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Reporting to the Parents the Progress of Children in the Elementary School

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REPORTING TO THE PARENTS THE PROGRESS
OF CHILDREN IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

by

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

After reading numerous articles in various professional periodicals and talking with teachers from all parts of the state, this writer has come to the conclusion that there are almost as many methods of reporting to parents as there are teachers. These methods range from the slipshod to the very conscientious parent-student-teacher conferences in which the student's progress is evaluated to both the parent and the student.

How best to report the progress of a child to his parents is a perennial problem in many of our elementary schools. The shortages which our traditional methods permit are generally recognized but a way to improve these conditions is not too clearly seen. Many difficulties appear in devising new and improved procedures. One of the most prominent is the problem of getting parents to understand and accept practices which are different from those to which they are accustomed. Another major difficulty is the increased demands made on the time of teachers by most of the new approaches. While a third difficulty is the lack of teachers adequately trained in the techniques of guidance and in ways of evaluating the child and his growth.

Ruth Strang, Professor of Education, Teachers College,

Columbia University, emphasizes the vast complications involved

in the making of an over-all report to parents by saying:

> "Reporting a pupil's progress to his parents is not
> the simple thing it at first seems to be. As we
> delve into the problem, we find ourselves involved
> in the whole philosophy of education, policies of
> marking and promotion, curriculum, and instruction."[1]

In order to reach a maximum of efficiency in any new

approaches, the home and the school must realize that they

have a joint responsibility in a child's development. What

happens to him in either place affects his total behavior.

It is therefore important that each cooperate to the fullest

extent in working out a suitable program of experiences and

activities designed to help the child develop a well-balanced

personality structure.

<div align="center">Purposes of the Study</div>

The purposes of this study are to:

1. Find what methods and procedures in the field of

   reporting to parents are being used in our elementary

   schools of today.

2. Find effective and desirable features of reporting

   now in use.

3. Set up criteria which may be of use to the elementary

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[1] Ruth Strang, Reporting to Parents, Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1952 --p:VII

schools in reporting to the parents on the over-all development or progress of their child.

Need For The Study

The relationship between the school and the home, at the present, appears to be strained. There seem to be several reasons for this condition. Among these reasons are the following:

1. Some schools do not have a definite philosophy of education and as a result are unable to have a definite purpose behind their program.

2. Some school's reports to parents are not in harmony with their philosophy of education.

3. Teachers in the same system, or even the same building, are not in agreement on the best procedure for reporting to parents.

4. "Schools have tended to lose sight of the child. Too often they have been occupied with the mechanics of their rapidly expanding program rather than with the functions of education."[1]

5. The present report card was organized to fit the condition that existed years ago when the school program was simple instead of complex.

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[1] Robert O. Evans, _Practices, Trends, and Issues in Reporting to Parents on the Welfare of the Child in School._ Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, N.Y. 1938 p.6

6. The school program has been enlarged and the teachers
   are not only teaching subject matter, but activities
   and "extra-activities".

7. Methods of teaching are different and it is harder
   for the parent to understand these newer procedures.

8. "The school has assumed a number of responsibilities
   formerly discharged by the home and some parents tend
   to load all their responsibilities to their children
   on to the school and assume few responsibilities
   theirselves."[1]

In far too many of our elementary schools, the report
card is the only procedure used in reporting to the parents.
Most educators and many informed parents, finding themselves
in this situation, are in agreement that this is an inferior
practice and that better practices and procedures need to be
devised. The questions which then arise are: Is an improved
report card the answer? Will a report in the form of a letter
from the teacher be sufficient? Or is an individual conference
between the parents and the teacher the best answer? Just
what practices and procedures best meet the needs of this
particular group must be decided and answered.

There seems to be no one best report for all schools.

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[1]
Ibid. p. 7

The type of report must fit the individual situation. Schools
with small classes, informal methods of instruction, guidance-
minded teachers, and intelligent and cooperative parents can
make a far more detailed report than can schools which have
large classes, formal methods of instruction, teachers who
lack the personnel point of view, and parents who are unable
to read or understand English.[1]

Regardless of the type of report that a school uses,
there is one thing that should always be remembered--

"The human factors involved in the problem of teacher's
marks are the same whatever the plan of marking. The
child is the object, his parents and the teachers the
agents and the report card the instrument that may
conceivably bring these agents of the school and the
home closer together in this cooperative enterprise,
which is education."[2]

From these findings, it is quite evident that there is
considerable need for a more cooperative relationship between
the schools and the local community; and that methods of
reporting to parents be developed that best meet the needs
of each child in the school. All this seems necessary if the
teachers and parents are to assume their full responsibility
to each child by offering the best possible plan of guidance
for our citizens of tomorrow.

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[1]
Ruth Strang, Reporting to Parents, Bureau of Publications,
Teachers College, Columbia University, N.Y. 1947 p. 9

[2]
J.E. Warren, "School Reports to Parents on Pupil Progress"
American School Board Journal, May 1935 p. 16

Methods of Procedure

Two methods of procedure were used in this study. First, a study was made of the current literature on reporting the progress of children to their parents. Second, a questionnaire embodying those principles upon which there seemed to be common agreement was formulated and sent to elementary school administrators in the state of Illinois.

The questionnaires asked for general information concerning the type of district, the number of attendance units, number of teachers per grade, enrollment of the district, number of guidance directors, and the number of times per year that reports are given the parents.

The study includes information relative to the extent and nature of the reporting programs in use. An attempt was made to determine who planned the program, the topics proposed by the administrators, topics proposed by the teachers, topics proposed by the parents, reporting practices used, school time allotted for reporting, freedom of teachers to put into operation the results of their findings, the obstacles to the program inherent in the district, and suggestions found for overcoming obstacles in reporting to parents.

Samples of the various types of report cards now in use in the elementary schools through out the state of Illinois were collected and given much consideration in attempting to arrive at the best methods and procedures for reporting to parents.

CHAPTER II

EVOLUTION OF REPORTING TO PARENTS

Early Attempts

Methods of reporting to parents the progress of their children in the elementary schools have gone through an interesting process during the past seventy or more years. During the late 1800's and the early 1900's parents were told that their children were reading in the first, third, or fourth McGuffey Reader. For several years the parents were told what particular "grade" their children were in, as though that in itself indicated how much progress and achievement had been completed.[1]

Following this meager and inadequate form of reporting to parents there developed an idea for a more scientific method. The schools tried to put an exact or quantitative evaluation on each child's progress. For example: Parents were told that Jim rated 75 per cent in arithmetic, 81 per cent in spelling, and 89 per cent in reading. This method was quite popular for some time, but eventually research established the fact that a percentage mark was not an accurate evaluation. The question which needed to be answered was, "Seventy-five per cent of what?" "Was the seventy-five per

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[1] Walter A. Lebaron, "What Shall We Tell the Parents?" The Elementary School Journal, Vol. LI (Feb. 1951), p. 322

cent based on the progress of all the children in his class or grade, on the child's own ability, or was it based on the relative progress of all the children of his age level?" Even by assuming that a teacher can accurately evaluate the progress of a child on a percentage basis (an assumption which research has proven untrue) the question still remained unanswered.[1]

