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A SURVEY OF THE STATUS OF THE PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATION
IN HARLEM, MONTANA

by

LARRY J. WATTERSON

B. S. Montana State College, 1949
Bozeman, Montana

Presented in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Master of Education

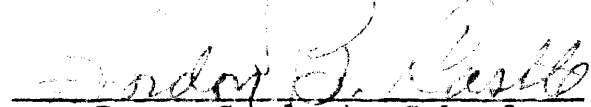
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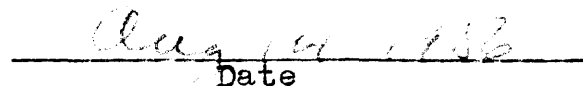
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Since 1900 most of the cities, towns, and communities in the United States have witnessed the phenomenal growth of the Parent-Teacher movement. Because of the nature of that Association, school administrators are called upon to play a major role in the development of programs and the planning of activities for each local chapter.

All communities have their possibilities and limitations. To insure an effective and constructive program, each administrator must determine the status and effectiveness of his own particular association.

The purpose of this study was to determine the relative effectiveness of the Harlem Parent-Teacher Association: (1) by making a survey of the membership and the kinds and types of activities (i.e., the program) carried on, and (2) by comparing this program with the program recommended by the National Congress of Parents and Teachers and by evaluating this program through the use of the two self-measuring scales for Parent-Teacher Associations proposed by Holbeck.¹

As of the time this study was made, the city of Harlem

¹Elmer S. Holbeck, An Analysis of the Activities and Potentialities for Achievement of the Parent-Teacher Association with Recommendations (New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1934), pp. 58, 110.

had a population of about 1100 people. It is located in the North Central part of Montana, thirty miles from the Canadian border, and is serviced by U. S. Highway # 2 and by the mainline of the Great Northern Railway. The town is situated in an irrigated farming area, but extensive livestock and dryland farming operations are carried on to the North and to the South. The business establishments benefit some from tourist trade, but the community is primarily agricultural.

Five miles to the East is Fort Belknap Indian Reservation, which covers an area of 1200 square miles. It is inhabited by approximately 1200 Indian and part Indian people. The Indian children attend the Harlem Schools and comprise about one-third the total enrollment.

The school system in Harlem is organized on the 8-4 plan. The first eight grades are housed in two connected buildings which consist of eighteen rooms for classes and associated facilities. The high school is located in another part of town, eight blocks away. Total enrollment was 596 for the school year 1955-56 of which number 154 were enrolled in high school. Total enrollment has been increasing at the rate of about twenty students per year for the past three years. The teaching staff consists of twenty-seven teachers, an elementary principal, and a superintendent of schools.

A new elementary addition of eight classrooms was constructed three years ago at a cost of \$150,000. This money came from a district supported bond levy. In 1954

a federal grant of \$200,000 was received for the remodeling of the existing buildings and the construction of a new addition to the high school. The district qualified for this assistance because of the impact of federally connected children from Fort Belknap Indian Reservation.

In this environment the Harlem Parent-Teacher Association has been active over the past ten years. Two years ago, when this writer became superintendent of the school system, it seemed desirable to "take a good look" at the local P.T.A. organization and its program.

It was hoped the benefits of the study would be threefold:

(1) The findings would help in developing a usable outline for the school administration to use in guiding activities of the local Parent-Teacher Association;

(2) The findings would establish a good foundation for cooperation between the school and the Parent-Teacher group;

(3) The findings would help achieve a strong, balanced Parent Teacher Association which would cooperate with the school in furthering the fundamental aims and purposes of both groups.

This study was limited to the Harlem Parent-Teacher Association whose membership included parents, teachers, and other persons interested in the children attending Harlem schools, both elementary and high school.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

HISTORY OF THE P.T.A. MOVEMENT

The Parent-Teacher movement in the United States has been developing for more than fifty years. This growth has been so gradual and steady that many people are not aware of its having taken place. Educators have tacitly accepted the Parent-Teacher Association as a group interested in Education and Child Welfare, as something to be "put up with" in some instances, or to be recognized as a helpful and powerful factor in modern education in others.

The organization had its actual beginning on February 17, 1897, with the formation of the National Congress of Mothers.¹

Much interest in this new organization was apparent from the start, and the movement became widespread. In 1908, the organization altered its name and became the National Congress of Mothers and Parent-Teacher Associations.² This title proved unsatisfactory, and in 1924, it was changed to the present form, the National Congress of Parents and Teachers.³

¹Martha S. Mason, Parents and Teachers (New York: Ginn and Company, 1928), p. 115.

²Ibid., p. 116.

³Ibid.

The Association now has 9,409,282 members and has chapters in each of the forty-eight states, the District of Columbia, Porto Rico, and Alaska.⁴

Membership in the Parent-Teacher Association is open to all. Any person interested in the objects of the National Congress and willing to subscribe to its bylaws may become a member upon payment of dues.⁵

PURPOSES OF THE P.T.A.

The Parent-Teacher movement has the underlying purpose of promoting the welfare of children and youth, and this basic philosophy is the uniting principle upon which all individual chapters are founded.

Article II of the National Bylaws lists the following as the objects of the National Congress.

To promote the welfare of children and youth in home, school, church, and community.

To raise the standards of home life.

