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A Projected School-Community Relationship Program in Western Kansas.

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A PROJECTED SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIP PROGRAM
IN WESTERN KANSAS

being

A thesis presented to the Graduate Faculty
of the Fort Hays Kansas State College in
partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the Degree of Master of Science

by

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Fort Hays Kansas State College

Date July 22, 1949

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROJECTED SCHOOL-COMMUNITY
RELATIONSHIP PROGRAM IN WESTERN KANSAS

The purpose of this study is to determine the need for a better school-community relationship, and a suggested solution of the problems involved, if there be need for improvement of the relationship of school and community.

Because of time and money the problem of the thesis, "A Projected School-Community Relationship Program in Western Kansas", must be limited to representative communities of Western Kansas.

In any problem of this type one must define terms to be used in the thesis. Leisure time has been defined as that time left over out of any twenty-four hours of the day not devoted to:

First, getting ready for work, actually working, and such tasks as are associated with the completion of work; second, time devoted to eating; and third, sleep or relaxation. In the pre-school period approximately twelve hours of the twenty-four are free or leisure time. In the early school period, ages six to thirteen, about six hours are free. In early youth, ages thirteen to eighteen, four hours, and three hours in young manhood and young womanhood, with about the same amount of time during the period of maturity. For old age the amount increases and approaches the initial life or infant period. In short, one fourth of the life span is concerned in its attempt to develop a better human being and a finer per-

sonality during leisure time.¹

A community center is two things. In physical aspects it is a community building or buildings planned and equipped to serve the leisure time needs of a particular neighborhood. In human terms it is the organization of the residents of the neighborhood, democratically, for the purpose of directing the center's activities and promoting the community interests. Community life is a possibility because people live near one another; it becomes a living fact, when neighbors become convinced that in serving the community and in turn being served by it, that the personalities of men and women may best develop.²

The methods used were the survey method, library research, and personal interview.

There has not been any related research in the State of Kansas, although numerous publications and articles have been written showing the need for a study of the problem. The State of Washington performed a state wide survey of their state on cultural and social

1. Ferd John Kipovetz, Recreation, A Handbook of Playground, School and Adult Recreation (Minneapolis: Burgess Publishing Co., 1940), p. 2.

2. Dahir James, Community Centers as Living War Memorials (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1946), p. 7.

resources. In their survey they studied the possibility of school and community relationship in solving many of their post war problems.

The following basic principles were used in this study of school-community relationship: (a) the child is considered as a whole human, therefore the community in which he lives is part of his education; (b) the adult is a social being who works best with a group to meet his needs in a changing society; (c) man needs a place where he can meet with his fellowmen for leisure; and, (d) in many communities the school is the one place, outside of the church, which can expand its program to meet the needs of society.

CHAPTER II

PROGRAMS AT WORK

There are a few schools in other states which have a school-community program. One is Fort Lowell School in Arizona near Tucson.

On Saturday night the parents load all their children in the car and head for the Fort Lowell School. There is square dancing for teen-agers as well as old folks. The young and old dance together in the same squares. They would never become acquainted if it were not for this relationship. The music is furnished by a neighborhood orchestra and the caller is a native of Texas. The people say this is the reason why dance attendance is so large. While the elders are dancing to rollicking tunes, the smaller children are playing games, and the babies and toddlers are made comfortable on improvised beds and sleep peacefully through all the gaiety.

Daily, Monday through Friday during the summer, the children gather at the school for sports, table games, crafts and dancing lessons under the supervision of Mr. Lee, formerly with the University of Wisconsin, and teacher of sciences during the winter at the Amphitheater School; and Mrs. Maxson, a physical education major at the University of Arizona, who has won the hearts of the teen-agers

with her dancing classes and the regularly scheduled dances for them alone. Every Tuesday night Mrs. Maxson conducts dancing lessons. Here the boys and girls are taught to waltz, foxtrot, rhumba or anything they desire. Some of the girls are interested in modern interpretive dancing and they get that, too.