Since the percentage system of marks did not prove satisfactory many schools developed substitutes. These substitute ideas developed during the 1930's and 1940's. Broad categories of percentage equivalency were substituted. Schools which developed systems using five symbols, usually the first letters of the alphabet, explained their marking system thus: "A" stood for 93 to 100 per cent, "B"--85 to 92 per cent, "C" represented average achievement or 78 to 84 per cent, "D"--70 to 77 per cent represented barely satisfactory progress, and "F" which was for any mark below 70 per cent was designated as unsatisfactory achievement. Even this system did not last long in many areas as it was felt that it was not scientifically sound. It still emphasized competition, and it did not show whether or not the individual was working up to his capacity.[2]

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[1] Ibid. p. 323

[2] Ruth Strang, Reporting to Parents, Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, N.Y., 1947, p. 10

To reduce the competitive effect of letter grades, some
schools began to use only three categories. This system used
"E" for excellent progress, "S" for satisfactory progress,
and "U" for unsatisfactory progress. This broad classification
probably reduced the competition especially for scholastic
leadership in a class, but in some cases, it also reduced
pupils' incentive to do better work. If they got "satisfactory"
they were content, even though they may have been almost on
the "line" between "satisfactory" and "unsatisfactory". A
system such as this seems to decrease pupils' efforts.[1]

A great many educators had an uneasy feeling that what
was being told the parents by this system was no more accurate
than the old percentage marks and was probably less understood
by them. The age old question continued to arise, "Satisfactory
in relation to what?" To the curriculum program; to the
abilities of the individual child; to all children in a particular
grade; or was it, all children of a certain age?

During the past thirty years many schools have designated
the child's social progress to the parent by giving marks or
ratings on traits or characteristics listed on the report
card. These listings were usually under the general head of
school citizenship. Studies which have been made indicate
that the weights given different characteristics by various

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[1] Ibid. p. 11

teachers in determining a single citizenship mark are decidedly
variable. For example, marks on such traits as truancy, cheat-
ing, bullying, obscenity, and others varied as much as 50 or
60 points on a scale of 100. The same study also revealed
that cheating, lying, stealing, impudence, defiance, and obsenity
are the forms of behavior which resulted in the lowest marks.
In general, the conclusion seems justified that, when a mark
of this sort is given it is not highly valid. However, it has
been found that some schools make use of rating scales or
score cards with such thoughtfulness and care that the marks
assigned are probably worthy of a considerable degree of
confidence.[1]

In checking over these early forms of reporting to parents
one cannot help but see that the chief concern of each method
used was that of the marks given in reference to scholastic
achievements. Several studies have been made concerning
factors which affect marks. For example: Bangs and Green
investigated the components that enter into final marks and
found that daily classwork generally counts for one half or
more, short tests and examinations usually for one fourth
to one third, the final examination ordinarily for about
one fourth, and any other work relatively very little. In
many cases, however, they found that the weight assigned

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[1] Joseph Miller, "The Conduct Marking" Ed. Meth. 13:
193-98, 1934

these factors were quite different, reaching as high as three-
fourths of the daily work, one-half on tests, and one third
on the final examinations. Many teachers and school departments
have developed detailed point systems for the scoring of numerous
elements which they believe to be important in determining the
semester or year marks.[1]

The problem of marks is a never ending one, always open
to question, study, and change. Moreover, since individual
teacher judgment usually operates, it proceeds to operate in
as many different ways as there are different personalities.

Another reason for so many types of reports was due to
the numerous concepts as to what education involved and what
educational outcomes ought to be.

> "One may believe that the unit of instruction is to
> be found in subject matter to be learned through
> direct attack. Another may center the unit of
> natural activities of the child. One may conceive
> of behavior in terms of whole activity of the child;
> another in terms of reaction to authority. One
> may put premiums on obedience, docility, and receptivity;
> another in self-assertion, initiative, and active
> participation. One would submit the child to open
> competition with others; another would emphasize the
> educational product; another the educational process."[2]

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    C.W. Bangs and H.A. Green, Teachers' Marks and the
Marking System, University of Iowa, Extension Bulletin No. 244,
1930, p. 44

    2
    J.E. Warren, "School Reports to Parents on Pupil Progress",
American School Board Journal, May 1935 p. 16

Regardless of one's thoughts, the methods for reporting to the parents tended to follow the philosophy of the administration and each member of the staff and as a result many of these attempts led to confusion rather than a stable method of contact between the home and the school.

Present Trends

Present educational philosophies on improved methods of reporting to parents, advocate the consideration of the "whole child" in his educational undertakings. Since there is no educational method for developing a mentality independent of its physical, social, and emotional existance, various improved methods of grading and reporting are being devised and tested in an effort to evaluate the child's potentialities and to diagnose his difficulties, so as to conform with these present educational philosophies.[1]

Although few schools have attained the above mentioned goal, many are well on their way toward more effective methods of communicating the progress of the "whole child" to the parents. Evidence of this may be found through a study of the following observable trends listed in recent professional books and professional magazine articles on reporting to parents and in the current practice of many of our progressive schools.

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[1] Grace S. Davis, "Report Cards Versus the Pupil", Education, Vol. 72 (Nov. '51), p. 193-7

1. "The trend away from subject-centered reports and toward pupil-centered reports.

2. The trend toward using more descriptive and anecdotal material and interpretive comments to supplement the quantitative data.

3. The trend toward reporting on character and personality development as well as on academic achievement.

4. The trend toward the use of letters or conferences with parents as substitutes for report cards.

5. The trend toward emphasizing the individual pupil's progress rather than comparing it with the achievement of fellow pupils."[1]

6. "A change from the use of negative statements in reporting, such as "wastes time" to more constructive comments, such as "needs help in methods of study".

7. A trend away from monthly to quarterly reports, and in many school systems to twice a year or less."[2]

8. A trend toward an analysis of difficulties with concrete suggestions for improvements rather than mere judgment passing.

9. A trend toward less uniformity within city school systems than formerly and more encouragement for individual schools to experiment with reporting media and to work out their own program of communicating with parents.

10. The trend toward helping the child realize his responsibility by having him evaluate his progress and achievement.

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[1]
Ruth Strang, Reporting to Parents, Bureau of Publications Teachers College, Columbia University, N.Y., 1947, p.8

[2]
Willard S. Elsbree, Pupil Progress in the Elementary School, Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, 1943, p. 86

These recent trends seem to be becoming more humane, more personal, and more concerned with the future than with the past. They are more in harmony with our educational objectives than were those that preceded them and far more useful for guidance purposes than the traditional report card. The fact that the education of the "whole child" is being emphasized makes it imperative that the gap between the school and the home be closed and that reporting systems be devised to function effectively in enlisting the whole-hearted cooperation of the parents.[1]

From a study of the present trends, it is apparent that two purposes must be considered in developing a meaningful and usable report to the parents. First, the parents should be informed as to the educational policies of the school, while the second purpose should be to provide the parents with information helpful in guiding their own children. Any attempt to use a single type of report for both these purposes is likely to fail, because the two require different information.[2]

Interpreting the educational policies of the school to the parents is a tremendous task. However, if reports about children are to be helpful, parents need to know what the school's purposes are, including the chief objectives of the various fields, department, and courses; how the curriculum is

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[1]
Ibid. p. 86

[2]
Ralph W. Tyler, "Helen is Smarter Than Betsy", N.E.A. Journal, Mar. '53, p. 165

organized to attain these objectives; and the various kinds of
learning experiences used throughout the school.

In order to provide the parents with information helpful
in guiding their own children, the school needs to record and
retain much information about each child. Evidence regarding
the child's abilities, interests, needs, achievements, problems,
family background, health information, test data, anecdotal
records, teachers comments, and interviews are all important
in guiding individuals, and providing information for later
educational and occupational placement.