To bring into closer relation the home and the school, that parents and teachers may cooperate intelligently in the training of the child.

To develop between educators and the general public such united efforts as will secure for every child the highest advantages in physical, mental, social, and spiritual education.⁶

⁴National Parent-Teacher, (March, 1956), p. 1.

⁵National Congress of Parents and Teachers, Parent-Teacher Manual, 1953, p. 21.

⁶Ibid., p. 20.

To insure that the association shall remain free from sectarianism, commercialism, and partisanism the following policies have been adopted and appear in the bylaws.

The program of this association shall be educational and shall be developed through conferences, committees, and projects.

The association shall be noncommercial, nonsectarian, and nonpartisan. No commercial enterprise and no candidate shall be endorsed by it. The name of the association or the names of its officers in their official capacities shall not be used in any connection with a commercial concern or with any partisan interest or for any other purpose than the regular work of the association.

This association shall not seek to direct the administrative activities of the school or to control its policies.

This association may cooperate with other organizations and agencies active in child welfare such as conference groups or coordinating councils, provided they make no commitments which bind their member groups.⁷

PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES OF THE LOCAL CHAPTERS

The local Parent Teacher association is a self-governing unit that plans its programs and activities to meet the needs of children and youth in the community. It is linked through its membership to its State Congress and the National Congress of Parents and Teachers. The bylaws of the local unit are based on those of the National Congress and the state branch. According to the age group they serve, associations are organized into preschool, elementary school, high school,

⁷Ibid.

or college units.⁸

The program of the local P.T.A. unit is the core around which the association is built. Mason says, "The programs of a Parent Teacher Association serve it in somewhat the same way as the compass serves the ship or the signal lights the train; they guide it safely toward its objective point."⁹

The activities of an association grow out of the information and stimulation gained through a well planned and well directed program.¹⁰

The National Congress suggests that three things should be kept in mind when planning the program for the year: (1) The annual theme or topic should be based on the needs and interests of the members and of the community, (2) A fair proportion of the members should be vitally interested in the topics to be discussed, (3) Time must be allowed and necessary leadership provided to insure participation in the programs and discussion by those in attendance.¹¹

EVALUATION OF THE LOCAL CHAPTER

Holbeck¹² in his study attempted to evaluate in terms

⁸Ibid., p. 17.

⁹Mason, op. cit., p. 188.

¹⁰National Parent-Teacher, op. cit., p. 60.

¹²Elmer S. Holbeck, An Analysis of the Activities and

of accomplishment and potentialities for accomplishment, the aims, activities, program, and work of the Parent-Teacher Association. He compared the theoretical functions and purposes of the Parent-Teacher Association with the activities in which the separate Associations were engaged by making three distinct studies.

The first was an evaluation by forty directing officers of the Parent-Teacher Association and forty administrators in the field of education of the sixteen primary purposes and functions of the Parent-Teacher Associations. Their opinions represented a theoretical approach to the subject.

The second was an evaluation by one hundred presidents of local Parent-Teacher Associations and one hundred school administrators, such as principals of schools and supervisors, of the most important activities which in their opinions should occupy the attention of the local Parent-Teacher Association. This study was intended to give an understanding of the limitations imposed by practical activity.

The third was a compilation of the activities actually carried on by one hundred Parent-Teacher Associations.

The results of his study indicated a clear understanding and agreement on the part of Parent-Teacher Association officials and educational authorities in regard to the

Potentialities for Achievement of the Parent-Teacher Association with Recommendations (New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1934), pp. 125.

functions of the Parent-Teacher Association. There is, however, some discrepancy between the functions considered important by these people and by the group of judges in closer contact with the field; there is much greater discrepancy between the ideas of either of these two groups and the actual work being carried on by the local Parent-Teacher associations.¹³

Holbeck also made ten case studies of individual local chapters. A study of purposes, programs and activities, meetings, minutes, and community reactions was included. The results were tabulated and measured in terms of a scale he devised for this study.¹⁴ This scale was used as one basis for evaluation of the Harlem P.T.A.

In addition Holbeck measured each of the ten associations in terms of a scale devised by J. E. Butterworth for the use of individual associations in analyzing their own local units.¹⁵ Butterworth's scale was also used in appraising the program of the Harlem P.T.A.

This scale measured the following: (1) Programs and activities; (2) Administration; (3) Membership and attendance; (4) Program of parent education; (5) Health; and (6) Effectiveness in bringing about changes for the better

¹³Ibid., p. 15.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 58.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 110.

in regard to child development, social adjustment, school housing, better teaching, better community attitude, etc. This was a weighted scale with a possible numerical score of one hundred.

Holbeck concludes the following:

As an existing organization within the limits of which much might be accomplished, the Parent-Teacher Association has a great potential of service. That its activities have unfortunately been misdirected to a very great extent impairs the immediate value of its work but does not impair the potential value.¹⁶

¹⁶Ibid., p. 96.

