How Costly Are Dropouts and Failures?

By Eulogio Manzano

A Grade-to-Grade Follow-Up of the Promotion of Children from Grade I to Grade VI from the School Year 1946-1947 to the School Year 1950-1951 in the Public Elementary Schools in the Philippines.[1]

ONE of the important aims of the Philippine educational system is to promote the optimum growth and development of children and youth to the end that' they will become enlightened, upright, and useful citizens of a democracy. The whole educational machinery is geared toward this goal.' If this is .the goal, it is important to know how many public school children survive through the Grades and obtain education.

This study is limited to facts and figures pertaining to public elementary education after Liberation, as compiled by the Research and Evaluation Division, Bureau of Public Schools. The annual enrolments in Grade I in the public schools for a five-year period (1946-1947 to 1950-1951) and the percentage promoted from Grade to Grade up to the completion of the elementary course are considered in this study.

Specifically, this article answers the following questions:

1. What percentage of the pupils enrolled in Grade I each year during the five-year period (1946-1947 to 1950-1951) was promoted? How many were able to complete primary education in four years? What percentage of these were able to finish the elementary course in six years?

2. What is the cumulative average number of pupils promoted from Grade to Grade based on the average number of pupils enrolled in Grade I during the school years 1946-1947 to 1950-1951? What is the average number of dropouts and failures in each Grade?

3. At the rate of 50 pupils per class, how many classes could be organized out of the number of pupils who failed to enroll in the next higher Grade, those who dropped out and those who failed in the same Grade during the period under consideration?

4. What is the estimated average annual loss suffered by the Government in each Grade in the form of wasted educational efforts due to dropouts or failure to be promoted? What is the average total annual loss for wasted efforts in all the Grade levels during the period under study?

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[1] This is the first instalment of similar studies of Five-Year Periods.

The dropouts referred to in this study are the following:

a. the pupils who left school for one reason or another during the year;

b. the pupils who were promoted to a certain Grade but failed to enroll in that Grade due to sickness, poverty, or some other reasons;

c. those who failed to complete a certain curriculum level: primary education (Grades I to IV) or elementary education (Grades I to VI).

The data on enrolment in Grade I for the five-year period were taken from B.P.S. Forms 6-A (Summarized. Division Report of Enrolment and Attendance) for March of each year and the data on promotion, from B.P.S. Forms 20 (Summarized Report on Promotion) from the school year 1946-1947 to the school year 1955-1956. Data on enrolment are presented in the following table together with other data needed in answering the aforementioned questions.

How Many Completed the Primary School?

The percentages of promotion from Grade I up to the completion of **primary** education in the public elementary schools each year during the five-year period were found by dividing the total number of pupils promoted from Grade IV after four years of study by the number of pupils enrolled in Grade I. Of those enrolled in Grade I in

1946-47—53.74 per cent completed primary education in 1949-50;

1947-48—60.46 per cent completed primary education in 1950-51;

1948-49—54.63 per cent completed primary education in 1951-52;

1949-50—49.09 per cent completed primary education in 1952-53;

1950-51—50-74 per cent completed primary education in 1953-54.

These figures show that in round figures out of every 10 pupils who enrolled in Grade I in

1946-47—5 completed primary education in 1949-50;

1947-48—6 completed primary education in 1950-51;

1948-49—5 completed primary education in 1951-52;

1949-50—5 completed primary education in 1952-53;

1950-51—5 completed primary education in 1953-54.

GRADE TO GRADE PROMOTION IN THE PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS
(1946-47 to 1955-56)

School Year	Annual Enrolment in Grade I	Number of Pupils Promoted from Grade —						Percentage of Pupils Promoted from	
		I	II	III	IV	V	VI	Grade IV	Grade VI
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
1946-47	1,135,819	775,789							
1947-48	859,006	627,315	761,794						
1948-49	948,172	672,696	600,968	674,216					
1949-50	945,513	694,032	648,364	578,264	610,420			53.74	
1950-51	885,948	622,418	625,069	593,760	519,378	425,087		60.46	
1951-52			579,096	560,872	517,969	374,494	342,178	54.63	30.13
1952-53				498,050	464,139	336,737	277,112	49.09	32.26
1953-54					449,505	337,416	271,958	50.74	28.68
1954-55						329,350	270,162		28.57
1955-56							272,026		30.70
Total	4,774,458	3,392,250	3,215,291	2,905,162	2,561,411	1,803,084	1,433,436		
Average	954,892	678,450	643,058	581,032	512,282	360,617	286,687		
Cumulative Number of Drop Outs and Failures	—	276,442	311,834	373,860	442,610	594,275	668,205		
Average Number of Drop Outs and Failures in Each Grade	—	276,442	35,392	62,026	68,750	151,665	73,930		
Per Cent of Promotion in each Grade based on the Average Grade I Enrolment	—	71.05	67.34	60.85	53.65	37.77	30.02		
Estimated number of classes that could be organized out of Drop Outs and Failures in each Grade	—	5,529	708	1,240	1,375	3,033	1,479		
Estimated Annual Loss in Each Grade at the Rate of ₱2,300 per class	—₱12,716.700	₱1,628,400	₱2,852,000	₱3,162,500	₱6,975,900	₱3,401,700			

