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A PROPOSED PROGRAM FOR A PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATION
AND ITS VALUE TO THE ROSENWALD NUMBER ONE
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, HUNTSVILLE, TEXAS

By

Esther H. Bridges

A Thesis in Education Submitted in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of

Bachelor of Science

in the

Division of Arts and Sciences

of the

Prairie View State Normal and Industrial College

Prairie View, Texas

August, 1938

Dedicated to
My Mother
Mrs. Sallie Hightower

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Esther H. Bridges

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Preface -

For four years, the organization of a Parent-Teacher Association in the Rosenwald number I. Elementary school has been a challenging problem to me. I constantly meet with friends. They tell me how their Parent-Teacher Associations are solving, for school and community, numerous problems which are urgent and vital to the welfare of their pupils.

Each year we attempt to organize a Parent-Teacher Association. But, we are never successful. Still, in the midst of continuous failure, I can see the growing need for Parent-Teacher co-operation in the Rosenwald No. I. Elementary School District. And, I am determined to plan a program that will prove successful. It is in this interest, that I submit this proposed program for a Parent-Teacher Association in the Rosenwald Number I. Elementary School, Huntsville, Texas.

The ultimate purpose will be first to make the citizens of this school district who are interested in child welfare aware of an urgent need; second, to show the value of co-operation in solving a problem which is common to all; and third, to recommend the Parent-Teacher Association as a means of satisfying their urgent needs, and thereby solving their common problems.

CHAPTER II

THE NEEDS FOR A PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATION

To Bring Parents and Teachers Together -

The children of Rosenwald Number I. Elementary school district are being deprived of many of the educational opportunities that are rightfully theirs, because of the lack of an organization which will bring parents and teachers into closer relationship.

The home nor the school can carry alone the full responsibility of education. Both factors must work in harmony. When parents have one set ideals and the teacher another the confusion of the home ideals, standards and motives in opposition to those of the school confuses the child. He wavers toward one and then the other, never sure as to which is right or wrong.

Our only hope for developing growing individuals, who are firm with a definite goal in mind and a clear conception of where they are going, why they are going and how they are to get there lies in the co-operation of parents and teachers as a medium for establishing unity.

By coming together parents understand better the school system and its needs. The teacher gets the view point of the home. Each understands the other. Therefore, they are better able to unite their efforts to develop growing self-reliable individuals. These are the words of P. P. Claxton, former United States Commissioner of Education, quoted by M. S. Mason, "I sincerely hope that

every school may soon have Parent-Teacher Associations through which parents and teachers may be brought into frequent consultation and intelligent co-operation in the task of the right education of all the children of the school community, nothing could mean more for the cause of education".¹

To Get Parents and Teachers to Share by Mutual Agreement the Responsibilities of Child Welfare -

It is surprising to see what new life and vitality will come to a community through common interest, all are needed by each one. We as parents and teachers are often perplexed by the individual problems that face us from time to time in rearing our children, but when parents exchange experiences with one another and with the teacher, difficulties soon vanish.

For example, Mrs. Brown is terribly perplexed because Sallie wants to attend the show every night. Many times Sallie wants to attend because Mary, Jane and Rose, her friends, are attending. If the mothers could meet and each tell of their experiences in attempting to limit show attendance and each decide, I will limit my child to one show a week and that on Friday or Saturday, it would be surprising to note how easy this would solve their problems. The Parent-Teacher Association affords an opportunity for such meetings.

¹ Mason, Martha S., - "Parent and Teacher"
Ginn and Company, Dallas - 1928
Page 149

To Interpret the School to Patrons -

We need some way of interpreting the school to parents. It must be understood that educational methods do not stand still. But are radically changed from generation to generation in an effort to prepare individuals to meet and solve their own social and economic problems.

A lack of acquaintance with the changes that have come about in methods of teaching causes misunderstanding and non-co-operation.

To illustrate this point, it has been many years since the teaching of alphabets ceased to be a part of early primary work. But, many fathers and mothers are greatly disturbed on discovering that the little first reader cannot say his letters.

While the teacher is putting forth every effort to teach the child to read, parents are at home trying to teach him letters. The child gets confused and his progress is retarded.

But if parents clearly understand the new methods of teaching, they will be able to give to their children at home the assistance necessary to supplement and apply the school lessons, and by such co-operative efforts the child will be able to progress at a normal speed. Not only is this true with the beginners, it is equally true with all grades. There is no better way of interpreting the school to parents than through a P. T. A. program which explains what is taught, how it is taught

and why it is taught.