CHAPTER III

PROCEDURE

Since the purpose of this study was to determine the status of the Harlem Parent-Teacher Association, the plan of work was as follows: first, to study the actual makeup of the organization, the number of parents belonging, their average attendance at meetings, the percent of male members, the number of persons who have held office or who have served on committees, the number and percent of Indian parents belonging, the number of meetings held, and other factors affecting the work of the Association; second, to analyze the program in terms of planned activity and accomplishment; and third, to determine the effectiveness of the local Association in terms of the standards established by the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, and through the use of the rating scales previously referred to.¹

Sources of data utilized for this study included: (1) minutes of the current and past year's meetings, (2) agenda for meetings, (3) the treasurer's reports, (4) activities of committees, (5) activities and programs sponsored by the Association as a whole, and (6) the file of parents' names in the office of the Superintendent of Schools.

¹See Chapter I, p. 1.

After much discussion with the Harlem school faculty and members of the local Parent-Teacher executive committee, a questionnaire² was developed which would be suitable for gathering certain factual information regarding such matters as membership, attendance, committee membership, and office-holding.

At one of their regular meetings, members of the Parent-Teacher group were briefed on the questionnaire by the writer. The teachers in the school were contacted individually to secure their cooperation in the conduct of the survey, and to afford the writer an opportunity to explain the procedure to be followed and to answer any questions which were raised.

The following week the oldest child in each school family was given a questionnaire to be taken to his parents, who were to fill it in and return it to the child's teacher.

Recognition was given to the fact that it would be necessary to exercise great care in the development of the questionnaire if valid data were to be obtained. That some members of the Parent-Teacher group did not have children in school and would not, therefore, be represented was also taken into account. Since these persons comprised less than five percent of the membership, the accuracy of the survey was probably not affected significantly thereby.

The suggestion was made by the executive committee of

²See appendix for copy of questionnaire.

the local Parent-Teacher Association that the questionnaire be kept as objective as possible so that the parents would not be given the impression that they were being "checked up on" by the school administration.

Official publications of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, magazine articles and related literature were also used as a basis for comparing the program of the Harlem Parent-Teacher Association with that recommended by the National Congress of Parents and Teachers.

Cooperation between school and Parent-Teacher group, relationship of school and administration to the association, and enthusiasm and interest at meetings were measured in part by personal experiences and observations of the writer.

CHAPTER IV

THE HARLEM PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATION

The purpose of this chapter is to report the actual makeup of the Harlem Parent-Teacher Association and to analyze its program in terms of planned activity and accomplishment.

MEMBERSHIP AND ATTENDANCE

The Association membership was made up of the parents, teachers, and other persons interested in the Harlem school and community for the school year 1955-56 (at which time this study was made). Approximately one-third of the school enrollment was Indian students. They came from 138 Indian families, three, or 2.2 percent, were represented in the Association. The four P.T.A. members from these three families made up only 2.5 percent of the total membership. There were 254 non-Indian families represented in school and, of this number, seventy-two (28 percent) were represented in the Parent-Teacher Association.

In Table I are listed the data tabulated from the returns of the questionnaire.

The attendance at the eight regular meetings averaged 63.5 persons, or approximately one-half of the membership. This ranged from a low of eighteen to a high of over two

TABLE I
MEMBERSHIP, ATTENDANCE, AND OTHER DATA PERTAINING TO
THE HARLEM PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATION

Number of parents belonging	121
Average attendance at meetings	63.5
Average meetings attended	4.2
Average years belonging	4.2
Percent of male members	31.4
Number of meetings held	8
Number who have held office	20
Number who have served on committee	22
Number who subscribe to Parent-Teacher magazine	33
Total non-member attendance	97
Average non-member attendance	12.1

hundred (at the teachers' reception meeting).

The number of meetings attended by members ranged from none to eight with an average of 4.2, or just over one-half. Members attending no meetings had joined P.T.A., but did not attend any meetings during the year.

The Association was formed ten years ago, and eight of the original members were still in attendance. The average years belonging was just over four years, and ranged from charter members to those with less than one year's membership.

There were thirty-eight men who belonged to the Association and these comprised 31.4 percent of the total membership.

There were eight regular meetings held on the fourth Tuesday in each month during the year. This included the teachers' reception which is always the first meeting in the fall of the year. No meeting was scheduled for December as it would have conflicted with Christmas vacation.

Twenty of the present members had held office, or were in office, at the time this study was made. Sixteen of these were represented in the twenty-two persons who served on committees.

Because subscription to the Parent-Teacher Magazine is one measure of interest in the Association, a question concerning this was included in the questionnaire. It was found that thirty-three members subscribed to the magazine.

Since the questionnaire was concerned only with the actual membership in the Association, it failed to represent

a true picture of attendance at Parent-Teacher Association meetings. Many of the people who attended the teachers' reception and other special interest meetings during the year were not parents of children in school or members of the Association.

PROJECTS

P.T.A. chapters ordinarily carry on one or more projects during each school year. The Harlem Association carried out several major projects as may be seen in Table II. In each case the number of years of sponsorship is indicated. Brief descriptions of each project follow.

Roller Skating. The Association for the past seven years had sponsored roller skating for the children and youth one night a week during the winter months. An admittance fee of ten cents per person had been charged and the money used to pay a supervisor and to purchase skates and repairs. The evenings were sectioned to care for different age groups. Members of the Association were on hand to assist the supervisor. The school auditorium had been used for this activity.

