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What The Negro Parents Of The Mexia Independent School District Expect Of The School And Of The Teachers

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WHAT THE NEGRO PARENTS OF THE MEXIA INDEPENDENT SCHOOL
DISTRICT EXPECT OF THE SCHOOL AND OF THE TEACHERS



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WHAT THE NEGRO PARENTS OF THE MEXIA INDEPENDENT SCHOOL
DISTRICT EXPECT OF THE SCHOOL AND OF THE TEACHERS

by

Robert B. Foreman

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A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
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DEDICATED TO

MY MOTHER,

Mrs. Pearl C. Foreman

and

the memory of my father,

Arthur R. Foreman,

who died August 3, 1946

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Nature and Purpose of the Survey

This survey was conducted for the purpose of determining whether or not the parents in Mexia Colored School District approved of the modern teacher and the school system as it was being practiced in this township in 1950. It was believed that certain questions could be answered by the parents which would lead to a better understanding of the school problems of today concerning the teacher and parent. A secondary purpose of this survey was to obtain many suggestions from parents which would be helpful in making the school system a greater success than it had previously been.

Reason for Selection of the Topic

The writer was made to feel the importance of such a survey by facts and data presented in a magazine article entitled, "Recent Education Survey Reflects New Attitude of Parents Toward School Program and the Teacher."¹ The question which this article suggested was: Would a survey similar to this one reflect new attitudes of the parents of Mexia Colored School District toward the school and teacher? In this study an attempt was made to determine whether or not the parents of the township were satisfied with the school system of 1950.

¹Ivins, L. S., The Peabody Reflector and Alumni News, 12:90-94, March, 1949.

Review of Previous Studies

A. P. Kephart stated in a magazine article that his reason for making such a survey was that the parent might give some information as to his ideas of the teacher which might prove very beneficial.²

Ten characteristics of the teacher were listed as follows: (1) character; (2) patience; (3) kindness; (4) sincerity; (5) teaching skill; (6) discipline; (7) thoroughness; (8) tact; (9) sense of humor; and (10) sociability.

A national survey was made in 1944 and 1948 by the Defiance College Department of Education under the direction of Lester S. Ivins as head of the department. This survey showed the new attitude of parents toward the school program and toward the teacher. Questionnaires were sent to parents from all walks of life in the different income groups, and in all parts of the United States. The 1948 results were even more convincing than those of 1944 in showing the desire of the parents of the nation for greater opportunities in religious training in the public schools that would improve the ethical and moral behavior of their children. The parents thought that the school administration should receive more suggestions from parents when revising courses of study. They also felt that the teacher should have a four-year college education.

The outstanding difference between the answers received in 1944 and 1948 reflected a decided change in favor of a stronger program of

²Kephart, A. P., "What Kind of a Teacher," American School Board Journal, 47-48, March, 1932.

religious education for the public school children. The parents expected the teacher to give more attention to the type of training that would instill better manners in the children, that would improve the moral standards which exist in many communities, and that would give the children training in common sense ethics.

Further comment included the suggestion that child guidance clinics should be a part of the public school set-up for assistance in dealing with moral problems of the children.

The survey of 1948 was intended to be a check upon the 1944 survey.

Limitations of This Survey

This survey was limited, since only the Mexia Colored School District was sampled. The larger proportion of the questionnaires was indirectly delivered to the parents through the principals and children of the township schools. The remaining ones were taken care of by personal and group interviews. The 150 questionnaires returned constitute 85 per cent of those sent out.

Although the two schools of Mexia Colored School District represented two types, namely, semi-rural and small community, the opinions of the parents were very much the same.

Procedure

The material used in making this study was secured by means of the questionnaire and personal interview methods as stated in the preceding topic. Approximately 10 per cent of the parents were interviewed individually or in a group; the remaining 90 per cent received

their questionnaires through the schools which their children attended. Through the gracious cooperation of Mr. E. Washington, principal of Dunbar Grade-High School, the questionnaires were first distributed among the children of that school. One questionnaire was sent to each family through the oldest child in school. Following this, the papers were given to children in the Dunbar and Douglas Schools who did not have older brothers or sisters in Dunbar High School or in their respective schools. Several families were represented in more than one school. The opinions of these parents were tabulated under the name of the school in which the larger number of their children were enrolled. Of the total number of questionnaires sent out at each school, approximately 86 per cent were returned at Dunbar High School, 80 per cent at Douglas School.

The principals of the schools collected the returned questionnaires and gave them to the author of this thesis. The information obtained from these papers was tabulated in per cents or in number for each school.

CHAPTER II

PRESENTATION OF DATA

Family Background

Occupation of parents. The occupations of the parents were found to be so varied and so numerous that no significant relationship could be established between these occupations and the parent's opinion. The per cent of parents in various occupational groups is listed in Table II.

Number of children. Table III shows, by percentages, the number of children in families who lived in the two different school districts. In a similar manner, Table IV shows the number of children of families living in the two school districts who attended school.

Schools the children attended. All children of school age in Mexia Colored School District who were mentally and physically able attended one of the two following schools: Dunbar Grade-High School, and Douglas School. The location of these schools is shown on the map of Limestone County in Table I.

Social Life of Parents

Visiting the school. Table V shows the percentages of parents in various ten-year groups (1) who frequently attended the school activities, (2) who felt free to visit the school at any time, and (3) who accepted special invitations to observe regular school work. The table makes apparent the fact that the parents felt free to visit the school at any time, even though they did not have the opportunity to visit. Several factors entered into the explanation of why they did not attend.