During the day the children can take their pick of activities. In addition to the popular softball games, other sports include horseshoes, badminton, volleyball, table tennis, croquet and a semi-minature golf course of eighteen holes. Pollyanna and parcheesi are proving to be very popular among the table games which also include such old stand-bys as chess and checkers and dominoes.

In the crafts, the children make everything from pocket-books, camera cases, wallets and belts of leather to plastic lanyards. Woodcarving and woodburning are offered too, and both are heavily favored.

Movies are shown at the school on alternate Saturday afternoons, and one afternoon each week the children are offered the use of a large private swimming pool by a generous member of the community.¹

The Consolidated Rural School of Ypsilanti, Michigan is another example of school-community relationship. In

1. Betty Massingale Nelson, "Fun On a Saturday Night," Parents' Magazine, XXIII (July, 1948), 34.

this community there were thirteen rural schools with thirteen teachers and the thirteen schools were administered by thirty-nine school board members. The attendance at these various schools ranged from a dozen to seventy children in a single room. The buildings, equipment, and sites were inadequate in this community.

It was decided by a minority group that a survey should be made to see what could be done to better the education for the community. Meetings were held in each of the thirteen districts at which a proposal of consolidation was discussed. The consolidation was effected, and bonds issued to erect a new consolidated rural school.

The school site was selected, containing twenty acres and located in the central part of the district. Great care was taken in choosing teachers. Conferences were held to develop philosophies, curriculum, programs and other details.

One year later a disastrous fire destroyed the new building completely. This loss seemed to unite the people of the community even more. They voted to increase the bonded indebtedness and rebuild. This time the school was made one third larger as it had proved to be inadequate in many ways before.

The functions of this new school were given careful consideration. The community school here described was to

operate as a laboratory or training school, and special rooms and equipment were given consideration in keeping with the demands which would be made upon it. This new plant was to serve academically, vocationally, socially, and recreationally for adults, out-of-school youths, and the regular school attendance.

If a community is to improve it must become concerned with self-improvement as this community did. The first step was taken when a history of the community was compiled to form a heritage for the community, and by doing this a great interest was then taken in local, county, state, and national affairs. The community tried to turn out better citizens by training them for the future.

A recreational program was formulated for summer evenings as well as in the winter. They consisted of intercommunity sports, dramatics, music, movies, play days, field days, and home comings.

The health program was improved by special classes on community health standards.

It was stressed that every home participate in the home-improvement or beautification program. Also, every phase of the community's activities of production, transportation, commerce, and consumption should be made to achieve its maximum production.

The various churches and church societies cooperated in the activities of the community as church societies are of great significance in the lives of young men and women, as well as adult groups.

To guard against misconcepts of curriculum the community called in educators to assist and study their community and to help determine what each child needed to have a well rounded educational course. Since this was a farming community work was offered in several phases of agriculture, general farm shop, home-making, commerce, and the usual academic subjects.

The work in agriculture was practical and a school farm was planned. This farm was to serve in relationship to biology, chemistry, and physics. This farm was also to be a laboratory for the school as well as the community. Even the elementary pupils were taught how to raise pets, and grow flowers and vegetables profitably. The major fields of study were to be horticulture, field-crops, pasture management, live-stock production, and poultry production.

The Community Citizenship League is the name given to the organization through which the children and adults cooperate to formulate and carry out policies and programs according to community interests and needs. There is the Elementary Citizenship League, The Junior-Senior Citizenship

League, and the Adult Citizenship League. Each of these groups is given certain tasks and responsibilities.

Community night schools are held concerning problems of interest at the particular time. Such classes held may concern "Low-Cost Menus" for the women and "Marketing Farm Products" for the men. Finer arts are discussed as well as practical arts.

The Parent-Teachers activities usually are extensive as they have charge of the fall festival and exhibits for the community.

The programs must be continually remade to serve their needs. Leadership to inspire program making and evaluation comes from the community with as little help as possible from the outside. The program covers all ages from the cradle to the grave. Every one in the community has a part in the planning of some phase of the school² community relationship.

