

David Starr Jordan Senior High School

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Psychology

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Introduction

Graduation is a very special point in every student's life. However, due to various issues, one is not able to complete it in time, leading to late graduation. In order to understand the situation in a better way, an interview was held with the teachers of the school of David Starr Jordan Senior High School, Edwin Markham Middle School and the King/Drew Magnet, Medicine and Science High School. The reason for conducting this interview was to get a better insight into the causes of late graduation. Also, their expert opinion can be used to find out the various ways and strategies that can be used by the school in order to rectify the situation. All this will be very beneficial for the students in their growth and development.

1. Why do high students graduate late in this community?

According to the response received from the teachers and principal at David Starr Jordan Senior High School, the reason major students graduate at a later stage as compared to others is that they are very strict in their marking. This made student generally leaves the course or get fewer marks than required in order to pass or graduate. The level of education provided was not what was on the understanding level of the students, which made them scoreless in their exams as compared to passing, making them repeat the exam or skip school altogether.

From the response received by the representative at the Edwin Markham Middle School, the reason high students graduate at a later stage as compared to others is that there is a lack of clarity in terms of credit. This makes them gamble with their subject and option, often leaving them in jeopardy. The lack of clarity is shown in areas of the subject as well. Changing the major subject or adding one or two subjects extra costs them an extra semester, leading to them passing late as compared to others.

With the response acquired from the principal and teacher at the King/Drew Magnet, Medicine and Science High School, it can be clearly defined that there are various reasons for students to graduate late. Lack of finance is a major cause. This makes students earn some money while working, giving them less time to study. This, along with the criteria of passing and the inexperience in terms of exams and studies, makes them fail some subjects, keeping them in school for a longer duration.

2. Why do students get retained in this county?

As per the David Starr Jordan Senior High School and its teacher, there are various reasons when it comes to students being retained. Many times, the student is not good enough to compete or is not capable enough for the next class or semester. The teacher believes that graduating them can be a loss of their growth. This is why they are retained for a certain period of time, after which, with proper learning and practice, they are promoted to the next level.

According to Edwin Markham Middle School's teacher and principal, there are various policies and

plans that state to hold back students until they have reached a master grade level. Students not capable of learning at a certain level need to repeat that grade in order to compete with other students in a better way. This is because if they are even passed, they are of no use to anyone, especially themselves, creating chaos in their life. Retention seems a better option.

From the response received by King/Drew Magnet, Medicine and Science High School, the students in the country are not without a parent or are not so financially stable. This makes them work for longer hours and during exam time also in order to support themselves and their families. This affects their studies to a great extent. This is a prime reason that they are retained. Many teachers provide those special classes and education to help them pass their exams.

3. How do families and students in this community perceive late graduation?

From the response received from the teachers at the David Starr Jordan Senior High School, most of the students and families consider late graduation as a symbol of shame. This is the reason that many of them either drop out of school or are forced to do the same by their parents. It is considered as a sign of weakness and hence is treated in a very negative frame of mind by the people.

The response from Edwin Markham Middle School's teacher shows that the families and students are pretty okay with their late graduation fact as most of the students in this locality have gone through something like this. This is not something that is different for them; hence, they are not affected much by it. Although most of them try to break this barrier it is not something worth too much importance for the people in this community.

As per the principal and teacher of the King/Drew Magnet, Medicine and Science High School, late graduation is not something that is liked by families and students of this community. Many parents, despite being dropouts, do not want their kids to repeat it. Students also consider late graduation as a thing of embarrassment and try to keep it a secret from people as much as possible.

4. What could educators in this school district have done to prevent late graduation?

Educators can be really helpful in providing the correct path for students. The response from the David Starr Jordan Senior High School's teachers suggests that educators can open another school or department for working students. This is necessary as they are not able to devote as much time to their education as compared to other kids, leading them to fail or late graduation. Close attention to the students failing or close to that line should be provided to help them understand their situation before it's too late.

The teachers and principal at the Edwin Markham Middle School majorly reply that the educator

needs to build better policies for the students. A timely analysis should be done of individual students to make a report of the entire one whose performance is not up to mark. A special class or seminar can be held for them, which would prevent them from late graduation. Proper aid and guidance should be provided to the students to help them in their studies. Teachers play a very important role in assisting students in subjects where they are failing or are weak.

As per the response from the teachers at the King/Drew Magnet, Medicine and Science High School, the educators can allow students who are working with some relief in terms of exam courses or duration that would help them from failing. They can also provide them with special coaching or classes in their area of problem, which could lead them to late graduation. A one on one talk with them can also be really helpful in this direction as this will help in making them understand the seriousness of the situation.