What to tell the parents about their children, how often
to report on their progress, and what media to use in reporting
are problems which rest entirely with the school and community.
However, the school professional staff should assume leadership
and responsibility in giving careful consideration to procedures
of reporting and in making every effort to establish policies
which are educationally sound. Even though faculty members of
a school have a great responsibility in formulating the practices
related to reporting, they alone can not provide for all the
needs of the students. Regardless of how hard they may try,
teachers can accomplish little with many children without
some cooperation on the part of the parents.

In making individual reports which will be most helpful
to the parents in guiding and planning the future for their
children, the schools need to include two types of information.

One kind of information should include the child's educational achievement and the other should include those factors which help to explain his progress or his lack of progress. For example, the report for a fourth grade child in reading might include comments or judgments regarding his reading level, his comprehension, his speed, his word attack skills, and his reading interests. Also, the report might comment, on his attitude toward reading, his work habits, his social and emotional development, his physical handicaps, his physical maturity, and his regularity of attendance; all of which are important in helping to determine those factors which aid or hinder his progress. Contributions such as these would give the parents much more information, regarding the child's educational achievements, his progress, and level of accomplishment by noting his difficulties and rate of growth, rather than a single grade found on far too many report cards.[1]

The problem of how often to report on the progress of the child to his parents has been given much thought and consideration the past few years. Should parents be informed periodically? If so, are certain dates preferable to others and what intervals appear most desirable?

In order to arrive at a reasonable solution to this problem, one needs to refer to the major purpose of reporting, which

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[1] Ralph W. Tyler, "Helen is Smarter Than Betsy", N.E.A. Journal, Mar. 1953, p. 166

is to provide information that will lead to close cooperation between the school and the parents in the guidance of each child in order that maximum pupil progress may result. However, if one is to consider the major purpose it would seem that any designated time for reporting would somewhat defeat this purpose. Many school administrators are skeptical of any scheme of pupil reporting which is not uniform. In a recent study nearly all administrators reported that their schools issued reports either four or six times each year. A large percentage also reported that they found it difficult to get parents to accept practices and procedures for reporting different from those to which they were accustomed. [1]

The number of times which a school reports to the parents may be determined by the size of the school, the teacher's load, background of the parents, and other factors. However, it seems that three reports each year are essential if we are to fulfill our major purpose in reporting. The first report should be given early enough in the school year in order to establish the child's level of development and to give him reassurance that he is on the right track and can make improvements. The second report should be given at the mid-year and should note his progress of development and also serve as an incentive for further achievement for the following semester. The third or final report should be made at the end of the

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[1] See Appendix (Report Cards)

school year and should include an over-all picture of the child's growth during the past year. Recommendations for planning the summer experiences for the child in order that growth will be continuous should also be included in this final report. This three-report system has the advantage of lightening the teacher's task and yet supplying information on the pupil's progress at critical times.[1]

The last twenty years have been characterized by an exploration of various innovations of reporting in an effort to determine which most nearly accomplished the purpose for which it was intended. The most common of these are: employing check-lists to provide a more comprehensive, quick description of the child's work, progress, and conduct; using pupil self-evaluation and teacher evaluation procedures; writing individual descriptive letters to the parents; and reporting orally in parent-teacher interviews.[2]

From these innovations, many forms for reporting to parents have been developed and put into actual use; however, all these may be classified under three main types--the report card, the individual letter, and the conference with

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[1] Ruth Strang, Reporting to Parents, Bureau of Publications Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, 1947, p. 41-42

[2] Ralph W. Tyler, "Helen Is Smarter Than Betsy", N.E.A. Journal, March 1953, p. 165

the parents.[1]

. The traditional report card tells the parents how the
child rates in school achievement with reference to grade
standards. This information appeals to many parents because
it seems to show how much subject matter the child has mastered.
Parents have been reluctant toward accepting changes in the
methods of reporting marks or grades achieved by their child.
They have failed to recognize that it is impossible for a
teacher to reduce the many-sided aspects of a child's develop-
ment to an accurate numerical value and as a result some
parents still maintain the percentage scale is the best
method to use. However, for the most part the parents who
favor the use of the percentage scale are those of the upper
social level group whose children are superior in scholastic
achievements. They apparently enjoy informing everyone of
the high percentage grades which their child made and also
in comparing his or her achievements with others of the
class or within the community. Thus, the percentage method
of reporting developed a highly competitive attitude among
the pupils with the result that many children and parents
found themselves unable to account for the fact that they
were not given the high honors which they believe they
deserved. The sad part is that these same parents fail to

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[1]
Ruth Strang, Reporting to Parents, Bureau of Publications,
Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, 1947, p. 9

recognize the natural abilities of the individual. The child, who is working up to his capacity and achieving a percentage grade of 80, is far more deserving of praise and encouragement than the child, who has the ability to achieve a score of 95, and receives a score of 80. This is because the former individual has achieved to his full capacity and has developed not only mentally but has acquired habits and characteristics that enable him to progress in his further development. While the latter individual whose mental growth indicated he has not made use of his potentialities, and has developed habits and characteristics which are detrimental to further growth. Therefore the former child should receive more recognition than the latter student.

As a result, of the competitive effect of the percentage system plus the fact that teachers' methods of appraising school achievement are not precise enough to enable them to make the distinction between 74 and 75 on a percentage scale, very few schools now use this system.

Many schools today use the A, B, C, D, F form of marking which requires less fine distinction in rating achievement than the older percentage system and also tends to be some what less competitive. However, there are still some competitive effects even with letter grades with the result that some schools have come to use only "satisfactory" and "unsatisfactory" with an honor grade for outstanding achievement. In this system, if a pupil works up to his capacity, he is rated S;

if he falls below his capacity he is rated U; and if he does
better than those who have more ability, then he is marked H.
This system seems to be more popular in the first and second
grades in the elementary school, probably because the teachers
can better justify these marks (until enough data have been
accumulated to give a more accurate evaluation) due to a
lack of adequate data concerning each individual. This very
broad classification has little diagnostic or guidance value
however, and beyond the primary grades seems to decrease
pupils' effort.[1]

In an effort to overcome some of these difficulties,
some schools have adopted a dual marking system which includes
ratings based on the individual's capacity to achieve and on
grade standards of achievement. With this system each child
receives two marks in each achievement area: the first
indicates his achievement in relation to the standard for the
grade and is expressed by letter ratings from A to F; the
second indicates his achievement in relation to his estimated
capacity and is expressed by numerical ratings, such as; 1
for "very good" to 3 which denotes "needs to improve".[2]

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[1] Ruth Strang, Reporting to Parents, Bureau of Publications,
Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, 1947, p.10

[2] Ibid. p. 11

A report of this type gives most parents the information they need and if used wisely should prevent parents from unjustly blaming a slow-learning child or from being satisfied with the mediocre achievement of a gifted child. However, it must be remembered this system requires psychological skill and seems very difficult to most parents since they lack the ability to interpret the present day objectives of education. But to those parents, who are well informed and understand child psychology, the present objectives of the school; this method of reporting will be understood and more likely meet with their approval.

Most of our better type report cards today provide space for written comments, wherein the teacher has an opportunity to interpret the marks, emphasize achievement along social, personal, and emotional lives; call attention to progress, and give suggestions for improvement. Any unsatisfactory mark should be explained to the parents and constructive suggestions should be made. Modifying the report card by providing ample space for written comments is a step in the right direction. However, these written comments are helpful only if they are based on an accurate study of the child and are written with particular parents in mind. Care must be taken in writing these comments since the child may develop negative attitudes if the teacher does not diagnose the parent's reaction as well as the child's to the remarks.