Clothing Exchange. This activity was started during the war years and intended as an exchange of outgrown clothing among members of the Association and community. After two years the project was changed to a direct donation of clothing which was sold and the proceeds placed in a welfare fund. This money was handled by a special committee with

TABLE II

CURRENT PROJECTS OF THE HARLEM PARENT TEACHERS ASSOCIATION,
AND THE NUMBER OF YEARS EACH HAS BEEN SPONSORED

Project	Number of years sponsored
Roller Skating	7
Clothing Exchange	10
Pre-school Clinic	8
School Nurse	1
Ice Skating	3
Teacher Reception	8
First Grade Tea	6

full authority to make use of it as seemed fit. Eye glasses and clothing for needy children were the commonest items for which the money was spent. During the past year, \$87 was realized from the sale of clothing. Seventy-six dollars was spent for glasses and eye examinations. As of April 1, 1956, the fund had a cash balance of \$128.42.

Pre-School Clinic. Each spring the Association had sponsored a clinic for next year's first grade children. The services of a doctor had been secured and each child given a thorough physical examination. Those cases requiring attention had been referred to the family physician.

School Nurse. The Harlem Parent-Teacher group hired a registered nurse to be at the elementary school for one hour each day. This service cost them \$50 each month and was paid from the welfare fund.

Ice Skating. The men of the Association some years back secured a vacant lot and constructed an ice rink for the use of the community. The committee supervised the flooding and use of the rink each winter.

Teachers' Reception. The Parent-Teacher Association for a number of years had sponsored a teachers' reception in September. At this meeting the teachers were introduced and an effort made to make them feel welcome.

First Grade Tea. Each May the mothers of the first

graders invited the children who were to be in the first grade in the fall to be their guests at the school for one-half day. This had been jointly sponsored for the past six years by the school and the Association.

COMMITTEES

Each local association carried on a major portion of its work by the use of standing and special committees. The standing committees in Harlem were: Hospitality, Membership, Program, P.T.A. Magazine, Publicity, Room Representatives, Executive, and Legislation. The special committees were: First Grade Tea, Teachers' Reception, Ice Skating, Pre-School Clinic, Clothing Exchange, Roller Skating, and School Nurse.

Standing committees are those appointed by the President and Executive committee of a local following election of new officers each spring. They function for the full year and have complete charge of the activity for which they are appointed. Special committees are appointed by the president to take care of situations which arise during the year. Such committees are usually of short duration.

The activities of the special committees of the Harlem P.T.A. have been explained in the section dealing with projects. A description of the organization and work of the standing committees follows.

Executive Committee. The executive committee is made up of the officers of the Association, the chairman of

standing committees, and the principal of the school or a representative appointed by him. It is the duty of the executive committee to assist the president and to carry on the work of the Association between meetings. The authority of the executive committee is limited to transacting the business assigned to it in the bylaws, or referred to it by the Association.¹

Hospitality. The main function of the hospitality committee is to arrange for lunch following each meeting. The committee in Harlem arranged a schedule for serving, contacting the parents, and making sure there would be at least five on hand to serve. All parents, regardless of P.T.A. membership, were contacted and asked to take their turn serving.

Membership. This committee endeavors to get as many parents to join a local Association as possible. This committee in Harlem also collected dues, and whenever necessary, contacted each family in person, by phone, or by mail.

Program. The program committee has the responsibility of planning each meeting during the year. The Harlem Association limits the business meeting to thirty minutes so that the program may be up to one hour in length.

¹Parent-Teacher Manual," National Congress of Parents and Teachers, 1953, p. 25.

P.T.A. Magazine. In Harlem a committee of one was appointed to read the official Congress publications and other related material and to report on at least one current article each meeting. This committee endeavored to interest all the members in the official literature so that subscriptions to the magazine could be secured.

Publicity. This committee was expected to advertise the meetings and report P.T.A. activities and accomplishments to the local newspaper.

Room Representatives. This committee was made up of a representative for each room in the school. Members of the Committee contacted the parents of children in their rooms, informed them of the date of the next meeting, explained the program, and encouraged them to attend. They offered a prize each meeting to the room which had the greatest parent representation on a percentage basis.

Legislation. This committee was made responsible for keeping the membership informed regarding proposed and current legislation, both local and national. In addition, it was expected to answer questions and lead discussions on current issues.

MEETING PROGRAMS

The Harlem Parent-Teacher Association meetings were usually divided into three parts: (1) the regular business

meeting, (2) the program, and (3) entertainment. Following are brief descriptions of the meetings held during the 1955-56 school year. Reports of business are quoted directly from the secretary's minutes.

1st meeting---Sept. 27, 1955

Business: None

Program: Teachers' Reception

2nd meeting---Oct. 25, 1955

Business: (1) "The President reported the P.T.A. would again have roller-skating. Mr. _____ had consented to sponsor the activity for \$5 each evening." (2) "Subscription to the Parent-Teacher magazine for the Harlem public library was approved." (3) "Clothing exchange project discussed. Full report at subsequent meeting called for." (4) "Publications chairman gave a report on a current article in the Parent-Teacher magazine. (A report was given each meeting, though this was not always mentioned in the minutes.) Nineteen subscriptions to the magazine have been taken." (5) "Mrs. _____ reported on possibility of a school nurse. No one is as yet available." (6) "Mr. _____ reported on expenditures from the clothing exchange fund for the previous year. Six pairs of glasses and six eye examinations were among the expenditures."

Program: Four members of the Havre P.T.A. were present and discussed their Association, its aims, purposes, and accomplishments.

