

High school dropout: causes, effects, and solutions

[Education](#), [School](#)



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High school dropouts are teenagers who have stopped going to high school before they get their grade twelve diploma. Many Canadian adolescents graduate from high school and go on to post-secondary- education such as college and university, or do trade apprenticeships. However, this is not the case for 1 in 12 Canadians aged 20 to 24. (Gilmore, 2009). Unfortunately, high school dropouts are quite common in Canada despite the fact that it's encouraged and expected that teens finish high school. What are hat is the causecauses of adolescents dropping out of High school? Many sociologists have studied the socio-economic factors that lead to teenagers dropping out of school.

Who Is Affected

The rates of high school dropouts have steadily decreased from the year 1990 compared to 2009 for high school dropouts are According to Stats Canada. One of the main causes for dropping out are money, lack of parental support, academic struggles, boredom and finally pregnancy and parenthood.

There are three reasons that the system is failing ' first is school quality, interpreted broadly to include curriculum and provincial education regulations, quality of teacher training offered by teacher's colleges, experience of teaching staff in particular schools, school infrastructure and so on. Second is the disturbing emergence of a gender gap whereby boys perform consistently less well in formal education than girls. Third is the idea that relevant cultural, political and administrative elites are, for whatever historical reasons, insufficiently committed to educational success. They may be committed to educational success for their own children, but tolerant of widespread educational failures elsewhere in their communities. To these three factors, I add a fourth: the syndrome of low Aboriginal education outcomes, especially among those who identify as North American Indian/First Nation.'

The rates of high school dropouts have steadily decreased from the year 1990 compared to 2009. Some of the sociological factors that influence dropout rates are teenage pregnancy, economically disadvantaged youth and parental graduation rates. According to research done by John Richards et al, certain segments of the population are at higher risks than others. Dropout rates are significantly higher for aboriginal youth as opposed to non-aboriginal youth; boys also tend to have higher dropout rates than girls; and teenagers living in rural areas have higher dropout rates than their city counterparts. According to Mendelson (2006), approximately 43 per cent of Aboriginals between the ages of 20 and 24 have not graduated from high school. The numbers increase to 58 percent when the people living on reserves are included. This drastic difference of aboriginal dropout rates

compared to non-aboriginals can be blamed on different socio-economic factors including “ Aboriginal people live in a community that is influenced by the high alcohol consumption and the dropout background, the Canadian people are surrounded by a social frame that motivates them to pursue their education.” (Noiseux, 2017) Because aboriginals don’t live in community where academic success is encouraged, they lose motivation to achieve well in school. They are also caught in a cycle of generations of dropouts, so the children take after their parents and don’t continue their education.

Aboriginal communities are plagued by poverty, high rates of drug and alcohol abuse and lack of sufficient resources. They sometimes perceive education as a colonial aspiration that does not agree with their traditional ways (Noiseux, 2017).

There is also a much higher rate of dropouts with male compared to female. “ In 2009/2010, 10. 3% of young men and 6. 6% of young women had dropped out of high school.” (Bowlby, 2010). The rates for both groups dropped significantly from 1990, when 19. 2% of men and 14. 0% of women had dropped out of high school. Over time the gap has diminished slightly from 5. 2% to 3. 7% but still remains noticeable. Sociologists have studied the reasons for this gap and have come to multiple different reasons. Men usually report that they wanted to work and earn money because they were not interested in school. On the other hand, women gave more personal reasons such as pregnancy or having a kid to take care of at home. (Bowlby, 2010)

“ Among those aged 45 and over, men have a higher high-school graduation rate and higher rates of post-secondary and university certification. Among those under 45, all three rankings are reversed. Among Canadians aged 25 to 34, four out of seven university graduates are women; four of seven without high-school diplomas are men. Canadians under age 45 at the time of the 2006 census were born in 1961 or after. This generation was part of a major social transformation that was characterized by the removal of barriers to female education and a ‘ catching up’ to men in terms of earnings (although we have still not ‘ caught up’)” (Richards, 2009). Another reason that women have lower rates of dropping out of school is that many initiatives have been implemented in the past forty to fifty years to help the gender imbalance in primary and secondary school. Some feel that catering to girls has led to boys falling behind. This recognition has led to initiatives to have classrooms that are inclusive to both girls and boys (Richards, 2009)

Causes

The causes for high school dropouts can be linked to two different factors called the push and pull dropout factors according to Jordan et al. (1994). He explains that a student is pushed out when adverse situations within the school environment lead to consequences, ultimately resulting in dropout. These include tests, attendance and discipline policies, and even consequences of poor behavior. However, students can be pulled out when factors inside the student lead them to not complete school. These occur when factors, such as financial worries, out-of-school employment, family needs, or even family changes, such as marriage or childbirth, pull students away from school. They can even include illnesses, as these cause students

to put a greater value on something outside of school, and therefore graduating is not a priority.

In 1994, Watt and Roessingh introduced a third reason which they referred to as falling out of school. This occurs “ when a student does not show significant academic progress in schoolwork and becomes apathetic or even disillusioned with school completion. It is not necessarily an active decision, but rather a “ side-effect of insufficient personal and educational support.” Unlike the push or pull theory, falling out factors explain the process where the teenager gradually disengages from school because they have found things that interests them more. As a result, these students eventually disappear or fall out from the system. (Walters, 2013)

Effects

Many negative consequences come from adolescents dropping out of high school and not continuing their education post secondary. Data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics states “ high school dropouts are having a harder time finding and keeping jobs than individuals with higher levels of education. In fact, the national unemployment rate for high school dropouts in July 2009 was 15. 4 percent, compared to 9. 4 percent for high school graduates, 7. 9 percent for individuals with some college credits or an associate’s degree, and 4. 7 percent for individuals with a bachelor’s degree or higher.” (Amos, 2009) The report, “ The Consequences of Dropping Out of High School: Joblessness and Jailing for High School Dropouts and the High Cost for Taxpayers concludes that the average high school dropout will have a negative net contribution to society of nearly \$5, 200, while the average

high school graduate generates a positive lifetime contribution of \$287, 000 from age eighteen to sixty-four.” (Amos, 2009)

Solutions

Mendelson suggests a number strategies that can be used to increase the number of Aboriginal students graduating from high school. His strategies include “ setting milestones for improvement of graduation rates, with specific target rates and dates by which those targets must be met, and establishing a way of monitoring to ensure the milestones are achieved.” (Staff, 2006)

Promoting the idea that education can help Aboriginal people achieve better living conditions is crucial to any plan. Noiseux believes that improving the standard and access to pre-school and primary education on reserves and elsewhere will help improve the problem. “ Also, provincial Minister of Education should allow school districts to take discretionary initiatives in Aboriginal education.” (Noiseux, 2017) Third, all provinces should increase funding and provide incentive programs to encourage aboriginal students to graduate and attend post-secondary school. (Noiseux 2017)

Conclusion

In conclusion high school dropout rates have significantly declined since 1990 but there are still populations who are lagging behind like aboriginal teens. We need to do better to help get their rates of graduation up to the national standard. We also need to ensure that while we are helping girls close the education and wage gap in Canada, that boys do not fall by the

way-side. As we have seen the cost to society of having high school dropouts can be high.