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Follow-up Study of Seventh Grade Students Attending McLoughlin Junior High who, in the Previous Year, were Sixth Graders at King, Harney, Lieser, or Marshall Elementary Schools

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FOLLOW-UP STUDY OF SEVENTH GRADE STUDENTS ATTENDING
McLOUGHLIN JUNIOR HIGH WHO, IN THE PREVIOUS YEAR, WERE
SIXTH GRADERS AT KING, HARNEY, LIESER, OR MARSHALL
ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

A Field Study
Presented to
the Graduate Faculty
Central Washington State College

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Education

by
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APPROVED FOR THE GRADUATE FACULTY

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The purpose of this field study is actually two-fold.

First, one must understand Martin Luther King Elementary School. King is an "open concept" school. The program is based upon different teaching techniques and philosophies than a more traditional type elementary school. After his years at King, a student then goes on to McLoughlin Junior High. McLoughlin is a typical junior high that is somewhat more regimented than the open environment at King. Parents have asked numerous times, "How do these students perform after they leave King and go to a more structured junior high?" Until now I have had no data that could be relayed to parents that would answer this question. This study should provide a better understanding of my students and their adjustment to their new environment.

Second, during my teaching career I have often wondered how my previous students have adjusted socially and academically to their new surroundings. This study should give insights into the successes or failures of techniques and philosophies in education. From these findings modification can be made if necessary.

In any field study one should include some background information. To begin with, all of the students surveyed in this study were seventh graders at McLoughlin Junior High. The students originated from four elementary feeder schools which included Lieser, Marshall, Harney, and Martin Luther King. Even though the socio-economic backgrounds of these students are not

being used in this study, one should understand that two of the schools, Martin Luther King and George Marshall have families ranging from very low to moderately high incomes. Lieser and Harney students, however, tend to come from more average income families.

This study is divided into five parts. First, an examination of the grades received by the students for the first tri-mester of junior high is discussed. A trimester in this study represents a grading period of three times yearly instead of the usual quarterly or semester evaluation. Second, the standardized test given to all seventh grade students at the beginning of the year is evaluated. Third, an examination of a social adjustment survey is described. Following the survey some generalizations are made, and finally some possible recommendations are given.

It is important to note that the intent of this study is not to say that one school or program is better or worse than another. Hopefully, the end result will give us information which can make our schools more meaningful and better places for students.

GRADES

This portion of the study deals with the grades taken from the first grading period of a tri-mester year. These grades will be divided into three categories. A description of each classification follows:

First, an average grade for each school in all academic areas has been compiled. This should give an indication of how the students from each elementary feeder school are academically adjusting to junior high.

Next, the students who received high grades are charted. The high grades are then grouped according to the elementary schools from which the recipients came. The high grades are also categorized according to the academic field in which they are received.

Finally, the low grades, "D" or less, are compiled. These are illustrated on the graph according to the four feeder schools.

The intent of the high and low grades is to see if some programs, schools, etc. are teaching toward the average child.

GRAPH A

Graph A brought out some interesting results. First, one should note that in the areas of social studies, English, and reading the four schools all followed a basic pattern. King repeatedly ranked the highest with Marshall placing second, Harney third, and Lieser fourth.

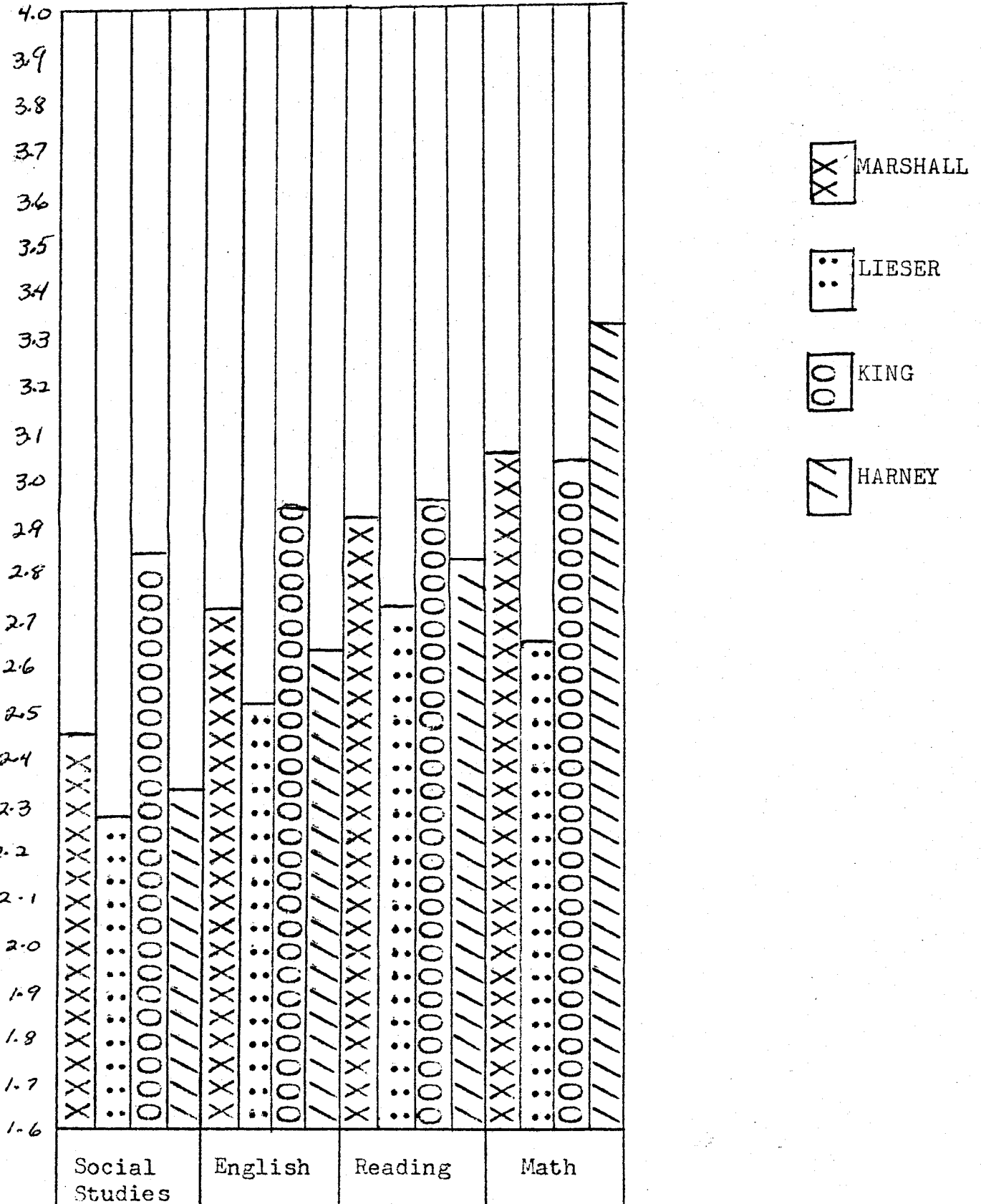
In the area of Math, Harney students rose from their third place position to first. Also, by looking at Graph A it becomes very obvious that the grades as a total are very high.