These programs are a success because of the enthusiastic response of the patrons of the school districts.

These schools are a place, where families, old and young alike may enjoy a variety of recreational, social, cultural, educational and civic activities and pursue their

2. Samuel Everett, The Community School (New York: D. Appleton--Century Company Inc., 1938), pp. 340-377.

interests with their neighbors.

The harmonious surroundings which suit each interest make for a congenial atmosphere. The well-kept, lawns, trees, shrubs, and flowers in addition to the lighted fields and courts, help to knit school-community relationships.

The varied programs have stimulated interests which needed revitalizing. The well planned programs show the excellent leadership the community has produced. The frequent and interesting staff meetings reveal the seriousness of the communities to use their leisure time profitably. By having these intercommunity programs the school-community relationships have been a success.

Two Kansas communities which have promoted school-community relationships are Holcomb Consolidated School, Holcomb, Kansas, and Labette County Community High School, Altamont, Kansas.

The Holcomb Consolidated School in Western Kansas has stood the test of school-community relationship for more than twenty-five years. The school is located in the tiny village of Holcomb and is the center of a 210 square mile area.

During the day 301 elementary and high school students occupy the classrooms and shops in the three buildings. In addition any worthwhile group may hold its

meetings there. Some of the organizations of the community are The Farm Bureau, 4-H, Boy Scouts, school-sponsored Future Farmers of America, and Future Homemakers of America.

The Holcomb Community Club, however, has been more effective than any other one factor in building a close-knit community of the farm families scattered over a wide area. It sponsors a community orchestra, basketball teams for out-of-school youths, and regular entertainments. The regular programs are a well planned evening of entertainment which consist of movies, games, cultural, and educational activities.

The Holcomb School originally took the place of six one-room schools and the one three-room elementary school at Holcomb. The idea to consolidate sprang up in 1919 and was effected, and the next year a school plant consisting of elementary and high school was completed.

In order to obtain good teachers the community solved this problem by providing housing.

The patrons of the community have seen the many advantages which their children receive from the consolidated school. There is more competition in larger schools and more opportunities to mix with children of their own age; the entire community becomes acquainted with one another. This condition is important in developing good citizens of tomorrow.

Holcomb community is a farming community and the vocational agriculture department serves as a laboratory for the entire community. The farm shop is open to all farmers to use in machinery repairs, butchering, milk testing, and other shop activities. The success of the boys in agriculture is shown by the many prize ribbons from different Kansas fairs the boys of the Holcomb community have brought home. In the Future Farmers of America each boy is given a project to take home and raise and when he has completed his project he then returns to the F. F. A. the borrowed material or the offspring of the borrowed material.

For a quarter of a century the Holcomb Consolidated School has proved to the people of Kansas as well as other states that school-community relationship can exist through interest and cooperation.³

The Labette County Community High School, Labette, Kansas, is an excellent example of school-community relationship. The farm patrons of Labette County theorized that people are loyal to their approximate locality so why not increase that locality and make them loyal to a larger area. Labette County Community High School takes in 540 square miles, by so doing it has consolidated many

3. Janet Russell, "Holcomb School Serves Large Western Community," Kansas Teacher, 56 (February, 1948), 6.

small high schools. In doing this taxes have been lowered and they are getting greater returns, because they have the kind of school farm boys and girls need. It is a farmers' school and the superintendent is anxious to keep it that way, by asking their opinions and advice.

The teachers are well qualified for the positions they hold. The community has two aims in mind when it selects its teachers. First, each teacher must understand, help, and guide the 440 individual boys and girls enrolled, and second, they must offer the kind of courses and activities farm youth need.

The school is open to all students, whether or not they have elementary school certificates and whether or not they plan to qualify for a high school diploma. If it were not for this many boys and girls would not be in high school.

The curriculum has been planned to serve the community in the best possible ways, as few graduates ever go to college. There are courses offered in twelve major fields and they are planning on adding refrigeration and air-conditioning.