Table II --OCCUPATIONS OF PARENTS

	Per Cent	Craftsman	Per Cent	Professional	Per Cent	Farming	Per Cent
Common Labor							
Day labor	53.6	Blacksmith Mechanics Electrician Plumber	.8 3.2 .8 2.4	Ministers Civil service Undertaker Barber Doctor Teacher Druggist	.4 1.6 2.4 1.6 .8 .8 1.6	Farmers	26.4

Table III --- NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN FAMILY

Number of Children in Family	Per Cent of Families in Various Schools	
	Dunbar	Douglas
1	1.4	1.8
2	2.6	7.9
3	15.6	12.7
4	16.0	19.6
5	25.8	18.6
6	15.5	17.6
7	8.8	3.0
8	5.9	5.9
9	2.0	5.9
10	2.9	1.0
11	2.0	2.0
12	1.5	2.0
Total	100.0	100.0

Table IV -- NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN FAMILY ATTENDING SCHOOL

Number of Children in School	Per Cent of Children of School Age	
	Dunbar	Douglas
1	7.2	6.0
2	30.7	10.0
3	20.2	16.0
4	18.8	36.0
5	10.2	24.0
6	7.4	8.0
7	5.5	
Total	100.0	100.0

Table V --- PARENTS WHO FELT FREE TO VISIT THE SCHOOL

Age of Parents	Per Cent of Parents Who Felt Free to Visit the School	
	Dunbar	Douglas
80 - 90	100	100
70 - 80	100	100
60 - 70	100	100
50 - 60	100	100
40 - 50	100	100
30 - 40	100	100
20 - 30	100	100

During "Visiting Week", invitations were sent to the parents of the Consolidated School, resulting in 465 classroom visitations during the week of November fifth to twelfth, 1949, inclusive. This showed that parents felt free to visit the school, were very much interested in their children's work, and did attend when special invitations were sent to them. Some parents expressed their desire to attend, but had no means of transportation.

Physical Aspects of the School

Parents who preferred a school with gymnasium and auditorium. An examination of the data presented in Table VI shows that 114 of 125 parents of Mexia Colored School District preferred the gymnasium and auditorium in the school. One mother of the Douglas School District stated that if there were a gymnasium in the school, an auditorium was unnecessary.

Some of the remarks made by the parents in favor of the gymnasium and auditorium were:

1. Physical education makes strong bodies.
2. Physical education is healthful and gives the children more exercise.
3. Children enjoy school more.
4. Promotes interest in school and in other pupils
5. Promotes interest in sports
6. Makes the schools more united
7. Physical education and athletics have their places in the school just as the other subjects which are taught.

Table VI --- PARENTS WHO PREFERRED USE OF GYMNASIUM ON SATURDAYS
 Per Cent of Parents Who Preferred the Use of the Gymnasium for
 Students on Saturdays

Age of Parents	Dunbar	Douglas
80 - 90	100	100
70 - 80	99.2	100
60 - 70	100	92.0
50 - 60	100	100
40 - 50	100	100
30 - 40	100	100
20 - 30	100	100

8. Develops the child physically and mentally.
9. Keeps boys in schools.
10. The gymnasium is a place for recreation.
11. A gymnasium and auditorium help the school to keep the parents growing and progressing with their children. Children soon outgrow their parents if the parents do not keep up.
12. Encourages the social life built around the school.¹

An interesting remark made by a parent of the Dunbar School was, "Plays given in the auditorium often bring out talents that might otherwise never be discovered."

Douglas School did not have a gymnasium and auditorium, and consequently the parents did not know so well the value of these. Five of the 11 parents in the different school districts who did not prefer a gymnasium in the school expressed the reasons for their objections.

The parents' statements were as follows:

1. It is all nonsense.
2. It is too much expense on poor people.
3. When I was a boy, we played on the cinders. Let the boys do that now.
4. Too much ungodliness; I do not like the gymnasium suits. I believe in covering ourselves with clothes.
5. I do not believe in making children take showers in the presence of one another.

¹ Grammatical errors have been corrected by the writer; however, changes were avoided where possible, in order to preserve the parent's own wording.

Several factors entering into these statements were education, salary, age, and school visitations. The parent who stated that the gymnasium was "all nonsense" would probably have a broader view of the subject if he were a grade school graduate. If the parent who made the second statement had worked at a job paying higher wages, he probably would not have thought that the gymnasium was too expensive. He would have seen the educational value more clearly instead of making a major issue of the financial drawback. The third statement was made by a parent 79 years old. If he were younger, he would probably have interpreted the modern school facilities in a different way. This parent expressed the only opinion in disapproval of a gymnasium which was influenced by age. If the parents who disapproved of the gymnasium suits and the showers had visited the school and seen how the lessons and showers were conducted and supervised, they would probably have become less narrow-minded. They would have seen the physical, social, and moral value of this phase of education.

Distance of the school from the home. The distances that the children traveled in going to and coming from the schools varied from a few feet to approximately ten miles. The percentage of these distances is shown in Table VII. All the children walked to and from the Douglas School; approximately 72 per cent of the children walked to and from the Dunbar School.

Location, condition, and playground space of school. Table VIII makes apparent the fact that the parents were very well satisfied with the location of the schools, the condition in which they were maintained,

Table VII -- DISTANCE OF SCHOOL FROM HOME
 Per Cent of Parents Whose Children Traveled Different Distances
 in Going to or Coming From School

Distance in Miles	Per Cent of Parents Whose Children Traveled Different Distances in Going to or Coming From School	
	Dunbar	Douglas
7 - 10	2.6	2.5
6 - 7	2.4	8.1
5 - 6	1.3	8.9
4 - 5	7.8	2
3 - 4	8	15.7
2 - 3	28.6	20.6
1 - 2	19.5	10.8
$\frac{1}{2}$ - 1	14.3	19.8
$\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$	1.3	3.3
0 - $\frac{1}{4}$	14.2	8.3
Total	100.0	100.0

Table VIII -- LOCATION, CONDITION, AND PLAYGROUND SPACE OF SCHOOLS

Beliefs of Parents	Per Cent of Parents	
	Dunbar	Douglas
School in desirable location	100	96.4
Playground space adequate	52.1	66.7
Building in good condition	100	21.2

and the amount of playground space provided for the children. The criticisms of the parents of the Douglas School were directed at the heating plant. The school was in need of a furnace and other modern conveniences.

