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AN ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH

ON GRADING SYSTEMS

(TITLE)

BY

Ted E. Johnson

PLAN B PAPER

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR  
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YEAR

I HEREBY RECOMMEND THIS PLAN B PAPER BE ACCEPTED AS  
FULFILLING THIS PART OF THE DEGREE, M.S. IN ED.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Observations of a reporting system---Probably the most obvious reason for a reporting system is that it should provide the parent with information that he needs about his child. A good reporting system also has the effect of informing the parent about the school itself. The reporting system functions as the most important form of contact that the citizenry has with the school.<sup>1</sup>

Early in the 1900's only a small proportion of children were in school. No great attempt was made to understand children, and the whole concept of a school geared to individual differences was yet to be described and practiced. According to Stout and Langdon, articles appearing in publications of the early 20th Century show that in only a few schools had both parents and teachers exhibited any marked concern about understanding children.<sup>2</sup>

It has been within the past two decades that more and more emphasis has been placed upon understanding the child, understanding greater endeavors to promote children's learning,

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<sup>1</sup>Robert H. Anderson, "The Importances and Purposes of Reporting," The National Elementary Principal, XLV (May, 1966), 8.

<sup>2</sup>Irving Stout and Grace Langdon, "Parent-Teacher Relationships," What Research Says To The Teacher, No. 16 (September, 1958).

diagnosing the difficulties the child is experiencing in his learning efforts, and appraising the past and present.

If schools are to appraise progress of the individual's growth pattern then some system of communicating this growth to both parent and teacher needs to be established. It has been the procedure and policy of schools from kindergarten to college to report appraisal of growth or achievements for many years. Much good paper and fine ink and many heated discussions have been devoted to the problems inherent in methods of appraising children's progress and methods of reporting such to parents.<sup>3</sup> Appraising children's progress is an inescapable and integral aspect of everyday teaching.

Assuming that the purpose of education is the modification of behavior, how should we set up objectives to appraise children's progress? Before we can entirely answer this problem we must concurrently grasp the arm of another problem. What means are we going to use to communicate children's progress in school?

There are, of course, several methods that can be employed. Publications dealing with this very subject have listed such avenues as: grade cards, conferences, personal letters, personal home visits, and telephone calls. Singularly or collectively these means of reporting have been used, discussed, misused, and probably in some cases dropped altogether.

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<sup>3</sup>Henry J. Otto, Elementary School Organization and Administration (New York: Appleton Century Crofts, Inc., 1944), p. 13.

It is the intent of this study to describe in Chapter II some of these methods of reporting.

## CHAPTER II

### MEANS OF REPORTING PUPIL PROGRESS

Probably the most commonly used means of informing parents of their children's standing and progress in school work is the familiar grade card. Not only should the report card inform the parent of the pupil, and the rating tell how satisfactory the child is progressing in the learnings offered by the school, but as Hansen reports, "It should tell something of the attitudes and behaviors of the children and of the type of school program."<sup>4</sup>

If the report card, then, is to be consistent with the school program, it is not to be expected that one school system can satisfactorily adopt a card developed in another school system having a different type of program.

The first task in deciding what to tell parents about their children is to examine the educational objectives of the school. While any single set of objectives will perhaps be quite satisfactory to use as the basis of deciding upon what items to report, it is highly probable that the following could be satisfactory examples.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Rowna Hansen, "Report Cards for Kindergarten and Elementary Grades," U. S. Department of the Interior Leaflet, No. 14, 1931, p. 1.

<sup>5</sup>Willard S. Elsbree, Pupil Progress in the Elementary School, (Columbia University: Bureau of Publications, 1949), p. 74.

1. Acquiring a command of the fundamental processes.
2. Cultivating the habit of critical thinking.
3. Practicing desirable social relationships.
4. Learning to appreciate and participate in worthwhile activities.
5. The development of a sound body.

Where a report card seems to be the best medium for informing parents, it should be prepared locally by the principal and teachers responsible for the reporting function, with the aid of representative parents. More will be said about this latter point in another part of this chapter. Report cards purchased from commercial firms are usually ill-adapted for use in the given particular school.<sup>6</sup>

The Philosophy of a report card. The direct line between parent and school that report cards seem to set up has not always been direct enough. Much controversy over grades and grade cards has been cited by the mass of articles appearing in periodicals (professional and non-professional). Otto brings this point into focus by stating that, during a ten-year period from 1941 to 1950, thirty-six leading educational journals published 170 articles on this subject, the number per year ranging from 11 in 1949 to 23 in 1945, and 21 in 1950. In the same book, a study done by Adella S. Niland, in her unpublished master's thesis, pointed out that 88% of the school administrators believed that improvements could be made in their marking and reporting practices, and that 58% of the school systems were contemplating making some changes in their

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 75.



procedures.<sup>7</sup> Similar dissatisfaction with present marking and reporting practices was also revealed by Erskine's study of problems relating to reporting pupil progress to parents. Seventeen out of 200 Texas school administrators (38%) were dissatisfied with their present reports.<sup>8</sup>

In a comprehensive survey of the literature relating to report cards, Messenger and Watts noted the following trends.<sup>9</sup>

1. There is general dissatisfaction with any scheme of grading that encourages the comparison of pupils with each other.
2. If any grades are used, a scale with fewer points is favored, a three-point scale being most often recommended.
3. There is a wide-spread feeling that the schools should evaluate traits other than mere subject-matter achievement.
4. There is a clear tendency to use descriptive rather than quantitative reports.
5. Report cards are being displaced by notes or letters to parents.
6. Cards, notes, or letters are being sent at less frequent intervals and in some schools only when there is a specific occasion for such communication.
7. Attempts are being made to give more detailed diagnosis of pupils achievements.
8. Parents are being asked to cooperate in building report forms.
9. Pupils are cooperating both in devising report cards and in evaluating their own accomplishment.

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<sup>7</sup>Otto, op. cit., p. 238.

<sup>8</sup>Mary Erskin, "Trends in Reporting to Parents in Elementary Schools," Unpublished Master's Thesis, (University of Texas, 1951).

<sup>9</sup>Helen R. Messenber and Winifred Watts, "Summaries of Selected Articles on School Report Cards," Educational Administration and Supervision, XXI (October, 1936), 539.

The reader of these nine points might feel that for today these ideas might be quite radical. A closer look at these ideas by Messenger and Watts will show that they were promoted in the year 1936. In these pre-World War II days thinkers on this reporting system problem were as realistic as those of today, obviously their ideas had to take a back seat until the world could be set right side up.

