policy dealing with teacher or employee absenteeism?
Yes__ No__ 2. If so, would you please enclose a copy of the Board of Education Policy?
Yes__ No__ 3. Does your school district have an administrative policy dealing with teacher absenteeism?
Yes__ No__ 4. If so, would you please enclose a copy of the Administrative Policy dealing with teacher absenteeism?
Yes__ No__ 5. Does your school district have a computerized payroll system that is capable of tracking teacher attendance?

6. Below please find a list of reasons for teacher absenteeism:

   ___ Court Appearance  ___ Lost Time/Docked Days
   ___ Business Day  ___ Maternity Sick Leave
   ___ Workers Compensation  ___ Other
   ___ Funeral  ___ Bargaining Unit Day
   ___ Emergency Day  ___ Released Time
   ___ Family Illness  ___ Sick Leave Bank
   ___ Religious Holiday  ___ Compensatory Time
   ___ Illness  ___ Vacation
   ___ Jury Duty  ___ School Related Meeting
   ___ Leave of Absence  ___ Non-School Related Business

   a. Please check those reasons for absence your school district uses in the above list.

   b. Please list those reasons your school district does not use.

   c. Please list any other reasons your school district uses that do not appear in the above list.

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7. If absence is defined as any reason a teacher was absent from the classroom (work), can you determine the following:

   a. What was your average rate of teacher absenteeism for the following years?

   1984-1985 _____________________________ days/year
   1983-1984 _________________________ days/year
   1982-1983 _____________________________ days/year
   1981-1982 ___________________________ days/year
   1980-1981 ______________________________ days/year

8. What was the rate of your female employees compared to male employees?

   Female________________________
   Male _________________________

9. What was the rate of your elementary employees compared to secondary employees?

   Elementary_______________
   Secondary ______________

10. What was the rate of employees aged (7-1-1939) - (7-1-1959) compared to (7-1-1938) - (7-1-1918)?

    7-1-1939 — 7-1-1959 _____________
    7-1-1938 — 7-1-1918 ______________

11. If absenteeism was divided into two (2) categories:

    I. (Mandatory approval reason for absence by contract)
    II. (Permissory - granted by administrator judgement reason for absence)

    What is the percentage of teacher absenteeism in your school district in:

    Category I_____________________
    Category II___________________

12. Does your school district require:

    Yes___ No___ a. Reasons for absence forms to be completed and signed by employee?
    Yes___ No___ b. Administrator approval of all teacher absences?
    Yes___ No___ c. notice to the immediate supervisor if a teacher is going to be absent from work?
d. administrator reports either on a monthly, semester, or yearly basis on staff absenteeism?

Yes__ No__

e. counseling sessions to be conducted with employees who have excessive absenteeism?

Yes__ No__

f. corrective discipline for those employees who continue to be excessively absent?

Yes__ No__

13. Does your school district provide:

Yes__ No__

a. employee recognition for perfect attendance?

If so, what is it? _________________________________

Yes__ No__

b. incentives for teachers to improve attendance?

If so, what is it? _________________________________

Yes__ No__

c. incentives for administrators to improve staff attendance?

If so, what is it? _________________________________

Yes__ No__

14. Does your school district provide a centralized call-in system (tape) to report teacher absenteeism and arrange for substitutes?

Yes__ No__

15. Are you presently experiencing a substitute teacher shortage?

Yes__ No__

Person compiling Report: ________________________________

School District: ________________________________

Please return by: JUNE 2, 1986

Bay City Public Schools
910 N. Walnut Street
Bay City, Michigan 48706

DFM/sf
4/4/86
Appendix B

Middle Cities List
MIDDLE CITIES LIST

Ann Arbor Public
Battle Creek Public
Bay City Public
Beecher Community
Benton Harbor Area
Buena Vista
Flint Community
Grand Rapids Public
Jackson Public
Kalamazoo Public
Lansing
Marquette Public
Midland Public
Monroe Public
Muskegon Public
Muskegon Heights
Niles Community
Plymouth-Canton Community
Pontiac
Port Huron Area
Saginaw School District
Southfield Public
Traverse City Area Public
Willow Run Community
Ypsilanti Public
Appendix C

Sample Letter to Middle Cities
April 16, 1986

Ms. Dolores Dawson
Director of Personnel Services
Ann Arbor Public Schools
2555 S. State Road
Ann Arbor, MI 48104

Dear Ms. Dawson:

I am in the process of doing my Doctoral dissertation on the subject of "Employee Absenteeism" and have chosen Middle Cities Association as a research sample population in regard to this subject.