5. Is there anything you would want to include that I did not cover in this interview?

From the response received at the David Starr Jordan Senior High School, it can be said that they were pretty okay with all the questions and think that it featured all the major topics of concern with respect to dropping out or late graduation in the community. They also believe that this set of questions would help in the further understanding of the causes of issues in school students and their retention problem.

As per the teachers and principals of the Edwin Markham Middle School, almost all the major topics of concern were covered in the interview. However, a topic about how students think they can benefit and avoid late graduation would have been helpful. This is because this would have showcased their point of view on how late graduation can be avoided.

With respect to the answer received from the King/Drew Magnet, Medicine and Science High School and its teacher, a great area has been covered by the questions in the interview. Just a mention of ways the world is handling late graduation or how others are improving in this area is asked that the teachers can share what more can be done that can be beneficial for the school and the students, allowing them to improve in this direction.

6. Tell me a little about your experience and academic background.

The answer received by the teacher, Mr. Adam Smith of the David Starr Jordan Senior High School, is he is an expert in mathematics. He has been working in the school for the past 3 years, and his overall experience is about seven years. He studied Mathematics as his major in his college time, both in his bachelor's as well as his master's degree. He has even acquired many diplomas for the same. He has worked previously at a local school in the country. He is very popular among the kids and is highly respected by them.

Another teacher who was interviewed from the Edwin Markham Middle School is Mrs. Sophie Brown. She is a highly experienced and educated teacher who teaches English Literature at the school. She has been an active participant in such interviews and has seen many students over her course of work. She has been to many schools in her years of teaching and is currently working at Edwin Markham Middle School as Mrs. Sophie Brown for the last six years. She is one of the senior most faculties at the school and is a perfect candidate to conduct this interview.

The teacher who participated from the King/Drew Magnet, Medicine and Science High School for this interview is Mr. William Scott. He has been teaching science at the school for the past seven years. He has completed his master's in Biology from one of the most renowned universities in the USA. This is his first job experience. He can be really strict at times, but he is very good at understanding the needs of the students and hence has a nice repo with them, making him appropriate for this interview.

7. Tell me about your community and school.

From the response received from the teacher Mr. Adam Smith, the school David Starr Jordan Senior High School is one of the top-notch schools in the area. The quality of education provided there, along with the support of the teacher towards the students, is credible. The community around the school is also very great. The parents and families are very encouraging and support the students to do better. Though there are a few nuisances that can be redeemed overall, the look and feel of the school and the community are quite good.

When it comes to the Edwin Markham Middle School, the teacher, Mrs. Sophie Brown, feels that the school can be a great help for students to learn and grow. She has been part of the school for quite some time now and believes in the potential of the school. However, she finds the community to be lacking when it comes to providing the support and help that it should to the students. According to her, many families in the community force their children to work rather than study, leading them to late graduation. She thinks they need to be more accountable for their actions.

The teacher of the school, King/Drew Magnet, Medicine, and Science High School, Mr. William Scott, considers his school to be the best among the lot. He feels that the school has brought a huge change in the community and the lives of many students. The school provides many programmes and scholarships for student, allowing them to complete their studies without much problem. Though, in this opinion, the community can do so much more for the students especially by providing them with a sound and good environment for their studies and growth.

8. What drives students to succeed in school? What about your school?

According to the teacher at the David Starr Jordan Senior High School, the thing that drives students

the most is the level of accomplishment. The feeling they get when they realize they have achieved something big on their own is a huge hype for them, forcing and motivating them to do better in school. This is a major case in his school as well. Students have a zeal to do better than what they did previously, allowing them to find out their negative and work towards it.

As per the response of the teacher from Edwin Markham Middle School, the need to be better than others is the source for students to succeed in school. Many students want to get better than their fellow students and work tremendously hard in this direction. A lot of students of Edwin School are like that. They just want to be the best among all and hence work towards the achievement of this goal irrespective of any difficulty that they may face to achieve it.

With respect to the answers received from the King/Drew Magnet, Medicine and Science High School the zeal and enthusiasm to learn something new is the driving force in school. At King/Drew Magnet, the students are educated with some innovative or fun way to keep them with the flow of the topic along with allowing them to learn something new. Also, the reason that these help the students in achieving their career goals is also a great motivator for them to do their best in school.