In *The Educational Method*, Hill cited a 1939 report about report card trends in the West. Hill analyzed 443 report cards from towns and cities of all sizes, representing all educational levels, and practically every state. He concluded that a satisfactory report card should be represented in the following ways.<sup>10</sup>

1. Represent the true spirit, purposes, and functions of the school.
2. Reflect educational objectives arrived at only after careful consideration and mature judgment.
3. Present a report of achievement that is broad enough to cover all the important educational outcomes-- subject achievement, character outcomes, and use of leisure time.
4. Change in accord with changes in educational standards and educational philosophies.
5. Give an adequate picture of causes as well as outcomes.
6. Reflect a complete and sympathetic understanding of the child.
7. Afford a means of reporting flexible enough to account for peculiar individual abilities of each child.
8. Give an account of pupil progress understandable and instructing to both pupil and parent.
9. Bring about closer cooperation and greater mutual understanding of home and school.

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<sup>10</sup>George E. Hill, "The Report Card in Present Practices," *The Educational Method*, XV (December, 1935), 116-118.

10. Provide for reciprocal reporting, i.e., space for suggestions and questions from the parent.
11. Rate achievement in relation to the basic abilities and capacities of the child.
12. Rate achievement by means of valid and reliable marking systems.
13. Conform to reasonable standards of form and appearance, as well as being attractive.

Ruth Strang has developed an extensive plan of attack for the implementation of a reporting system that seems as sound today as it was twenty years ago. As Professor of Education at Columbia University, she outlined several guidelines. The following are suggested as criteria that any school staff may use in appraising their present reports and in building more effective ones.<sup>11</sup>

1. Has your method of reporting to parents been developed cooperatively?
2. Does your report to parents show trends in each pupil's development?
3. Does your report to parents show progress in the kinds of behavior that are most important for persons in a free society?
4. Does your report to parents recognize individual differences in ability?
5. Is your report to parents accurate?
6. Is your report to parents diagnostic?
7. Is your report to parents constructive?
8. Does your report "accentuate the positive?"
9. Does your report provide ample space for comments?
10. Is your report to parents closely related to cumulative pupil personnel records?

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<sup>11</sup>Ruth Strang, Reporting to Parents (Columbia University: Bureau of Publications, 1947), pp. 3-30.

11. Is your report easily understood by the different parents in your community?
12. Can your report to parents be prepared without putting too great a burden on the teacher?
13. Do pupils share in the writing of their own report?
14. Is the philosophy underlying your report to parents consistent with educational philosophy and procedure of the whole school?
15. Are the parents and teachers given help in using the report for guidance purposes?

It would be well at this point to elaborate upon some of the above criteria along with some comments that others have discussed in other professional literature.

Appraising report cards. It is all too evident that the schools are beginning to allow parents to have a greater voice in the planning of school programs. Much literature has been written about citizen committees, PTA's, and homeroom mothers aiding the school in its many duties to educate the children of the community.

If we go back to the reason for the main purpose of a reporting system we recall that it is for communicating to parents and pupils the progress of children made in school. Burr, Coffield, Jenson, and Neagley in their book, Elementary School Administration, point out that although parents are involved in deciding upon the mechanics of reporting, too little time is spent on developing an adequate philosophy of reporting and in continuously interpreting it to parents.

These writers go on to say, "It is easy for principals to forget that parent turnover proceeds at approximately the same rate as pupil turnover. To do a thorough job, each year

the principal should include in his orientation program an interpretation of the philosophy of evaluation, marking, and reporting."<sup>12</sup> Closely related to this idea is that point promoted by Stout and Langdon, ". . . the words good working relationship are used to designate those feelings that parents and classroom teachers have toward each other which lead them to think, talk, and plan together on how to help a child with his growing and learning."<sup>13</sup> Even back in 1949, although not adhered to, in any great degree, Elsbree profoundly states, "Try as hard as they may, teachers will accomplish relatively little in the case of many pupils without the cooperation of parents. And for the optimum educational growth of children, a complete understanding of the mutual task confronting both interested parties, the school and the home, is absolutely essential."<sup>14</sup>

Equally important in the appraisal of report cards is the age old determiner known as "recognizing individual differences." If you will recall something was said about this earlier in light of the need for an effective reporting system. Now it becomes apparent that this same idea is true about the assignment of grades on cards, about the competitive nature of grades, and naturally the "traditional card."

Although the pupil's progress in relation to his own capacity is of first importance, it is also necessary for the

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<sup>12</sup>James B. Burr, et. al., Elementary School Administration (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1963), p. 193.

<sup>13</sup>Stout and Langdon, op. cit., p. 4.

<sup>14</sup>Elsbree, op. cit., p. 55.

parents, and sometimes for the child himself, to know how he stands in relation to other children of his age. Smith and Tyler take a different perspective to this point when they state:

There was also a feeling that marks had become competitive to a degree that we saw that they were harmful to both the less able and the more able, and that they were increasingly directing the attention of the pupils, parents, and even teachers, away from the real purposes of education toward the symbols that represented success, but did not emphasize its elements or meaning.<sup>15</sup>

The able and more or less able pupils have been criteria that have opened more discussion about the traditional card. In the winter of 1963, Patricia Hockstad wrote in the professional magazine, *Education*, that in reference to grades and grade standards there were three points that needed to be kept in mind about traditional cards. She stated that grade cards had weaknesses in that they:<sup>16</sup>

1. Placed emphasis entirely upon subjects and not upon the learner. The real purposes of education and the real outcome of learning are concealed.
2. Do not state good qualities.
3. Are a reminder (if poor grades) of failure regularly.

In a similar report by Halliwell, he states that:

Critics of the traditional report feel that its major weakness is its inability to give a valid description of the progress or growth of the individual pupil. A pupil of high academic aptitude usually obtains good grades although he may expend little or no effort, whereas a pupil of low aptitude usually

<sup>15</sup>Eugene R. Smith and Ralph W. Tyler, "Appraising and Recording Student Progress," Adventure in American Education (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1942), p. 489.

<sup>16</sup>Patricia Hockstad, "Helpful or Harmful," Education, LXXXIV (November, 1963), 174.

receives poor or failing grades despite the fact that he might expend a great deal of effort. Thus, with the traditional reporting program, the bright pupil is frequently rewarded for indolence, while the slow pupil is frequently penalized for effort.<sup>17</sup>

The traditional card comes under fire from Elsbree in his definite statement directed towards the school personnel.

First of all, it can be stated unequivocally that pupils in the elementary school should not be marked in terms of their accomplishment as compared with other members of the class or group. The corollary to this is that the achievement of pupils should be rated in terms of their own abilities and potentialities. Emphasis should be placed on checking the pupil's present status against his former achievement in light of his mental ability, his emotional qualities, his physical energy and strength, his home relationships, and any other force or influence which may limit or qualify his progress.<sup>18</sup>

Elsewhere in Elsbree's writing it is found that he attacks the assignment of grades from a motivational viewpoint. At this point he continues to say:

There are many thoughtful educators who believe that the whole philosophy underlying the assignment of grades in the elementary school is unsound. These critics maintain that the practice of passing out grades as an indication of the achievement of pupils produces results that are detrimental to the optimum educational growth of children. Wherever, therefore, pupils are graded on a percentile basis, or accorded a letter grade, or given a rank in class, the motivation is likely not to be the acquisition of knowledge for its own sake. It is contended that the pupil loves the mark and not the wisdom which it presumably symbolizes. Under the traditional scheme, marks acquire an intrinsic value and the pupil's ambition is to qualify for the mark regardless of how little command he may have of the subject matter taught. The motivation is false and is comparable in nature to rewards and wages. Pupils are compelled to study because of the prestige

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<sup>17</sup>Joseph W. Halliwell, "The Relationship Between Theory and Practice In A Dual Reporting Program," The Journal of Educational Research, LVII, (November, 1963), 137.