Curriculum

Revision of the curriculum. Only 33 per cent of the parents represented in the two schools thought the course of study should be revised to provide for other instruction than that given. This indicated that the majority of the parents of Mexia Colored School District were satisfied with the curriculum.

One parent, a college graduate, made this remark:

I think the schools are doing a fine piece of work in the variety of good things they offer the children, but there is a definite weakness in the way English and grammar are presented. Perhaps the old-fashioned methods in this field were of real value after all.

A parent who had received training in a business college, but not a graduate made this remark:

A course in behavior, showing both boys and girls how to approach an employer and how to act in public should be added to the curriculum. This is partly taken care of, but I think more stress should be placed on every day etiquette, so that boys and girls would be able to overcome embarrassment and put their best foot forward. To be at ease with our superiors is half of the battle.

In the comments that follow, it is evident that the parents who were not satisfied with the curriculum thought religion should be made a part of school teachings. Several parents would have added new subjects, or dropped subjects taught, for moral, religious, or educational reasons. These parents who wrote suggestions or criticisms said:

1. Why don't we have Bible study in the school for our future American citizens? Protestant schools, especially, should teach the pupils about the Bible, if only a half an hour a day.

2. I think there should be time for some kind of Bible study during the day. Teach the children the Lord's Prayer.

3. Sewing and cooking should be added, especially for our children in the Douglas School whose mothers and fathers haven't the education themselves to prepare the child for his place in the world.

4. I think that a foreign language, Spanish or French, should be taught.

5. Just now the curriculum seems to be adequate.

6. I think that the children have every course that is needed in common life for their future.

The high school or college graduates felt that subjects that would enrich the curriculum should be added, while the parents who had not attended college or high school wanted to add religion or the Bible study as a subject and eliminate other subjects, such as physical education and the public showers.

The following question, taken from the publications of the Educational Policies Commission, explains why religion cannot be taught in the public schools of America:

One of the greatest achievements of our democracy has been the establishment of freedom of religious belief. There is a distinct prohibition against the compulsory support of religion through taxation. There is no restraint upon the holding of particular religious beliefs or their expressions. The ideal of complete religious freedom necessarily involves the secularization of the tax-supported schools. Even the reading of the Bible and the reciting of the Lord's Prayer as a daily exercise in the schools is properly interpreted as opposed to the guarantee of religious freedom. Any type of religious instruction in the public schools may be interpreted by the taxpayers as the enforced support of the particular religious doctrine that is represented. Constitutions, court

decisions, and legislative enactments definitely point to the conclusion, namely, that religious liberty can be maintained only on the basis of complete separation of church and state. This political doctrine should not be interpreted as anti-religious. Those who adhere most firmly to it recognize the desirability of providing religious education in homes and in churches. No one would deny to the parents the acceptance of their obligations to provide religious education for their children. Most of our citizens would urge that this education be provided by the home and by the church while leaving to the school system secular education.²

Current school subjects. Less than ten per cent of the parents preferred the old method of teaching the three "R's" only. The following list shows the per cent of the parents who preferred the current school subjects and activities: Dunbar, 93.4 per cent; Douglas, 90.0 per cent. The parents, as well as the teachers, were beginning to see that education should develop not only the mental capacities but should also develop the child physically, morally, socially, and in every way prepare him for his future life. Children learned not only reading, writing, and arithmetic, but under the current curriculum they learned by doing, to know by observing, learn by listening, develop their bodies as well as their minds, and receive an all-round education; and that is what the parents wanted them to do.

Motion pictures and radio in the curriculum. Parents of the Mexia Colored School District were beginning to see that the motion pictures had a place in the school curriculum. The Dunbar School had motion pictures in the auditorium bimonthly during the school years of 1948 to 1950, inclusive. The children of the Dunbar School, as well as the

² Educational Policies Commission, The Structure and Administration of Education in American Democracy. Washington, D. C: National Education Association of the United States, October, 1938, pp. 123-24.

teachers, stayed in the auditorium after school hours to see the pictures which were shown. Through the courtesy and cooperation of Mr. Washington, principal of Dunbar School, the children of Douglas School saw the pictures occasionally.

It might be well to state, as an indication of the parents' approval of motion pictures as a school activity, that 107 children of the total enrollment of 134 were taken as a group to see the Walt Disney production, "Pinocchio", April 18, 1949, during its run at the Orphan Theatre in Mexia. On the following day, approximately 80 per cent of the seventh grade attended the theatre of Mexia, where they saw the historical production, "Young Tom Edison". The parents of these children showed their approval of the motion pictures as school activities by sending their children in these groups.

Many parents had radios in their homes, and knew the pleasures and social and educational value they derived from listening to good programs broadcast by radio; therefore, it was not difficult for them to realize the desirability of making available radios in the schools, through which the children could listen to good programs. The parents expressed their approval of radio as an activity in the school by their replies to the question concerning this in the questionnaire. The information which was obtained from these replies is tabulated in Table IX.

Vocational subjects in the curriculum. Parents of the Mexia Colored School District were like all other parents, enthusiastic about the opportunities which their children had as compared with the limited curriculum of their own school days, without neglecting the "good old

Table IX -- MOTION PICTURES IN THE CURRICULUM

Subject	Per Cent of Parents Who Approved of Motion Pictures in the Curriculum	
	Dunbar	Douglas
Motion pictures in the school	96.4	63.8
Motion pictures in the theater	84.6	61.3

fundamentals", or, one might say, the three "R's". The elementary school had found ways and means to supplement academic studies with vocational work.