How Many Completed the Elementary School?

The percentages of promotion of pupils from the First Grade up to the time they completed the elementary course (six Grades) during the five-year period were found by dividing the total number of pupils promoted from Grade VI after six years of study by the number of pupils enrolled in Grade I. Of those enrolled in Grade I in

1946-47—30.13 per cent completed the elementary course in 1951-52;

1947-48—32.26 per cent completed the elementary course in 1952-53;

1948-49—28.68 per cent completed the elementary course in 1953-54;

1949-50—28.57 per cent completed the elementary course in 1954-55;

1950-51—30.70 per cent completed the elementary course in 1955-56.

These data reveal that in round figures **out of every 10 pupils enrolled in Grade I during each year of the period under study, only three complete elementary education in six years.**

How Many Dropped Out or Failed?

The cumulative average number of pupils promoted, the cumulative percentage of pupils promoted from Grade to Grade based on the average number of pupils, 954,892, enrolled in Grade I during the school years 1946-47 to 1950-51 and the average number of dropouts and failures in each Grade were found.[2]

The foregoing table shows that out of the average Grade I enrolment of 954,892 —

678,450 or 71.05 per cent were promoted from Grade I;

643,058 or 67.34 per cent were promoted from Grade II;

581,032 or 60.85 per cent were promoted from Grade III;

512,282 or 53.65 per cent were promoted from Grade IV;

360,617 or 37.77 per cent were promoted from Grade V; and

286,687 or 30.02 per cent were promoted from Grade VI.

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[2] The data on Grade 1 enrolment for the five-year period were added and the average enrolment in this Grade (954,892) was found by dividing the total enrolment of 4,744,458 by 5. Likewise, the data on promotion by Grades were added and the average number of pupils promoted from each Grade was found by dividing the total number of pupils promoted from each Grade in the five-year period by 5. The average number of dropouts and failures in Grade I was found by subtracting the average number of pupils promoted from Grade I from the average enrolment in Grade I. For the next higher Grades, the average number of pupils promoted from Grade II was subtracted from the average number of pupils promoted from Grade I; etc.

In the light of the above figures, it can be deduced that in round figures on the average, out of every 100 pupils enrolled in Grade I

71 completed Grade I;
67 completed Grade II;
61 completed Grade III;
54 completed Grade IV;
38 completed Grade V; and
30 completed Grade VI.

The figures also show that on the average, the yearly total number of pupils who failed and those who dropped out in Grade I was 276,442; the number of pupils who failed to enroll in Grade II, those who dropped out during the year and those who failed in the same Grade totalled 35,392; those who failed to be enrolled in Grade III, those who dropped out, and those who failed in the same Grade totalled 62,026; those who failed to enroll in Grade IV together with those who dropped out and those who failed in the same Grade totalled 68,750; the pupils who failed to enroll in Grade V together with those who dropped out and those who failed in the same Grade totalled 151,665; and those who failed to enroll in Grade VI together with those who dropped out from that Grade and those who failed in the same Grade totalled 73,930.

The figures further show that the public elementary schools were turning out every year about 300,000 children who were presumed to be functionally literate by completing Grade VI and more than 600,000 who were not considered functionally and permanently literate.[3]

Loss to the Government

To estimate the loss suffered by the Government in each Grade in the form of wasted educational efforts, it is necessary to determine the number of classes that could be organized out of the number of pupils who failed to enroll in the next higher Grade, those who dropped out and those who failed in the same Grade. An average of 50 pupils per class or per teacher was used in determining the number of classes because said number was found to be the over-all average number of pupils per teacher from the school year 1946-47 to the school year 1955-56. The average number of classes that could be organized out of the average number of pupils who failed to continue up to Grade VI are as follows:

Grade I	5,529	classes
Grade II	708	"
Grade III	1,240	"
Grade IV	1,375	"
Grade V	3,033	"

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[3] However, Gerardo Flores, consultant of the Joint Congressional Committee on Education (1949-50) concluded from a study that the completion of at least Grade VII is necessary for functional literacy.