<sup>18</sup>Elsbree, op. cit., p. 69.

which the mark carries or the privileges it brings. Thus the vast proportion of pupils attach little significance to the knowledge and skill which they command, and seldom look beyond the mark to see its full implication.<sup>19</sup>

A full complement of ideas has been spoken out by advocates of the over-use of percentile rankings. Both Otto and Elsbree are quite vehement about the consequences it could bring. It could go without saying that the values of education, particularly at the elementary level, are greatly distorted by this kind of mark or reporting. A brier summary of what these two educators say can be summed up thusly. The evidence that percentile rank still persists today shows that it is strongly entrenched, if only by tradition. The limitations of the percentage system, well known by pupils of the problem and in many cases obvious that a child's progress can be measured in such fine units as percentages, is entirely unsupported by scientific experiments. In other words, it is quite improbable, to state the case that a teacher can distinguish between the rank and rile percentile scale and do this with any reliability.

The final truism that Otto places on these inequities of the traditional marks or percentage marks of the ever present letter grade. He says:

The majority of elementary school teachers recognize the educationally unsound features and the inadequacy of report cards with ABCDF, percentage, or satisfactory-unsatisfactory marks. Yet, when they ask parents what kind of a report they desire, the majority say, "ABCDF or some other form of comparative marks." How can this delemma be resolved? It is likely that

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<sup>19</sup>Elsbree, op. cit., p. 65.



schools still using the comparative marking system are misled by parents' reactions. It must be remembered that the parents themselves were schooled under a comparative marking system; it is the only system with which they are familiar. How could parents request some other system when they know no others? Instead of accepting parent approval of the status quo, perhaps the professional staff of the school should accept its responsibility in this area as well as in other aspects of school practice for giving school leadership to the community in school improvements.<sup>20</sup>

In a recent PTA Magazine, the principal of an Evanston, Illinois high school, speaks out for the grade card. Perhaps not to defend them but to emphasize that they still (if constructed correctly) do have some merits. He speaks out from the standpoint of both parent and pupil. According to this author, "Parents almost universally want grade cards. They want a written, factual, formal, structured evaluation." He goes on to say that pupils want grade cards because, "they want something to share with parents. Many children are already truly aware of how they are doing in school."<sup>21</sup>

Narrative reports. This form of reporting has been discussed throughout many of the professional periodicals. It seems to be gaining in emphasis because of its purely conversational tone as opposed to the rather rigid approach of the traditional card. The flexibility in reporting that the narrative report (sometimes called a letter of evaluation) has helped to bring about some popularity for its usage. Although this is in many cases a break with tradition those school systems that are experimenting with it have found that it does break down the

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<sup>20</sup>Otto, op. cit., p. 249.

<sup>21</sup>Eugene Klemm, "Parents and Report Cards," The PTA Magazine, LXI (October, 1966), 25.

barrier of regular reporting, which some administrators reel is not needed. Perhaps it should be said at this point that a great deal of the success of any informal note or narrative to parents depends on the skill of the portraying of the children's needs in such a way as to secure the parents' sympathetic cooperation and help. In a book published in 1963 by Allyn and Bacon, the authors point out one definite weakness to the narrative report, namely, . . . it (narrative) like the other procedures discussed thus far, is usually one-way communication, although some schools request that parents respond in writing. If the real purpose of reporting pupil progress is to be achieved fully, two-way communication between the teacher and the parent is essential.<sup>22</sup>

This same book goes on to point out that a word of caution is necessary when writing such reports. The authors say, "Words are powerful and frequently the meaning received by the reader is not the one intended by the writer. Sometimes, it would be better if the parent did not understand the message if it is similar to some the authors have read."<sup>23</sup> This writer believes that these authors are wanting to bring forth the age old idea that the semantics or word meaning from one person (sender) to the other (receiver) can many times create a large gap in what is meant by the passages written. Elsbree continues this same point in his book when he states that, "Since all teachers are not equally competent in writing letters

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<sup>22</sup>Burr, et. al., op. cit., pp. 194-195.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid.

some school systems have prepared outlines suggesting the items to be considered in making the report."<sup>24</sup> Appendix I is a suggestion of "Writing Letters to Parents" promoted by the Santa Monica, California Schools. According to Elsbree, this form of writing was dropped after a few tiresome years because teachers found it extremely difficult to comment on pupils work with any variety of expression and without tiresome repetition. Attacks on letter reports show that they are definitely time consuming and tend to be stereo-typed. It is also contended that many teachers are not especially gifted in writing letters, therefore, they fail to enlist the confidence and support of parents. Ruth Strang had something to say about this in one of her points about suggested criteria about appraising present reports, she says, "Is the teacher's appraisal of the pupil's progress correct in each item? Parents and pupils lose confidence in the teacher's judgment if they find inaccuracies in the record."<sup>25</sup> Many schools have apparently been able to surmount at least some of the difficulties enumerated, because of the growing trend to the usage of letter reports. The attitude of teachers is an important consideration in the evaluation of pupils, for if the attitudes of teachers and the various in-service education of teachers is constantly evaluated then perhaps the ability to communicate by narrative will increase in value and quality.

Telephone calls. A method of reporting that has had

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<sup>24</sup>Elsbree, op. cit., p. 82.

<sup>25</sup>Strang, op. cit., p. 3.

some rather recent popularity is the use of telephone calls. Although this may be an easy method of reporting from the standpoint of the teacher it does seem to lack the personal touch that a written report of one kind or another might bring. It is quite true that it is hard to assess the feedback of both parent and teacher in this two-way telephone communicative situation. For any oral communicative procedure to become really effective it must be noted that both parties must be able to react or act according to what and how each other is saying. Another adverse viewpoint that telephone calls, as a means of reporting have, is the lack of planning on the part of the teacher. Because of its rather spontaneous nature, the true picture of the problem or whatever is being reported might not be brought out, or at least might be distorted. The impromptu nature of the telephone call has inherent weaknesses of not having said what should have been said, and then saying what should not have been said. Ill feeling, a lack of insight, and then the possibility of one party later saying, "I did not say that," all add to the dilemma of building good public relations, not to mention strengthening the educational programs or objectives.