The average percentages of parents who approved of the five different vocational subjects included in the questionnaire were as follows: home economics, 95.2 per cent; Handwork, 93.9 per cent; shopwork, 93.5 per cent; and agriculture, 90.5 per cent. Table X shows the per cent of parents who approved of each of these vocational subjects.

Vocational guidance in the curriculum. Most parents apparently felt that the children should be taught as to direct them in choosing an occupation after they had finished school. One parent in the Dunbar School stated that more time should be given to the thought and training toward some trade or business. She also added, "We wait too long to prepare the child for his life work in a trade or business."

Parents desired vocational guidance for their children so that they would have some definite idea about what they wanted to do in their future life and would be skilled in doing this. The percentages of parents who expressed their desire for vocational guidance in the school were: Dunbar, 100 per cent; Douglas, 93.8 per cent.

Extra-curricula vocational work. One hundred per cent of the parents answered that they thought the children should be allowed to use the gymnasium on Saturdays, and 100 per cent favored student use of the library on Saturdays. This proved that the parents approved of the library remaining open on Saturdays for the use of the children. None of the school departments of the Mexia Colored School District schools had

Table X -- VOCATIONAL SUBJECTS IN THE CURRICULUM
Per Cent of Parents Who Approved of Different
Vocational Subjects in the Curriculum

Subject	Dumbar	Douglas
Shop work	93.5	100
Hand work	93.9	100
Agriculture	90.5	100
Home Economics	95.2	100

ever been open for use by the students on Saturdays except on special occasions, and the parents, therefore, probably did not realize the advantages which their children would receive from this method of teaching by doing. There were several points which should be considered in relation to this problem. Some of the children lived so far from the school that bus provisions, with the extra cost to the taxpayers, would have to be made; others were needed at home to help their parents; and parents of the other children felt that they needed to rest on Saturdays. The opinions of the parents are shown in Table XI.

Most important purpose of the school. Table XII shows the per cent of parents who felt that the major purpose of the school was one of the following points:

1. To make good American citizens of the children.
2. To prepare the children for their later life.
3. To teach them proper respect for law and order.
4. To teach the children the three "R's".

The information contained in this table shows that the parents were aware of the fact that children not only need an education in academic subjects, but also need one which prepared them physically, socially, morally, and in all ways that will equip them for their places in society.

A few statements of parents concerning the most important purposes of the school were:

1. I think the most important purpose of the school is to train the child for a more complete life.
2. To establish ideals and ambitions.

Table XI --- USE OF GYMNASIUM AND LIBRARY ON SATURDAYS

Department	Per Cent of Parents Who Thought the Children Should be Allowed to Use Certain Departments on Saturdays
Gymnasium	Dunbar 100 Douglas 100
Library	100 100

Table XII -- MAJOR PURPOSE OF THE SCHOOL
 Per Cent of Parents Who Thought the Major Purpose of
 the School Was One of These Points

Major Purpose of the School	Dunbar	Douglas
To make good American citizens	92.8	96
Prepare children for later life	86.4	92.6
Respect for law and order	78.4	68.3
Teach the three "R's"	2.5	4.6

3. To train children for useful living and good citizenship.
4. To fit pupils for life after school age.
5. To make good American Citizens.
6. Book learning and team work.
7. Education and play.
8. To fit children to meet life's problems successfully.
9. General education.
10. To prepare students for a better and finer life and to help in choosing a student's life work.

Since 28.5 per cent of the parents answered the question with the rather general term "education", there remained 71.5 per cent of those parents who expressed themselves definitely. It was difficult to explain what the parents meant by the term "education", but the 71.5 per cent of definite answers was sufficient to show that trend of opinion on education was toward a more comprehensive and less narrowed curriculum.

Importance of different types of lessons. Approximately 40 per cent of the parents write that the four types of lessons listed were, in their opinion, all of greatest importance and did not discriminate among them. A few of the parents checked only the ones which they thought were of the greatest importance and did not indicate their opinion concerning the remaining ones. The parents seemed to favor the teaching of the following lessons: lessons that teach the value of good character; ones that impress the value of cooperation; and ones that teach beauty in everyday life. The parents' opinions are indicated by percentages in Table XIII.

Table XIII -- IMPORTANCE OF LESSONS

Types of Lessons	Degree or Importance	Per Cent of Parents Who Believed the Lessons Listed Were of the Different Degrees of Importance	
		Dunbar	Douglas
Good character	G	37.5	20.0
	M	50.0	20.0
	L	12.5	60.0
Respect for others	G	67.3	60.0
	M	15.4	40.0
	L	17.3	0.0
Beauty in every-day life	G	29.8	50.0
	M	34.0	50.0
	L	36.2	0.0
Leisure time	G	45.2	20.0
	M	28.6	50.0
	L	26.2	30.0

Teacher

Teacher's recreation. Since so many parents wrote in the affirmative, it may be definitely stated that they felt that the teacher should have some recreation. The parents of the different schools answered affirmatively according to the following percentages: Douglas, 100 per cent and Dunbar, 98.2 per cent. The majority of the parents thought that the teacher should not have papers to grade, lessons to plan, et cetera, at night. This was shown by the following percentages of parents answers: Dunbar, 98.2 per cent and Douglas, 100 per cent.

Several interesting remarks made by the parents on this topic were:

1. If a good teacher, she will arrange her work and complete it. I am not in favor of home work at night.
2. Too many teachers take their work too seriously and they do not treat children kindly if they do not get any recreation.
3. I think they should work only while at school and if they need help, obtain it elsewhere.
4. A teacher should not have other things to do pertaining to school after school hours, except for meetings. occasionally a party, et cetera.