To Provide Student Aid -

In our community as in all other communities, there are some pupils who are in families of limited income or in families temporarily embarrassed because of illness or lack of employment of the wage earner. Without help, these children will be unable to secure the secondary education which they need and desire.

In many schools, Student Aid in the form of clothing are given by the Parent-Teacher Association to the children who would be handicapped in their progress and probably have to drop out of school if assistance were not given to them or to their parents.

A number of handicapped children have to discontinue in school because of their eyes. Schools with working Parent-Teacher Associations often furnish glasses for such children through their student aid fund.

In considering the need for a student aid fund we should remember Theodore Roosevelt's saying, "Far and away the best prize that life offers is the chance to work hard at work worth doing".

To Safeguard the Social and Recreational Life of the Children -

"Human life becomes vicious through misdirection and not through inheritance".² We wonder why so many of our children become unruly, as we call it. We do not give

² Moore, M. E. - "Parent-Teacher and School"
The MacMillan Company, New York, 1926, Page 197.

enough consideration to the social and recreational life of the child.

If education is to be of any value it should help the child to do better those things he is going to do. Un-sponsored recreation is tragic. The child builds up wrong habits, attitudes and ideals. But, on the other hand, proper supervised recreation builds lofty ideals, correct habits and desirable attitudes and produces mental strength, health and vigor.

With a little co-operative effort of parents and teachers, we can equip a playground and secure an efficient leader to direct our children.

Another mistake we make is that of allowing our children to go to unchaperoned parties, picnics and the like. Of course, as long as we do not sponsor social activities, our children are going to flock to the type that is available. A Parent-Teacher Association will sponsor worthwhile activities.

To Form Study Classes -

Your child looks to you for guidance and understanding. Are you prepared to help him? The early years of a child's life are the important ones".⁵ "Recently, Nancy, ten years old, and Gretchen, six years old, were playing with Nancy's water colors. Nancy was called away, Gretchen's friend Ann arrived and the two youngsters used

⁵ Schmedt, Leo A. - "National Parent-Teacher" February, 1938, page 32.

all of Nancy's paint.

Nancy was very much aggrieved. In a discussion between Nancy, Gretchen and father, it was decided that Gretchen must replace the paint out of her paint".

The punishment fit the offence and was much more effective than a procedure such as spanking, scolding or putting to bed.

It seems easy, but, it takes a scientific knowledge of child nature, his instincts and impulses to deal intelligently, as this father did. Therefore, study we must if we are going to deal intelligently in training our children.

The Parent-Teacher Association offers a medium for co-operatively studying subjects which immediately concerns the well being of our children as: Developing character traits; Social Hygiene; The selection of Reading Material; Diet; Play; and Children's Clothes.

CHAPTER III

METHODS OF GETTING COMMUNITY CO-OPERATION

Co-operative Agents -

Much more can be accomplished when people work together than when they work alone. The teachers, doctor, and deomontrating agent or our community are Prairie View students. The Prairie View Club is a medium for promoting sociability and bringing about a cordial relationship. We co-operatively support the pastors' programs. And they are willing to help us. The leaders do not have to be of the same school to organize a similar club.

There is no symptoms of selfish interest. We realize that our individual success depends upon our ability to get the good will of the people of the community and that as a group we can do more along this line in a month than we could do alone in a year. Therefore, we feel free to go to each other for aid in launching our programs.

The principal will explain the proposed program to the different individuals mentioned above and ask each for their co-operation. I could cite instances where just presenting our program to the group was sufficient.

Probable Steps that Co-operative Agents may Take -

The preacher may preach a sermon on "Parental Responsibility for Child Guidance" bringing out the need for intelligent co-operation of parents and teachers for effective guidance.

The doctor may emphasize the slogan "Prevention

Rather Than Cure" and show the value of co-operating with the school in this campaign. Some may say the doctor would be cutting his own throat. But when you consider that if the association is organized, the teacher will have a better chance to educate the people to the need or value of medical examinations and treatments. You will realize that helping the teacher is his medium for what we might call teacher-self support.