Enclosed you will find a questionnaire on employee absenteeism which I would appreciate you completing and returning to me. If you have any questions in regard to this questionnaire, please feel free to call my office (517/686-9700, ext. 100).

Sincerely,

Dale F. Martin
Deputy Superintendent
Personnel and Employee Relations

DFM/sf

cc: file

enc.
June 26, 1986

Mr. Joseph Shurn
Director, Personnel
Benton Harbor Area Schools
711 E. Britain Avenue
Benton Harbor, MI 49022

Dear Mr. Shurn:

Knowing the busy schedules that exist during this time of the school year, this is just a follow-up to my inquiry of April 16, 1986 regarding "Employee Absenteeism" in your school district. A questionnaire accompanied a letter to you on the April 16th date.

As of this date, my office has not received this completed questionnaire, or a letter indicating you are unable to complete this form due to a lack of data in your district/lack of time involved to complete questionnaire, etc.

Because the above questionnaire/letter is part of my Doctoral Dissertation, I would appreciate hearing from you in the near future.

Thank you for your cooperation/assistance in reaching my goal.

Sincerely,

Dale F. Martin
Deputy Superintendent
Personnel and Employee Relations

DFM/sf
Appendix E

Letter to Ray Keech, Superintendent of Schools

Permission to Use Data
November 3, 1986

TO:       Dr. Ray R. Keech  
          Superintendent

FROM:     Mr. Dale F. Martin   
          Deputy Superintendent  
          Personnel and Employee Relations

RE:       USE OF BAY CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS' 1984-1985
          SCHOOL YEAR DATA

I am presently working on my Doctoral Dissertation on K-12 employee absenteeism, and would like permission to use Bay City Public Schools' employee attendance data for the 1984-1985 school year within this dissertation.

Thank you for consideration of this request.

DFM/sf

cc: file
Appendix F

Reasons for Absence
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Business Day</td>
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<td>Workers' Compensation</td>
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<td>D</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>Family Illness</td>
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<td>I</td>
<td>Illness</td>
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<td>Jury Duty</td>
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<td>K</td>
<td>Leave of Absence</td>
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<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>Lost Time/Docked Days</td>
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<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Maternity Sick Leave</td>
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<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>Other</td>
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<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>Bargaining Unit Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>Released Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>Sick Leave Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>Compensatory Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>Vacation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>School Related Meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Z</td>
<td>Non-School Related Meeting</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Appendix G

Reason for Absence Form
BAY CITY PUBLIC SCHOOL EMPLOYEES REASON FOR ABSENCE FORM

THIS FORM TO BE COMPLETED ON THE DAY FOLLOWING AN ABSENCE BY ALL EMPLOYEES

Complete and submit to your principal/immediate supervisor... Pink copy will be retained by him/her. White copy is to be sent to the Deputy Superintendent for Personnel and Employee Relations, and Goldenrod copy will be for the employee.

I was absent on ____________________________________________
(month) (specific dates) (year)

for the following reason: (check one)

A Court Appearance           L Lost Time/Docked Days
B Business Day                M Maternity Sick Leave
C Workers' Compensation      O Other
D Funeral                    P Bargaining Unit Day
E Emergency Day               R Released Time
F Family Illness             S Sick Leave Bank
H Religious Holiday          T Compensatory Time
I Illness                    V Vacation
J Jury Duty                  X School Related Meeting
K Leave of Absence           Z Non-School Related Meeting

COMMENTS: (Please state specific reason for absence)

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

Employee's Signature              Building

Principal/Immediate Supervisor     Date Submitted

white copy - Deputy Superintendent for Personnel & Employee Relations
pink copy - immediate supervisor  goldenrod copy - employee