Conferences. It is especially important for schools to design reports that communicate quickly and meaningfully to parent and child alike, and the conference method helps many schools achieve this goal of good understanding. Marilyn Cutler in Nations School says:

The conference method, when well-planned and conducted keeps just about everybody happy. For administration it helps cement good public relations between school and community. For the teacher it provides the

opportunity to go into considerable detail about a child's personal progress as well as to get to know the parents. And for the parents, the conference serves to bring the teacher, school, and classroom setting into clearer focus.<sup>26</sup>

Even back in 1955 the Education Digest strongly promoted conferences by saying, "They (conferences) must become a part of the regular program, and time must be set aside for them just as time is set aside for the various school activities."<sup>27</sup>

In this face-to-face relationship the pupil's progress can be more adequately interpreted and a report of this kind can be personalized still more fully. Strang points to the opportunity to get both parent and teacher to understand each other's problems in relation to the pupil. She continues by saying:

Obviously the parents have much more information about the child's home background and out-of-school behavior than the teacher has. And they will talk about their child much more readily than they will write a report about him to the teacher. By participating intelligently in parent conferences, the teacher will himself grow in his ability to understand and guide pupils and parents.<sup>28</sup>

Most of the disadvantages of the parent conference arise from faults in the guidance program--teachers who are poorly qualified or unprepared for their guidance responsibilities, a heavy load that leaves no time for conferences, inadequate pupil personnel records, and lack of opportunity for teachers to learn the guidance techniques they need.

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<sup>26</sup>Marilyn Cutler, "Does Your Report Card Format Rate an A?" Nations School, (September, 1963), pp. 56-57.

<sup>27</sup>Bess Goodykoontz, "A Report on Report Cards," Education Digest, XXI, (December, 1955), 6.

<sup>28</sup>Strang, op. cit., p. 33.

More is said about this idea of teacher preparation for conferences by Burr, et al. These authors seem to feel that the greatest potential of the success of conferences stems from preparation of guides for teachers and parents. The material is expended in this way:

Teachers should not be expected to be able to conduct successful parent-teacher conferences without some practice. Helpful as the teacher's guide may prove, there is no substitute for experience. One school district set up a series of role-playing situations where some teachers assumed the role of parents and conferences were conducted according to suggestions in the handbook.<sup>29</sup>

Two exceptional guides to teachers and administrators about how to conduct, plan, and administrate certain guidelines have been set up. One such plan was established by Wallace R. Johnson in a recent professional periodical. He has divided the guide into those roles that should be carried out by both principal and teacher. According to Johnson, the principal should do two major things, they are:

1. Conduct role-playing conferences.
2. Establish a publication of the ins and outs of oral conversation.

Johnson continues in his writing to list eight major duties that a teacher should perform in the area of preparation and planning of conferences. They are:

1. Collect data about each child.
  - a. Samples of school work.
2. Samples of textbooks used by the child should be displayed.
3. An arrangement of test results.

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<sup>29</sup>Burr, et al., op. cit., p. 196.

4. Progress charts should be up to date.
5. Be organized in presentation and interview.
6. Review notes of previous conferences with this child's parents.
7. Have a "dry-run" rehearsal.
8. Check the physical appearance of the classroom.<sup>30</sup>

A second work that distinguishes in seven concrete ways the suggestions that an elementary school principal might undertake in preparing for and conducting parent-teacher conferences are:

1. Continuous in-service education must be provided for the purpose of improving conference techniques.
2. A master conference schedule should be made for the school year, including conference periods that are convenient for parents as well as teachers.
3. Transportation should be provided for parents who need it.
4. Provision should be made for care and supervision of their children while parents are participating in conferences.
5. Displays of the children's work should be put up in classrooms.
6. Teachers should be encouraged to involve children in the preparation of their parent's conference.
7. Procedures for holding parent-teacher conferences must be evaluated constantly and improved.<sup>31</sup>

It is appropriate at this point to bring out the several reports that tell how the parents feel about teacher-parent conferences. According to an NEA survey, 85% of parents questioned who were accustomed to the conference method wanted

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<sup>30</sup>Wallace R. Johnson, "Parent-Teacher Conferences," National Elementary Principal, XLV (May, 1966), 49.

<sup>31</sup>Burr, et al., op. cit., p. 196.

it continued because of worthwhile information gained about their children's development.<sup>32</sup>

In another report where aprents had a chance to be on the evaluation of current reporting systems, 60%or 368 parents strongly favored the teacher-parent conference; 28% were inclined to favor them; and only 6% were mildly or strongly opposed.<sup>33</sup> This article commented that the parents that were interviewed about the conferences made such remarks as, "I feel that I know a lot more about how my child is progressing in school after a half hour's conference with his teacher than I did when report cards were brought home every six weeks with an A down the entire column", or "This method has 100% approval and endorsement of myself and my wife. We are gratefully gratified with the individual attention afforded the pupils and the grand scope of your curriculum."

From the foregoing comments which strike a note for the individual attention that the parent receives in discussion about his child, it is quite apparent that this fulfills the extremely large gap in the reporting systems that do have conferences. Certainly one of the cardinal purposes of education is to fulfill the needs of a parent that earnestly wants to know about the individual success of his child in school.

In still another report about the value of conferences eighty-seven parents were interviewed after their children had attended a school for six years in which parent-teacher conferences composed the major feature of their reporting plan. One

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<sup>32</sup>Cutler, op. cit., p. 57.

<sup>33</sup>Otto, op. cit., p. 249.



hundred per cent of these parents felt that the child's social and emotional development would be expressed best in a teacher-parent conference; 91% felt that they received sufficient evidence of the child's achievement to indicate his progress; 80% said that they received from the teacher several suggestions that were helpful to them in dealing with the child at home; only one parent felt that the visit to the school for the conference was a waste of time; and 91% said that it seemed unnecessary to issue a report card as long as two parent-teacher conferences were held each year.<sup>34</sup>

The evidence seems to show clearly that parent-teacher conferences do hold a great deal of weight with parents in what they would like to have in the way of evaluation of their child's progress in school. If we could stop for a moment and study more closely what has been said we would see that the favored teacher-parent conference is certainly going to require a great deal of time, perhaps more time than the time-tested traditional means of reporting. If this would be so, then certainly an evaluation of just what or how much time is needed to educate the children should be established. How much of a premium do we place on time? Is it so valuable in the classroom that nothing else matters? Is school only the dissemination of subject matter, or is it more? Might it not be also the understanding of the child from the words of an interested parent in a parent-teacher conference? Surely with the fast pace that the world is moving in today, time to set

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<sup>34</sup>Otto, op. cit., p. 249.

down and reflect or time to sit down and discuss ways to educate the child, and/or to understand them better is needed.

In an unpublished master's thesis from the University of Texas, this same time element was studied. The researcher found out this:

Teachers devoted approximately an hour to making the appointment with the parent, preparation for the conference, and holding the conference with the parent. This would mean about 60 hours per year given to parent conferences, if a teacher had 30 pupils and held two conferences per year. It is also revealed that teachers who issue the conventional report card four times a year devote about 30 hours per year to this activity.<sup>35</sup>

The problem then arises, are not conferences twice as effective as traditional cards?