GRAPH B

On Graph B there are two important points that one should note. First, there seems to be quite a difference in the field of music. King and Harney are much higher than Marshall and Lieser.

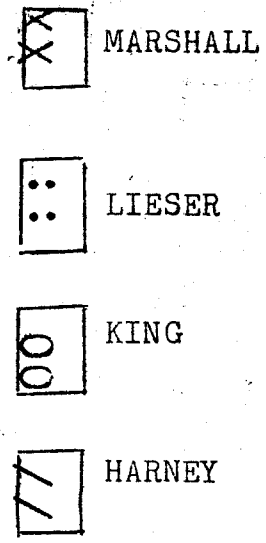
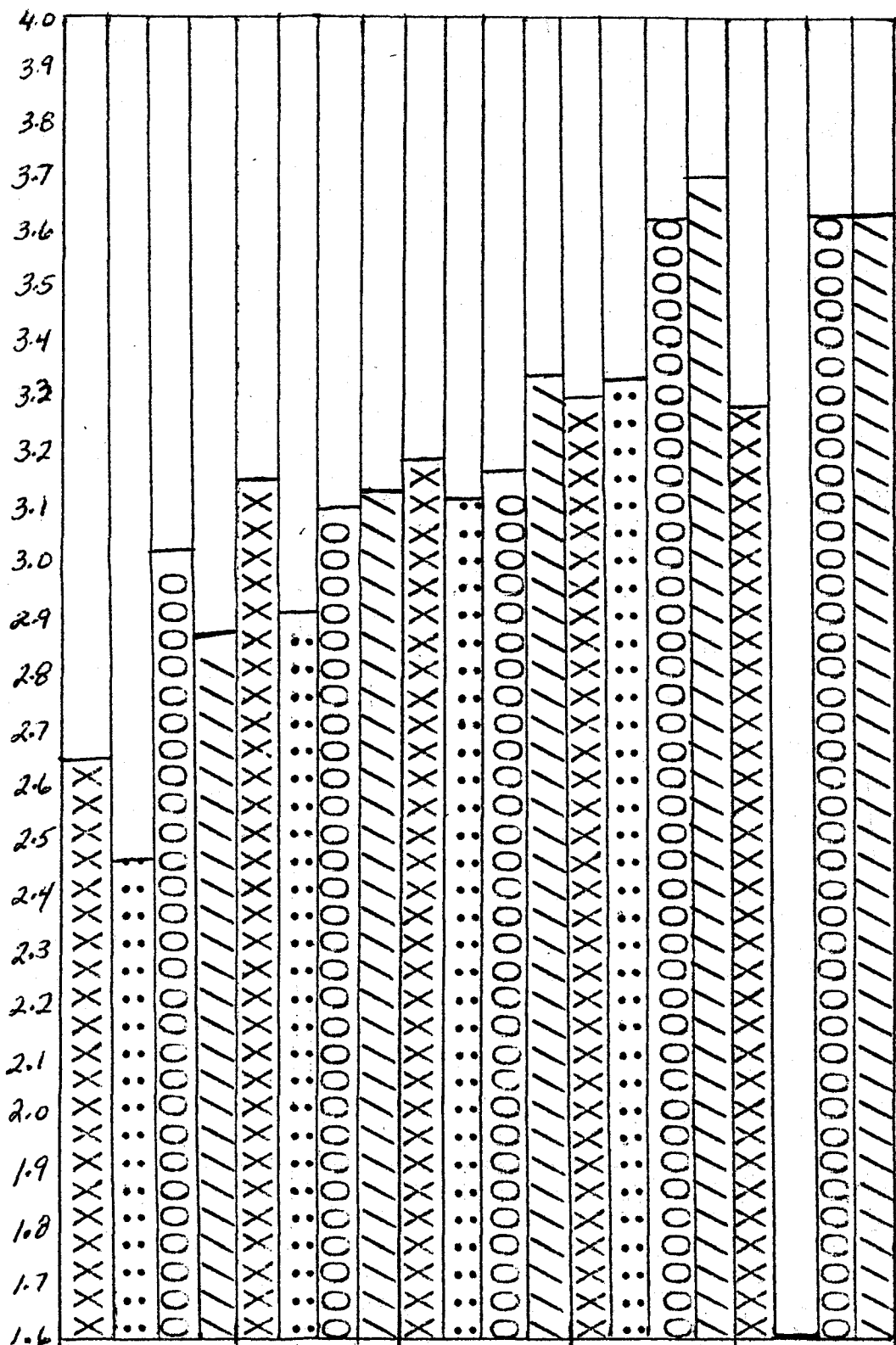
The other point that should be noted is the extremely high grade point averages in band and orchestra. One might think that these classes should be graded on a pass-fail system.