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Appendix I

Computer Printout
Individual
Building
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TOTAL EMPLOYEES = 85
AVG. DAYS ABSENT = 13.2
**PAYROLL ATTENDANCE REPORT 1984-85**

**RUN DATE: 07/31/85**

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*8 = .5 0 = 2.0 F = 2.0 H = 8.0 T = 3.0 V = 29.0 X = 3.0*

**BEGINNING OF YEAR BALANCE:** 96.00

**1ST SEM ADDITION:**

**2ND SEM ADDITION:**

**TOTAL DAYS SUBTRACTED:**

**ENDING "OF YEAR" BALANCE:** 96.00
Appendix J

Program for Monitoring Sick Leave and Employee Attendance
PROGRAM FOR MONITORING
SICK LEAVE
AND
EMPLOYEE ATTENDANCE

Personnel Department

112
INTRODUCTION

POLICY GUIDE

A certain amount of absenteeism is inevitable: people become ill and emergencies arise that keep employees away from their jobs. Sometimes, however, significant proportions of employee absences are avoidable. Such "voluntary" absenteeism can add up to a sizable increase in the costs of a school district's budget.

Administration has an obligation to its employees, students, and community to assure them that employees are absent only when absolutely necessary. With this in mind, administration should develop policies to:

1. determine what the absenteeism problem is by keeping track of absences
2. try to discover specific causes of absenteeism and pinpoint areas where absenteeism is excessive
3. give supervisors special training in how to combat absenteeism
4. let employees know about the absenteeism problem, and the costs involved
5. consider special incentives or recognition for employees with good attendance records
6. make sure that chronic offenders are dealt with in a thorough and fairly administered disciplinary procedure.

Monitoring job absence is a standard practice among employers, according to a survey of BNA's Personnel Policies Forum (PPF Survey No. 132, Job Absence and Turnover Control, October, 1981).
The public school system would like its employees and citizens to know the policies and procedures being implemented in order to monitor employee absence. It is with this intent that the following policies and procedures are developed.
<table>
<thead>
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<th>TABLE OF CONTENTS</th>
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<tr>
<td>Program for &quot;Monitoring&quot; Employees Absence ....................... 1</td>
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<td>Attendance/Absence Reports ........................................... 13</td>
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<td>Program for Recognizing Outstanding Employee Attendance .......... 17</td>
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Administration needs to take the following factors into consideration in order to develop a Program for "Monitoring" Sick Leave and Employee Attendance. (1)

1. An employee's attendance record is separate from and distinctly different than sick leave use.

2. Attendance refers to the absence of an employee from work for any reason.

3. Sick leave refers to "contractual" rights of an employee in relationship to the Master Agreement between the employer and the union.

4. "Monitoring" Sick Leave and Employee Attendance refers to approaches used to clarify the nature and extent of employee attendance and sick leave use, to probe for potential causes of abuse, and to identify various means to obtain improvements.

With these factors in mind, the following observations can be made:

1. The existing rules of the School Board and the provisions of the various labor agreements stipulate the potential consequences of poor employee attendance, of misusing sick leave, and provide for management action.

2. The amount of sick leave used is not a measure of amount of illness in the employee groups.


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3. There is not presently a uniform, system-wide application of procedures and forms to monitor and control attendance and sick leave.

4. The current procedures for administering disciplinary action for sick leave abuse and poor attendance are inadequate and difficult to use.

5. There is little system-wide emphasis on the necessity of good attendance.

6. There appear to be five broad reasons why an employee would have poor attendance and abuse sick leave:
   a. lack of appropriate administrative control
   b. the nature of the job
   c. the nature of the work environment
   d. the attitude that sick leave is an earned and deserved time off
   e. lack of incentive for not using sick leave.