The demonstrating agent may come in contact with a group of people that neither the doctor or preacher contacts. Here, he will casually show the need for a working Parent-Teacher Association. For example, some patrons may say they are handicapped because their children come from school late. The demonstrating agent may show them how co-operation between parents and teachers could solve this problem. He could start off by telling them that many times children are turned out on time. But, they feel that the teacher doesn't know when they get home nor does the parent know when they were turned out. Then in a convincing manner he could show the parents how an understanding between parents and teachers could solve this problem.

Selling the Program to Contrary Ones -

The Knockers - In our community, as in most others, there are individuals who persistently knock every undertaking unless they are the originators. To make these individuals feel that the Parent-Teacher Association's enterprise is one of their own initiative, the

principal will visit their homes and ask them to offer some suggestions for getting parents and teachers to cooperate. If they are slow about suggesting, he will ask them about the advisability of forming a Parent-Teacher Association, he will explain the object of the association.

The Fault Finders - This group calls every thing new a fad. They say little and do nothing because they do not have an intelligent understanding of what the new undertaking is all about. The principal will go to their homes. Probably, they will ask him about some of their problems. He will recommend the Parent-Teacher Association as a solution for their problems clearly explaining the object of the association. It takes tact, skill and initiative to deal with these people.

Program by Children -

Many methods of bringing parents and teachers together for what I would call a preliminary conference have been found effective. For example, "Get Togethers" with refreshments, "Attendance Contest" and "Outside Speakers". Each teacher will have to study the interest of his own community. People in my community do not come out rapidly for refreshments. On the other hand, you will get attendance for programs. Therefore, we will work out a thirty minutes program. We will be careful to see that at least one child in every family appears on program, parents like to hear their own children. We will put the children's best work on display. This lets parents see what the child is doing and is an important means for

creating interest in the school.

Time - Due to (1) the remote distance of parents and citizens from school and (2) that there are no public workers in the community, we will get our largest number around three o'clock. Because, they will be anxious to get home in time to do their evening chores.

Place - We will meet at the school which is the community center.

Announcing the Program -

I find that with a program in which the children are taking part they will often announce it efficiently verbal. But to be sure that the time and date is clear we will print program cards and send them to every family in the community.

Conducting the Program -

Two of the school children will conduct the thirty minutes literary program. After the program the principal will dismiss children. In instances where parents want their children to wait, they will remain out-of-doors. The physical education teacher will supervise these children.

Next, some qualified parent who has agreed on his own initiative (there are several of this type in our community) will open an informal discussion on the advisability of forming a Parent-Teacher Association.

After the discussion, the principal will allow time for parents or visitors, with teachers to inspect the children's display of work. Some parents will ask teachers

personal questions about their children. Teachers should be tactful in their personality and speech to convince the parents that they understand young people and have their welfare at heart.

Before adjournment the principal will announce that a little later on a call will be issued to organize a Parent-Teacher Association.

CHAPTER IV

METHODS AND TECHNIQUE FOR ORGANIZING
PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATION

The Organization Meeting -

Place - The meeting will be held at the school.

Time - Three o'clock P. M. for the same reason explained in the preliminary conference. The meeting will open and close promptly at the time stated on the invitation. Promptness has much to do with the success of the organization. Long drawn out meetings have a deadening effect on enthusiasm and interest. Our time schedule for meetings will range from one hour to an hour and a half.

Methods of Announcing the Meeting -

(1) In our language classes, pupils will write invitations stating the time place and object of the meeting. They will write a sufficient number to invite every family in the community. We want the co-operative interest of as many as possible; (2) in newspapers, school and local; (3) at public gatherings; (4) through personal and telephone invitations; and (5) from the pulpits.

Conducting the Meeting -

The principal will open the meeting with community singing. Purpose of the meeting - To give the purpose of the meeting we want a convincing person well informed about the Parent-Teacher Association movement, its social and educational importance and its unlimited possibilities for promoting the welfare of children. For this purpose we will use the Jean Supervisor. Next, will be the

election of a temporary chairman. The Jean Supervisor may be elected. Next will be the election of a temporary secretary.

Careful thought should be given to the selection of officers for the success of the organization depends upon the wise choice of officers. "Well begun is half done". The association must have a strong foundation to build on if it is to be successful. So with common consent of the group we will use the temporary chairman and secretary until we have had time to know enough about our members to wisely choose permanent officers.

The temporary chairman will state that a motion to organize a Parent-Teacher Association is now in order. When the motion has been made and seconded from the floor, the chairman will put the question before the house. If the vote is favorable, the chairman will precede with the organization.