FIRST SEMESTER GRADE POINT AVERAGE
FOR EACH SCHOOL



FIRST SEMESTER GRADE POINT AVERAGE
FOR EACH SCHOOL

G. P. A.



Music/
Speech Physical
Education Art/
Science Band Orchestra

GRAPH C

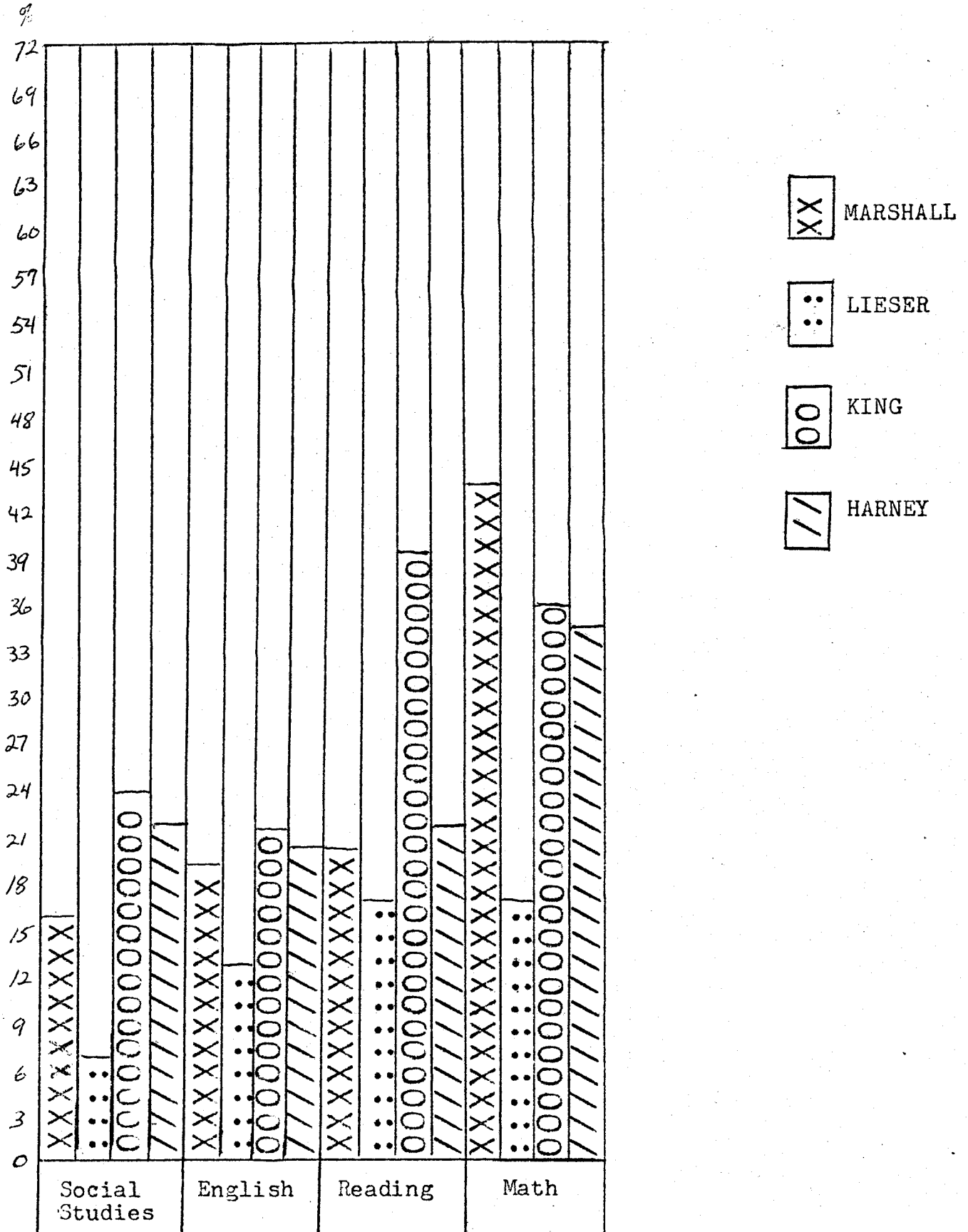
Graph C illustrates the percentage of students from each school who received "A" grades. First, one should notice the high percentage of students from King that received grades of "A" in reading. King had almost twice the percentage of "A" grades as Harney, the next school in sequence. King also had the highest percentage of "A" grades in social studies and language. King was followed by Harney, Marshall, and finally Lieser.

In the area of math Lieser was extremely low as compared to the other three schools. The sequential pattern also changed on this graph. Marshall ranked first in the highest percentage of "A" grades followed by King, Harney, and then Lieser.

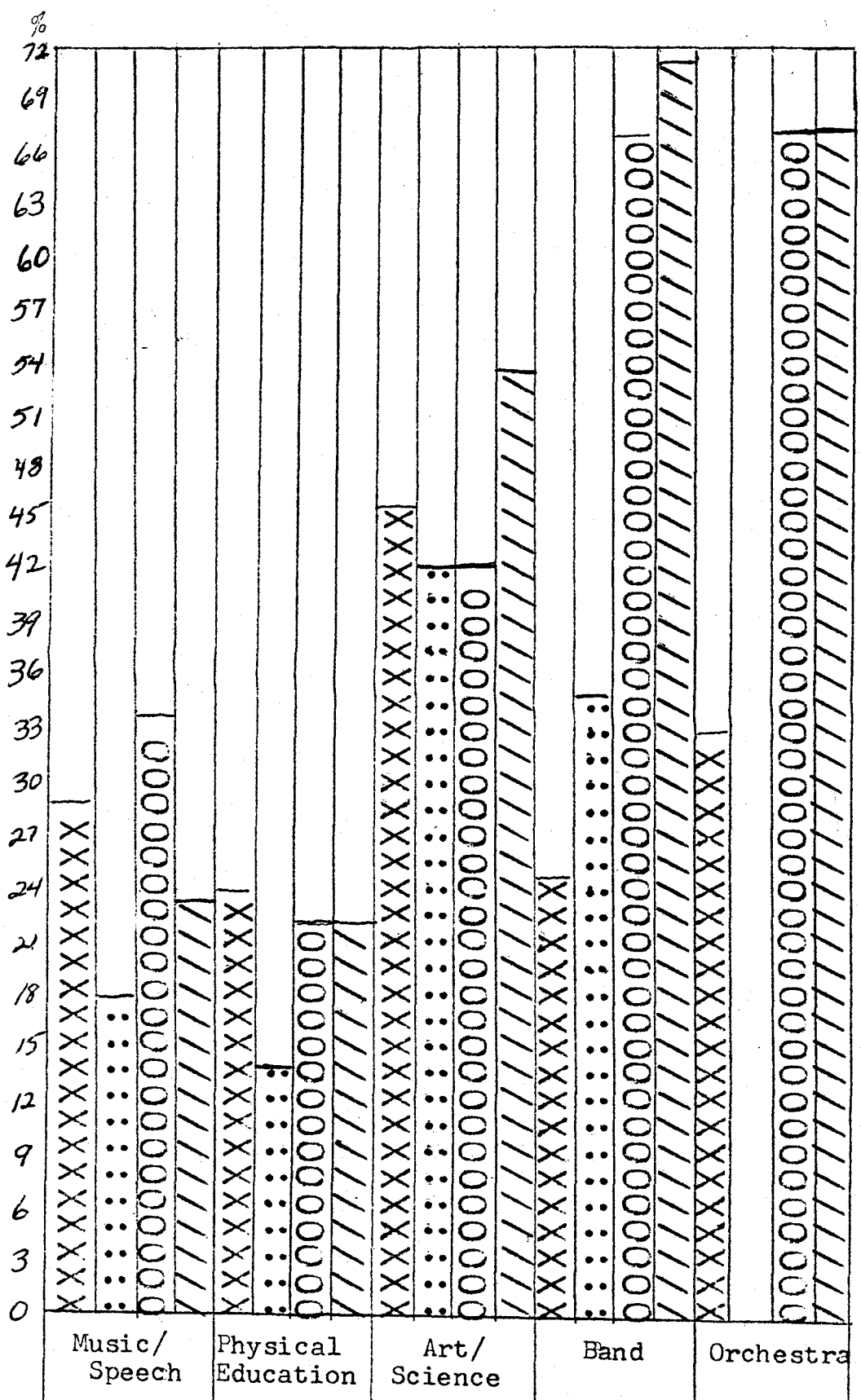
GRAPH D





On Graph D, as on Graph B, one sees the extremely high percentage of grades for King and Harney in the fields of band and orchestra. Also, one notices that the order on Graph B (First Semester Grade Average For Each School) and Graph D (Percent of Students from Each School that Received "A" Grades First Semester) basically remained the same.