Based on these observation, the following recommendations need to be considered:

1. We must improve communications and establish a uniform district policy.

2. All employees must be informed of the established district policies in regard to attendance and sick leave.

3. Building principals and immediate supervisors must be provided more direct communication.

4. We must improve the overall enforcement of the "monitoring" of poor attendance and sick leave abuse.

5. Management training (Inservice) must be provided to those in the position to supervise attendance.

6. Procedural changes should be made as follows:
   a. notification of an absence should go directly to the immediate supervisor (i.e. an employee would have the responsibility of notifying the immediate supervisor/building administrator)
   b. verification and follow-up by the immediate supervisor/building administrator should be more frequent
   c. the investigation and processing of all employee accidents must be clarified
   d. a procedure for absence reimbursement approval must be installed
   e. record keeping at the building level must occur
   f. discipline alternatives for offenders must be developed
   g. performance evaluations should place a greater emphasis on attendance.

7. Emphasize that attendance is important and inform all personnel of the system's philosophy regarding absence.

8. Consider establishing positive incentives for employees with good attendance records.

9. Employees who have established outstanding attendance records should be recognized.

10. Buildings or units with outstanding attendance records
11. Quality of Work Life, employee performance, and employee attendance should be studied jointly.

12. Age of staff should be considered and special provisions should be considered for senior personnel with a record of good attendance.

In order to implement the above recommendations and devise a consistent and comprehensive plan to regulate employee absenteeism, five factors need to be considered:

1. The entering behavior of an employee
2. Alerting the employee
3. "Monitoring" or checking
4. Accountability
5. Follow-up

Consider each of these factors as follows:

1. Entering behavior of an employee would consist of a check of the prospective employee's previous attendance records of school attendance figures before employment. The use of a personality screening devise to identify prospective employees with a positive work ethic. Development of a quality of work life program starting from the very first day.

2. Alerting, not just informing, all employees that attendance records are important and that absence requests and occurrences

---

will be closely monitored. The practice of merely informing employees of the types of absence leaves available and under which each type might be used is not sufficient. More emphasis needs to be placed on each employee's responsibility for good attendance. Clearly, before an employee can be expected to change his/her behavior pattern, he/she must know what pattern management expects. The alerting process tells the employee what management considers important and, in effect, notifies the employee of consequences that will occur following certain behavior patterns. Suggested or possible techniques would be:

a. Periodic announcements concerning the attendance policy, amount of leave taken over a given time period, and areas which need improvement.

b. Increased emphasis on good attendance by supervising employees.

c. Establish feedback devices to notify employees of absences, which would ultimately remind the staff of the value that is being placed on good attendance.

"Monitoring" or checking ensures the active monitoring of absenteeism records. Absenteeism records should be maintained at the building level to insure that administrators take a personal interest in absenteeism trends. Summary records would also be maintained at Central Office.

Accountability insures that an employee is made responsible for absences. The focus of all policies in this area should
be made to make it as difficult as possible for an employee to take an unjustified absence. Direct contact between the employee and his immediate supervisor must be established for reporting an absence.

Follow-up consists of follow-up activities during an absence, immediately after the employee returns to work, and over the years the employee has worked for the system. Follow-up procedures must be developed for all employees so that positive aspects for employees with good attendance records can be rewarded as well as those employees with poor attendance records disciplined.

PROPOSED PLAN OF ACTION:

I. Conduct an information campaign. 1

A. Purposes:

1. To communicate to all employee units that attendance is important and will be emphasized.

2. To communicate to all employee units that the intent of sick leave is to provide a form of income protection insurance. It is not a fixed number of days which can be used each year.

1 Birmingham Public Schools, ERS Report, 1981, page 70
3. To advise all employees that because the Bay City Public Schools/Board Sick Leave Bank may not have sufficient days to cover all extended absences, it is increasingly important for all employees to maintain an ample number of sick leave days.

4. To clarify the reasons for which sick leave days may and may not be used.

5. To emphasize the importance of regular employee attendance, stressing the impact on the overall instructional program of the district.

6. To inform employees that Administration will take action toward employees who have excessive absence rates.

B. Procedures:

1. Principals and immediate supervisors shall distribute a bulletin to all employees in a meeting arranged by the principal/immediate supervisor and discuss the contents of the bulletin. (copy attached)

2. Principals/immediate supervisors shall hold individual meetings with employees who need, in the judgment of the principal/immediate supervisor, reinforcement of information and/or corrective discipline.