Regardless of the type of report card used, it still is
not adequate in that it can not present an overall picture of
the "whole child" as to his development and achievement.
It requires a some what more detailed report in order to be
of the utmost value to those for which it is intended.
Another weakness or criticism of the report card method
of reporting is the tensions developed on the part of the
children at the time report cards are to be sent home. This
factor has been overlooked in far too many instances and as
a result many children become emotionally disturbed. According
to Ralph W. Tyler, Dean of the Social Studies division, University
of Chicago, children whose parents expected a great deal of them
became disturbed for fear their above average grade might not
please their parents. Children with low marks became disturbed
when their parents exhibit sorrowful reactions and often were
administer punishment when they brought home their report cards.
With these thoughts in mind, it isn't any wonder that many of
our more progressive schools have either dispensed with the
report card method of reporting or else they use it along with
other more complete methods of reporting.[1]

The report card has been replaced in some schools by
freely written reports in the form of letters to the parents.
These letters describe the pupil's progress in all phases of

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[1]
Ralph W. Tyler, "Helen is Smarter Than Betsy", N.E.A.
Journal, March 1953, p. 165

his school achievement and are usually divided more or less into three parts. The first part is concerned with the outstanding features of the pupil's work, the second, to those phases of the school program in which he is making satisfactory progress; and the third, to those phases in which he needs special help and can make improvement. It is this last part which requires much thought, consideration, and technique on the part of the teacher in proposing specific suggestions to the individual parent in such a manner as to obtain the greatest cooperation from that particular parent. In other words, this method of reporting to parents is a technique itself.

The success of any informal note or letter depends on the ability of the reporter in portraying the child's needs and achievements in such a way as to secure the parent's sincere cooperation. Obviously if the parents are unable to understand the contents of the letter or if they misinterpret the meanings intended, the report will then fail in its mission. Since all teachers are not equally competent in writing letters some school systems have prepared outlines suggesting the items to be considered in making the report and then each letter is presented to the administrator and must merit his approval before it is sent to the parent.

Criticisms often made of letter reports are that they are time consuming, that they tend to become stereotyped,

and that many teachers are not especially gifted in composing
letters of this type. However, many schools have been able
to surmount at least some of these difficulties and are find-
ing this method of reporting to be very satisfactory both
on the part of the members of the faculty and the parents.
The attitude of the faculty is an important consideration,
and the type of neighborhood in which the school is located;
are important factors in determining the success of the letter
form of reporting to the parents.[1]

Parent-teacher conferences must be an integral part of
the school program or curriculum, if the school and the
parents are to accept their full responsibility for the
personality growth of the child as well as for his intellectual
growth. This integral and vital part of the school curriculum,
in order to remain as such, must not be relegated to after-
school hours, when the teachers are weary from a long day's
work. Instead they must become a part of the regular program,
and time must be set aside for them just as time is set aside
for other school activities.

Several schools have been experimenting with various
methods for finding time for parent-teacher conference with
the result thatseveral workable plans have been adopted

[1]
Willard S. Elsbree, Pupil Progress in the Elementary
School, Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia
University, New York, 1943, p.84

throughout the nation's schools. One plan is to include on the teaching staff a "floating teacher " who can take over a class while the regular classroom teacher is holding a conference. Another plan is to set aside certain periods of time each week or month in which no classes are scheduled, and the entire time is devoted to conferences. Other schools have developed a program in which a class works in the shop or the art studio for a one hour period, thus releasing the home-room teacher for conference work.[1]

One consideration of the parent-teacher conference is a planned time. Another is the matter of pupil load. This matter of pupil load is extremely important to teachers in the kindergarten and primary grades. It is important that intensive counseling be done during the child's early formative years and in order to do this the pupil load should not exceed twenty. If the teacher is to gain a thorough knowledge of the individual needs of each pupil and do a satisfactory job of parent counseling the pupil load must be reduced in the greater portion of our present classrooms.

An in-service training program needs to receive special consideration in order to prepare teachers already in the field in the art of parent counseling. A program of this type will require a specialist on the school staff in the

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[1]
Katherine E. D'Evelyn, Individual Parent-Teacher Conferences, Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, N.Y. 1945, p. 92

field of guidance and psychological counseling. Such a person
would train the teachers in counseling by working with them
on individual cases and by serving as an advisor in their
group discussions. He might take over the most difficult
or complex problems of counseling. However, it has been
found most advisable to have the teachers counsel their students'
parents with aid from the chief counselor when necessary.
By functioning in a supervisory capacity, the specialist's
service would also extend to the parent group and aid in
developing a better understanding between the school and the
members of the local community.[1]

One other consideration deemed necessary is the sound
mental health of the teacher. He must be reasonably well
adjusted emotionally if he is to confer with parents and be
able to assist them with their problems in a constructive
manner. This does not mean that the teacher must be super-
human, but he should have insight into his own motivations,
needs, and desires. He should know wherein lie his satisfactions
and his faults. He should have a working philosophy that
will permit him to choose his satisfactions wisely. Only
by sound constructive thinking and by maintaining a firm

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[1] Katherine E. D'Evelyn, Individual Parent-Teacher Conferences,
Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University,
N.Y., 1945, p. 93

control of one's emotions can one best serve as a parent
counselor.[1]

Another matter which needs to be given much consideration
is that of preparing student-teachers for parent counseling.
A special background of study and training is required if
teachers hope to be able to conduct successful conferences.
Teachers must be well grounded in mental hygiene, personality
adjustment, and have a thorough knowledge of the normative
growth and behavior expectations of the age range of children
with whom they are working. All this is essential in order
for a teacher to know what behavior is within the normal
range of expectations and thus be able to discern any deviations
serious enough to cause concern. Good counseling techniques
should be a required part of each curriculum in the teacher
training field.

Regardless of the implications, the parent-teacher
conference method of reporting to parents has certain advantages
over other media of reporting. In this face-to-face relation-
ship, between the teacher and the parent, the pupil's progress
can be more adequately interpreted and the report can be
personalized more fully. It also provides the parents with
an excellent opportunity to better understand the teacher's
problems and at the same time it provides the teacher with

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[1] Ibid. p. 93

an equal opportunity to learn from the parents. As Ruth

Strang, Professor of Education, Columbia University, so

skillfully points out:

> "Parents have much more information about the child's
> background and out-of-school behavior than the
> teacher has. And most parents will talk about their
> child much more readily than they will write a report
> about him to the teacher. With every thoughtfully
> appraised parent conference, the teacher will grow
> in his ability to understand and guide pupils and
> parents."[1]

In order to be of the utmost help to the child, the

teacher and the parents should each have a list of common

characteristics and needs which boys and girls of a particular

age range may be expected to have and thus be better prepared

to help the child in making his adjustments in society. A

list, such as the one used in the East Whittier Schools of

California, could serve as a guide to help the teacher and

the parents to better acquaint themselves with the problems

facing the child at that particular stage of his development.[2]

It is very difficult, it seems, for adults to see the problem

which the child faces in the same light that the child sees

the same problem. A guide should prove beneficial in preparing

the teacher and the parents for a better understanding of the

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[1]
    Ruth Strang, Reporting to Parents, Bureau of Publication,
Teachers College, Columbia University, N.Y. 1947, p. 32

[2]
    See Appendix p. 61

characteristics in child growth and development.