PERCENT OF STUDENTS FROM EACH SCHOOL THAT RECEIVED 'A' GRADES FIRST SEMESTER



PERCENT OF STUDENTS FROM EACH SCHOOL
THAT RECEIVED 'A' GRADES FIRST SEMESTER



-  MARSHALL
-  LIESER
-  KING
-  HARNEY

GRAPH E

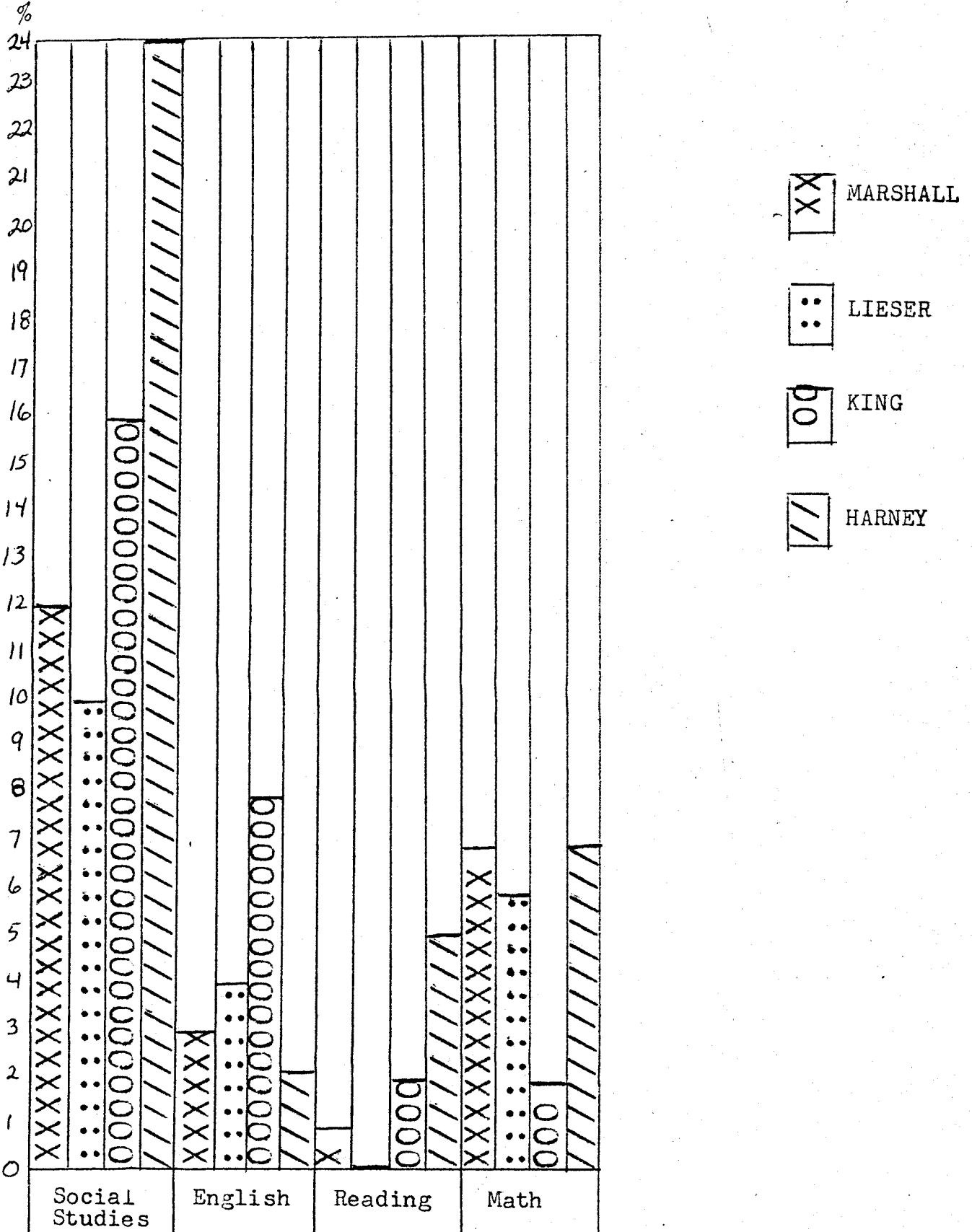
Graph E deals with the percentage of low grades. One point which is quite obvious is that there are not nearly as many low grades given as high grades.

Another important fact is that, even though King and Harney had the highest percentage of high grades, they also had the highest percentage of low grades with the exception of Harney's English grades and King's math grades.

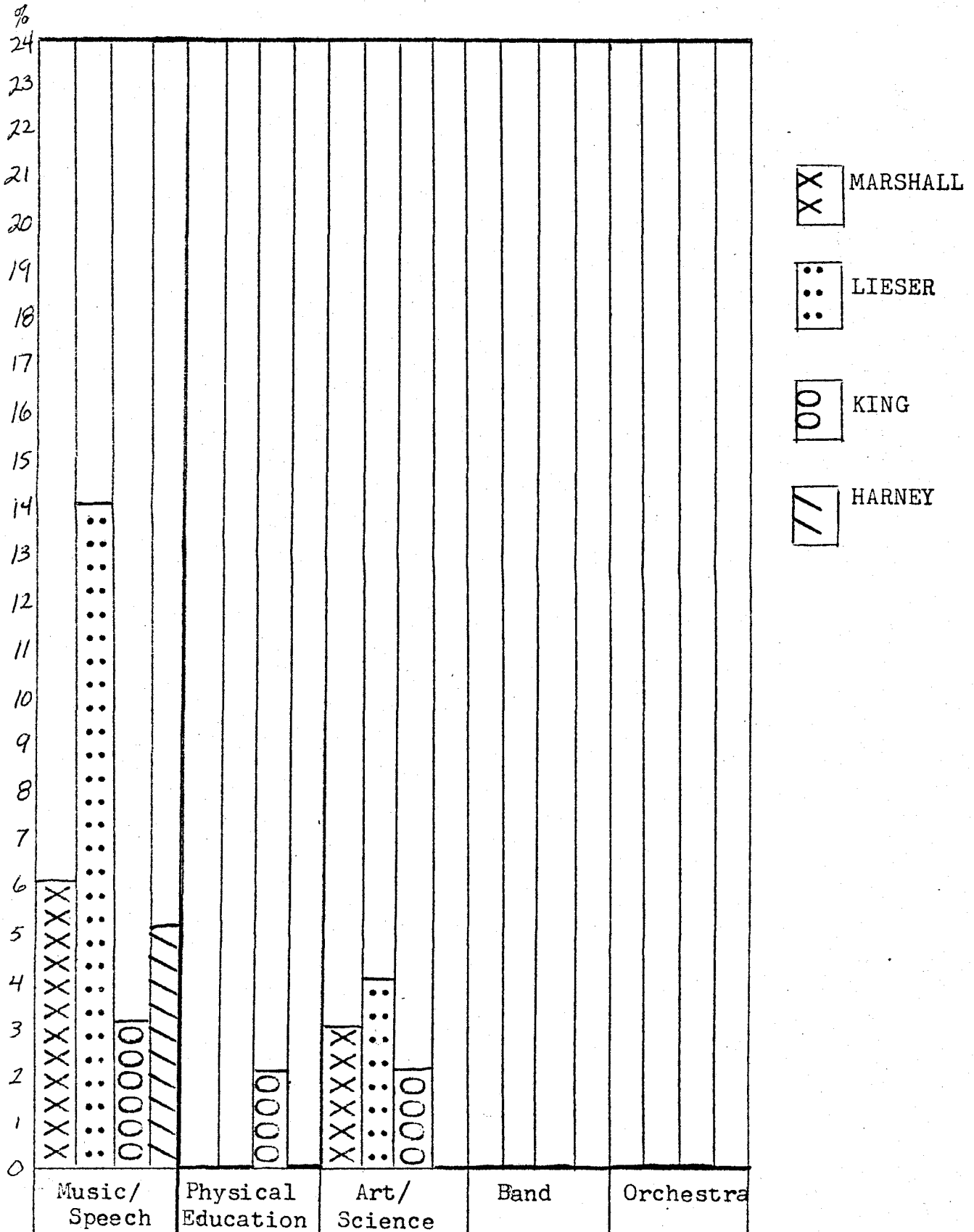
GRAPH F

The two points worth noting on Graph F are the high percentage of low grades earned by Lieser students in the field of music and speech and the fact that no student received less than a "C" in band or orchestra.