3. The personnel department shall hold meetings with employees who need, in the judgment of the Deputy Superintendent for Personnel and Employee Relations, reinforcement of information and/or corrective
discipline for patterns of attendance over the years.

II. Monitoring Absenteeism and Providing Follow-Up:

A. Principals/immediate supervisors shall provide the following information regarding absences for employees they are responsible for:

1. Weekly and biweekly absence reports (attendance sheets) to payroll
2. Monthly report on reasons for absence to personnel department
3. Semester report - Biannually of all employees to personnel department
4. Annual report showing total absences of each employee and reasons for absence.

B. Each principal/immediate supervisor shall develop a plan to reinforce the importance of regular attendance. Examples of activities which principals/immediate supervisors are expected to be engaged in are:

a. Counseling employees in circumstances such as the following:
   a. When an employee has developed a pattern of incidental absence.
   b. When an employee is frequently absent for "illness" on days before or after holidays or vacation periods.


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c. When an employee is frequently absent for "illness" on certain "special days" (i.e. hunting season, baseball, basketball, etc.).
d. When an employee who appeared to be in robust health the previous day is absent for illness.
e. When an employee has reported an absence for illness for more than one day.

2. Requiring some employees to contact the principal/immediate supervisor personally between 9:00 a.m. and 12:00 noon on the day or days of absence. This requirement would be imposed at the discretion of the building principal/immediate supervisor.

3. Requiring employees to provide proof of illness.

4. Implementing corrective disciplinary measures where appropriate.

UNAUTHORIZED ABSENTEEISM

1st Offense: Meeting of concern - building Principal/Immediate Supervisor

2nd Offense: Oral Warning - building principal/immediate supervisor

3rd Offense: Written reprimand - building principal/immediate supervisor
4th Offense: 1 day suspension (without pay)
5th Offense: 1 week suspension (without pay)
6th Offense: 3 week suspension (without pay)
7th Offense: Termination

Employee records of attendance will also be used and considered, if and when Sick Leave Bank requests are necessary.
CORRECTIVE DISCIPLINE PROCEDURE

When the rate of sick leave usage exceeds nine (9) occasions per year, (excluding verified long-term illness) an absence review shall be instituted as follows: 1

a. A meeting of concern will be held with the employee by his/her immediate supervisor to advise him/her of this sick leave record.

b. The supervisor should attempt to learn the causes of absence of the employee and, if necessary, arrange for a medical examination.

c. The employee is to be counseled about his rate of usage and the possible effects on his future. The employee’s past record of absence during his/her period of employment will be considered.

d. A form letter will be used to note the date of the conference, along with the absentee statistics. A copy is to be given to the employee, the union, and personnel administrative file.

If, after the steps outlined above, the employee's rate of usage continues to exceed nine (9) occasions per year, the employee shall be subject to an oral reprimand. Due process, with twenty-four hours notice and right to representation by his/her union representative will be followed. 2

2 Grand Blanc Community Schools, ERS Report, pg. 55.
If the pattern of absenteeism continues, following due process procedures, the employee will be issued a written reprimand.

1st Offense: Meeting of concern held by the building principal/immediate supervisor and employee

2nd Offense: Oral Reprimand - building principal/immediate supervisor

3rd Offense: Written Reprimand - building principal/immediate supervisor

4th Offense: One (1) day suspension without pay

5th Offense: One (1) week suspension without pay

6th Offense: Three (3) weeks suspension without pay

7th Offense: Termination

It should be noted that employee records of attendance will also be used and considered if and when sick leave bank requests are necessary.
ATTENDANCE/ABSENCE REPORTS

All employees of the school district shall be expected to fill out a "Reason for Absence Form" (Form A) and turn it in to his immediate supervisor/principal on his/her return to work. This form will consist of three (3) copies:

#1 shall be forwarded to the Deputy Superintendent for Personnel and Employee Relations
#2 shall be filed with the immediate supervisor/principal
#3 shall be kept in the employees' possession.

The responsibility of follow-through, on all employees in relationship to reports being submitted, will rest with the immediate supervisor/building principal.