9. What kind of hurdles do your students face on a daily basis?

A high number of answers received at the David Starr Jordan Senior High School states that the major hurdle is the lack of understanding. Many teachers just come and teach without the idea of whether the student is able to learn anything from it or not. The topic may be an absurd one or something that is not so easy to understand. This makes them skip it or lose interest in the subject, which may cause them to graduate late or fail in that exam.

As per the teachers at the Edwin Markham Middle School, the major hurdle is to balance the work-study relationship. Many students are working while studying. This makes it difficult to balance out both, creating a lot of other issues for the students as they get tired of it. Topics like attention, attendance and clarity are some of the other areas which the students suffer from and are a major hurdle for them.

In the eyes of the response of the teachers at the King/Drew Magnet, Medicine and Science High School, depression is a huge hurdle that students face on a daily basis. The prevailing competition, maintaining a social life, and keeping up with the grades tend to put too much pressure on the students, which at times can lead to depression. Another hurdle is to know what subject to choose as this is a career-defining decision and hence cannot be taken so lightly acting as a huge hurdle for the students.

10. What effect, if any, do family and community have on high

school graduation?

From the response received by David Starr Jordan Senior High School and its teacher, it can be clearly stated that family and community have a huge effect on high school graduation. Family who support their children and allow them the proper space and finances to study tend to do better than the students who have to struggle in order to even pay their face. Also, families encourage students to do their best, which motivates them to perform well in their exams, which is lacking in students with no family or support from the family.

The teachers and principal at the Edwin Markham Middle School believe that family and community have a huge involvement in student graduation. The reason is that they are a source of inspiration for the children. A successful parent may encourage their child to do better at school as compared to others. Along with that community considers students who graduate late with a bad eye, which makes students work hard to avoid this situation as much as possible.

As per the answers from the King/Drew Magnet, Medicine and Science High School's teacher community and families are the reference point for every student. One does as one sees. Therefore, they play a significant role in the high school graduation party. Great parents help their students with their study and their problems, allowing them to avoid cases of late graduation. They also motivate or demotivate the child which has a huge impact on the high school graduation of the student accordingly.

11. Why do you think students graduate late in inner cities of Los Angeles?

According to the response received from the teacher at the David Starr Jordan Senior High School, the prime reason that students don't graduate on time is that they have a tendency to change their major very often and frequently. This misbalances their whole foundation as they keep on changing their major, which takes more and more time for them to pass. Also, they try and major in two to three subjects. Changing those leads to all the more time spent by them in school and college, leading to their late graduation.

In the opinion of the teacher of the Edwin Markham Middle School, students in the inner cities of Los Angeles are not so financially stable. In order to balance that out, they work. This, in turn, leads to them working a lot and not getting sufficient time to complete their studies. Along with they do not get enough support from their families who many times force them to keep on working despite the issue that they may graduate late or even fail their exams. This, in their opinion, is a core reason for the students graduating late.

The reason, in the eyes of the King/Drew Magnet, Medicine and Science High School's teacher, for students to graduate late in the inner cities of Los Angeles is that students are very confused about

what they want to do. In all this confusion, they tend to change schools and classes, missing out on a lot of credits. Also, many colleges are very strict in passing their students above a certain grade or mark. This makes a lot of students not pass or repeat a class, which leads them to graduate at a later stage as compared to others.

12. Have you ever retained a student? Any reason.

With the response from the recipient teacher of the David Starr Jordan Senior High School, the answer is yes. He has retained many students many times in the college. This is because the subject that he teaches is very difficult for quite a number of students. They tend to miss a lot of classes or are not so clear with their base. This makes them incapable of some basic stuff, which makes him retain the students to pass on the relevant and necessary information to them, which would be helpful for them.

According to the response of the Edwin Markham Middle School teacher, she has not retained any student in her entire teaching career. This is because she takes a regular follow up with him and informs them in advance about their poor performance or their chance of graduating late. She also tries to make it a point to help them in some of the other ways that can help them pass with all the other students.

The teacher of the King/Drew Magnet, Medicine and Science High School responded that he has retained quite a number of students in his school. This is because, in his opinion, the students are not worth promoting or passing as they have not achieved the basic education or level that is required of them. This is done because he believes that a student without basic knowledge is of no use in the outside world. Passing them would only lead to unemployment or more chaos in their life. He is also quite a bit strict when it comes to his subject and does not allow any leniency in this matter.