Married women teachers. There was a very noticable difference in the percentage of Mexia township parents who favored married women teaching in comparison with the percentage of Fayette County obtained by Miss Maize Elliott in 1943.³

³Elliott, Maize J., A Survey of Parents Opinions Concerning the Qualifications of Teachers (unpublished Master's Thesis, Indiana State Teachers College, Terre Haute, Indiana, 1944)

Although there were several good statements in favor of the married woman teaching, Table XIV shows that the majority of parents did not feel that qualifications, physical health, mental health, personality, and efficiency were more important than whether or not the teacher was married. The table also shows the percentages of parents in the different school districts who believed it satisfactory for a woman to continue teaching if she married during the school year and for a married woman teacher to have children. Since these percentages ranged from 98.2 per cent to 100 per cent, the data was considered to be of great importance.

Teacher's dress. Approximately 75 per cent of the parents thought that the teachers should be modern in dress. Some parents stated that they should not go to extremes in styles, and that they should not be old-fashioned; they should use good common judgment. One parent stated that so long as the teacher was neat and clean the style did not matter so much. Practically 95 per cent of the parents checked the word "yes" without comment.

Teacher's salary. About five per cent of the parents did not answer this question, stating that they were not well enough informed to feel justified in passing their opinions. Of those who did answer, 29.3 per cent said that the salary was too low, and 70.7 per cent said that the salary was about right. This showed that the majority thought that the teacher's salary was sufficient compensation for the duties she performed. An interesting note from one parent, who believed that the teacher's salary was not adequate, read:

Table XIV --- PARENTS OPINIONS ABOUT MARRIED WOMEN TEACHING

Circumstance	Per Cent of Parents Who Felt That Women Should Teach Under Different Circumstances	
	Dunbar	Douglas
Married	98.2	100
Continue teaching after marriage	98.2	100

The teacher's salary is not nearly adequate. When our young people graduate from high school, how many really want to become teachers? Not very many. The most gifted turn to engineering, accounting, et cetera. Why do they belittle the teaching profession? The main reason for this is the poor salary. Which is more important to the future of America, good minds or bridges? If a teacher really keeps up, he should go to school or work at something during vacation to improve his teaching and this costs.

This parent was a housewife and had three children. Two of the children were in the Dunbar School and one was in Tillotson College.

Approximately 71 per cent of the parents of all of the school districts agreed that the teacher's salary was about as it should be and was adequate compensation for his work.

Politics in the hiring of the teacher. Approximately 99 per cent of the parents of the township believed that politics should not enter into the hiring of the teacher. This high percentage proved that the parents wanted the school to remain free of political entanglements and affairs. One father placed two crosses in the parenthesis preceding the negative answer as an emphatic reply, and another wrote, "absolutely not."

About 99 per cent of the parents thought that the teacher should vote with the same freedom as any other citizen. They seemed to feel that voting was one of a teachers privileges, and that he should make use of it. The information upon which the above conclusions were based is given in Table XV.

Type of teacher whom parents preferred. About 19 per cent of the parents preferred the old-fashioned, strict teacher, and 81 per cent preferred a teacher who allowed more freedom in discipline. The parents

Table XV -- POLITICS AND THE TEACHER

Topic	Per Cent of Parents Who Felt That Politics Should Enter Into the Hiring of Teachers and Those Who Felt That the Teacher Should Vote	
	Dunbar	Douglas
Politics in hiring	1.6	0.0
Voting	98.7	100

who preferred the antiquated method of teaching the three "R's" did not think that married women should teach, did not prefer a school with a gymnasium, and did not visit the school during regular school hours nor attend extra-curricular activities. It was easily seen why these parents preferred this type of teacher. If they were to visit the schools and see the advantages and opportunities which the children had in the modern school that were absent in the school of 25 years ago, they probably would change their views of these improvements and opportunities.

Only 19 per cent of the parents preferred the strict teacher; the remaining 81 per cent favored, in large part, the teacher who was liberal in problems of discipline but did not go to extremes. An examination of Table XVI will show that the parents did not care to revert to the teacher who maintains strict, almost military discipline; the type of teacher that was considered essential to successful teaching 25 years ago.

Social activities of the teacher. Five questions were considered under this topic, four of which pertained to the church. The parents gave many combinations of replies, but 15 per cent of them seemed to consider these questions as ones personal to the teacher, stating that the individual should do as he desired in relation to the subject. Table XVII lists the percentages of those parents who were in favor of each point.

Characteristics of the teacher. The answers of the parents to this topic paralleled their answers to the type of lessons they thought should be taught in the school.

Table XVI -- TYPE OF TEACHERS
 Per Cent of Parents Who Preferred a Type Teacher Who Maintained Discipline to Different Extents

Type of teachers	Dunbar	Douglas
Liberal, modern	81.9	73.0
Strict	18.1	27.0
Total	100.0	100.0

Table XVII -- SOCIAL LIFE OF THE TEACHER
 Per Cent of Parents Who Felt That the Teacher Should
 Carry Out the Listed Activities

Activity	Dunbar	Douglas
Attend motion pictures	98.5	96.2
Belong to church	99.2	100
Play cards	28.6	29.8
Dance	32.0	31.2
Smoke	6.4	3.2

Approximately 90 per cent of the parents said that all of the characteristics listed were necessary ones which the teacher should possess. The remaining parents seemed to feel that the following characteristics should be a part of the teacher's make-up:

1. One who commands the respect of the pupils and of the community by the life he leads
2. One who teaches the value of a good, moral character, good health, and good citizenship
3. One who stands for honest and thorough work by the pupils
4. One who teaches his pupils respect for the church

CHAPTER III

SUMMARY

As was stated in the opening pages of this thesis, the primary purpose was to determine whether or not the parents of Mexia approved of the modern teacher and the school system that was being used in the town. By summing up the most important points in the thesis, it was made evident that the parents of the town did approve of the modern teacher and school system.