3rd meeting---Nov. 22, 1955

Business: (1) "Mrs. _____ gave a complete report on the clothing exchange. In past years they had total receipts of \$1,633.60 and expenditures of \$1234.83. Cash on hand was \$398.77." (2) "Discussion of a school nurse was held. Reported by the chairman that Mrs. _____ would take the job at \$50 per month. The chairman of the school board, Mr. _____,

reported that the board was in favor of the project and would be willing to contribute. Motion was carried that the P.T.A. carry the full cost for the current year but that it be recommended to the school board that they budget for this expense in following years."

Program: Dr. _____ of Fort Belknap Indian Hospital talked to the group on children's diseases.

4th meeting---January 23, 1956

Business: (1) "Motion carried that lunch receipts be donated to the March of Dimes." (2) "Mr. _____ reported on roller skating." (3) "Mr. _____ reported on Administrators conference in Billings. He further reported that because of continued interest in adult education an experimental class in typing would be offered in the evenings. Cost would be \$6 per person for the ten week course." (4) "Mr. _____ reported on the activity of the school nurse. Eye testing not completed but good progress being made." (5) Mrs. _____ gave a talk on Girl Scouts and asked the Association for financial and moral support. The hat was passed and \$18.90 collected for a donation."

Program: Two films, "Prescription for Life" and "Freedom to Learn" were shown.

5th meeting---February 28, 1956

Business: (1) "Letter from Fairfield P.T.A. regarding redistricting for athletic purposes was read." (2) "Association was presented with a check for \$4 from the Milk River Seed Show. Money was for winning fifth place in the education exhibit entry." (3) "A report on the reorganization of the clothing exchange was heard." (4) "Mr. _____ explained Public Law 815 and how it affected the Harlem schools. He also explained the importance of filling out the form sent home with the students."

Program: A panel discussion on the teacher shortage and what people in Harlem could do about it was held.

Members of the panel were the Chairman of the School Board, a housewife, a local merchant, and the Superintendent

of the Harlem Schools.

6th meeting---March 27, 1956

The regular meeting was dispensed with, and an open house and dedication of the new school was held. The State Superintendent of Public Instruction was the guest speaker.

7th meeting---April 24, 1956

Business: (1) "Mr. _____ gave a full report on roller skating. \$48.44 was cleared for the year." (2) "_____ gave a report on the clothing exchange for the year. Annual rummage sale to be held this month." (3) "Mr. _____ reported on Spring Round Up and 1st Grade Tea." (4) "Mr. _____ discussed the district claim under P.L. 815 and informed the group that the claim had been disallowed because of inadequate number unhoused. He gave a run-down of work to be done in the schools this summer and discussed the formation of a county wide school boards' association. He indicated this group would try and establish a county-wide minimum entrance age for 1st graders. Mr. _____ then explained the questionnaire on P.T.A. to be sent home with the children in school."

Program: The program consisted of an actual demonstration of the techniques involved, purposes of, and appreciation for music instruction in the elementary school.

8th meeting---May 15, 1956

Business: (1) "Mr. _____ explained the change in the entrance age for 1st graders. The county-wide date is to become effective with the school year 1957-58." (2) "The report of the nominating committee was adopted. New officers were installed."

Program: The program consisted of an inspection of the elementary school.

In addition to the programs as indicated in the minutes,

most meetings included some special entertainment feature. Each of the regular meetings was followed by a social hour during which refreshments were served.

Executive committee meetings were held two weeks prior to each regular meeting of the Association. These meetings were informal and no official minutes were kept.

The programs held during the year may be classified under the three general headings: "Better Homes," "Better Schools," and "Better Communities." This was advocated by the National Congress.²

Better Homes

(1) Dr. _____ talked to the group on children's diseases.

Better Schools

(1) Open house at elementary school.

(2) Demonstration of music instruction in elementary school.

(3) Havre officers present to discuss their Association, its aims, purposes, and accomplishments.

(4) A panel discussion on the teacher shortage and what people in Harlem could do about it.

Better Communities

(1) Two films, "Prescription for Life" and

²Ibid., p. 79.

"Freedom to Learn" were shown.

(2) Open house and dedication of the new school.

Table III gives a summary of the kinds of business carried on by the Association during 1955-56.

Eight standing committee, eleven special committee, five school administration, and six miscellaneous reports were heard.

TABLE III

KINDS OF BUSINESS CARRIED ON AT HARLEM P.T.A. MEETINGS
DURING SCHOOL YEAR 1955-56

Kind of business	Number
Standing committee reports	8
Special committee reports	11
Reports from school administration	5
All others	6

CHAPTER V

EVALUATION

One of the purposes of this study was to attempt to evaluate the program of the Parent-Teacher Association at Harlem, Montana. This was accomplished in three ways: first, through applying Butterworth's¹ self-administering scale as used by Holbeck; second, by measuring the Association in terms of a scale adopted from Holbeck;² and, third, by rating the Association on the 1954-55 Requirements for a Standard Association as published by the Montana Congress of Parents and Teachers.³

In every instance the weight of each item used represented the opinion of the writer based upon his observations and discussions with teachers and leaders of the Parent-Teacher Association in Harlem, as well as his interpretation of the data on program and activities as reported in this paper.