13. Please highlight the role of the family in the lives of students in Inner cities.

According to the teacher at the David Starr Jordan Senior High School, families are the foundation of a student's life. They can make or break them and their career. A supporting family encourages the students to do their best and helps in achieving anything and everything they want. A good family can understand the weaknesses of the students and work with them in order to overcome them for the greater good. But a bad family can have the opposite effect on the student, which may lead them to fail at times.

The teacher at the Edwin Markham Middle School believes that families are the make-or-break factor in the life of a student. Many times, the conflict or tension at home can be seen in the performance of students at school, which is a clear example of how much effect they have on a student. Parents who encourage their students to show better performance and results in life make a huge difference in their confidence levels.

The role of the family is unmatched, as per the King/Drew Magnet, Medicine and Science High School's teacher. This can be proven by the various statistics which show that student with supporting family does better in their studies as compared to those with a family issue. Families also participate in the day-to-day activities of the students, opening more horizons for them, which is a huge factor in their success. Financial support is something that is lacking and can create a drastic effect on the life of a student, stating how big a role family plays in the lives when it comes to the student in Inner Cities.

14. How do students and families view the concept of late graduation from high school in this community?

In the opinion of the teacher at the David Starr Jordan Senior High School who participated in the interview, families and students are not so happy with the concept of late graduation. They consider it as a token of shame. Many parents even force their students to quit school if they cannot graduate on time or send them to some other school and college where they can graduate on time. This leads to a lot of loss of credit, and the student might have to change a few subjects, which may not go according to their career plan.

From the response of the Edwin Markham Middle School teacher, she believes that many students and families are okay with the concept of the child graduating late from high school in the community. This is because many of them do not have sufficient funds to support education. This makes the student work in order to earn the funds required to carry on with their studies. This surely would take a toll on their result. The main motive of the families is to get their children to pass with a certain grade so that they can get a decent job.

According to the teacher at the King/Drew Magnet, Medicine, and Science High School, graduating late is a very taboo subject and concept for families and students in the community, in his opinion. Many people consider it as a sign of failure, and it is something that is looked down upon by them. A student graduating late even because of unavoidable circumstances is not given proper credit. They are being taunted for this by their families, which leads to their low morale in life.

15. What do you think are the distinctive differences between these schools?

The feature or difference that sets David Starr Jordan Senior High School apart from other schools, in the opinion of the teacher, is that the quality of education served in the school is way better than any school in the community. Very experienced and skilled teachers are appointed by the school, which focuses on the overall development of the students. They pay great attention to every student, allowing them to have a discussion with the teacher regarding any issue or problem that they may be facing.

As per the teacher of the Edwin Markham Middle School, the distinctive difference between their school and others is that the main focus is on the overall development of the students. Though education is given sufficient importance, the main focus is to make a person capable of making a stand in real life. The school also offers many extracurricular activities in this direction which are very helpful for the growth of the students.

According to the King/Drew Magnet, Medicine and Science High School teacher, the distinctive feature that makes their school better is that they understand the importance of education and the shortage of money. They provide many scholarships and programs that are very useful for the students of this community who are always short of cash. These programs also allow students to pursue those careers that may be too expensive or seem out of reach to them. This makes it a favorite among student and also solves their issue of late graduation to a great extent.

16. What reasons do you believe contribute to students' late graduation from high school?

In the opinion of the teacher of the David Starr Jordan Senior High School, the reasons that contribute to students graduating late from high school is the lack of focus and clarity that stays in their lives. They do not know what they want to do, which is the main reason that leads them to change schools and courses throughout the journey. This makes them lose a lot of credit and many times repeat a course, which is a huge reason for them graduating late as compared to their other classmates.

From the response of the recipient teacher at the Edwin Markham Middle School, the reason she believes contributes to the student's late graduation is the lack of finances. They do not have sufficient funds in order to carry on their studies. In order to do that they need to work very hard and many times need to take 2-3 jobs in order to support themselves. This is a prime cause that makes them fall behind in their studies, leading them to graduate late. The lack of family support is also a huge reason that contributes to the late graduation.

In the opinion of the teacher of the King/Drew Magnet, Medicine, and Science High School, the reason that contributes majorly to the late graduation of the student is the indecisiveness that floats in the mind of the student. They are not clear about their future which makes them late in their high school graduation. Also, the set benchmark for students that they need to pass an exam with a certain grade forces the school to retain students, which makes them graduate late.

17. What are dropout prevention strategies in place here?

Late graduation often makes a student drop out of school as it becomes a thing of shame for them. The response received from the teacher at the David Starr Jordan Senior High School says that the school has taken various strategies to tackle this situation. Things such as a systematic renewal of the students are very helpful as this allows the students to get a timely update on their performance. Any

lack or issues can be handled well in advance, preventing them from graduating late or dropping out of school.