If one really desires to learn what parents expect of the school, one must consult them. This does not mean consulting just a few parents of some select group, but it means questioning parents from all sections of the town, parents of all age groupings, parents of various degrees of education, and of different degrees of economic status. One very useful means of contacting parents is that of the questionnaire; and since this method seemed most practicable for the purposes of the writer, it was used in order to obtain the data on which this thesis was based. The parents and teachers of the town gave willing cooperation in the answering and issuing and collecting of the questionnaires.

Physical aspects of the school

Very few parents will seriously contend that the one-room school with its almost total lack of facilities for health and comfort, and with its over-worked and under-trained teacher, is superior to the modern school. The taxpayers have learned that, comparatively, the low-standard school is an expensive school. As a result, there has been an abandonment of all the one-room schools in Mexia and the erection of Dunbar Grade and High School and of the Douglas Elementary School. These two schools had a capacity sufficient to provide for the education of all the children in all sections of the town.

There seemingly was a marked change in attitude on the part of the parents towards the schools during the few years before 1950 in Mexia. Possibly this was the result of wider educational experience. These parents were enthusiastic about the opportunities which their children had as compared with the limited opportunities of their own school days. They wanted their children to have the privileges of gymnasiums, auditoriums, libraries, shop rooms, et cetera.

Democracy is based on education, and progress in democracy must be based on progress in education. The little red school house of the horse-and-buggy days would no more satisfy the parents of Mexia than it would the general public of the nation.

Curriculum

The parents, who preferred the modern curriculum rather than the three "R's", realized that the curriculum was based upon two important considerations:

1. What was recognized as logical and essential in child society

2. What was recognized as logical and essential in modern adult society

The interests of both adults and children should be considered in the preparation of the curriculum. Minimum essentials in education in 1950 went far beyond the traditional three "R's", and everywhere in Mexia were seen evidences of the scarifices in time and money by persons who believed in good schools—to provide such worthwhile experiences as those derived from athletics, health education, travel, music, libraries, et cetera.

Schools will continue to strive to supplement, aid, and inspire the homes that are built. They will demonstrate more efficient techniques, try to develop life interests, so that leisure will be used more richly, will attempt to broaden visions and a sense of obligation to society, their aim. They will become increasingly sensitive to adult-felt needs.¹

There was a better understanding by 1950 of individual differences, and with it had come the realization that it is not possible to educate beyond the levels established by nature in the individual. Children differ in ability, aptitude, probable career (educational and vocational), social status, habits of work, race, health, intellectual development, nationality, economic status, moral atmosphere, and in numerous other ways. The teacher should recognize these differences and provide such activities that will utilize the social instinct and the integrating factors important in establishing a common basis of feelings, aspirations, and ideals essential in a democracy.

¹"Report of the Educational Policies Commission," National Parent Teacher, March, 1940, p. 19.

Equalization of opportunity is a democratic ideal of which the parents of the Dunbar School were obviously desirous. The teacher should recognize equalization of opportunity, whether the student is notably dull, studious, clever, timid, et cetera.

This realization of individual differences and attempt at equalization of opportunity helped in bringing about programs broad enough to accommodate a variety of individual differences. This broadening of the program, which the Mexia parents desired, had been initiated in the town with handwork, sewing, cooking, physical education, visual education, agriculture, et cetera, along with the academic subjects.

Progressive schools should change carefully and scientifically if they are to improve. They not only should keep up with this generation but they should be ahead of it, for they are training children to cope with the world of tomorrow. The school of Mexia had improved its organizations, curricula, methods, and above all, the personnel. The curriculum had been both simplified and enriched and it will undergo more changes if and when secondary education reaches the 30 or 40 per cent of the boys and girls of secondary age who were not in high school in 1950.

Educational development in the elementary school was accelerated by its early acceptance of the results of scientific experimentation in such common subjects as spelling, reading, arithmetic, and penmanship. Here are found the beginnings of the objective study of educational problems which have produced such fundamental changes in curriculum, content, organization, and method. Then one considers what changes have been made in studying spelling since the days when he learned lists of useless and strange words from the spelling books, he has to admit progress.

Closely associated with the scientific movement is the advance in the understanding of child nature and the learning process. Educational psychology has helped the teacher to understand more objectively the limitations and the possibilities of his pupils. The elementary school has made much use of the contributions of the psychologists and has reorganized and changed its curriculum content and methods of teaching in the light of this knowledge. In the primary grades unbelievable progress has been made. When one compares these grades with those of a half century ago, the results seem almost miraculous. Not only are the textbooks and reading materials improved, but methods of teaching have been correspondingly developed.

Parents of Mexia were intensely interested in these newer methods, reorganized curricula, and extended content--which was shown by their frequent visits to the regular classroom lessons.

Teacher

Teacher's health. The importance of the teacher's health in the school room was made known by a large majority of the parents. Only one parent considered it a minor factor. The one most directly and vitally concerned with the problem of teacher health is the teacher himself. His health may have serious relationships and consequences for others; it does have these consequences for the teacher. Ill health often means to him a partial or total loss of income for a period of time. Undermining effects of minor ailments sap the teacher's vitality and lower his personal efficiency, thus preventing his attaining the full measure of success of which he is inherently capable. Some parents felt that

personality, intelligence, social integrity, and moral integrity depended to some extent upon one's level of vitality. Good health is essential to success and enjoyment in teaching. The parents felt that in daily contact with vigorous boys and girls, the successful teacher should be physically and mentally fit to react to their high spirits. Academic qualifications alone were not sufficient.

With that personal magnetism which is born of surplus vitality, the teacher otherwise adequately prepared can scarcely rise above mediocrity.²

Married women teaching. The parents seemed to be evenly divided in their opinions on this question. However, only 47 per cent of the parents who answered approved of a married woman teaching if her husband was working.

