

## POOR ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

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### Poor Academic Performance in High Schools

From a small, poor village to the most advanced and developed cities, everyone knows that education is a valuable and essential tool. It can open doors for better opportunities, thus for a better future. Despite the recent and previous global financial crisis, parents and whole communities have tried their best to make sure their children receive appropriate education and training. They wish to provide them with an opportunity to get better jobs in future for better lives. Unfortunately, many students entering University level perform poorly on proficiency tests. High school graduates experience a lack of necessary skills needed for university level. Because of this, many place the blame directly on high and elementary schools for failing to educate their pupils/students appropriately. Many problems are facing elementary and high school education systems today, and some of them might have adverse effects on student performance at the end. Some of the issues that have led to high school poor performance rate include student reading ability, teacher attrition and parental involvement. The problems exist within high and elementary levels, and hopefully, there are promising solutions to bring better education for students. The goal of this paper is to discuss specific problems, facing elementary and high school educational performance, and to search for solutions on how to ensure better performance of school leavers.

### Problems

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### 1. Reading problems

The problem here is the reading epidemic booming among elementary and high school students. As suggested by Holmes (1998), most of the high school students cannot read what they are supposed to read on their grade level. The majority of these high school students lack the literacy skills needed to be successful in life (Holmes, 1998), tens of thousands of these students drop out of school every day, and some of them do not get a high school diploma. The most contributing reason that causes these difficulties hides behind improper schooling back at a lower grade. Because of certain circumstances, they did not learn to read properly, and this gap creates a lot of problems with their current education. Reading skills of high school graduates have not improved for the last decade (USA Today).

### 2. Attrition rate

The main contributor to the poor performance of high school children is the high attrition rate of teachers. Many people underestimate the duties done by high school teachers, and, for that case, many think teaching high school kids is an easy job. In reality, it is a demanding profession with a lot of responsibilities. It is also a rewarding profession at the end of the day. Unfortunately, many new teachers cannot withstand the overwhelming duties expected of them and thus quit teaching after five years or less. According to Holmes (1998), up to 90% of teachers hired in developed countries, like the U.S.A, are replacements for teachers who just quit without any justified reasons. Because of the shocking teacher turnover rates, high school students are believed to perform poorly. Another problem is the amount of money spent by governments in search of new teachers. Every year, the number grows and takes a toll on the education budget. The money paid to hire these teachers could have been otherwise used for valuable expenditures, like textbooks and computers.

### 3. Parental involvement

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The final problem is the lack of parental involvement with children education, especially when it comes to homework activities. Unfortunately, parents nowadays do not show any interest in helping their kids with their everyday homework, which mainly the teachers have to deal with. Children, with parents involved in a child's education, show higher G.P.A, higher test scores and higher graduation rates (Elish-Piper, 2008). We all know that parents can offer help, encourage, stimulate ideas, support, and provide their children with basics skills better than most teachers can do.

### Solutions

As proved by the above facts, reading is an issue that teachers need to pay more attention to. Moreover, it is a serious problem that needs to be controlled by all teachers of all subjects, not just by the language and reading teachers only (Silverman, 2006). As suggested by Silverman (2006), as a responsibility, all teachers regardless of the grade level, should have reading instructions for their students. Teachers can help out struggling readers, especially if they get the parents involved in the student's reading activities. Some parents may have noticed something, at one point, at home while listening how their child read, and this will help the teacher diagnose the trouble, and that is where to begin the help (Ediger, 2008, p.47). It is not an easy thing to diagnose the reading problems of a child by a teacher within an hour-long class, but parent's involvement will only make matters easier.

Another thing that is of high importance and can be done to help students who cannot read properly is to train the teachers more extensively (Menzies, Mahadavi and Lewis, 2008). All areas and grade levels must instruct their teachers on this problematic part with lousy reading. Various challenges make new teachers' heads spin, and there are steps to ensure that the beginning teachers remain in the assigned school for a longer time. Many scholars suggest that the best way to avoid attrition teacher rate is to begin a thorough teacher

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preparation. Another vital thing that communities or schools need to do to minimize attrition rate is to create a more developed support system for teachers. A reliable support system, according to Anhorn (2008), includes fellow teachers and administrators, teacher education programs, mentoring, and real-life teacher education preparation. Unfortunately, most of the first-time teachers do not get any of this support.

Teachers can get parents involved only if they find out why the parents were not involved in the first place. Some of the reasons why parents were not involved may include language barriers, scheduling conflict, lack of transport, and cultural differences. Some parents may have had bad experiences in school during their time. Hurtful memories do not let them take part in any school activities, making them avoid this environment. Teachers must show these parents that their opinions and thoughts are highly valued. This parental involvement is also crucial, as it will help bond families in the community, and this will encourage reluctant parents to participate in school activities more. Another way of keeping parents involved is through the Student Information System. This is where parents can check online the information on their child's grades, attendance, and evaluations. These systems will help both teachers and parents in many ways. Since many parents have tight schedules, getting online and seeing how their children perform is the best way out. To keep students on track, teachers need to get parents involved. In this case, many students will be more than happy to see their parents' commitment to be engaged in their education.

To this point, we all know that poor reading abilities and many other problems mentioned above are not going anywhere in a snap of a finger. However, it is about time for us, as a community, to join with states (governments) and school districts and start spending money wisely. For instance, on books that will make our kids wish for continuous reading. Teachers, on the other hand, should also take their job more responsibly and do everything possible to overcome the problems school kids are facing today. Education is a valuable and

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essential tool that can open doors for better opportunities and a better future for the next generations.

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