In Table IV the writer has rated the Harlem P.T.A. using Butterworth's⁴ self-measuring scale for Parent-Teacher

¹Elmer S. Holbeck, An Analysis of the Activities and Potentialities for Achievement of the Parent-Teacher Association with Recommendations (New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1934), p. 110.

²Ibid., p. 58.

³Montana Parent-Teacher, (November, 1954), p. 8.

⁴Holbeck, op. cit., p. 110.

TABLE IV

A MEASURING SCALE FOR PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATIONS*

ITEMS	POSSIBLE SCORE	HARLEM SCORE
I. Programs and Activities		
A. Preliminary meeting of the executive committee for making general plans	5	5
B. Methods of planning programs		
1. Definite study of educational needs	3	1
2. Preparation of programs early in year	1	1
3. Focusing of programs upon relatively few needs	1	0
C. The year's objectives and their attainment		
1. Giving members an understanding of the objectives and methods of the school	3	1
2. Teaching members to apply accepted educational objectives and methods to the out-of-school environment	2	0
3. Facilitating acquaintance among parents and teachers	2	2
4. Aiding in educating the community to desirable aspects of the school's program	2	1
5. Raising funds under certain conditions	1	1
6. Under certain conditions giving to the school officials judgment as to where the school fails or succeeds	1	0
D. Maintaining a reasonable balance between entertainment and non-entertainment features	2	2
E. Reasonable adherence to educational problems of children as contrasted with general community problems	2	0
F. Non-interference with work of board or teaching staff	2	2
G. Percentage total membership utilized during the year in some way	2	0
H. Extension work, such as work in unorganized territory; collecting funds; Founders' Day	1	1
Total	30	17

TABLE IV (continued)

ITEMS		POSSIBLE SCORE	HARLEM SCORE
II. Administration			
A.	Committee organization	4	4
B.	Financial policies		
	1. Preparation of budget early in year	1	0
	2. Budget in keeping with educational program	2	1
	3. Reasonable adherence to this budget	1	0
C.	Promptness in attending to state and national business	1	0
D.	Dignified publicity of parent-teacher matters	4	3
E.	Sending delegates to the state and district conventions	1	0
F.	Absence of friction and prevalence of spirit of cooperation among members	3	2
G.	Meetings		
	1. Frequency (number that can be held successfully)	1	1
	2. Regularity (each month according to schedule)	2	2
Total		20	13
III. Membership and Attendance			
A.	Percent of parents who are members	3	1
B.	Percent of men members	3	3
C.	Percent of teachers who are members	3	3
D.	Percent of membership in average attendance	3	2
E.	Percent of teachers in average attendance	3	3
Total		15	12
IV. Program of Parent Education			
A.	Preliminary study of problem	3	0
B.	Focusing program on needs	3	1
C.	Organization	6	3
D.	Study groups		
	1. Classification of interests	2	0
	2. Leadership	4	0
	3. Subjects or material covered	1	0
	4. Financial support of board of education	1	0
Total		20	4

TABLE IV (continued)

ITEMS	POSSIBLE SCORE	HARLEM SCORE
V. Health		
Summer Round-Up (location and means for correcting physical and mental defects of children)		
A. Discovering of defects	2	2
B. Organization and procedure; set-up and plan	2	2
C. Results or accomplishments; actual number of defects corrected as a result of Parent-Teacher Association leadership	4	4
Total	8	8
VI. Effectiveness in bringing about changes for the better in regard to child development; social adjustment in and out of school; school housing; better teaching; better community attitude, etc.	7	4
Total	7	4
Grand Total	100	58

*Elmer S. Holbeck, An Analysis of the Activities and Potentialities for Achievement of the Parent-Teacher Association with Recommendations (New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1934), p. 110.

Associations.

Weaknesses were indicated in these areas: (1) Definite study of educational needs, (2) Giving members an understanding of the objectives and methods of the school, (3) Teaching members to apply accepted educational objectives and methods to the out-of-school environment, (4) Reasonable adherence to educational problems of children as contrasted with general community problems, (5) Percentage of total membership utilized during the year in some way, (6) Sending delegates to state and district conventions, (7) Percent of parents who are members, and (8) Program of parent education.

The strong points of the Association included: (1) Preliminary meeting of executive committee for making plans, (2) Facilitating acquaintance among parents and teachers, (3) Maintaining a reasonable balance between entertainment and non-entertainment features, (4) Non-interference with work of board or teaching staff, (5) Committee organization, (6) Dignified publicity of Parent-Teacher matters, (7) Frequency and regularity of meetings, (8) Percent of men members, (9) Percent of teachers who are members, (10) Percent of teachers in regular attendance, and (11) The health program.

Butterworth's⁵ scale has a possible numerical score of one hundred. As may be seen in Table IV, the writer has given the Harlem Association a total score of only fifty-eight. The scale was divided into four broad areas. Under

⁵Ibid.

Area I, Programs and Activities, the Harlem Association scored 17 out of a possible 30 points. Under Area II, Administration, the Association scored 17 out of a possible 30 points. Under Area III, Membership and Attendance, the Association scored 13 out of a possible 20 points. Under Area IV, Program of Parent Education, the Association received only 4 out of a possible 20 points. Definite weakness is thus indicated in this area. Under Area V, Health, and Area VI, Effectiveness, the Association scored 12 out of a possible 15 points.