It seemed that the larger proportion of the parents were satisfied with married women teachers as long as they were efficient, both physically and mentally, and performed their duties successfully. If the married woman did not perform her school duties efficiently because of her home duties, the parents preferred the unmarried woman teacher. Both criticisms and compliments were received with the questionnaires, but the criticisms were in a small minority.

When women give of themselves generously, their homes and children benefit even more than society. Nothing so stimulates a child as parents

²"Fit to Teach", Ninth Yearbook, 1938, Journal of the National Education Association, Department of Classroom Teachers, p. 11

who achieve some eminence in thinking and doing. Parents whose vision is not bounded by the four walls of the home attract others whose interests are broad.

Marriage does not take away the qualities of the teaching power; the married woman seeks the ultimate goal in teaching just as the one who is not married; then why should the married woman teacher be barred from the work she enjoys?

Types of teachers. Rigid and military organization has been replaced by a flexible and informal order. Table XVI reveals the information that the majority of the parents of Mexia desired this change and were satisfied with the disappearance of the strict teacher. Control is no longer imposed without reason, and blind obedience is no longer a virtue. The days of "lickin' and larnin'" belong to ancient history. Discipline is present, but it is the self-imposed discipline of a democratic society. When each child is busy in activities in which he is actually interested, the discipline problem becomes a minor factor. The basic thing in discipline is to secure the whole-hearted interest of the pupils. After that is attained, the rest is easy and there is no need for the old-fashioned, strict teacher. Firmness and fairness coupled with sympathetic understanding and tactfulness of the teacher, go a long way toward assuring a well-disciplined classroom of children. A few parents preferred the old-time, strict teacher, but the number was so small that it was insignificant. If in former days when discipline was a major problem there had been shop work, home economics, et cetera, subjects in which the children learned to do by doing, the children

would have been so interested that there probably would have been no need for the strict teacher. Discipline would have become a minor factor.

Social activities of the teacher. The parents were very considerate in their answers to the questions, "Should a teacher play cards?" and, "Should a teacher attend movies?" Most parents believed that these were the teacher's personal rights and that he should decide for himself. Parents realized that the teacher was a human being rather than an efficient machine or someone aloft from their own community. Nothing helps the teacher more in doing his work cheerfully than knowing that he is being treated fairly and given the same consideration as any other citizen. Teachers do not have an excessive amount of time to play cards, attend movies, dance, et cetera, since they must keep up-to-date professionally, participate as a normal person in community life and church life, and enjoy the ordinary recreational and cultural activities which enter into balanced and wholesome living.

Characteristics of a teacher. The parents apparently were of the opinion that of the characteristics listed in the questionnaire, the following four were the ones of utmost importance:

1. One who commands the respect of the pupils and the community by the life he leads
2. One who teaches the value of a good moral character, good health, and good citizenship
3. One who stands for honest and thorough work by the pupils
4. One who teaches his pupils the proper respect for the church

Conclusion

Better buildings, playgrounds, equipment, libraries, shops, laboratories, more qualified teachers, enriched curricula, administrative organizations, and an extended school year, were evidences of progress in Mexia made possible by the taxpayers. These taxpayers were parents of the two schools of Mexia; and this improvement and advancement, together with the results of this thesis, proved that the parents were interested in, and desired, the modern teacher and the school system as it was being presented at the time of this study.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions presented above, the following recommendations are offered:

1. That the curriculum should be enriched and thoroughly organized. Course offerings that are suitable integrated in individual training patterns of each student should be increased.
2. Organization of a good vocational guidance program.
3. That more trades be offered the youth now in school.
4. Addition of more playground space.
5. That an adequately equipped laboratory be added, and courses in chemistry be offered.
6. Make the school more community centered by giving more programs, and bringing in artists.

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APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE

WHAT PARENTS OF THE MEXIA COLORED SCHOOL DISTRICT

EXPECT OF THE SCHOOL AND OF THE TEACHER

Occupation of Mother _____. Occupation of father _____.

Number of children _____. Number of children in school _____.

(CHECK THE PARENTHESIS PRECEDING YOUR ANSWER)

Social Life of Parents:

Do you frequently attend the school activities, such as school entertainments, ball games, et cetera? () Yes () No

Do you feel free to visit the school at any time? () Yes () No

When special invitations are sent to you to visit your school, do you usually accept and attend with interest? () Yes () No

Physical Aspects of the School:

Do you think that the movie should have a place in the school? () Yes () No

Do you think that children should have opportunities to see moving pictures of educational value in the theater in the city during school hours? () Yes () No

Do you think that shopwork should be taught in the school? () Yes () No

Do you think that handwork should be taught in the school? () Yes () No

Do you think that agriculture should be taught in the school () Yes () No

Do you think that home economics should be taught in the school () Yes () No

Do you think that children should have an opportunity to use the gymnasium on Saturdays? () Yes () No

Do you think that children should have an opportunity to use the library on Saturdays? () Yes () No

Is your school in a desirable location? () Yes () No

Do the children have dangerous railroad and highway intersections to cross? () Yes () No

Do you think that too much time is being spent on athletics? () Yes () No

Do you think that the school should take part in the Interscholastic League? () Yes () No

What is the distance of your school from your home? _____.

(CHECK MOST IMPORTANT ITEMS IN CURRICULUM)

_____ Lessons that will impress the value of good character.

_____ Lessons that teach respect for others.

_____ Lessons that create an appreciation of beauty in everyday life.

_____ Lessons that help determine the wise use of leisure time.

Teacher

Is it important that the teacher have some recreation? () Yes () No;

or do you think that she should teach the entire day and then have

papers to grade at night, lessons to plan, et cetera? () Yes () No

Should married women be permitted to teach? () Yes () No

If a woman teacher marries during the school year, should she be permitted to continue teaching? () Yes () No

Should a teacher be modern in dress and try to keep up with the styles?

() Yes () No

Do you think a teacher should play cards? () Yes () No; Dance?