Busses are used in transportation, but if the student lives too far out boarding houses are provided. The students are fed in the cafeteria, and given medical care through a full-time nurse. Students are given a chance to do

clerical work for teachers if they need extra money.

The many activities for the community are varied, ranging from musical concerts and dramatic clubs to boxing matches. Twice a month all school parties are held for the teen-agers of the high school.

This community is trying to do something for the whole child, not just train his mind.⁴

4. Janet Russell, "The Labette County Community High School," Kansas Teacher, 56 (December, 1947), 6.

CHAPTER III

SURVEY OF COMMUNITIES OF WESTERN KANSAS

The communities of Western Kansas were used in the survey on school-community relationship. Inquiry blanks were sent out to one hundred third-class cities of the western third of Kansas. (See Appendix, pp. 27-28) The questionnaire was sent to city officials, whose names were obtained from the Kansas publication issued by the Kansas League of Municipalities. Questionnaires were sent to people of all occupations, such as, doctors, lawyers, bankers, merchants, and day laborers. Eighty percent of the questionnaires were answered and returned. The results of the survey are shown in the table on page sixteen.

SURVEY TABLE

All numbers on this table are based on percent.

Do you consider your schools as the focal point of your community life?	Yes-----	50%
	Fair-----	48%
	No-----	2%
Does the school and community have a program in which they work together in setting up a recreational plan for adults of the community?	Yes-----	17%
	Fair-----	16%
	No-----	67%
Are your schools used as much as they could be for recreational, social, and cultural advancement of the community?	Yes-----	12%
	Moderately so---	58%
	No-----	30%
Is there any planned program for the young people of your community outside of school hours?	Good Program----	12%
	Inadequate-----	48%
	None -----	40%
Must the people of your community depend on commercial recreation?	Yes-----	40%
	Moderately so---	59%
	No-----	1%

In the space left for suggestions or comments, twenty-five percent responded. They wanted suggestions for a good program, and how it might be maintained, financially. Those replying they had good programs revealed through further investigations to be far inadequate for the community.

Personal Interviews

Personal interviews were made in a number of different localities. The persons interviewed were told their names would not be cited in the thesis. This was done so the individual would speak frankly and freely of his community situations. The following is a summary of these interviews: In one community the B. P. W. sponsored a "youth center" but interest was soon lost. In another community the superintendent of schools seemed unwilling to cooperate with the community. A progressive community was building a new auditorium and gymnasium which will help their community. Another individual felt the school-community program was a practical and worthwhile project to undertake. One of the communities wanted a recreation hall to provide a place for school students to spend their spare time so as to bring down juvenile delinquency in that community. Another community stated they had no recreational program other than Red Cross swimming lessons and Boy Scouts, and were in need of a program to benefit the young people. One community felt the adult was the forgotten man in the community. The mayor of a small town advocated some form of recreational and cultural advancement for his community; he felt the schools had not participated in leading the community like they should. Another individual felt his community had lost the idealism of service without

pay; he felt such a program could be established through cooperation and friendly relationship. One community had a youth program underway and wanted any suggestions which could be given. In a town of 600 population there were no facilities outside of the school and these were not in use; there were no finances available from the city fund to permit any such program. Another mayor felt there was too much planned recreation in his town; most of the people and children had no time at home to read and study.

The results of the survey show that patrons believe the school could be used more for community recreation. The educators and administrators believe the schools are overtaxed at the present. Therefore better relations among administrators, teachers, and patrons must be achieved.

CHAPTER IV

PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONS

There are many problems associated with school-community relationships, and the chief one is proper use of leisure time outside of the regular school curriculum. This would include a varied program of recreation for young people, adult recreation, adult education, and a general varied program of activity.

In a small community there are many clubs and organizations willing to do something toward school-community relations. These many organizations could be coordinated through a community-council. The term "community-council" means a community council with representatives from all existing organizations within the community. A study of good school-community relationships reveal that the program is best accomplished through a community-council.