The parent conference requires of the teacher significant information about each pupil. This information may originate from various sources, such as cumulative record folder, check lists, samples of the pupil's work, anecdotal notes, and pupil self evaluation sheets. From these sources of material the teachers and the parents should get a rather complete picture of the "whole child". From this picture, they should be able to diagnose the causes for any difficulties and also work out together the best plan of procedure _for_ the child. All of this may not be solved in one conference but will evolve from a series of conferences in which there is complete harmony among all concerned.

Whether the conference creates good home-school relationships depends to a large extent on the teacher's personality and interviewing skill. One must not forget that each parent is unique in his personality and his problems. Therefore, much of the responsibility for the success or failure of a conference rests with the teacher. Since the success or failure of the parent-teacher conference rests primarily with the teacher, it seems apparent that a few guides to aid the teacher in conducting an interview might be appropriate. These guides, although somewhat general, might provide the difference between success and failure in a parent-teacher conference.

1. "It is well to arrange for no interruptions dur-
   ing a conference. Nothing is more disturbing to
   the serious efforts of trying to think through a
   problem than to be interrupted at a crucial
   moment.

2. It is easier to build a cooperative relationship
   if the teacher is not seated behind a dest.
   Behind a desk the teacher is in the place of
   authority, not partnership.

3. The teacher's greeting should be friendly and
   relaxed. If he is hurried or tense, the parent
   will know it. It is difficult to discuss a
   problem with someone who looks as if he wished
   you were not there, or would leave soon.

4. Listen, and then listen some more. The teacher
   did not invite the parent in to deliver a lecture
   to him, but to get, as well as to give, help.
   Encourage the parent to talk, and then listen
   to what he has to say.

5. Find out how the parent is thinking and feeling
   about his child. This is important, because the
   teacher cannot understand the child's behavior
   until he knows the parent attitude.

6. If a parent says he is worried about his child's
   behavior, follow through. Find out why he is
   worried. The teacher should not assume that he
   knows why. He and the parent may not feel the
   same way about the child.

7. It does not help to argue with a parent. Arguing
   will arouse resentment and resistance.

8. Most parents can not be objective about their
   own children. Therefore, do not criticize, either
   directly or indirectly. Criticism is fatal to
   the building of a cooperative relationship.

9. Try to be aware of sensitive spots, and avoid
   embarrassing the parent by noting facial expressions,
   gestures, and voice. These all give a clue to
   the parent's emotions.

10. It is helpful to try to close the conference on

a constructive, a pleasant, or a forward-going
note, such as a plan for further consultation,
a definite date for the next conference, a state-
ment of a plan for cooperative action."[1]

In checking over this medium of reporting, it is apparent
that most of the disadvantages of the parent-teacher conference
arise from faults in the guidance program, inadequate pupil
personnel records, or a heavy teaching load which leaves no
time for conferences. Many teachers are poorly qualified
or unprepared for their guidance responsibilities while still
others lack the opportunity to learn the guidance techniques
they need. However, regardless of the amount of training a
teacher may have his personality is the most important asset
needed if the parent-teacher conference is to be used success-
fully as an evaluating medium.

Summary

Early attempts in evaluating the progress of the child
to his parents were little more than informing the parents
the reading book in which the child was working. From this
meager method there developed various grading systems which
necessitated the development and use of the report card as
a means of communicating the evaluations to the parents.

The last twenty years have been characterized by intensive

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[1]
   Katherine E. D'Evelyn, Individual Parent-Teacher Conference,
Bureau of Publication, Teacher College, Columbia University,
New York, 1945, p. 96-7

study and experimentation of very different procedures.

Reporting to parents now has two chief purposes. One is to

interpret the school to the parents, while the other is

provide the parents with information helpful in guiding their

own child. The most common innovations are using individual

lescriptive letters to the parents, and reporting orally in

parent-teacher conferences.

CHAPTER III

A STUDY OF EVALUATION METHODS IN USE IN THE

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS OF ILLINOIS

General Information

A few general facts will help to present a better picture
as to the scope and the various sizes of the schools which
submitted to the study.

Questionnaires were sent to sixty-five heads of elementary
schools throughout the state of Illinois. Of the sixty-five
questionnaires, forty-seven were returned and of these twenty-
two were filled out completely, the rest being partially
completed. The forty-seven questionnaires submitted came
from twenty-nine community unit districts, seven community
consolidated districts, six consolidated districts, four common
school districts, and one charter district. The schools included
in the study ranged in size from eighteen attendance units to
only one attendance unit. The total number of attendance
units reported for the study was two hundred seventy-eight.
Seven districts reported that they had full time guidance
directors, ten reported part time guidance directors, and
thirty indicated that they were without a guidance director.
In regard to the number of times per year that reports are
made to the parents, thirty-one schools reported issuing
reports six times per year, while sixteen schools reported

issuing their reports four times per year.

Thus, it can be observed the questionnaires came from a pretty good cross section of central Illinois schools.

Trends and Evaluations

Approximately seventy-five per cent of the administrators submitting questionnaires were of the opinion that their present method or methods of reporting to parents were inadequate. In fact, three large school systems returned their questionnaires with the comment that they were in the process of revising their media of reporting. This present trend of thought among the school administrators is an excellent indication as to how they feel in regard to the need for better reporting procedures.

The trend, as to who determines the program or methods of reporting, indicates a turn in the right direction. Of those reported, almost seventy-five per cent indicated that their program was determined by the administrators, teachers, and the parents. This is as it should be. The schools belong to the community and as such the members of that community should have a part in the planning, the curriculum, and evaluation program of the school.

Present reporting devices being used in the elementary schools of Illinois are encouraging. The findings, as shown in Table I, indicate modern trends are beginning to be supplemented with the report card in evaluating the work of the child to the parents.

TABLE I

REPORTING MEDIA USED IN CONJUNCTION WITH REPORT CARDS
IN FORTY-SEVEN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS IN ILLINOIS
1952-53

Media of Reporting (With the Report Card)	Number of Times Indicated
1. Parent-Teacher Conference........	23
2. Parent-Teacher Conference and the Letter Report.............	15
3. Letter Reports...................	6
4. Report Cards (alone).............	3

Since the report card was checked along with the parent-teacher conference and the letter report, the indications are that these more modern methods of evaluation are more or less in the experimental stage. Samples of the pupil's work, anecdotal motes, and cumulative folders were checked most often where the parent-teacher conference was indicated as a method of reporting. These devices are all essential in the parent-teacher conference method for reporting. The pupil self-evaluation sheet, teacher evaluation sheet, and personality check list were checked the least often of all. This is probably due to the fact these methods are not too well adapted for lower grade reporting.

From the samples of report cards collected, it is quite
evident we have schools through out the state that have made
tremendous advancement in their methods for reporting to
parents. Many schools have felt the inadequacy and unjustness
of their method of reporting the pupil's progress and growth
to the parents. Several of these schools have made attempts
to improve their method of reporting as shown in the development
and adoption of report cards conforming to modern objectives
of education. Methods of reporting which tend to include the
"whole child" may be found by examining the forms of reports
used in the various individual grades of the Watseka, Vandalia,
and Urbana public schools.[1] The reports used by these schools
in their primary grades take into account the child's academic
achievement, his social development, his physical growth,
and his personality traits. Under each of these major topics
numerous sub-topics or items are listed. For example, under
Social Habits and Attitudes the following characteristics
were listed: Works and plays well with others, Accepts responsi-
bility, Shows courtesy and respect for others, Accepts construc-
tive criticism, and Offers good suggestions. Thus it may be
observed that the social development of the child is given
much consideration even in the primary grades.