() Yes () No; Smoke? () Yes () No

Should a teacher attend movies? () Yes () No

Should a teacher belong to a church? () Yes () No

Should she hold any important office in a church? () Yes () No

Do you prefer the old-fashioned strict teacher or one who allows more freedom? () Yes () No

Do you think it justifiable to dismiss school for the State Teachers Associations and other teachers meetings? () Yes () No

Should politics enter into hiring teachers? () Yes () No

What do you think the teachers monthly salary should be? _____.

(CHECK THE MOST IMPORTANT ITEMS FOR GOOD TEACHERS)

_____ A teacher who commands respect of the pupils and the community by the life she leads

_____ One who teaches the value of good character, good health and good citizenship

_____ One who possesses thorough training as well as common sense.

REMARKS:



LEGEND

District, data secured in

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> —•—•— DWELLINGS —•—•— GROUP OF DWELLINGS —•—•— CHURCH AND CEMETERY —•—•— SCHOOL —•—•— HOTEL OR TOURIST CAMP —•—•— BUSINESS ESTABLISHMENT —•—•— FACTORY OR INDUSTRY —•—•— DWELLING AND STORE —•—•— TOWN HALL OR COURTHOUSE —•—•— POST OFFICE —•—•— BUSINESS AND POST OFFICE —•—•— HOSPITAL —•—•— CAMP OR LODGE —•—•— SAWMILL —•—•— S.H.D. WAREHOUSE —•—•— S.H.D. DISTRICT OFFICE —•—•— POWER PLANT —•—•— POWER SUB-STATION —•—•— PUMPING STATION —•—•— RADIO STATION —•—•— MINE, QUARRY OR GRAVEL PIT —•—•— OIL OR GAS WELLS —•—•— TANKS, OIL —•—•— GOLF COURSE OR COUNTRY CLUB —•—•— ATHLETIC FIELD, ETC. —•—•— RACE TRACK OR FAIR GROUND —•—•— CEMETERY —•—•— FOREST FIRE TOWER —•—•— WATER SUPPLY STANPUM —•—•— WINDMILL —•—•— TRANSMISSION STATION —•—•— TRANSLATION CUT STATION —•—•— BOUNDARY MONUMENT —•—•— BENCH MARK 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> —•— NATIONAL OR STATE BOUNDARY —•— COUNTY BOUNDARY —•— CITY LIMIT —•— STATE CAPITAL —•— COUNTY SEAT —•— TOWN OR VILLAGE —•— NAUTICAL LIGHT —•— NAVIGABLE STREAM —•— INTERMITTENT NAVIGATION —•— SHIP AND BARGE LINES —•— DOCK, PIER OR LANDING —•— PRIVATE RAILROAD —•— RAILROAD AND STATION —•— PRIVATE ROAD —•— PRIMITIVE ROAD —•— GRADED EARTH ROAD —•— GRADED AND DRAINED ROAD —•— SOIL SURFACED ROAD —•— METAL SURFACED ROAD —•— BITUMINOUS SURFACED ROAD —•— PAVED ROAD —•— DIVIDED HIGHWAY —•— FEDERAL AID ROAD —•— FEDERAL AID SECONDARY ROAD —•— MILEAGE BETWEEN POINTS —•— U.S. HIGHWAY —•— STATE HIGHWAY —•— STATE HIGHWAY - PARK ROAD —•— STATE HIGHWAY - LOOP OR SPUR —•— STATE HIGHWAY - FARM OR RANCH TO MARKET 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> —•— SUSPENSION BRIDGE —•— ARCH BRIDGE —•— TRUSS BRIDGE —•— CONCRETE FORD OR DIP —•— FORD —•— HIGHWAY GRADE SEPARATION —•— BRIDGE OVER 20 FEET —•— DRAW BRIDGE —•— RAILROAD UNDERPASS —•— RAILROAD OVERPASS —•— GATE —•— GATTLIE GUARD —•— AIRWAY —•— MILITARY AIRFIELD —•— AUXILIARY OR PRIVATE AIRFIELD —•— COMMERCIAL OR MUNICIPAL AIRPORT —•— AIRWAY BEACON LIGHT —•— INTERMITTENT STREAM —•— FLOWING STREAM —•— PIPE LINE - OIL —•— PIPE LINE - GAS —•— TRANSMISSION LINE —•— DITCH —•— SPRING —•— LEVEE —•— POND OR LAKE —•— INTERMITTENT LAKE —•— PROMINENT ELEVATION —•— ESCARPMENT OR BLUFF —•— DAM
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GENERAL HIGHWAY MAP

LIMESTONE COUNTY

TEXAS

PREPARED BY THE
TEXAS STATE HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
IN COOPERATION WITH THE
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
BUREAU OF PUBLIC ROADS
DATA OBTAINED FROM
STATE-WIDE HIGHWAY PLANNING SURVEY

1946

STATE HIGHWAYS REVISED TO JANUARY 1, 1950

POLYCONIC PROJECTION NORTH AMERICAN DATUM

Control: U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey and U.S. Geological Survey supplemented by U.S. Engineer's Surveys, Railroad Alignments, State Highway Alignments, and State-Wide Highway Planning Survey's Road Inventory

SCALES

0 1 2 3 4 MILES

0 1/8 1/4 3/8 1/2 MILE

1946

STATE HIGHWAYS REVISED TO JANUARY 1, 1950

POLYCONIC PROJECTION NORTH AMERICAN DATUM

Control: U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey and U.S. Geological Survey supplemented by U.S. Engineer's Surveys, Railroad Alignments, State Highway Alignments, and State-Wide Highway Planning Survey's Road Inventory

DELIA

FROSTA

MART

WATT

SHILOH

DATURA

PERSONVILLE

BEN HUR

FAIROAKS

FARRAR

KIRK

PRAIRIE HILL

KEY TO COUNTIES