How often should the school report? Another important consideration about a total picture of a grading system is how often should the school report? It would seem wise to refer to the major purpose of reporting, which is to provide information that will lead to close cooperation between the school and every parent, in the guidance of every child so that optimum pupil progress may result. If we are to report individual differences, then it would seem that evidence might point away from regular reporting periods. Several "whys" have been enlisted at this point to show that regular reporting periods are not useful. Why send home a report card to a parent six times a year, if the parent can't read? Why notify a neurotic mother periodically that her boy is badly in need

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<sup>35</sup>Lilburn May, "An Evaluation of the Parent-Teacher Conference Method of Reporting Pupil Progress in the Sherman, Texas Elementary Schools," (An unpublished master's thesis, University of Texas, 1952).

of advice on cleanliness if she never attempts to be neat and clean? Why send home periodically a grade card to a parent who is somewhat demanding that their child get "good grades", when the child is not capable of achieving better than he already is? Have you ever seen a child punished by such a parent? Why send any report home unless the school has reason to believe that a better understanding of the child and his needs will result?

Elsbree states that, "Many school administrators will be skeptical of a scheme of pupil reporting which is not uniform. But adherence to any one administrative pattern is inconsistent with the objectives sought in the modern school."<sup>36</sup>

The determination of which parent to receive written reports and which should be advised orally about their children's progress is a problem for the principal and his staff. There does not seem to be any clear-cut pattern to follow. We could, of course, follow the objective that we need to pay closer attention to the individual differences of the individual child. Perhaps it is best said that the parents need to understand the reasons for the more elastic and versatile program of reporting, with the emphasis always being placed upon aiding the child. This same author goes on to say that, "courteous treatment accorded all parents at all times will remove much of the anxiety that usually accompanies a change in the system of reporting pupil progress."<sup>37</sup> We could add to this that there seems to be sufficient evidence to lead us to believe that if

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<sup>36</sup>Elsbree, op. cit., p. 77.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., p. 78.

parents were consulted about any change that they would be more agreeable and acceptable to the break in tradition.

Ruth Strang states her views about frequency of reporting to parents in perhaps a striking difference from that listed above. Although she has pages, in her publication entitled, Reporting to Parents, devoted to various kinds of means to carry the message to parents about their child's progress, she quite clearly states that there needs to be some regularity to reporting. The merit upon which she explains this procedure seems to carry an important message.. She says:

The first report should be sent home early enough in the school year so that the pupil either gets reassurance that he is on the right track or learns before it is too late what improvement he must make. A second report, sent out at mid-year, serves as a record of progress during the past semester and as a stimulus for achievement in the semester ahead. A third report, made at the end of the school year, presents a picture of progress during the year and offers recommendations for summer experiences and next year's progress.<sup>38</sup>

Conclusions. From what has been said heretofore, it seems that the articles and volumes that have been written on the subject of reporting to parents point in only one direction. One method of conveying the message about pupil progress will not do. Several kinds need to be used so that the pupil can best be served by the school. We are certainly aware that all children are different, and therefore the report needs to be evaluated differently. If the reporting plan is to emphasize the child as an individual and a member of a social group, comparisons with classmates should be avoided. Any one

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<sup>38</sup>Strang, op. cit., p. 41.

system should be supplemented by at least a conference or two a year. Any reporting plan should provide for a two-way communication network. No matter what plan is adopted the child should be taken into consideration for it is his education and his evaluation.

## CHAPTER III

### EVALUATION OF GRADING SYSTEMS

This portion of the paper will deal with the evaluation of 24 grade cards, the discussion of 13 questionnaires, and 56 opinionnaires. The grade cards were gathered from elementary schools in East and South Central Illinois. The schools were selected according to school enrollment. The elementary schools picked had an enrollment of under 400. The average enrollment was 227. All schools were rural elementary schools with the exception of one. The questionnaires were sent to principals of the same schools, in the same manner in which five opinionnaires were sent to each of five faculty members at the same schools where the questionnaires were sent.

It was the intent of this portion of the study to find some points of comparison or interest in relationship to the ideas mentioned in Chapter I.

The grade card samples. A table of various portions of a grade card is presented in Appendix II of this paper. Some very interesting and striking points at first glance are based on the kind of grades, marks, or percentages given. Of the twenty-four cards recorded, all graded pupil progress on some letter grade basis. This is in direct opposition to Otto when he remarks:

For a teacher to report rank in class to a parent is really a meaningless waste of time because the

the teacher hasn't told the many things the teacher would like to tell the parent. A mark of A or C does not tell the parent level of development in reading, music, or cooperation. Neither does it tell the fine progress the child has recently made . . . . Except for rank in class, marks do not convey any information to parents and don't provide a satisfactory means of communication for the teacher.<sup>39</sup>

Only 7 of the 24 grade cards or 29% do not have a place to check individual traits according to subject area. Ruth Strang says quite clearly and definitely in point 4 on page 7 of this report that there needs to be a means to report individual differences. The reader will be aware of other examples in this paper whereby professional educators abhor the use of letter grades without any opportunity to note individual differences in the achievement of the child's growth.

A glance at Appendix II tells us that of those schools that do not note subject area traits to point out some individuality, only one requires a conference on a regular basis, and the remaining schools hold conferences based on teacher request or at parental request.

A brief point of interest about the grading scale is that six schools do not have an "F" or failure indicator. However, one administrator mentioned that his school has had its grade card for eight years and have continually used the "F" as a mark.

When teachers were asked (See Appendix III) if they thought grade cards were an adequate means for reporting academic and citizenship achievement, 28 said "yes" and 28 said

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<sup>39</sup>Otto, op. cit., p. 247.

"no." But when the teachers responded to the question, "Do you feel something else could take the place of the grade cards?", 32 out of 52 or 61% said "no." Of the 20 that said "yes," several listed such examples as to what might be that "something else": letters, conferences, anecdotal reports, and case studies. Incidentally, one teacher reported, "definitely a different grade card." Many schools just list the subject area without any traits to distinguish where the weaknesses or strengths lie in the subject and this seems to defeat the purpose of a mark. Of what value is it to a pupil to receive a grade of C in reading, and the parent not to know if the child is weak in phonics, oral reading, comprehension, silent reading, speed reading, or use of the library? Any subject has several areas that the parent (as well as the teacher) should know about in relationship to achievement. Of the seven schools that make distinction of subject area traits, the number of those traits ranges from 16 to 33. Of course, there should be relatively few trait areas that a teacher will have to mark.

What is the optimum number of subject traits that should be graded or marked? The writer does not have any concrete or specific answer. What might be another way to explain this remark would be to have some other means to decipher the intelligent meaning of the grade or mark, or something in conjunction with the grade card.