The adoption of by-laws and election of officers will be delayed until a later day for reasons mentioned above. The secretary will register members, and while interest and enthusiasm are at their height, the chairman will discuss the duties of and appoint different committees.

Committee work provides an excellent means for enlisting the interest of individual members for the accomplishment of important works in the association. The chairman will use what I consider an effective method of getting committees. She will list the committees on the board, state the duties of each and ask each member to

indicate on a slip of paper, the committee on which he would like to serve, and to give also his second choice. This is to provide an opportunity for those who would be passive listeners to become active and enthusiastic participants according to their interest and abilities. The chairman will have authority to apoint others to make out the desirable number.

The Committees -

To function properly every Parent-Teacher Association must have the following:

First, a program committee made up of both parents and teachers in order that the point of view of both the home and the school may be presented to the association through its programs. "This committee must be faithful, for its work is never done; it must be meek in spirit, for it will always be subject to criticism; it must be courageous in the face of disappointment, patient in the time of trial; tireless in the time of stress, it must have a sense of humor and an abundance of that most uncommon quality, common sense. It must be resourceful, responsible and executive".⁴

Its main duties are: (1) To study program material provided by congress and state branches; (2) To outline the year's program and (3) To develop monthly programs based upon themes chosen by the group.

Second; A membership committee representing the

⁴ Mason, Martha S. "Parents and Teachers"
Ginn and Company, Dallas, 1928, page 189.

whole school district. Its duties are: (1) To study the aim, purpose and plans of work of Parent-Teacher Association in order to speak intelligently about Parent-Teacher work when approaching prospective members; (2) To increase membership of the association and promote its growth in every way. (3) To make plans to keep the interest of the members.

Third, a hospitality committee selected from various sections of the community, friends invited will come more readily when assured of a welcome from one they know. Much of the success of the organization depends upon the friendly spirit of the members. New members especially should be made feel at home.

The duties of this committee are: (1) To promote good fellowship at all meetings (2) To greet and introduce members and visitors before and after meetings, (3) To be responsible for social activities. "The hospitality committee must be large enough to prevent the work from becoming burdensome to any one".⁵

Fourth, a publicity committee to inform the public about the parent-teacher movement in order to create a public opinion that is intelligent and favorable. "Any attitude or action of parent or community which is not in harmony with the efforts of the school tends to nullify these (the school's) efforts".⁶

⁵ The Handbook, National Congress of Parents and Teachers, 1201 Sixteenth Street, Northwest Washington, D. C., 1929.

⁶ Bulletin - The Odyssey of Mrs. Brown, State Dept. of Education, Austin, Texas. Sept., 1936, Vol. 12, p. 42.

The duties of this committee are: (1) To study publicity of all kinds, Congress publications, principles of publicity and the like. (2) They must be familiar with the aims and accomplishments of the association. (3) The chairman of this committee must be able to tell what he knows, or get intelligibly told what others know but cannot tell.

At this point, I believe, we have our organization in working order. Therefore, we will leave the succeeding programs to be developed by the program committee and the membership publicity committees will select their chairmen and begin their duties as listed above.

The Meeting Following the Organization Meeting -

The chairman will call the meeting to order with community singing. The secretary will read the minutes of the last meeting. Then we will listen to the report of different committees. The chairman will allow time for discussion of the reports.

Presentation of Projects -

The chairman will explain that closely studying conditions related to child welfare in our school district one finds many needs, all of which will have a strong bearing on child welfare. But, we will endeavor to take one piece of work at a time, the one the group considers most important. We do not want to dissipate the force of the organization by attempting to carry on more projects than can be handled successfully. Then she will state that the house is open for presentation of projects. She will

encourage the group to name projects they are interested in. Principal and teachers will give time for parents and citizens to present projects. If they are slow about suggesting projects or after projects given by them have been discussed, the principal will present the following projects:

1. Promotion of Community Health.
2. Supporting a Recreation Program.
3. Establishing a Student Aid Fund.

In an attempt to explain each project he will give brief suggestions for carrying out the project as follows:

The Promotion of Community Health - The principal will explain that if this project is taken up, the monthly programs will show the growing importance of health as a factor in modern life which enables one to live most and serve best. And an appointed committee will study the home conditions of each child, after which steps to improve home conditions will be in order.

Study and discussion groups will consider means of improving poor home conditions.