Grade VI .... 1,479 ”
     Total .... 13,364 ”

It is also shown in the foregoing table that an average of 5,529 classes could be formed out of the average number of pupils who dropped out and those who failed in Grade I. Second in number were the 3,033 classes that could be organized out of the average number of pupils who failed to enroll in Grade V together with those who dropped out and those who failed in the same Grade; and the least in number were the 708 classes that could be formed out of the average number of pupils who failed to enroll in Grade II and those who failed to finish the Grade.

The estimated loss incurred by the Government in the elementary Grades, by Grade levels, follows:[4]

Grade I	₱12,716,700
Grade II	1,628,400
Grade III	2,852,000
Grade IV	3,162,500
Grade V	6,975,900
Grade VI	3,401,700
Estimated Total Annual Loss	₱30,737,200

The National Government suffered the heaviest loss annually in Grade I. The estimated amount, ₱12,716,700, is 41 per cent of the average total annual loss which amounted to ₱30,737,200.

In the study entitled "National Survey on Dropouts from Elementary Schools during 1952-55[5] only ₱19 million was reported as annual loss due to wasted educational efforts; while this study reports an average annual loss of ₱30,737,200. This difference may have come about because the study referred to herein was concerned only with "the causes of children dropping out of the public schools before completing Grade VI[6], while this study makes a Grade-to-Grade follow-up of children for a five-year period beginning from the time the children were enrolled in course. In other words, the previous study ended Grade I up to the time they finished the elementary upon the pupils' reaching Grade VI, while this present study goes farther since it makes a follow-up of the children up to their completion of elementary instruction.

[4] An estimate of the loss incurred by the Government each year, by Grade levels, was made by multiplying the average number of classes that could be organized out of dropouts and failures by ₱2,300.00 which is the appropriation for a whole class. This figure was furnished by the School Finance Division, Bureau of Public Schools.

[5] "National Survey on Dropouts from Elementary Schools during 1952-1955", conducted by a joint committee of the National Economic Council, Bureau of Public Schools and the University of the Philippines, p. 2.

[6] Ibid, p. 1.

SUMMARY

The findings in this study may be summarized as follows:

1. The percentages of promotion in Grade IV of the pupils originally enrolled in Grade I from 1946-47 to 1950-51 show that only 5 out of every 10 children enrolled in Grade I completed the primary course every year after four years of study.

2. The percentages of promotion in Grade VI of the pupils originally enrolled in Grade I from 1946-47 to 1950-51 show that only 3 out of every 10 children enrolled in Grade I completed elementary education every year after six years of study.

3. On the average, out of every 100 pupils enrolled in Grade I from the school year 1946-47 to 1950-51,

    71 completed Grade I;
    67 completed Grade II;
    61 completed Grade III;
    54 completed Grade IV;
    38 completed Grade V; and
    30 completed Grade VI.

4. At the rate of 50 pupils per class, the average number of classes that could be organized each year out of the average number of pupils who failed to complete Grade VI was 13,364.

5. The National Government suffered the heaviest average annual loss in Grade I in the amount of ₱12,716,700 which was 41 per cent of the total average annual loss in the elementary Grades which amounted to ₱30,737,200.

It may be mentioned in this connection that the public school system has no definite policy relative to the promotion of pupils in the elementary Grades. The general tendency, however, is towards mass promotion which aims to minimizing, if not eliminating, wastage of government funds. Considering that the dropouts and failures found in this study are largely pupils who left school for one reason or another, it would be worthwhile to consider the following four major causes of pupils dropping out in the elementary grades as found by the report on the survey entitled "National Survey on Dropouts from Elementary Schools during 1952-1955[7] conducted throughout the Philippines by a joint committee composed of the National Economic Council, the Bureau of Public Schools and the University of the Philippines:

1. Educational factors:
    a. Lack of interest in learning
    b. Could not get required books
    c. Distance to travel to school
    d. Too old for the class
    e. Onerous contributions
    f. Did not like the teacher

[7] Ibid., pp. 5, 8, 9, 11, and 14.

g. Irregular attendance
h. Influence of bad companions
i. Frequent transfer from school to school
j. Difficulty with English

2. Economic considerations:
   a. Occupation of fathers
   b. Income of households
   c. Family assistance required of dropouts
   d. Costs associated with education

3. Home influence:
   a. Disruption in household
   b. Size of household
   c. Incomes of household

4. Health
   a. Illness

The report also gives ways of overcoming these causes to the end that the holding power of the schools is improved.