Social, citizenship, and work traits. Of course the many named traits of citizenship, work habits, and growth habits could be substituted for the subject area traits. From the



critique of grade cards, all but one school had indicators of these traits. Yet it does not tell in which subject this grade has been given. It is an accepted fact that some pupils like or enjoy one subject more than another. If a trait identified as "lacks interest in school work" is checked by the teacher as a weakness, and it is based solely on his interest in social studies again an incorrect interpretation is placed in the minds of both parent and pupil.

In answer to the question, "Do teachers write comments on the cards?" Seven out of 12 said "sometimes," and only two said "always." To the following question on the questionnaire about reciprocal notes from parents; two replied "never"; 10 out of 12 said "sometimes." Perhaps this is part of the answer to two-way communication.

It might be presumptuous to say that any mark or grade is an indication of achievement, but yet not a completely thorough remark. More needs to be said than the letter or mark. On the survey of grade cards as noted by Appendix II, seven out of 24, or 29% did not have a space on the card for parental or teacher comment. This does not speak well for reciprocal communication between parent and teacher about a child's development.

There seems to be a growing trend toward less issuance of grade cards at regular intervals. According to ideas on pages 23 and 24 of this report, the grade cards examined quite clearly pointed out that they were sent home regularly with the child. Grades one through three sent out grades most commonly on a nine-week basis and grades four through eight on a six-weeks basis.

Review of a grading system. One aspect of administration is the continuous evaluation of the total program from curriculum to plant facilities. An integral part of this evaluation is the report card. Of the eleven cards returned out of the 15 requested, six were using a card that was more than five years old. It is suggested that if a revision of the curriculum or other programs of the school were omitted, as revision of grade cards, then problems would certainly arise. Literature imparted in Chapter I about the basis of grade cards being the philosophy of the school, could suggest that the philosophy of the six schools mentioned has not changed in over five years. Surely with the vast educational changes developing everyday the philosophy of the school would alter itself within that time limit. The writer interviewed one administrator concerning the duration of grade cards in his unit, he pointed out that he had been in a unit district seven years, and the grade cards were there when he came. Nearly the same report came from an interview with parents that had a graduating senior this year. The parents told this writer that their boy had the same card when he was in the third grade, this was as far back as they could remember.

Parent-School cooperation in planning school programs. The comments of Stout and Langdon,<sup>40</sup> from the NEA Journal have some facts concerning parental help in planning school programs, "A recent survey of what urban schools are doing about report cards revealed that 52% had revised their systems in the past

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<sup>40</sup>See pages 1 and 9.

five years. About one-half had asked parents to help in the revision."<sup>41</sup>

The principals of ten schools responded to the question, "What person or groups were represented in the establishment of your current grade card?", a count was made for superintendents, principals, and teachers. No principal suggested that the PTA, citizen committee, school board, or other groups should have anything to do with the establishment of the card.

Conferences. Most administrators commented on the "reason for conferences", and noted that conferences should be held for academic and guidance reasons. While at the same time they suggested by their ratings that conferences are held in 75% of the schools, but as was remarked above, that by and large they were held only on request of teacher, parent, and administrator, in that order. Six schools polled voted equally for disciplinary and academic reasons. From the opinionnaire sent to teachers in the same schools, an overwhelming 82.4% voted that parent-teacher conferences were necessary. Only nine teachers were negative in their vote. This infers that the teachers believe that conferences are a necessary portion of the reporting system in their school. Yet, at the same time, the administrative policy does not establish them as a necessary regular part of the school program. The teachers were as verbal about the need of conferences when they suggested that in their opinion (87%) parents appreciated conferences. Only seven votes out of 54 were dissenting ones.

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<sup>41</sup>"Report on Reports," NEA Journal, LII (December, 1963), 14.

The principals of the various schools polled commented that for the most part conferences (as to material and content) were planned by the teachers of their respective school units, but at the same time nine out of ten said that teachers did not get released time to plan this material. One principal qualified his vote by saying, "during preparation period," which might account for some of the "no" votes. It was a rather close vote (5 "yes" - 6 "no") on released time to conduct conferences. Yet, the teachers themselves said 33 to 23 that conferences should be held during the regular school hours. If conferences are as valuable as the teachers and administrators both agree, then why is more released time not given to the planning of them and then by the same token to the conducting of them?

It was surprising to note the indication that the teachers had about the next question, namely, "Would parent attendance be better if conferences were held in the evening?" Nearly 80% said no. Some teachers wrote on their comments various reasons for their vote, such as: too many outside activities in the evening, (lodge, ballgames, various meetings), teachers need that time off, bowling, shopping, etc.

The administrators responded to the advantages of conferences from the list of six they were to rate--plus one disadvantage they might check, (incidentally, one principal checked "little or no benefit"). The top vote getter was that it "helps parents understand problem better." As far as correcting problems for which conferences might be called, most administrators believed that conferences partially corrected the problem

for which they were called, and only two said that it almost totally corrected the problem for which it was called.

In response to the question that, "who decided whether or not conferences will be a part of the school program," the principals said in greatest frequency that the administrator should. Some (7 out of 11) believed that teachers ought to have a voice in the establishment of conferences. It was certainly surprising to find out that the principals felt, that from 2 out of 11 schools, the parents ought to have a voice in whether or not to have conferences as a part of the school program. An overview of this idea comes from the opinionnaire taken from the teachers of the same group of schools, 41 out of 55 or 73.2% said "no", parents should not have a voice in the establishment of a reporting system.

A brief look at PTA meetings. A closely allied person-to-person exchange of ideas is the PTA meeting. When teachers were asked if they thought the PTA meeting was a good place to exchange ideas of achievement of the children, I got a resounding 98.2% "no". Some teachers were good enough to comment as to why. It would be a concensus to say that most all agreed that the PTA meeting was a social gathering, a place to plan collectively some programs of the school, and a place to discuss the problems of all children.

Correspondence. Correspondence as a form of reporting is another plan of attack. Seven out of eleven administrators send letters dealing with disciplinary problems that develop in their schools. The greatest vote getter of when or why correspondence

was sent is "retention", presumably in the spring of the school year to warn the parent and/or pupil of the eventual problem that may arise at promotion time. Only one administrator voiced his opinion on the point that correspondence is sent concerning good grades.

Correspondence concerning grades was commonly sent when poor grades were made consecutively in several grading periods. Only three out of fourteen schools send correspondence after the first grading period to point out the necessity to get the pupil and parent more concerned about learning and achievement.

## CHAPTER IV

### CONCLUSIONS

It was the initial intent of this investigator to (1) study some of the methods of reporting and (2) to find some points of comparison and concerning guidelines for effective reporting systems.

It was found that any reporting system must be an individual school or school-district undertaking. No one reporting system can be taken and placed in another unit. The children, school philosophy, school program, parents, teachers, and administrators are different from those in another unit, therefore each school may require a different reporting system.

The research from this study points out that any reporting system should be the cooperative effort of all interested persons. It is only through the effort of all those persons that they will understand or readily accept something new or something different than the "old way".