Reasons for absence from work will be as follows:

(A) Court Appearance (L) Lost Time/Docked Days
(B) Business Day (M) Maternity Sick Leave
(C) Workers' Compensation (O) Other
(D) Funeral (P) BCEA Day
(E) Emergency Days (R) Released Time
(F) Family Illness (S) Sick Leave Bank
(G) Religious Holiday (T) Compensatory Time
(H) Illness (V) Vacation
(J) Jury Duty (X) School Related Meeting
(K) Leave of Absence (Z) Non-School Related Business

All employees will be asked to state a specific reason for their absence which will correspond with the reason checked on Form A. This form shall be signed by the principal/immediate supervisor and submitted to the office of the Deputy Superintendent for personnel and Employee Relations.

Employees who pre-arrange absences should do so with their immediate supervisor/principal and fill out Form (A). Employees who
call in absence from work are asked to contact their immediate supervisor/principal. It will be the immediate supervisors/principal's responsibility to arrange for a substitute by calling the substitute office or tape.

An attempt to monitor employee absence will be at three (3) levels:

1. Immediate Supervisor/Building principal
2. Deputy Superintendent for Personnel and Employee Relations
3. Sick Leave Appeal Board

It needs to be pointed out that the master agreements of the various units speak to the different types of leaves an employee is entitled to. These agreements do differ, and it will be responsibility of the immediate supervisor/building principal to make judgments in regard to the master agreement covering that particular employee's request. The office of the Deputy Superintendent for Personnel and Employee Relations is available for advice and to answer any questions.

The building principal/immediate supervisor, with his/her secretary, will fill out a weekly and biweekly payroll attendance sheet. This sheet will correspond with all Reason for Absence Forms. The signature of the building principal/immediate supervisor will attest to the accuracy of the information on the payroll sheet. Time must be given to insure the accuracy of the information.

On a monthly basis the building principal/immediate supervisor, with his/her secretary, will fill out Form (B) for all employees and submit to the Deputy Superintendent for Personnel and Employee Relations.
On a semester basis, Form (C) will be submitted by the building principal/immediate supervisor. This will cover staff (all employees) absences for a semester in order from most absences to perfect attendance. It should be noted that this report will be a statistical report only.

When it becomes necessary to discuss an individual employee's attendance record, (Form D) will be filled out by the immediate supervisor/building principal and submitted to the office of the Deputy Superintendent for Personnel and Employee Relations. A conference will be held by the immediate supervisor/building principal with the employee. This conference will be a meeting of concern. Items to be discussed will be the employee's absence, reasons for absence, and administration's position in regard to this absence. An employee will have rights to representation, if desired. This meeting is not intended to be a disciplinary meeting, but a meeting to clarify administration's position in regard to attendance and employee absence.

When an employee's attendance record is referred to the office of the Deputy Superintendent for Personnel and Employee Relations, a study of past history of the employee's attendance will be completed (Form D). This report will be forwarded to the building principal/immediate supervisor for their ADMINISTRATIVE FILE. If the report shows an average use of more than 9.0 days per year for the following categories: Illness, Family Illness, and/or Sick Leave Bank, a meeting of concern will be set up with the employee and the Deputy Superintendent for Personnel and Employee Relations. The employee will
have the right to representation. Administration will use the overall history of an employee's attendance, his present requests and all doctors' reports, etc. in order to make a recommendation to the Sick Leave Appeal Board.

The Sick Leave Appeal Board may make requests to the office of the Deputy Superintendent for Personnel and Employee Relations for information in regard to an employee's absence and documented evidence.
PROGRAM FOR RECOGNIZING OUTSTANDING EMPLOYEE ATTENDANCE

In a program for monitoring sick leave and employee attendance, administration has a responsibility to recognize employees with outstanding attendance records. The school district is very fortunate to have many employees who conscientiously, on a daily basis, carry out their work responsibilities. It is with these employees in mind that the following procedures are suggested:

Suggestions:

1. Employees who have had perfect attendance would receive a letter from the Board of Education recognizing their outstanding attendance records. In addition, each employee with perfect attendance would receive two (2) additional days pay at the end of the school year.