PERCENT OF STUDENTS RECEIVING
'D' OR LESS GRADES FIRST SEMESTER



PERCENT OF STUDENTS RECEIVING
'D' OR LESS GRADES FIRST SEMESTER



THE COMPREHENSIVE TEST OF BASIC SKILLS

At the beginning of the fifth, seventh, and ninth grades all students are given a standardized test. This portion of the study explains the results of that test which the students took at the beginning of their seventh grade year.

The name of the test is the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills Level 3-Form Q-Short Form Test of Academic Aptitude--Level 4 Batch 4054 Group 002, or more commonly referred to as the C.T.B. Test. This test is produced by the McGraw Hill Company of Monterey, California. The test was given at McLoughlin Junior High in Vancouver, Washington in September of 1972.

There are three basic uses of the data gathered from the C.T.B. Test. First, is to determine how many students fall on grade level, how many are above, and how many are below. Grade level in this case was calculated as anyone who received a score between 6.8 and 7.3. Anyone below 6.8 was considered below grade level and anyone above 7.3 was considered above grade level.

Second, is using the C.T.B. Test scores to determine how many students would be considered academically high and how many would be considered academically low. Students below 5.0 were categorized as academically low and students above 9.0 as academically high.

Lastly, the C.T.B. Test results are used to construct average grade point equivalents for each school. Each of the four portions of the test were considered and grade equivalents

or each school were resolved.

The following graphs show the results of my findings as related to the C.T.B. Test results.

SUMMARY FOR GRAPHS G, H, I, J

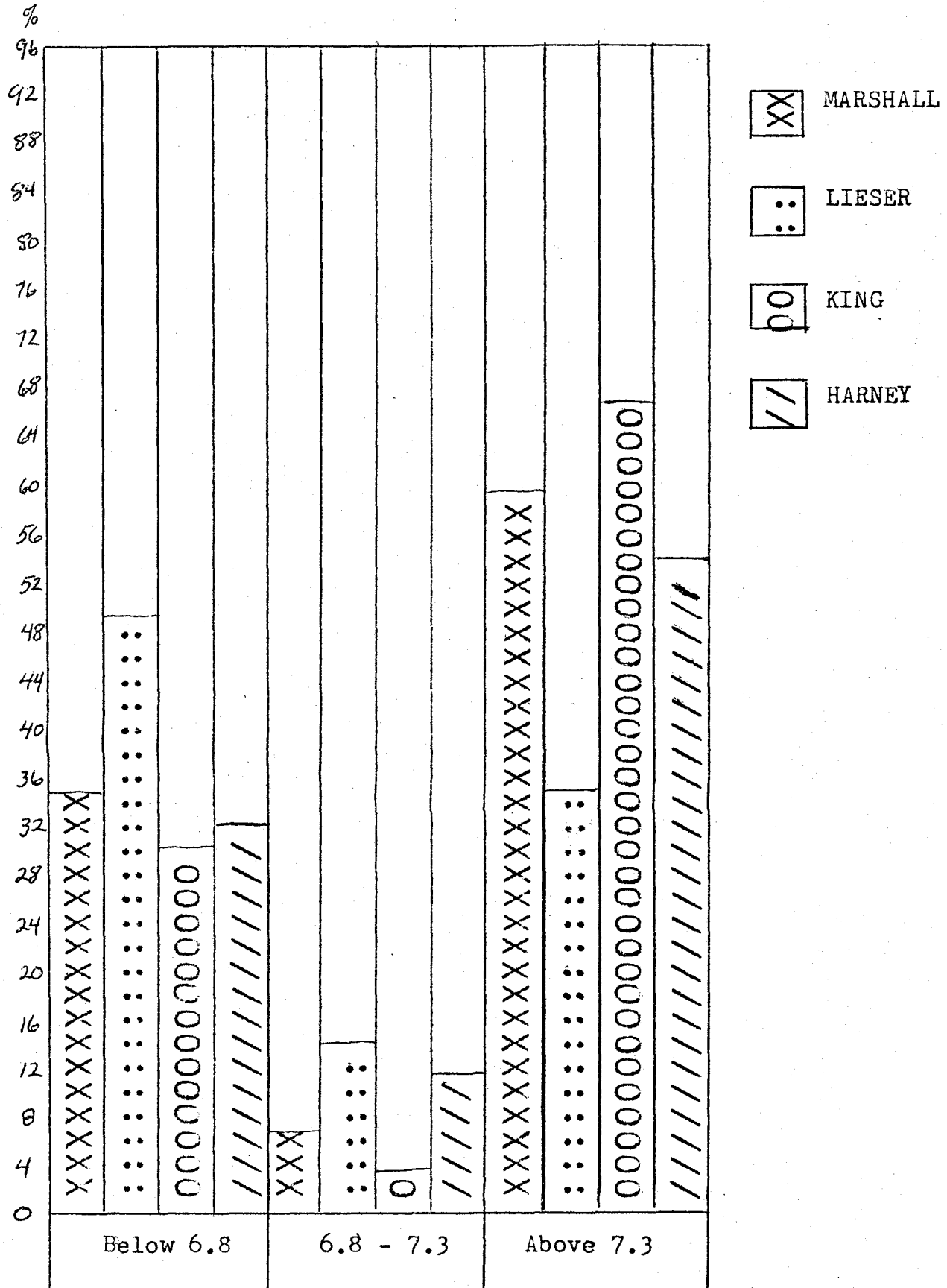
Graphs G, H, I, and J have been grouped together because they all pertain to the subject of grade level. On these graphs there are three important points to consider. First, one must note the performance of students who attended Lieser Elementary School. Lieser had the highest ratio of students in the 6.8 or below category in all four areas. Seventy eight percent of the Lieser students fell below 6.8 in the field of math. On the total battery portion of the test only twenty one percent of the Lieser students received 7.3 or above.

Next, consider the schools as a total unit. Marshall, Harney, and King all looked quite impressive in the field of reading. In language, King and Harney appeared to be approximately at grade level with Marshall and Lieser considerably behind. Math appeared to be the weakest area for all for all four schools.