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[1] Samples of report cards from Urbana, Vandalia, Watseka,
Danville, and Edwardsville Schools are included in the Appendix

All items on the card, regardless of the major topic under which they appear, are checked as showing satisfactory progress, unsatisfactory progress, outstanding progress, or needs improvement. This method of marking is a decided improvement over the old percentage or even the letter method of evaluating the child's growth and progress.

Space is provided on several of the better type cards for teacher and parent comments and also a place where either the parent or the teacher may check if a conference is desired.

Another type card, the opposite to the forms of reports discussed above was also submitted. This type card was small with a minimum of printed information. Space was provided for writing in the subjects to be graded. A small space to record the grade was the only means provided for evaluating the child to his parents.

Administrators were asked on the questionnaires to indicate areas of work or topics which had been proposed for study during the past two years by; (1) Administrators, (2) Teachers, or (3) Parents. The following table presents the trends of thought of the various groups as indicated by the school administrators.

TABLE II

AREAS OF WORK AND TOPICS PROPOSED BY VARIOUS GROUPS FOR
IN-SERVICE STUDY THE PAST TWO YEARS

Proposed by Administrators	No. of Times	Proposed by Teachers	No. of Times	Proposed by Parents	No. of Times
Parent-Teacher Conference	8	Personal Conference	4	Need for Conference	2
Reports to Parents	5	Guidance Workshop	3	Better Reports	2
Parent Study Groups	4	Anecdotal Notes	3		
Hand Book for Parents	3	Personal Letters	3		
Testing and Evaluating	2	Check Sheets	2		

From the study, it is interesting to note that better report-
ing methods and the parent-teacher conference both received
more demand for recognition than any other areas of study.
In fact both topics were suggested by each group which indicated
each group was well aware of the needs involved.

Suggestions evolving from the teacher groups are all
vital topics and indicate that where teachers were given the
opportunity to propose in-service study areas they did an

excellent job. From these findings, administrators and boards of education might arrange to sponsor some of these proposed studies and thereby meet the needs of the teachers, who in turn will be better prepared to meet the needs of their pupils.

Two other topics suggested for study by the administrators which merit consideration are parent study groups and hand books for parents. Both topics are valuable in that they offer the parents an opportunity to learn more about the school and its problems and they also provide good public relations.

More than seventy-five per cent of the administrators indicated that they were unable, at the present, to provide free time during the school day for their teachers to prepare or present their reports to the parents. A situation, such as this, makes it difficult for the teachers to improve their methods of reporting. Not many teachers possess the vim and the vitality to do their best work after teaching a full day in an overcrowded classroom, such as many of our elementary teachers now have.

The administrators expressed conflicting sentiments concerning their opinions about the abilities of the greater portion of classroom teachers to conduct a meaningful and worthwhile conference with parents. Slightly less than half of the administrators judged the classroom teachers

adequately trained in the field of guidance and child growth
and development to conduct such a conference. More than
half of the administrators agreed the classroom teachers
were not sufficiently trained in these fields to direct such
an important conference.

In this study, an attempt was made to determine the
problems encountered by administrators in their efforts
toward improving their methods of reporting to the parents.
The following table presents the problems most often referred
to along with the suggested solutions as recommended by these
administrators.

TABLE III

PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED BY ADMINISTRATORS IN IMPROVING REPORTING
METHODS AND SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS

Problems Encountered	Suggested Solutions
Lack of understanding on the part of the parents	Better public relations
Tradition	Better school interpretation program
Over emphasis on grades	Parent-teacher study groups
Time	Plan with the parents instead of for them
Failure of teachers to "know pupils"	Better professional preparation on part of teachers
	More career teachers

Getting parents to accept reporting practices which
are different from those to which they are accustomed is
apparently a difficult problem in many communities. The
results of the survey show that three-fourths of the administra-
tors have experienced this difficulty when attempts toward
a revision in evaluation were suggested to the parents.
The apparent obstacles which the administrators encountered
in their efforts toward improving their methods of reporting
were: over emphasis which parents place on grades, tradition,
and the lack of understanding of the modern trends of education
on the part of the parents. Once these obstacles have been
eliminated, the home-school relationship should develop a
more cooperative attitude. The results of this improved
attitude should be shown in the improved methods of evaluating.

Some administrators stated that not only the parents,
but their teaching staff opposed any changes proposed in the
evaluating a child to his parents. Some of the reasons listed
were: in contemplating a few needed changes, the administrator
found the teachers would rather follow the traditional pattern,
than to help work out a solution to the problem; some teachers
would be willing to find the solution, but due to other
curricular activities which have been added to the teacher's
load, and the teacher having no free period, they feared that
any change would demand more time in their already over-crowded
day.

The list of suggestions in Table III indicates two broad
areas in which work has been done in an effort to promote better
guidance and evaluation programs for the children. One area
refers to the development of better public relationship between
the school and parents by forming parent-teacher study groups
whereby the policies of the school are discussed and interpreted.
From the study and discussion of modern methods of evaluation
and guidance there should develop an understanding on the
part of the parents so that they will cooperate with the
teacher and enable the child to progress and develop mentally,
physically, socially, and emotionally. The second area concerns
the problem of better trained teachers in the fields of
guidance and evaluation methods. Teachers well trained in
these areas are essential if progress is to be established
and maintained in the field of reporting to the parents.
Teachers lacking this training and teachers not teaching in
the field in which they took their training find it difficult
to diagnose and interpret their findings with the children
to the parents, concerning their child.

Summary

The results of the study made indicates that there are
numerous methods of evaluating the child's progress to the
parents in use throughout the state of Illinois. The survey
revealed that in the forty-seven school systems replying
the report card was in use along with attempts to use other

methods of evaluation. Many of these report cards supplied space for parent and teacher comments, whereby the teacher or parent might ask for a conference.

Considerable evidence was set forth which indicates that administrators are studying the problem of improving their present methods of evaluation. Many administrators stated they were in the process of changing, while others expressed an opinion for a needed change from their present methods.

Before a change can be expected the following problems must be solved: the improvement of public relations between the community and the school, trained teachers in the field of guidance and in methods of evaluation, and the solving of the problem of time necessary for the teacher to evaluate the "whole child".

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND
TOPICS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study has been to find the various
methods and procedures of reporting to the parents used in
the elementary schools of today and to determine the desirable
and most effective features of each medium. From this study,
criteria were selected which could be used in the elementary
schools for reporting to parents on the development and
progress of the "whole child".

Sources of Data

The chief sources of information were: books, bulletins,
and magazine articles pertinent to the diverse phases of
reporting to parents; and data accumulated from questionnaires
and report cards received from school administrators.

Summary

Historical information revealed that early attempts in
evaluating the progress of the child to his parents were little
more than informing the parents which reading book the child
was using in his school work. From this meager report there
developed a system of marking in which a numerical method of
evaluating was soon replaced by a letter system which was

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based on a wider range for determining grades. Little consideration was given the child, as to his social, physical, or emotional development in these early attempts.

The last twenty years have been characterized by intensive study and exploration of very diverse methods and procedures. The most common and acceptable methods developed are: using individual descriptive letters to the parents; and, reporting orally in parent-teacher interviews. Both methods, in order to be effective require the teacher to have considerable data concerning each individual he evaluates.