A school system that wishes to revise its present grading system would be wise to consider the individuality of its pupils. This point was emphasized in the study. Most educators agreed that it is unwise to rate one pupil against another. The comparison of achievement of pupils is a technique that is promoted by current trends in reporting.

Both parents and schools are becoming dissatisfied with report cards as an evaluation of achievement. Other means must be used to supplement or substitute for the grade cards. Some more common methods receiving recognition are anecdotal reports, letters sent to parents, and conferences. The latter techniques are gaining in popularity, especially if parents have had a hand in organizing them. It must also be remembered that conferences should be effectively planned by the person conducting them. It is wise to give teachers released time to plan for, and conduct, conferences if they are to be an integral part of the pattern of transmitting the culture to the children in the schools.

In another approach, this study pointed out that if parents say continually that they "are satisfied" with the present system, they may be unfamiliar with current acceptable trends and therefore may need professional guidance. This last point should be emphasized because the parents are usually familiar with only that which they have experienced.

There does not seem to be enough professional leadership or professional initiative to establish a reporting system whereby the schools and pupils will be improved. Teachers from the schools tabulated admitted that school policy did not allow techniques other than the usual grade card, for reporting regularly the achievement of pupils.

From the recent research cited in Chapter III, it was brought out that principals as well as teachers do not want the parents involved in the planning of most aspects of a reporting system. Nearly seventy-five per cent of the teachers



felt that parents should not have a voice in establishing a reporting system.

It was discussed that before any reporting system can be effective it must involve different techniques. No one method of reporting will effectively evaluate pupil progress. Many kinds of reporting should be attempted and evaluated for the effectiveness in any one school system.

APPENDIXES

## APPENDIX I

### SUGGESTIONS FOR WRITING LETTERS TO PARENTS

#### TO THE FACULTY: SANTA MONICA CITY SCHOOLS

- I. Begin the letter with encouraging news.
- II. Close with an attitude of optimism.
- III. Solicit the parents' cooperation in solving the problems, if any exist.
- IV. Speak of the child's growth - social, physical, and academic.
  - A. Social (citizenship traits)
    1. Desirable traits: attention, attitude toward school, care of property, cooperation, honesty, effort, fair play, neatness, truthfulness, obedience, promptness, reliability, self-control, self-reliance, concentration, courtesy, and consideration, thrift, patience, appreciation, kindness, sympathy, orderliness, interest in associates, discrimination, politeness, respect for the right of others.
    2. Undesirable traits: selfishness, wastefulness, untruthfulness, dishonesty, spitefulness, slow to respond, impudence, carelessness, untidiness, rudeness, noisiness, insolence, cheating, inattention, lack of self-reliance, discourtesy, tattling, snobbishness, conceit, impatience, stealing.
  - B. Physical (health conditions): posture, weight, vitality, physical handicaps, cleanliness (personal), muscular coordination, nervousness, emotional traits.
  - C. Academic
    1. Interests: In school, in extra-school activities.
    2. Methods of work: methods of attack, purposing, planning, executing, judging, consistency in finishing work.

## APPENDIX I (cont.)

3. Achievements: Growth in knowledge, appreciation, and techniques; list subjects in which the child is making progress and those in which he is not making progress; relationship of his accepted standards to his capacities.
- V. Compare the child's efforts with his own previous efforts and not with those of others.
- VI. Speak of his achievements in terms of his ability to do school work.
- VII. Remember it is our professional duty to know the reason why if the child is not making what, for him, is normal progress.
  - A. Some suggestive reason for lack of progress: late entry, absence, lack of application, health defects, such as hearing, sight, or under-nourishment.
- VIII. Teacher's advice to parents in matters pertaining to health in which the home is a vital factor, such as: diet, rest, clothing, exercise, etc.
- IX. Please remember that every letter is a professional diagnosis, and as such is as sacred as any diagnosis ever made by any physician.

APPENDIX II  
GRADE CARD ANALYSIS

Town	Grade Scale	Subj. Areas	Trait Areas	Work Areas	Sign. Parents	Sign Teach.	Comm.	Grade Period	Name of Card
Morrisonville #1	ABCDF	9	0	9	Yes	No	Yes	4	Report to Parents
Charles-ton	ESU ABCDF	13	0	16	Yes	No	Yes	4	Pupil Progress Rpt. Tchrs. Re-
Athens	ABCDF ESUI	12	0	26	Yes	No	No	6	pt. to Par.
Tovey	ABCD	13	0	5	Yes	No	No	6	None
Mt. Auburn #1	US ABCD	9	32	10	Yes	Yes	Yes	4	Primary Rpt. Card
Savoy #1	ABCDF I	9	0	14	Yes	No	Yes	4	Progress Report
Mt. Auburn #2	ABCD US	17	0	0	Yes	Yes	Yes	6	Pupil Progress Rpt.
Kincaid	ABC DE	9	25	12	Yes	No	Yes	6	Prg. Rpt. to Par.
Hume #1	ABC DF	11	0	12	Yes	No	No	6	Report Card
Hume #2	SUN ABCDF	17	0	2	Yes	No	No	6	Pupils Rpt. Card
Stoning-ton	Inc US ABCDF	13	0	4	Yes	No	Yes	4	Elem. Rpt. Card
Hutsonville #1	US ABCDF	10	0	9	Yes	No	No	6	None
Flatville	ABCDF + -	11	22	10	Yes	No	Yes	4	Progress Report
Savoy #2	ABCDF I	11	0	14	Yes	No	Yes	4	Report to Parent
Morrisonville #2	ABCDF ISNU	10	0	9	Yes	No	Yes	4	Pupil Progress Rpt. and
Edinburg	ABCDF	12	0	0	Yes	Yes	Yes	6	Promo. Cd.
Illiopolis #1	US ABCDF	10	0	22	Yes	No	No	6	Report of Progress
Illiopolis #2	US ABCDF	10	16	20	Yes	No	Yes	6	Report of Progress
Hutsonville #2	ABCUEF INC	13	33	8	Yes	No	Yes	4	Quarterly Rpt. to Pt.
Flat Rock	ABCDEF	key sort	0	12	No	No	No	4	Pri. Prg.
Assumption #1	OSF INU	7	22	22	Yes	No	Yes	4	Report Pupil Prg.
Assumption #2	ABCDE SU + -	15	14	12	Yes	No	Yes	6	Report Pupil Prg.
Chandlerville	ABCDF A or E	15	0	9	Yes	No	Yes	6	None
No Name	B or S C or M D or I F	13	0	9	Yes	No	Yes	4	Progress Report