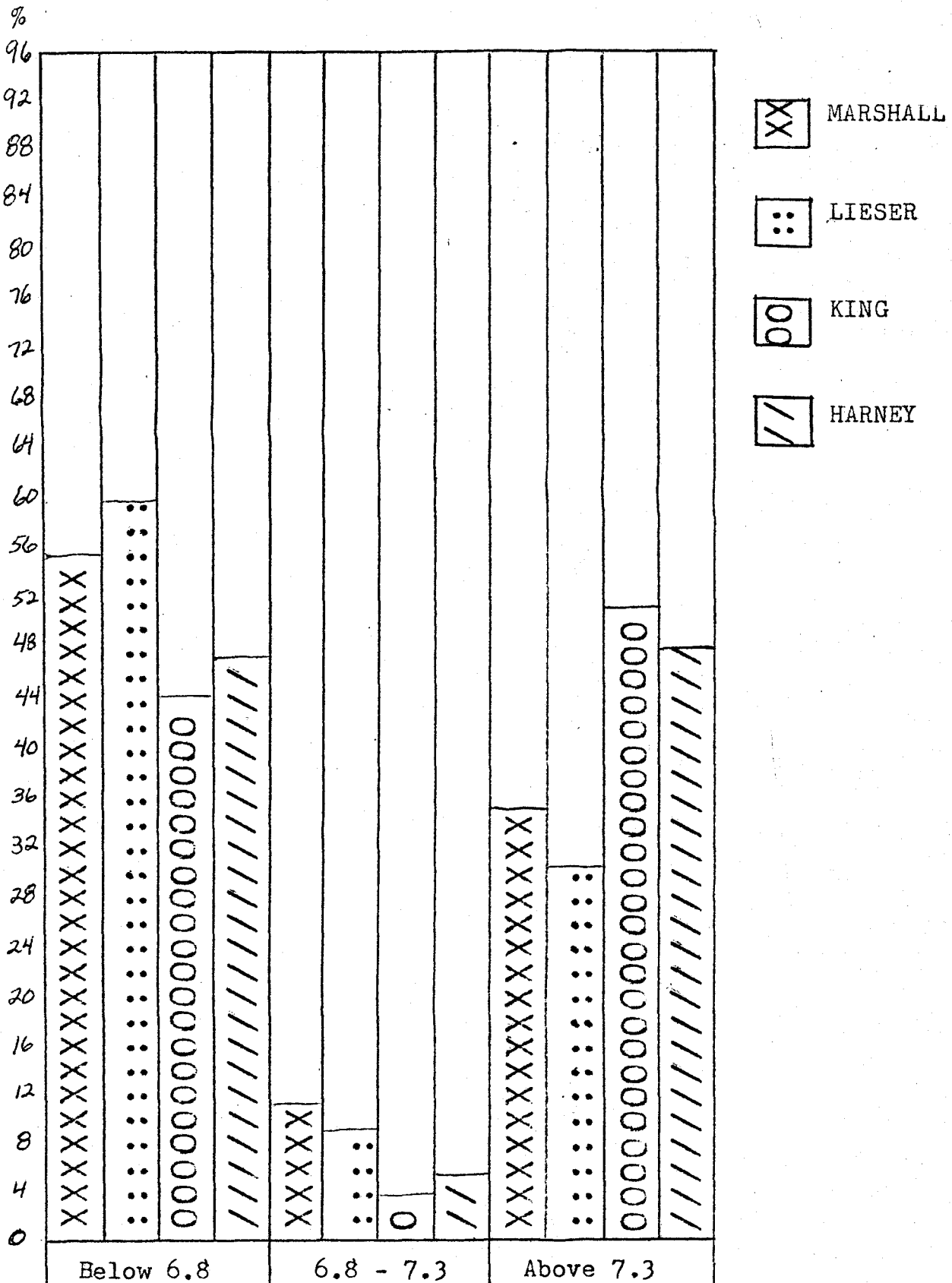
Another interesting observation is that in the field of math Harney scored the lowest in the classification of 6.8 or below and the highest in the grouping of 7.3 or above. King followed second with Marshall third and Lieser fourth.

On the total battery, King again led the schools with Harney second and Marshall and Lieser following.

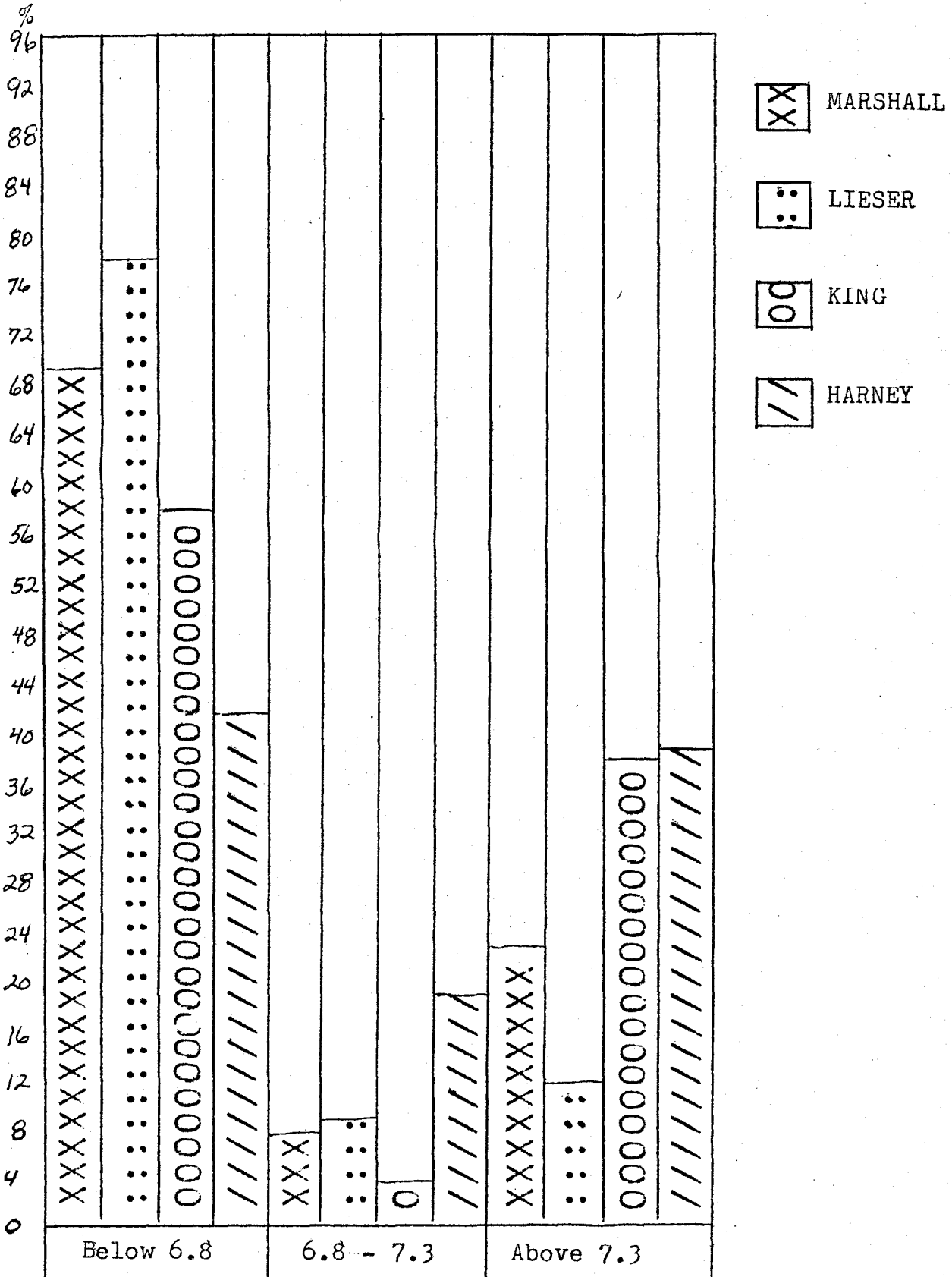
PERCENT OF STUDENTS BELOW 6.8, BETWEEN 6.8-7.3, AND OVER 7.3 ON THE READING PORTION OF THE CTB



