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How do Schools Push Students Out of School? A Case Study of Two Rural Secondary Schools in Masvingo District of Zimbabwe

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ABSTRACT This article examines school factors that are closely related to the dropping out of students. This is a case study of two rural secondary schools in Zimbabwe. A total of sixteen students who had dropped out of school in the last two years participated in the study. These were selected through the purposive sampling technique. The study adopted the mixed methodology and used a survey research design as the operational framework for data gathering. Data were collected through a researcher constructed 12-item Likert-type questionnaire administered to the participants. Data analysis proceeded through the compiling of frequency tables and the discussion revolved around the three research questions that formed the pillar of the study. The study established that teacher-student relationships, the nature of the high school curriculum as well as school policies and practices were critical in the dropout problem. The study, therefore, recommends that schools need to transform themselves by creating conditions that not only attract and retain students but also ensure that student survival in schools is guaranteed. For instance, a friendly school climate, where students values and beliefs are respected can go a long way in mitigating the problem of dropping out.