Considerable evidence was collected which revealed the need for improved methods of evaluating in most of our schools. There are three main problems which must be solved before successful changes can be acceptable. These problems are: (1) lack of training on the part of teachers in the field of guidance and methods of evaluation; (2) lack of parent understanding in modern trends and objectives of the school and in evaluation procedures; and, (3) a lack of time and energy on the part of teachers because of heavy class loads and inadequate provision for improved reporting procedures in the regular school program.

Conclusions

True education is a process of growth and progress of the "whole child", not just his mental achievement, but also his

physical development and his social and emotional adjustment.
No two individuals possess the same potentialities or progress
at the same rate. Yet tremendous amounts of valuable time,
effort, and energy are used by teachers in grading, scoring,
and labeling their pupils in order that they may make a report
to the parents using the group for comparison. This method
of evaluating the child is not in keeping with the more modern
trends. We think the person who possesses less worldly wealth
is foolish for keeping up with the Joneses, yet, we as teachers
and parents have expected children to do the same type of work
without considering the potentialities which they possess.
Every teacher should accept the child in what ever stage of
development he finds him and then guide and direct him in
his efforts to achieve higher goals.

What means or methods shall be used in evaluating the
child to his parents? Is one method superior to all others?
From the information obtained from current literature pertaining
to these questions there is no one best report for all schools.
The type of report must fit the individual situation. Schools
with small classes, guidance-minded teachers, and intelligent
and cooperative parents can make a more detailed report than
can a school with large classes, teachers who lack guidance
techniques, and uninformed or disinterested parents. One
of the most important things to remember is that reports are
made for the child and not about the child. The sole purpose

of any printed form, written report, or parent-teacher conference
should be to help the child succeed in life.

In order to develop an evaluating program which will
be most satisfactory to the community, a study group from the
local school area should be selected. It might be well to
select this group by a small committee composed of members
from the local teachers' organization, the board of education,
and the parent-teacher organization. The group which this
committee selects should be composed of parents, teachers,
members from the board of education, and the school administrators
and should be selected on their interest in the study and their
leadership in the community. The duties of this group would
be to propose and to provide necessary criteria for recommended
program. A program in which the parents and teachers have a
part in formulating should be more acceptable than one devised
by the administrative staff.

From a study of the present programs now in use, it
seems apparent that the parent-teacher conference used in
conjunction with other methods of evaluation presents the
greatest possibilities for becoming the most successful medium
of evaluating the "whole child" to his parents. It tends to
eliminate antagonistic attitudes of the parent and the child
toward the school and to develop a more wholesome atmosphere
in which the child is enabled to develop and grow and thus
become more adjusted to social living. However, the parent-

teacher conference method of reporting will meet with criticism and be subjected to ridicule like other experimental changes in education unless the school and the local community in which it is introduced, understands its objectives and goals.

Recommendations

As a result of this study and from information obtained from current literature the following recommendations are made in the belief that they will add to the total effectiveness of the reporting programs now in use in our elementary schools.

1. Teachers, administrators, boards of education, and ultimately whole communities should become aware that they are jointly responsible for the development and improvement of programs and procedures for reporting to parents.

2. Increased use should be made of those democratic group processes which utilize the varied knowledge, experiences, and points of view of various members of the community.

3. A cooperative study needs to be made at the local level by teachers, administrators, and the board of education for the purpose of providing time to carry on a worthwhile program, designed to meet the needs of the child and offer aid and

suggestions deemed advisable for the parents.

4. Adult education classes from which the parents
   may gain valuable information concerning child
   growth and development, guidance techniques,
   modern methods of teaching, modern procedures
   in reporting, and thus better understand the
   importance of close cooperation between the home
   and the school.

5. Boards of education need to be informed of the
   needs, purposes, and problems of an adequate re-
   porting program.

6. A revised curriculum in elementary education
   in our universities and colleges, for the purpose
   of better preparing teachers and prospective
   teachers in the fields of individual differences,
   guidance techniques, and in the techniques of
   evaluation.

7. Each school community needs to have a reporting-
   to-parents-program which best meets the needs
   of every elementary school child within that
   community.

Topics For Further Study

There are many unanswered questions and unsolved problems
in this field, some of which appear impossible of experimental

or objective solution by means and methods at present available.
Several problems or questions closely related to the topic
under consideration were suggested. They are:

1. The question as to the effects of marks upon the
   lives of those to whom they are given (not merely
   in the relatively near future, but in later years)
   is very important and merits much study.

2. The whole question of whether standards for
   marking should be uniform and fixed or adapted
   to the group should be attacked more thoroughly,
   but much of the attack must be by clear, critical
   thinking rather than the use of objective data.

3. Has school reorganization in Illinois brought about
   any significant changes in the methods and procedures
   for reporting to parents?

4. To what extent are school administrators and
   teachers providing democratic leadership for
   improving methods and procedures in reporting
   to parents?

5. What means and procedures are being used by groups
   working on new methods of reports to parents for
   an evaluation of their own work?

6. To what extent are trained teachers and administrators
   teaching and administrating in the areas in which
   they received their training?

7. What do present marks really tell the administrators, teachers, or parents?

This list of topics or areas for further study is not a complete list. There are numerous other topics and areas on which there is a need for further research. However, the list presented should provide a challenge that will require ample research before a satisfactory conclusion can be made.

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APPENDIX

March 17, 1953

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Dear Sir:

I am making a study in the elementary schools of methods used in reporting to parents. The enclosed questionnaire is being sent to you along with a request for a _sample_ _report_ _card_ or cards now being used in your school system. The information will be used in the preparation of a paper entitled 'Reporting to the Parents the Progress of Children in the Elementary School". This paper will be presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Science Degree in Education at Eastern Illinois State College.

The information requested will give a reasonable and accurate description of the various methods and procedures in use in many of our elementary schools of Illinois. If you would like a summary of the compiled reports and their implications for our schools, please indicate by writing your name and address at the bottom of the questionnaire. This information will be sent to you as soon as the data is compiled.

I wish to thank you for your cooperation in this study. [1]
                    Yours truly,

                    Paul Beauchamp
                    Georgetown, Illinois

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[1]
    Form letter sent with questionnaire.

QUESTIONNAIRE

Reporting to the Parents the Progress of Children in the Elementary

School

I. General Information

    1. Type of school district: Community Unit_____;

    Community Consolidated_____; Consolidated_____;

    Common School_____; Other_____.

    2. Number of attendance units in the district _____.

    3. Number of teachers per grade: Grade 1_____,2_____

    3_____,4_____, 5_____, 6_____,

    7_____, 8_____.

    4. Total elementary enrollment of the school district. _____

    5. Number of guidance directors: Full time _____;

    Part time _____; None_____

    6. Number of times per year that reports are given

    the parents. _____

II Reporting to the Parents

    1. Do you feel that you have a satisfactory program

    for reporting to parents? _____

    2. Who determines the program or the methods of reporting?

    _____ _____ _____

    3. Check as many of the reporting devices as are used in

    your program:

        _____report cards

        _____letter reports

        _____Parent-Teacher conference

        _____Teacher evaluation sheet

_____Pupil Self-evaluation sheet

_____Samples of Pupil's work

_____Cumulative Record Folder

_____Anecdotal Notes

_____Personality (Emotional and Social) Adjustment
        Check Sheet

4. List any areas of work or topics for discussion or
   study which have been proposed for consideration
   during the past two years.