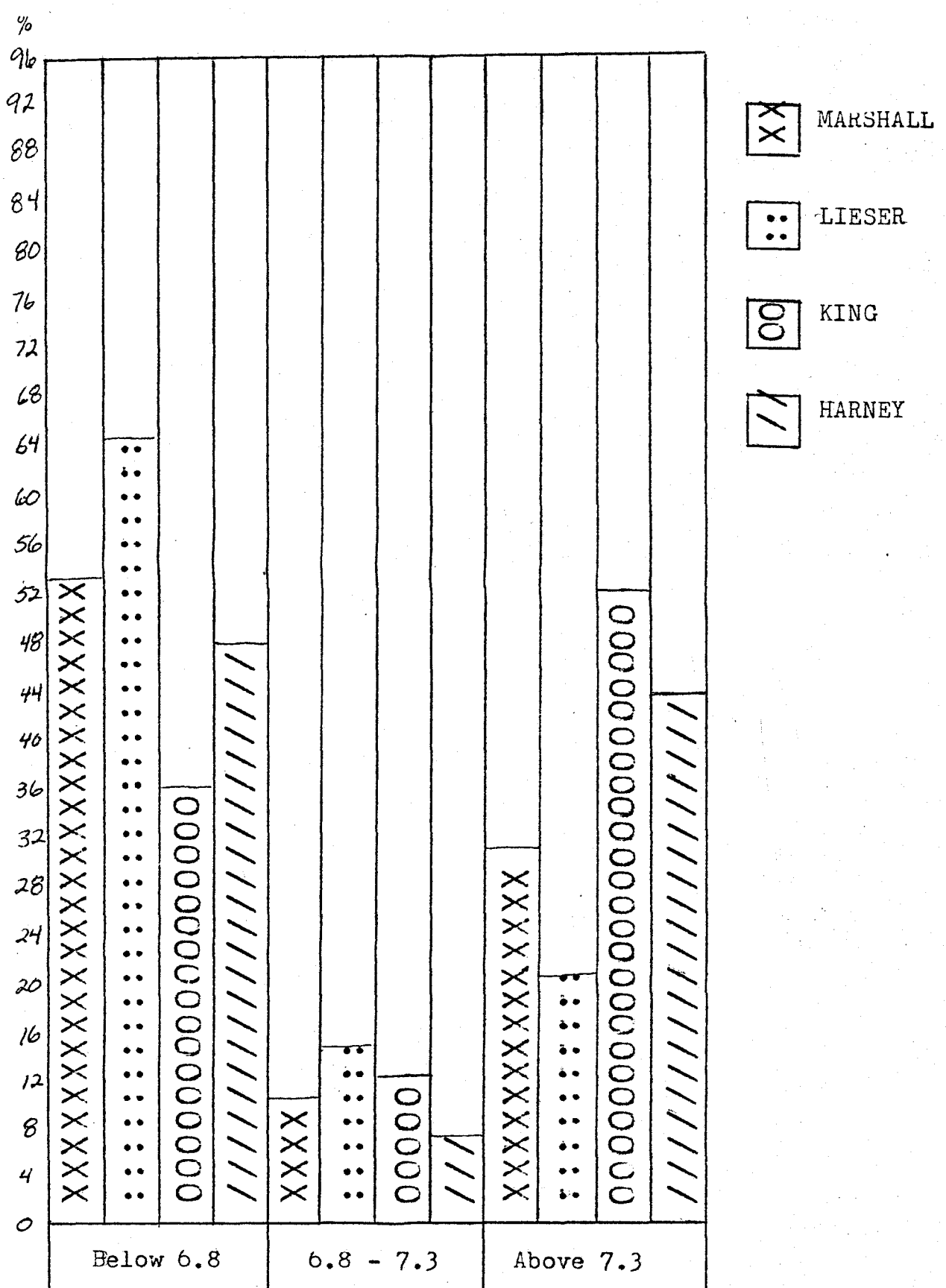
PERCENT OF STUDENTS BELOW 6.8, BETWEEN 6.8-7.3, AND OVER 7.3 ON THE LANGUAGE PORTION OF THE C.T.B.



PERCENT OF STUDENTS BELOW 6.8, BETWEEN 6.8-7.3, AND OVER 7.3 ON THE MATH PORTION OF THE C.T.E.