APPENDIX III

TALLY OF OPINIONNAIRE SENT TO TEACHERS

1. Do you believe that your grade cards are adequate for reporting of academic and citizenship achievement to parents?  
      28   YES        28   NO
2. Do you feel that something else could take the place of grade cards?  
      20   YES        32   NO
3. Are annual (or semi-annual) parent-teacher conferences necessary?  
      48   YES         9   NO
4. Do parents appreciate conferences?  
      47   YES         7   NO
5. Should conferences, if held, be held during school hours?  
      33   YES        23   NO
6. From your observations - Would conferences have better attendance, if held in the evening?  
      16   YES        40   NO
7. Should parents have a voice in the establishment of grade cards?  
      16   YES        36   NO
8. Should parents have a voice in the establishment of all phases of a school's reporting system (cards, conferences, correspondence, home visits)?  
      15   YES        41   NO
9. Should grade cards be anecdotal in nature?  
      22   YES        34   NO
10. Is the PTA meeting a satisfactory place to discuss the achievement of a pupil?  
       1   YES        55   NO

APPENDIX IV

You are one of five members from your faculty completing this opinionnaire. Please return it to your principal (folded) - He will return it to the proper place. THANK YOU

1. Do you believe that your grade cards are adequate for reporting of academic and citizenship achievement to parents?  
\_\_\_\_\_Yes            \_\_\_\_\_No
2. Do you feel that something else could take the place of grade cards?  
\_\_\_\_\_Yes            \_\_\_\_\_No (If yes, specify, \_\_\_\_\_)
3. Are annual (or semi-annual) parent-teacher conferences necessary?  
\_\_\_\_\_Yes            \_\_\_\_\_No
4. Do parents appreciate conferences?  
\_\_\_\_\_Yes            \_\_\_\_\_No
5. Should conferences, if held, be held during school hours?  
\_\_\_\_\_Yes            \_\_\_\_\_No
6. From your observations - Would conferences have better attendance, if held in the evening?  
\_\_\_\_\_Yes            \_\_\_\_\_No
7. Should parents have a voice in the establishment of grade cards?  
\_\_\_\_\_Yes            \_\_\_\_\_No
8. Should parents have a voice in the establishment of all phases of a school's reporting system (cards, conferences, correspondence, home visits)?  
\_\_\_\_\_Yes            \_\_\_\_\_No
9. Should grade cards be anecdotal in nature?  
\_\_\_\_\_Yes            \_\_\_\_\_No
10. Is the PTA meeting a satisfactory place to discuss the achievement of a pupil?  
\_\_\_\_\_Yes            \_\_\_\_\_No

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP

APPENDIX V

Post Office Box #94  
Mt. Auburn, Illinois  
May 17, 1967

I have enclosed one questionnaire for you, and five opinionnaires for five different members of your faculty.

If you will do me the favor of distributing these opinionnaires to any five different faculty members, it will be greatly appreciated.

I have asked your faculty if they will return the completed opinionnaires to you so that you may return them, along with your questionnaire, to me.

I hope that this bother has not inconvenienced you too much. Thank you for cooperating with me to improve this phase of our school program.

Please use the return envelope provided.

Sincerely,

TED E. JOHNSON



APPENDIX VI

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE EVALUATION OF A REPORTING SYSTEM

This questionnaire takes only a few minutes to fill out. Please fill it out as thoroughly as you can and send back immediately in the self-addressed stamped envelope.

1. What is the term upon which grades are reported to parents? (check term)  
  0   4 weeks        7   6 weeks        6   9 weeks  
  0   12 weeks        0   Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_
2. Is grade card sent home with pupil?  
 12  yes        0  no
3. Do teachers write comments?  
  7  sometimes        1  usually        2  always  
  1  never        1  when specifically warranted
4. Do parents write comments?  
 10  sometimes        0  usually        0  always  
  2  never        0  when specifically warranted
5. When was last revision of your current grade report?  
  1  1 year ago        1  2 years ago        2  3 years ago  
  0  4 years ago        1  5 years ago        6  more than 5 years
6. Mark all person (s) or group (s) that were represented in the establishment of your current grade report.  
  6  superintendent        9  principal        8  teacher  
  0  PTA        0  citizens committee        0  school board  
  0  other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_
7. What is the principal reason for conferences?  
  4  disciplinary        7  academic        8  guidance

APPENDIX VI (cont.)

Page 2

8. Are parent-teacher conferences held?  
\_\_2\_\_ yes      \_\_3\_\_ no
9. If answer to question #8 is yes - check the following that apply. Conferences are held:  
\_\_2\_\_ once a year on a regular basis  
\_\_3\_\_ twice a year on a regular basis  
\_\_0\_\_ three times a year on a regular basis  
\_\_2\_\_ at request of teacher  
\_\_4\_\_ at request of administrator  
\_\_7\_\_ at request of parent  
\_\_6\_\_ for disciplinary reasons  
\_\_6\_\_ for academic reasons
10. Is the material or content for the conference planned by teacher or whomever is conducting?  
\_\_4\_\_ always      \_\_5\_\_ usually      \_\_0\_\_ never
11. Are teachers given released time to plan for conferences?  
\_\_1\_\_ yes      \_\_2\_\_ no
12. Are teachers given released time from class to conduct conferences?  
\_\_5\_\_ yes      \_\_6\_\_ no
13. Do parents attend as requested?  
\_\_2\_\_ always      \_\_8\_\_ usually      \_\_0\_\_ never
14. What per cent of teachers are originally from your community or were reared in your school district?  
\_\_3\_\_ 10%      \_\_3\_\_ 20%      \_\_2\_\_ 30%      \_\_0\_\_ 40%  
\_\_1\_\_ 50%      \_\_2\_\_ more than 50%

APPENDIX VI (cont.)

Page 3

15. In your opinion, conferences: (check those that apply)

9 build good public relations

8 partially corrects immediate problem for which it was called

2 almost totally corrects immediate problem for which it was called

8 helps teacher understand problem better

10 helps parent understand problem better

9 helps parent understand school objective better

1 are of little or no benefit

16. Who decides whether or not conferences will be a part of the school program? (check those that apply)

10 administration      7 teacher      2 parent

17. Is correspondence sent to parents concerning disciplinary reasons?

7 yes      4 no

18. Is correspondence sent to parents concerning grade (academic) problem? (check those that apply)

3 poor grades at first grading period

5 poor grades consecutively during the year

3 poor grades by mid-year

8 poor grades that might cause retention

1 as a reward for good grades or achievement

Thank you for helping me in this evaluation

APPENDIX VII

FACTUAL INFORMATION ABOUT SCHOOLS USED IN SURVEY

	<u>School</u>	<u>Enrollment</u>	<u>No. of Teachers</u>	<u>Grade Level</u>
1.	Illioopolis	292	13	K-6
2.	Edinburg	365	11	K-6
3.	Stonington	254	13	1-8
4.	Morrinsonville	310	16	K-6
5.	Assumption	274	13	1-6
6.	Athens	117	4	5-8
7.	Hutsonville	185	9	1-8
8.	Tovey	126	5	1-8
9.	Thomasboro	164	10	1-8
10.	Hardinville	99	4	1-8
11.	Flat Rock	216	9	K-8
12.	Lincoln (Charleston)	234	9	1-4
13.	Savoy	240	8	K-6
14.	Hume	220	13	1-8
15.	Kincaid	315	13	K-8

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