In indicating weaknesses of the Association the writer usually selected those items which were two below the possible score and those items which received a score of zero. The strong points were those in which the Association received the highest score possible on the scale.

Table V summarizes the important factors as determined by Holbeck⁶ and used in this study.

The Harlem Parent-Teacher Association showed weakness in these items: (1) Percent of membership utilized in carrying on work, (2) Percent of attendance, (3) Percent of homes represented, (4) Leadership, (5) Objectives, (6) Unified program, (7) Budget policy (8) Study groups, (9) Parent education, and (10) Types of activities.

However, strength was evident in such items as: (1) Percent of teacher membership, (2) Percent of men, (3) Regular

⁶Holbeck, op. cit., p. 58.

TABLE V

SUMMARY OF IMPORTANT FACTORS OF PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATIONS

FACTOR	RATING
Reaction of lay people--Press	Not impressive
*1 Rating by responsible centralized group	Standard
*2 Rating on measuring scale of this study	58
Size	121
Who initiated	Parents
Percent membership utilized in carrying on work	22
Percent of teaching membership	100
Percent of men	31
Percent of attendance	52
Percent of homes represented	19
Size of city	1200
Personnel of membership	Average
Friction between school and Association	None
Number of meetings (regular)	8
Attitude of School	Leadership
	Zeal toward P.T.A.
Attitude of Parents	Friendly and cooperative
	Leadership
	Cooperative
	Interest
Strickly P.T.A. function	Yes
Committee organization	Acceptable
Publicity	Incomplete
Objectives	Need restatement
Unified program	No
Budget policy	No real plan
Study groups	None
Parent education	No definite plan
Type of activities	All types--many non-educational
Results effecting desirable changes in school and community	Could be improved
Legislative program	Some evidences
Greatest problems of P.T.A.	Unity of program
	Not reaching all parents
Method of work	Uncertain
Training of leaders	No special training
Turnover	Not large

*1 National Congress of Parents and Teachers rates the best Associations judged in terms of standards as "Superior" Associations or "Standard" Associations.

*2 See Table IV, p. 30 for scale which was used to measure.

meetings, (4) Attitude of school, and (5) Committee organization.

The Harlem Parent-Teacher Association did not meet the requirements for a standard association as outlined by the Montana Parent-Teacher Association.⁷ Table VI shows the writer's rating on each of these items.

Weaknesses of the Association with respect to Montana standards were as follows: (1) Membership did not equal 50 percent of the homes represented in school, (2) Average monthly attendance was not equal to 40 percent of the families in residence, (3) Study groups were not on an organized basis, (4) National objects were not presented at meetings, and (5) President or alternate did not attend a workshop or other meetings on the state or national level.

Strong points of the Harlem Association included: (1) Active committees, (2) Meetings held, (3) Subscription to periodicals, (4) Well planned meetings, and (5) Freedom from partisanism and commercialism. In the writer's opinion membership and study groups were the most important weaknesses; and meetings held, and well planned meetings were the most important strengths indicated above.

The three comparisons and evaluations indicated these general strengths and weaknesses.

⁷Montana Parent-Teacher, op. cit.

TABLE VI

1954-55 REQUIREMENTS FOR A STANDARD ASSOCIATION*

YES OR NO	REQUIREMENTS
<u>No</u>	1. Membership equal to 50% of number of HOMES represented in the School and 50% number of teachers.
<u>No</u>	2. Average monthly attendance of adults equal to 40% of families in residence.
<u>Yes</u>	3. Seven standing committees; namely, Membership, Program, Publicity, Finance and Budget, Publications and Magazine.
<u>Yes</u>	4. At least SEVEN meetings of units during the year.
<u>Yes</u>	5. Elective officers must be subscribers to the MONTANA PARENT TEACHER. Subscription to be in by October 15th.
<u>Yes</u>	6. 10% of HOMES represented in membership must be subscribers to the NATIONAL PARENT TEACHER.
<u>Yes</u>	7. State-National DUES (20¢ per member enrolled) sent promptly to Mrs. Thomas Micka, State Treasurer, December 15 to March 15.
<u>Yes</u>	8. FOUNDERS' DAY observed and offering sent to STAFF TREASURER.
<u>Yes</u>	9. LOCAL UNIT REPORT BLANK AND STANDARD REPORT BLANK returned to STATE OFFICE as directed.
<u>No</u>	10. STUDY GROUP--Average of 10% of TOTAL UNIT MEMBERSHIP must attend Unit Study Group or organized PTA Study Group. (PTA Council) Minimum of four meetings.
<u>Yes</u>	11. Conduct and complete SUMMER ROUNDUP of pre-school children. (Does not apply to High School Units or other schools not having First Grade).
<u>No</u>	12. National Objects presented together at 3 meetings of unit.
<u>Yes</u>	13. General plan for PROGRAM for at least 4 meetings sent to District President or Vice President, and good ones printed in Bulletin.
<u>Yes</u>	14. Contents of PRESIDENT'S PACKET used in regular work.
<u> </u>	15. New units must submit their BYLAWS to Oliver Peterson, E.C.O.E., Billings, for approval. Established units amending their BYLAWS or adopting new ones, must follow same procedure. Parliamentary procedure observed.