The teacher of the Edwin Markham Middle School, in her interview, stated that there are various dropout prevention strategies that are being undertaken by their school. Early intervention is one of them. Poor attendance, lack of clarity, and lack of attention in class are some of the early signs that are detected by the teacher at the school. This makes them have a one on one discussion with the student and helps in detecting their issue and a suitable solution for the same. This will allow them to handle everything better and in time without facing the big consequences of dropping out.

According to the King/Drew Magnet, Medicine, and Science High School teacher, a lot of initiatives are taken by the school for the prevention of dropouts. A lot of programs and scholarships have been started by them to help students support their studies without the need to work so hard. The teachers also provide great support to the students in their studies, allowing them to take extra classes in their weak areas, which can help them to get a better grasp of the topic.

18. We are at the end of our interview, but is there anything you would like to add that maybe you were thinking about or we did not cover?

In the opinion of the teacher of the David Starr Jordan Senior High School, almost everything major was included as part of the interview. They believe that all these questions would allow one to question all the major issues in relation to the late graduation of the students in the community and the inner cities, which can be really helpful in taking some strict action against it.

According to the Edwin Markham Middle School teacher, the interview had everything that was important with respect to the topic of late graduation in the area. But a topic about how students themselves can make a difference or things they need to take care of to avoid late graduation would have been great as it would have mentioned some useful tips that they could keep in mind and avoid such situations in the future.

As per the teacher of the King/Drew Magnet, Medicine and Science High School, the interview was very detailed and precise, helping to cover all the major topics in this aspect. A brief overview of things that other renowned institutions and world schools are doing to handle the situation of late graduation could be useful for the teachers and students to learn from so that the same can be applied to the schools of Los Angeles.

Summary And Conclusion

From the major response received from the teachers of the three schools of David Starr Jordan Senior High School, Edwin Markham Middle School and the King/Drew Magnet, Medicine and Science High

School, the most common thing about all is that the lack of clarity and finance is the prime cause of late graduation in the area. Despite various efforts, students are not clear about what they want out of their careers, causing them to switch between them, losing out on a lot of time. The lack of finance and parental support also contributes majorly to this cause as students need to work to support themselves, leading them to miss out on school and studies, causing them to graduate late. Schools and teachers play a very crucial role in order to prevent this. By giving proper attention to the weaker students and understanding their issues, they can find out the cause of their problems.

The support of the family and the community can also be a great help. Parents should help their children make important decisions and provide as much help as possible in every way. They shouldn't see the students who are graduating late with distaste as this may discourage the student all the more, leading them to depression. The proper measure needs to be taken by schools on various levels, such as programs and scholarships, early intervention, systematic review, etc., which can be used to assess the condition of the student in advance. This will prevent them from leading the situation to the extreme case of late graduation or dropout. Rather a timely and adequate decision can be taken which would be beneficial both for the school and the students. Efforts need to be made to minimize the hurdle faced by the students on a daily basis. This will make their life easier, providing them the sufficient time to concentrate on their studies and graduating at a proper time.

Appendix

Student Dropout Interview Questionnaire

Q.1 What is the reason for high school students of this community to graduate late?

Q.2 What are the reasons that lead students to get retained in the nation?

Q.3 How do families and communities look at late graduation?

Q.4 What efforts of the school educators in terms of the district school can be helpful in preventing late graduation of the students?

Q.5 Any other question or topic that you think would be helpful in this research?

Los Angeles Inner Cities Teacher/Principal Interview Questionnaire

Q.1 Kindly give a brief introduction about your academic background and your working experience.

Q.2 Kindly tell us a little bit about your school and the community.

Q.3 In your opinion what is the driving force for students to succeed in school? What is the case in

your school?

Q.4 Name the major issues that the students of your school face on a daily basis.

Q.5 Do the family and community have any role or impact on the high school graduation? If yes, then what

Q.6 What, according to you, is the reason that makes students graduate late in Los Angeles's inner cities?

Q.7 As a teacher, have you ever retained a student? If yes, then why?

Q.8 What role does family play in a student's life in the inner cities?

Q.9 How do families and students of the community look at the topic of late graduation from high school?

Q.10 What features or qualities set these schools apart from each other?

Q.11 Why do students graduate late in high school?

Q.12 What strategies have been used in the school to prevent dropout of students?

Q.13 Is there any other topic or issue that is left behind or that you would like to add?

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