2. Buildings would receive a budgeted amount for substitutes for a given year. Unused money for substitutes during a given year by an individual building could then be used by that staff for curriculum and program needs.

3. Buildings at each level with the best total staff percentage attendance would receive an additional five hundred dollars ($500) for their curriculum budget in the following school year.

4. Buildings at each level that show the best total staff percentage improvement from the previous year would receive an additional five hundred dollars ($500) for their curriculum budget in the following school year.
5. An employee with a minimum of twenty (20) years of continuous service in the district upon retirement shall receive a payment equal to the substitute rate of pay for each day of unused accumulated sick leave.

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Date: June 10, 1982

TO: Mr. John Brown
    Custodian, Hampton Elementary School

FROM: Hometown Board of Education

RE: OUTSTANDING ATTENDANCE RECORD

Dear Mr. Brown:

On behalf of the Bay City Board of Education and the taxpayers of the Bay City Public School District, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you on your outstanding attendance record.

The Board of Education is concerned about employee absenteeism and your record is noted and appreciated. Please be assured that your commitment and dedication has made you eligible for an additional monetary reward as shown below.

Congratulations once again and best wishes for a challenging and successful year in 1982-1983.

Sincerely,

John Smith
President
Board of Education
INFORMATION REGARDING COMPENSATED ABSENCES

PERSONNEL DEPARTMENT

September 1, 1982

For the past six (6) years, 1979-1980—1984-1985, the Personnel Department has made a study of compensated absences of employees in the Bay City School District. From this study administration has developed a program for monitoring sick leave and employee attendance.

It should be emphasized that the vast majority of employees are very conscientious and are absent only when absolutely necessary. However, because absenteeism continues to be a problem of considerable magnitude, principals/immediate supervisors have been asked to distribute and discuss this bulletin. This effort to provide information is to assure that employees:

1. have an accurate understanding of sick leave policies
2. are aware that principals/immediate supervisors are expected to strictly enforce sick leave policies.

Administrators have an obligation to staff, students, and the community to assure that employees are absent only when absolutely necessary. Pursuant to that obligation, administrators are expected to:

1. assure that sick leave days are taken for appropriate reasons only
2. encourage individuals, who are frequently absent for self treated illness to seek professional treatment.

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3. require individuals who are absent for questionable reasons to provide proof of illness or business exigency
4. institute disciplinary action if and when individuals are found to be abusing the sick leave policy

All employees have an obligation to students, the community, and their fellow employees to be present whenever possible. Extraordinary effort should be expended to arrange personal obligations so that they do not conflict with the employees primary responsibility.

Sick leave days are provided as a form of income protection insurance. Employees should not be at work when they are ill. Employees may also have unavoidable personal business or family obligations which justify absences.

Sick leave days may be utilized when an employee is ill, injured or other quarantine. They may not be used, however, for routine medical and dental appointments, rest and relaxation (mental health days) cosmetic surgery, or for other similar purposes.

Sick leave days may be used for serious illness in the immediate family, when the employee's presence is required. Contractual agreements cover this concern. Sick leave days may not be used for family members who are not seriously ill or to take family members for routine medical and dental appointments.

Two sick leave days may be used annually for personal business as defined in contractual agreements. It should be noted that personal business days may be used when an event or condition requires teachers'/employees' presence during the school day and is of such a
nature that it cannot be attended to at a time when schools are not in session.

Administration thanks the great majority of you who are faithfully and conscientiously discharging your employee obligations. It is no secret how important the services performed by our employees are to the vitality and well being of the school district. We are receiving compliments on how well most of you are doing your job. Administration commits itself to recognize those employees with outstanding attendance records and will be developing incentive plans with those employees in mind.

It is our hope that all employees will cooperate with administration in using sick leave benefits in a reasonable manner. Together we can continue to prove to the citizens of our community that the public school employees are truly concerned about our overall educational performance to the students who attend our schools.
BAY CITY PUBLIC SCHOOL EMPLOYEES REASON FOR ABSENCE FORM

THIS FORM TO BE COMPLETED ON THE DAY FOLLOWING AN ABSENCE BY ALL EMPLOYEES

Complete and submit to your principal/immediate supervisor... Pink copy will be retained by him/her. White copy is to be sent to the Deputy Superintendent for Personnel and Employee Relations, and Goldenrod copy will be for the employee.