A physician may be engaged for yearly medical inspection. We will endeavor to see that each child has at least two dental inspections yearly.

We will provide for hot lunches to be served in the school daily and have frequent lectures, discussions and illustrations to show the importance of looking after the undernourished child.

Supporting a Recreation program. The principal will explain this project by stating that the activities

in working out this project could be centered around a community program. We would secure a place for the playground. The next step would be to secure equipment for the smaller children; sandpiles and pails, blocks, slides, seesaws and swings. As far as possible, the equipment could be made by the older school boys. The association would furnish the material.

For the adolescent boys and girls, we would provide for base ball, volley ball and basket ball. Including a swimming pool and a small sketch of woods that the children may explore studying birds, animals and plants. Along with other planning, we will provide for a field garden. And secure an efficient leader to supervise the playground.

Then the principal would explain that in establishing a student Aid Fund, the project could be worked out like this: In the monthly meetings we would consider helping handicapped boys and girls, orphans and those in families temporary embarrassed because of illness and the like, over the critical times when they are fitting themselves for a life's work. We would discuss ways of helping these handicapped individuals as: providing clothing; eyeglasses for those who need them; providing scholarships are loaning them money until they have finished a secondary education and have sufficient earning power to enable them to return the loan to the fund, that it may be used for some other pupil.

He would also mention the various forms of en-

tertainments that could be given and the fact that some may give donations to raise and support the student Aid Fund. It must be made plain that the fund would be used to support such needs as mentioned above and others which the Parent-Teacher Association in general may agree upon.

Projects for Consideration -

At this point the chairman will give time for consideration of projects presented by the group to decide which one we will work on.

Assuming that the group will select Health, since all other abilities, skills and attitudes are based on one's health, the following is a suggested one year Health Program.

A SUGGESTED ONE YEAR HEALTH PROGRAM

Months	Topics for Discussion	Activities
October	The Relation of Health to Mental Fitness	Seeing that each child has a medical Examination and at least two dental inspections yearly
November	Meal Planning	Sponsor a Father's night (Prepare a supper)
December	Social Disease	Secure and show slides
January	Living with others	Fly proof pit toilets for school and home
February	Studying Health pamphlets secured from State Health Dept.	Screening kitchens and Dining rooms
March	Ventilation	Survey to Study and improve home conditions
April	Health, Everybody's Problem	Clean up campaign
Summer		Securing material and planning program for next year

The hospitality committee will furnish social activities for recreation and to finance this program.

CHAPTER V

THE VALUE I HOPE TO OBTAIN FROM
THIS PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATION

First, I hope to form a partnership of home and school. That is, to get each factor home and school, to work in harmony with an understanding sympathy towards the work of the other. Each doing as well as possible its own appropriate task and intelligently uniting their forces when ever necessary.

Second, I hope to establish co-operation among parents. I mean that type of co-operation that will be a medium for sympathetic approach and understanding between parents enabling them to approach each other concerning their common problems.

Third, I hope to develop a program study course on child welfare.

We have study courses appearing in different magazines. But, not all of our patrons are able to secure such magazines. Therefore, in our local Parent-Teacher Association we want to provide a study course on child welfare that will be interesting, helpful and available to all parents and citizens in the community.

Fourth, I hope to develop activities, constructive, preventive and protective. To illustrate what I mean we will use the community playground. It is constructive in the since that with proper supervision we will be able to build individuals who are reliable, honest, and has self control and respect the rights of others. It is

preventive in the sense that it furnish amusement for our young people and prevent them from going to other undesirable places. It is protective in the sense that by preventing children from going to undesirable places we protect them from perils.

Fifth, I hope the Parent-Teacher Association will be a means of preventing mistakes, and misunderstandings. Often we make mistakes in dealing with children, because we do not know their physical or mental limitations nor their living conditions. It is my desire that this proposed Parent-Teacher Association, if accepted, will furnish an excellent opportunity for finding out about such mental and physical handicaps and home conditions. And in that way prevent mistakes and misunderstandings.

Sixth, I hope to build a united community, a community in which all the parents and citizens will work together for child welfare, a community that unitedly believe as the President of Teachers College Columbia University who said:

"I cannot conceive of a really good school hoping to alter the behavior of children and changing their lines of thinking without constant co-operation of parent and teacher".⁷

⁷ Mason, Martha S. "Parents and Teachers", Ginn and Company, Dallas, 1928, page 274.

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