*Montana Parent Teacher, November, 1954.

TABLE VI (continued)

YES OR NO	REQUIREMENTS
<u>Yes</u>	16. Freedom from political and sectional partisanship and promoting commercial enterprises.
<u>No</u>	17. President or his alternate, sent to Workshop approved by State Board, State, National or District Convention.

STRENGTHS

- (1) Percent of teacher membership.
- (2) Percent of men members.
- (3) Regular meetings.
- (4) Attitude of school.
- (5) Committee organization.
- (6) Acquaintance of parents and teachers.
- (7) Balanced programs.
- (8) Non-interference with board or teaching staff.
- (9) Dignified publicity.
- (10) Health program.
- (11) Subscription to periodicals.
- (12) Freedom from partisanism and commercialism.

WEAKNESSES

- (1) Percent of membership utilized in carrying on work.
- (2) Percent of homes represented.
- (3) Leadership.
- (4) Objectives.
- (5) Unified program.
- (6) Budget policy.
- (7) Study groups.
- (8) Parent education.
- (9) Sending delegates to state and district conventions.

These comparisons indicate that the Association kept well within its lay function and the individual members were interested and willing to work for the betterment of school and community. The meetings were well planned and held regularly. The committees were active as is evidenced by the many projects carried out. The programs were varied and well balanced as to entertainment and more serious features. However, the value of educational activities was endangered somewhat by the number of non-educational activities.

Membership did not reach into enough homes and there was practically no representation from the Indian families. There were no study groups and no real program of parent education. Little or no evidence was found of efforts to evaluate the P.T.A. program in Harlem and to develop leadership.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

SUMMARY

In general the purpose of this study was to determine the status of the Harlem Parent-Teacher Association: (1) by making a survey of the membership, the kinds and types of activities carried on and the results of the program in Harlem; and (2) to compare these activities and programs with the activities and programs recommended by the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, and also to apply known rating scales to the Harlem P.T.A. program.

A carefully prepared questionnaire was sent home with the oldest child in each school family with the request that it be filled in by his parents and returned to the teacher. The minutes of the meetings of the Harlem Parent-Teacher Association for the school year 1955-56 and the activities and programs of the Association were analyzed and tabulated. These data were then compared to the recommendations of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers and to criteria set up by two related studies.

The findings of this study in terms of "strengths" and "weaknesses" of the Association may be summarized briefly in the following statements:

Strengths.

(1) All of the teachers in the Harlem School system were members of the Association.

(2) The Association had a healthy percentage of men members.

(3) Meetings were well planned and held regularly.

(4) Committee organization was complete.

(5) The programs had a good balance between social and educational features.

(6) The Association played an important part in furthering acquaintance of parents with teachers and vice versa.

(7) The relationship between the Association and the school was good.

(8) The health program for the children in school was well planned and carried out by the Association.

(9) There was a high percentage of members who subscribed to Parent-Teacher periodicals.

(10) The Association was noticeably free from partisanism and commercialism.

Weaknesses.

(1) A low percentage of homes was represented in the membership. This was especially true of Indian families.

(2) Not enough of the membership was utilized in carrying on the work of the Association.

(3) The Association did not have a unified program

with well thought out objectives.

(4) Study groups and parent education were not being emphasized.

(5) There was no planned leadership training program.

CONCLUSIONS

The Harlem Parent-Teacher Association keeps well within its lay function, and the individual members are interested and willing to work for the betterment of school and community. However, this study indicates a need for self-evaluation and a realignment of the areas of effort. The Association has had the tendency to over emphasize the importance of non-educational activities and to lose sight of the basic purposes of the organization.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations concerning the Harlem Parent-Teacher Association are made in the belief that, if adopted, they would strengthen its program:

(1) An effort should be made to attract more of the Indian parents to meetings.

(2) The total membership should be enlarged so it will represent a greater percent of the school families.

(3) Existing activities and projects should be continued but a strong effort should be made to include more activities of an educational nature.

(4) Study groups and parent education should be made a more important part of the Association program.

(5) Planned leadership training should be a part of the program and this should include sending delegates and officers to district and state meetings.

(6) A planned program of self-analysis should be undertaken by the executive committee. The results of this evaluation should indicate the strengths and weaknesses of the organization and afford a framework around which future projects, activities, and programs could be built.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX

Harlem, Montana
April 27, 1956

Dear Mr.

Are you a member of the Harlem Parent-Teacher
Association? _____

If so, how long have you been a member? _____

How many meetings have you attended this year? _____

Do you now, or have you ever held an office in the
Parent-Teacher Association? _____

Have you served on a P.T.A. committee this year? _____

Do you subscribe to the Parent-Teacher magazine? _____

Please return this questionnaire by your child as soon
as possible.

Sincerely,

Larry J. Watterson
Superintendent

Harlem, Montana
April 27, 1956

Dear Mrs.

Are you a member of the Harlem Parent-Teacher
Association? _____

If so, how long have you been a member? _____

How many meetings have you attended this year? _____

Do you now, or have you ever held an office in the
Parent-Teacher Association? _____

Have you served on a P.T.A. committee this year? _____

Do you subscribe to the Parent-Teacher magazine? _____

Please return this questionnaire by your child as soon
as possible.

Sincerely,

Larry J. Watterson
Superintendent