I was absent on ____________________________________________________
(month) (specific dates) (year)

for the following reason: (check one)

A  Court Appearance     L  Lost Time/Docked Days
B  Business Day       M  Maternity Sick Leave
C  Workers' Compensation  O  Other
D  Funeral             P  Bargaining Unit Day
E  Emergency Day       Q  Released Time
F  Family Illness      R  Sick Leave Bank
H  Religious Holiday   T  Compensatory Time
I  Illness             V  Vacation
J  Jury Duty          X  School Related Meeting
K  Leave of Absence     X  Non-School Related Meeting

COMMENTS: (Please state specific reason for absence)
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________

Employee's Signature ___________________________ Building ___________________________
Principal/Immediate Supervisor _______________________ Date Submitted ___________________

white copy - Deputy Superintendent for Personnel & Employee Relations
pink copy - immediate supervisor
goldenrod copy - employee
### Monthly Absentee Report

**School**

- **B.C.E.A. PERSONNEL**
  - **1981-1982**
  - **Verification**
    - **Administrator Signature**

**Month**

- **Monthly Absentee Report**

**Key:**
- A - Association Day
- B - Business Day
- C - Court Appearance
- D - Funeral
- E - Emergency Day
- F - Family Illness
- G - Funeral
- H - Family Illness
- I - Personal Illness
- J - Jury Duty
- K - Maternity Sick Leave
- L - Lost Time
- M - Extra Curricular Asmt.
- N - School Related Business
- O - Other
- P - Visitation Day
- Q - Family Illness
- R - Family Illness
- S - School Related Business
- T - Other

### Table

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*Form B*

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**ATTENDANCE/ABSENCE REPORT**

Date: ____________________________

Building: ____________________________

Principal/
Immediate Supervisor: ____________________________

Semester: ____________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STAFF MEMBERS' NAME</th>
<th>M</th>
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<th>F</th>
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Please total columns horizontally and vertically.

Please list in order of highest absenteeism to least absenteeism.

Staff Attendance percentage rate: ________
INDIVIDUAL ABSENTEEISM REPORT

Date: February 17, 1982

Employer: John Smith

Principal/
Immediate Supervisor: Tom Jones

<table>
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<th>DATE</th>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>REASON FOR ABSENCE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>October 22</td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>Illness</td>
</tr>
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<td>Friday</td>
<td>October 23</td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>Illness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>November 19</td>
<td>1981</td>
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<td>February 17</td>
<td>1982</td>
<td>Emergency Day</td>
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</table>

TOTAL NUMBER OF DAYS ABSENT: 10
INDIVIDUAL ABSENTEEISM REPORT

Date: ________________________________

Employer: ________________________________

Principal/
Immediate Supervisor: ________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DAY</th>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>REASON FOR ABSENCE</th>
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TOTAL NUMBER OF DAYS ABSENT: __________

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INDIVIDUAL HISTORY OF YEARS ABSENTEEISM

Date: __________________________
Employee: _______________________
Principal/
Immediate Supervisor: ____________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>SCHOOL</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>W</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>F</th>
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<td>Dorland</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>1978-79</td>
<td>Lindsay</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979-80</td>
<td>Lindsay</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>1980-81</td>
<td>Washington</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>1981-82</td>
<td>Washington</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>16</td>
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| TOTAL |      | 5 | 14 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 46 |

Please total columns horizontally and vertically.

Average number of days absent per year: 7.66

IMMEDIATE SUPERVISOR REPORT

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INDIVIDUAL HISTORY OF YEARS ABSENTEEISM

Date: ________________________________

Employee: ___________________________

Principal/
Immediate Supervisor: _______________

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Please total columns horizontally and vertically.

Average number of days absent per year: ______

IMMEDIATE SUPERVISOR REPORT

29
BIBLIOGRAPHY


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Vegter, Ernest (1980, August). Teacher Absenteeism in the School

Vegter, Ernest (1981, November). Teacher Absenteeism in the School


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