Most communities have a number of non-professional people who have a particular fitness and interest for this type of program. Their contributions as volunteer leaders are most important in school-community programs. Educators must take the responsibility of establishing a school-community relationship.

A good community program must provide a full set of

activities for both boys and girls, men and women, old and young, and, of course, must serve without preference or discrimination.

The facilities obtainable are the school buildings, playgrounds, and other public facilities. The schools will usually grant permission for full time use. In many towns and rural areas, the school building must serve as the center of the community. It is often the only building with adequate space, which, being publicly owned, is regularly available to everyone. With good planning, a school building may be used for school purposes with sections of it available to groups during the day, and the entire building devoted to recreational activities after school closes.

Community recreation needs a legal frame work within which to grow. It reaches maturity, and no longer can carry on satisfactorily in the informal haphazard method developed. Its growth is hampered by lack of recognized authority, insufficient funds and the inabilities of counties, school districts, and towns to pool their recreational resources for coordinated use. There must be legislation giving cities, towns, counties, and school districts the power to establish recreational authorities. These authorities must have the power to receive and disburse funds, acquire recreational property, employ

personnel and maintain programs.¹

In Kansas the third class cities are not permitted to make any levy for recreational and cultural purposes. There is no coordinated State agency which can assist these smaller communities.

1. Burton W. James, Recreational and Cultural Resources Survey (Olympia: State of Washington, 1946), p. 27.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARIZING STATEMENTS

General Conclusion of Facts Shown in Survey

The survey on school-community relationships in Western Kansas reveals that although the school is considered the focal point of the community it is not being used as a community school.

It is shown there is need for a planned program to increase the cultural, recreational, and social advancement of the community.

The survey reveals most people of the community must depend upon commercialized recreation.

The survey, also, reveals that the young people do not have a program outside of the regular school hours.

It is disclosed there are very few schools and communities which provide adult recreation.

Personal Conclusions Drawn from the Study

One of the cardinal principles of education, namely, the wise use of leisure time, has been overlooked in most communities.

Many of the communities have become too small in population, due to modern transportation, they cannot function efficiently as a small group.

The people of the community do not feel the school has functioned properly in trying to improve the community.

There is a need for state leadership.

There is a need for raising revenue in third-class cities.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are submitted for better school-community relationships for Western Kansas.

School administrators, teachers, and boards of education should take into consideration the needs of the community extend far beyond six hours a day, five days a week, and nine months a year.

The people of the community must realize the importance of proper use of leisure time and be willing to correct the ills of their community.

Because so many communities have decreased in population, they should realize the importance of consolidating into a larger community. The consolidation should never be with a community already large enough to be active in school-community affairs. To prevent consolidating with a large community, the smaller communities should try to effect their own consolidation. An example of this existing condition and how it could be improved are the three small towns of Menlo, Rexford, and Gen.

The erection of a modern school, centrally located to all the patrons of the three communities, would make for a workable program and the expenses of the program, as well as the upkeep of the school would not be as much as they are at the present.

All communities should have a community-council. This council would consist of representatives of all existing organizations. The duties of this council would be: (1) to plan a long range recreational, cultural, and social development program, (2) to choose the program to fit the community, (3) to cordially invite all public and private agencies to participate in the program, (4) to pursue all means of obtaining money, (5) recruiting and developing volunteer leadership and obtaining professional personnel, and (6) to educate the public to participate.

The most important duty of the community-council is to make possible full use of existing facilities. If the school-community program is to serve as a means of re-establishing friendly neighborhood relations, the community-council has a vital role to play. It must be the planning, coordinating, mobilizing force to unify and advance the school-community program for all. Most towns have a number of non-professional people, however, with a particular fitness for, and interest in recreational and cultural activities. Their contributions as volunteer

leaders would be very important and the community-council could help recruit, train, and place them. Everyone in the community should have a part in the planning of some phase of school-community relationship. In many communities the administrators and teachers must take a lead to form the community-council.