   A. By you

      (1) _____

      (2) _____

      (3) _____

      (4)_____

   B. By the teachers

      (1) _____

      (2)_____

      (3)_____

      (4)_____

   C. By the parents

      (1) _____

      (2)_____

      (3) _____

      (4) _____

5. List any areas of work or topics for discussion or
   study which have been helpful.

(1) _____

(2) _____

(3)_   _____

(4)_____

6. Are you able to provide free time during the school day for teachers to report or organize their reports for the parents? _____How much time is allotted? _____

7. Do you feel that the greater portion of classroom teachers are adequately trained in the field of guidance and child growth and development to conduct a meaningful and worthwhile conference with the parents? _____

8. Do you find it difficult to get parents to understand and accept practices in reporting which are different from those to which they are accustomed? _____

9. Are the teachers permitted to try out or put into operation the results of their work in reporting to parents? _____

10. List any obstacles which you have encountered in your district in improving the methods of reporting to parents/:

    A. _____

    B_____

11. List any suggestions or ideas for overcoming any of the obstacles which you have encountered:

    A. _____

    B. _____

    C. _____

    L. _____

LIST OF SCHOOLS THAT SUBMITTED QUESTIONNAIRES FOR THIS STUDY

1. Arthur (Com. Unit)
2. Bismarck (Cons.)
3. Bogota (Cons.)
4. Bridgeport (Common)
5. Champaign (Com. Unit)
6. Charleston (Com. Unit)
7. Cumberland (Com. Unit)
8. Danville (Com. Cons.)
9. Deland (Com. Unit)
10. Edwards (County Unit I)
11. Edwardsville (Com. Unit)
12. Effingham (Com. Unit)
13. Georgetown (Cons.)
14. Herrick (Com. Cons.)
15. Henning (Com. Cons.)
16. Hume (Com. Unit)
17. Indianola (Cons.)
18. Lawrenceville (Com. Unit)
19. Mattoon (Com. Unit)
20. Milford (Com. Cons.)
21. Moweaqua (Com. Unit)
22. Oakland (Com. Unit)
23. Paris (Charter)
24. Ridgefarm (Common)
25. Robinson (Com. Unit)
26. Rockford (Common)
27. Shelbyville (Com. Unit)
28. Taylorville (Com. Unit)
29. Urbana (Com. Unit)
30. Vandalia (Com. Unit)
31. Vermilion Grove (Cons.)
32. Windsor (Com. Unit)
33. Watseka (Com. Cons.)
34. Westville (Com. Cons.)

The remaining thirteen questionnaires submitted were classified as anonymous since there was no way to determine the school from which they came.

The child at the sixth grade level is nearing the end of "middle childhood" and the beginning of "later childhood". Therefore some are quite grown up, but most have not quite reached this point of maturity. They are becoming quite independent. Most are beginning to grow quite rapidly, the girls generally out growing the boys. They need a feeling of security and of belonging to the group.

The sixth grade child will probably be:
1. Eleven or twelve years old.
2. Approaching adolescence.
3. Energetic and daring.
4. Interested in organized games.
5. Growing rapidly, -especially the long bones.
6. Desirous of group approval.
7. Becoming aware of independence.
8. Ravenous, but finiky about food.
9. Quite self-conscious about undertaking physical activity unless skilled.
10. Sensitive to possibility of hurting people's feelings, therefore less critical.

He will probably have:
1. An imagination; but stories must be relatively close to life.
2. An ability to analyze situations and "talk out" about group problems.
3. A willingness to practice in order to become good in sports.
4. Periods of sluggishness or inattention.
5. Poor posture or awkwardness.
6. A hard time concentrating for a long period of time.
7. A tendency to associate with one's own sex.
8. Frequent crushes on age mates or adults.
9. A desire for adult guidance.

The sixth grade child needs:
1. Attention and praise.
2. To understand relationship between wants and family income.
3. A place to call his own, where privacy and possessions are respected.
4. A chance to earn money.
5. The feeling of importance in family and group planning.
6. To "shine" in some activity valued by his group.
7. Parties attended by both boys and girls.
8. An awareness of codes of moral conduct.

Parents can help by:
1. Giving the child a chance to earn money.
2. Giving a feeling of security and belonging in the family.
3. Giving praise for good work and behavior.
4. Recognizing friends of the child.
5. Listening to problems and helping to weigh them.
6. Guiding activities.
7. Having parties and activities for friends.
8. Giving place of own to the child.

An estimate of my progress in school work and school citizenship.

By_____

I. Arithmetic work (underline) Good work Average work Poor work

Check where you feel you should and could make improvement.
a. be more accurate _____ b. look over my work_____
c. work more slowly _____ d. complete work on time____
e. neater arrangement of work on paper_____

II. Language work written Good work Average work Poor work

Check where you feel you should and could improve.
a. use of punctuation marks____b. use of capital letters____
c. sentence structure thought is not complete_____
d. use dictionary to check spelling_____
e. misspell many little words_____

III. Language work oral Good work Average work Poor work

Check where you feel you should and could improve.
a. speak clearly_____ b. use words correctly_____
c. when making a report or sharing plan and organize
material_____ d. give my talk in an interesting way_____

IV. Penmanship Good work Average work Poor work

Check where you feel you should and could improve.
a. neatness_____ b. better formation of letters_____
c. writing is difficult to read_____

V. Spelling Good work Average work Poor work

Check where you feel you should and could improve.
a. spelling correctly words in weekly spelling list_____
b. using those words correctly in sentences_____
c. finishing sentences and work in book each week_____

VI. Social Studies Good work Average work Poor work

Check where you feel you could improve.
a. give more attention to class discussion_____
b. by using books, pictures etc. to get more accurate
information_____ c. organize material and information
which is given in reports_____

VII. Reading Good work Average work Poor work

Answer the following questions.
a. on books which you have read yourself, how many book
reports have you made? _____ b. do you enjoy reading?
_____ c. what kind of books do you like best?_____
_____ c. underline the kind of reading
you do. story books-- nature stories--- stories about
life of person--- magazines---newspapers

7

VIII- Taking part in class activities
     Answer the following questions.
   <u>Sharing period</u>
     a- Do I share on my day each week? _____
         always   few times   very seldom   not at all
     b- Do I speak so the class can understand me?_____
     c-Have I prepared my material so that I can tell it to the
         class in an interesting way in one minute?_____

   <u>Officers and monitors</u>
     a- What class offices I have held this year_____

         _____

     b- Monitor duties I have had _____

     c- Did I do my duties without being reminded? _____

IX- Work habits and school citizenship.
     Answer the following questions.

     a- Do I finish on time the work which I start?_____

     b- Am I slow getting started to work?_____

     c- Do I talk unnecessarly with my neighbors?_____

     d- Do I sometimes cause a disturbance in class?_____

     f- Am I courteous?_____

     g- Do I accept criticism and try to profit by it?_____

     h- Do I respect authority, rules etc,?_____

     i- Where can I improve my school citizenship? (underline)

  bus   class room   halls   playground   assembly   cafeteria

     j- In what ways can I improve?_____

         _____

         _____

EAST WHITTIER SCHOOL DISTRICT

REPORT TO PARENTS

Name of pupil _____

Report of Conference _____ Date: _____

Teacher: _____

Goals Agreed upon for Child's Growth	

OUTLINE AND SUMMARY
OF PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCE

Child's Name _____   Teacher's Name _____

Grade _____   Room _____   Date _____   Parent's Name

_____

TEACHER'S JUDGMENT OF CHILD'S GROWTH, STATUS, AND NEEDS:

EDUCATIONAL

PHYSICAL

SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL

ATTITUDES & INTERESTS

FUTURE PLANS