The compulsory education law, known as Elementary Education Act of 1953, is gradually being enforced. Pertinent portions of a memorandum[8] of the Bureau of Public Schools which gives some findings on the experimental scheme for compulsory education are quoted as follows:

Compulsory education was officially carried out on a partial basis in 1956-1957 under Department Order No. 4, s. 1957, entitled **Experimental Scheme for Compulsory Education**. This is but an initial step, as full implementation of the law is not, as yet, possible.

In accordance with the aforementioned Department Order, a census was taken of children aged 7 to 13 who had not enrolled in Grade I or who had enrolled but left school before completing the elementary grades. Teachers in a municipality in each division and in a district in each city division undertook the survey. The teachers exerted every effort to induce these children to go or to return to school. Authority was given the superintendent to utilize one teaching position for a teacher whose duties are to attend to all matters pertaining to this program, to visit with parents who have difficulty in sending their children to and keeping them in school, to give those parents assistance in every possible way, and to give counsel to children in school who may need his guidance.

The findings of the "Further Study on the Compulsory Education Experiment" indicate that if teachers exerted more assiduous efforts to "retrieve" children who dropped out, they could be induced to return to school and stay longer. The teacher in the
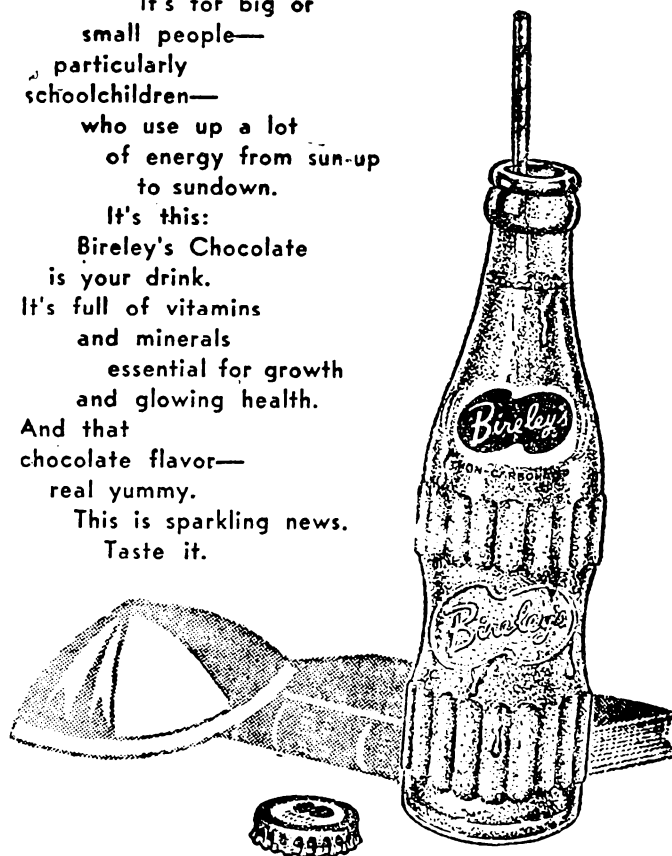
District of Washington, Division of Capiz,[9] who undertook the survey, reported that 235 pupils were persuaded to return to school. Out of this number, 31 returned to school before the scheme went into effect. There were then 204 or 86.81 per cent of the 235 pupils who returned after the scheme was launched. Out of the 235 returnees, only 38 or 16.17 per cent failed and 10 or 4.26 per cent dropped out during the experiment. Only 65 or 21.67 per cent of the 300 dropouts reported were not persuaded to return to school.

The use of the native language as medium of instruction in the first two Grades might reduce dropouts and failures because the children would take more interest in the kind of schooling which they can acquire through a language that they understand. Experiments and studies on the teaching and use of the native languages, the Filipino Language, and English may reveal further how to keep children longer in school. A valid hypothesis could at this time be set up indicating that there is a high degree of correlation between the learning and use of a language and the incidence of longer stay in scchool.

[8] Bureau of Public Schools, Memorandum No. 113, s. 1957.

[9] Letter of the Superintendent of Schools dated Sept. 17, 1957 inclosing the answers of the teachers and parents to the questionnaire in the inclosure to General Letter No. 105 dated July 3, 1957.