The colleges need to turn out more leaders trained in the organization of community life, social leaders, and recreational leaders. The existing leaders in the community must realize the importance of this type of a program in the present day living.

At the present time in Kansas small communities, such as third class cities and smaller are prohibited from levying a tax which could be spent for this type of program. This is an unfortunate situation because these smaller communities are willing to levy a tax for a school-community program. There needs to be some type of State agency to coordinate this type of program. This agency should be under the State Department of Education and would work with the recreational and cultural phase of education. This agency must not be a controlling agency, but merely a bureau where information may be passed on.

A clear conception of the word recreation and leisure time must be given to all people in all communities.

The apparent values of this study on school-com-

munity relations, are the setting up of objectives of a school-community program, showing the need for such a program, and giving suggestions as to how a program could be set up; the problems facing a community in the launching of such a program.

The writer realizes this research is not entirely complete and there is need for more research on a State wide basis. The writer hopes this projected study of school-community relationships will be of use to all communities of Western Kansas.

LETTER ACCOMPANYING SURVEY BLANK

Lewis Field
Apartment 86
Hays, Kansas
June 26, 1948

In these days of unusual interest in the study of communities and community life and to make the school a better servant of community life, I am prompted to send this letter of inquiry to certain selected individuals in many communities of Kansas.

As a citizen and as a school superintendent I am very much interested in "School and Community" relationships. I am making a survey of the types of recreational and social programs that are in operation in many third class communities in Western Kansas.

Enclosed is a questionnaire which I would like for you to read carefully and check the answer which most nearly suits your community. After obtaining this information I will compile the answers and write a thesis on the subject "School and Community Relationships".

Return postage and self-addressed envelope are at your convenience. I hope and trust you will make a reply. I will send a summary copy to all communities who have participated in this survey.

Sincerely,

Joe J. Jellison

COMMUNITY AND SCHOOL RELATIONSHIP INQUIRY BLANK

Community name _____

Explanation: Read carefully. After each question there are three possible answers but only one is wanted. Check the answer which most nearly typifies your community. For example place a check mark thus (X) after Yes, Moderately so, or No, and only one check mark after each question.

Do you consider your schools as the focal point of your community-life? Yes _____
Fair _____
No _____

Does the school and community have a program in which they work together in setting up a recreational plan for adults of the community? Yes _____
Fair _____
No _____

Are your schools used as much as they could be for recreational, social, and cultural advancement of the community? Yes _____
Moderately so _____
N _____

Is there any planned program for the young people of your community outside of school hours? Good Program _____
Inadequate _____
None _____

Must the people of your community depend on commercial recreation? Yes _____
Moderately so _____
No _____

I will be pleased to have you write any suggestions which you may wish.

(Signed) _____

COMMUNITIES PARTICIPATING IN SURVEY

Agra	Hill City
Alexander	Holcomb
Almena	Horace
Alton	Hoxie
Arnold	Hugoton
Athol	Jennings
Atwood	Jetmore
Bazine	Johnson
Beeler	Kirwin
Belpre	LaCrosse
Bird City	Lakin
Bison	Lenora
Bogue	Leoti
Brewster	Levant
Brownell	Lincoln
Bucklin	Logan
Bunker Hill	Lucas
Bushton	Mankato
Byers	McCracken
Cimarron	McDonald
Clayton	Meade
Clearwater	Medicine Lodge
Codell	Menlo
Collyer	Minneola
Copeland	Moreland
Demar	Otis
Deerfield	Palco
Densmore	Plainville
Dighton	Protection
Dorrance	Quinter
Dresden	Ransom
Edson	Rexford
Edmond	St. Francis
Ensign	Scott City
Fowler	Sharon Springs
Gardner	Stockton
Garfield	Tribune
Gem	Ulysses
Glen Elder	Wakeney
Gove City	Weskan
Grainfield	Wilson
Greensburg	Woodston
Grinnell	Winona
Hanston	Walker
Healy	Zook
Herndon	

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