PERCENT OF STUDENTS BELOW 6.8, BETWEEN 6.8-7.3, AND OVER 7.3 ON THE TOTAL BATTERY PORTION OF THE C.T.B



SUMMARY OF GRAPHS K, L, M, N

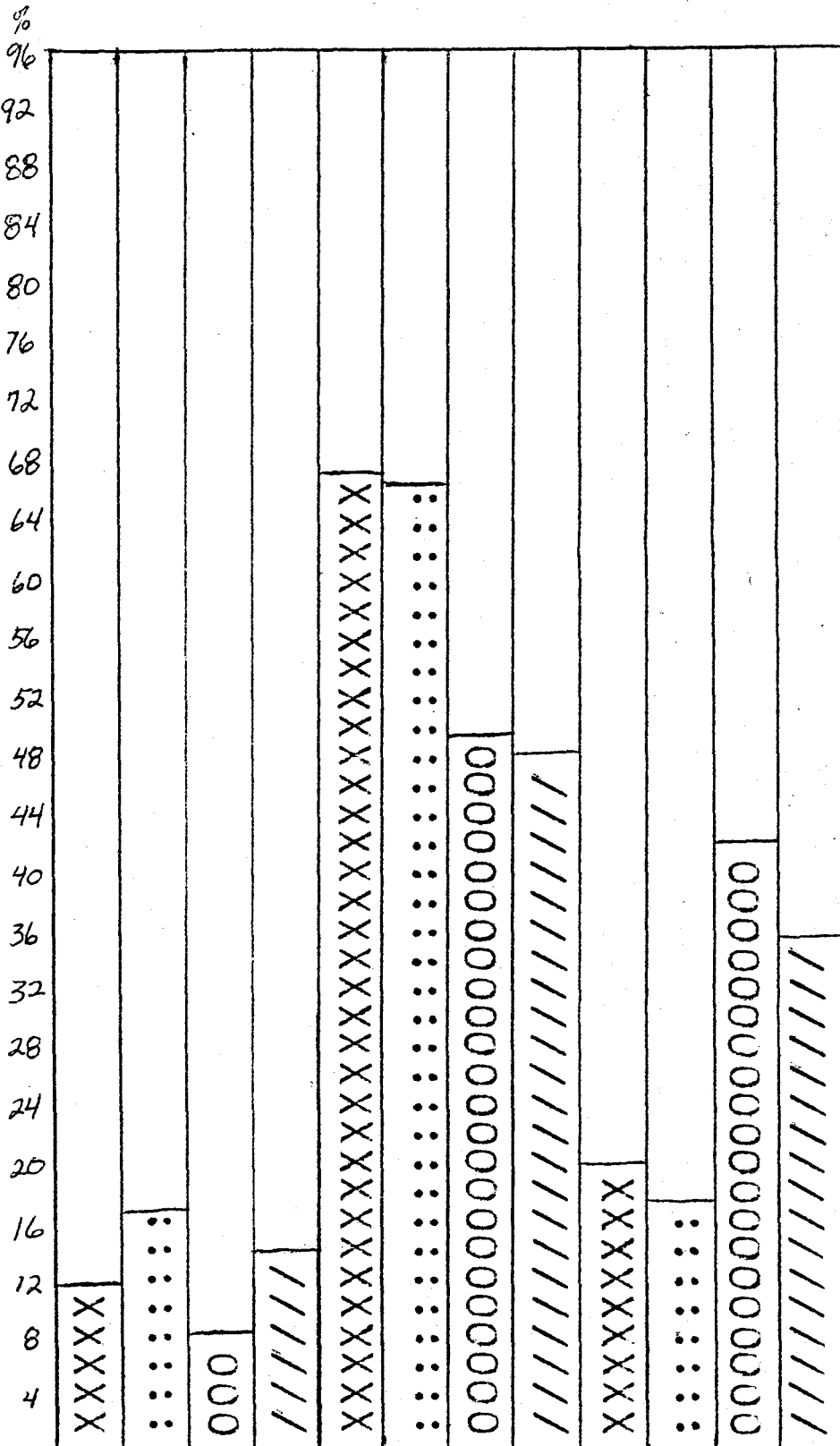
In this portion of the study the intent was to find high and low abilities in specific academic areas. Although King and Harney had many more students in the 9.0 or above classification in the reading section of the test, no school had an extremely high percentage of students below the fifth grade level.





In the field of language King was the only school to maintain a higher percentage above 9.0 than below 5.0.

On Graph M, which illustrates math scores, one notices the much higher percentage of students in the 5.0 to 9.0 grouping. Also, one should note the very low percentage of students in the 1.0 or above grouping.

The total battery illustrates that the percentage of 5.0 or below are higher than the 9.0 or above in all cases with the exception of Harney.

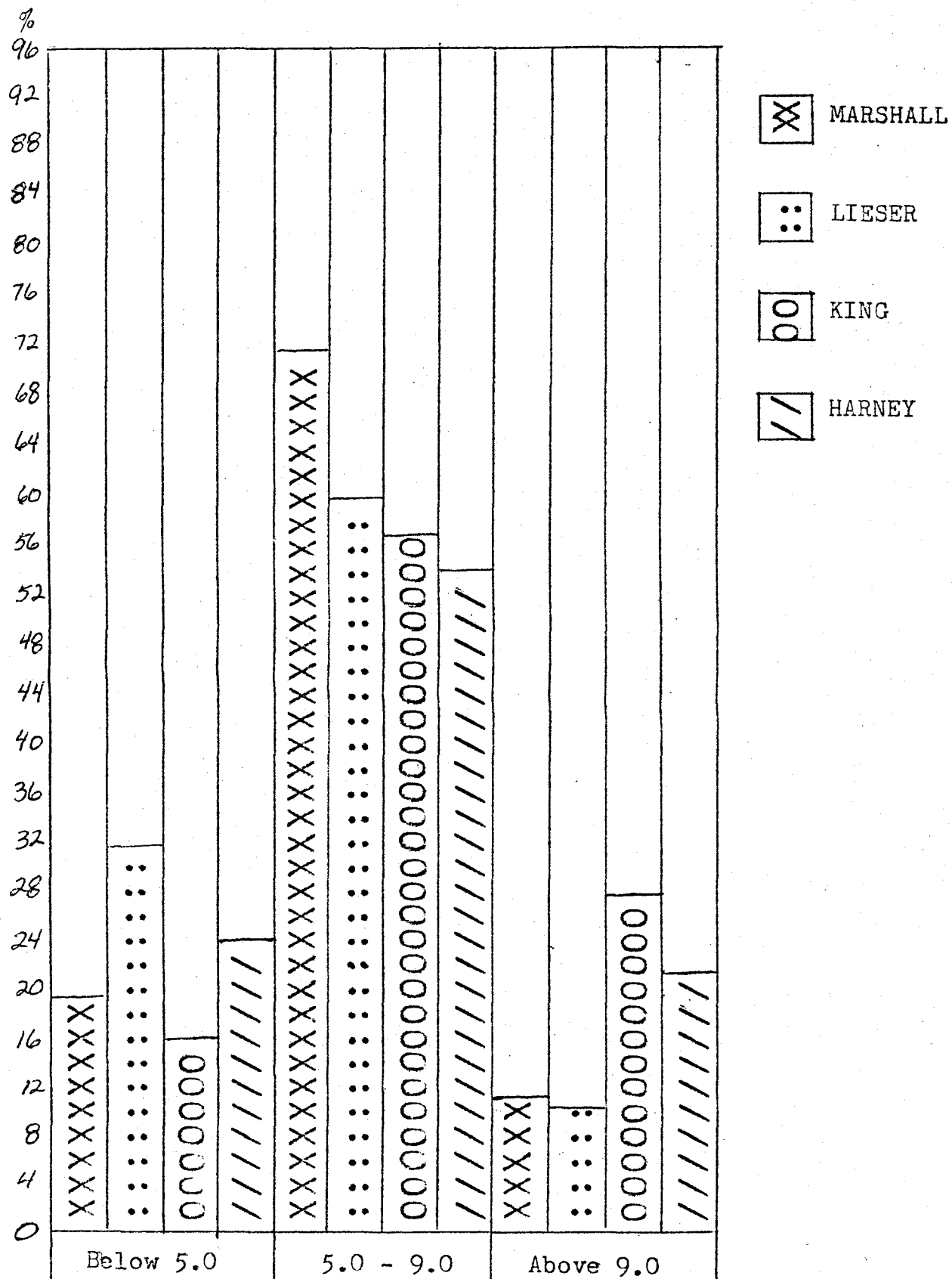
PERCENT OF STUDENTS BELOW 5.0, BETWEEN 5.0-9.0, AND ABOVE 9.0 ON THE READING PORTION OF THE C.T.B.



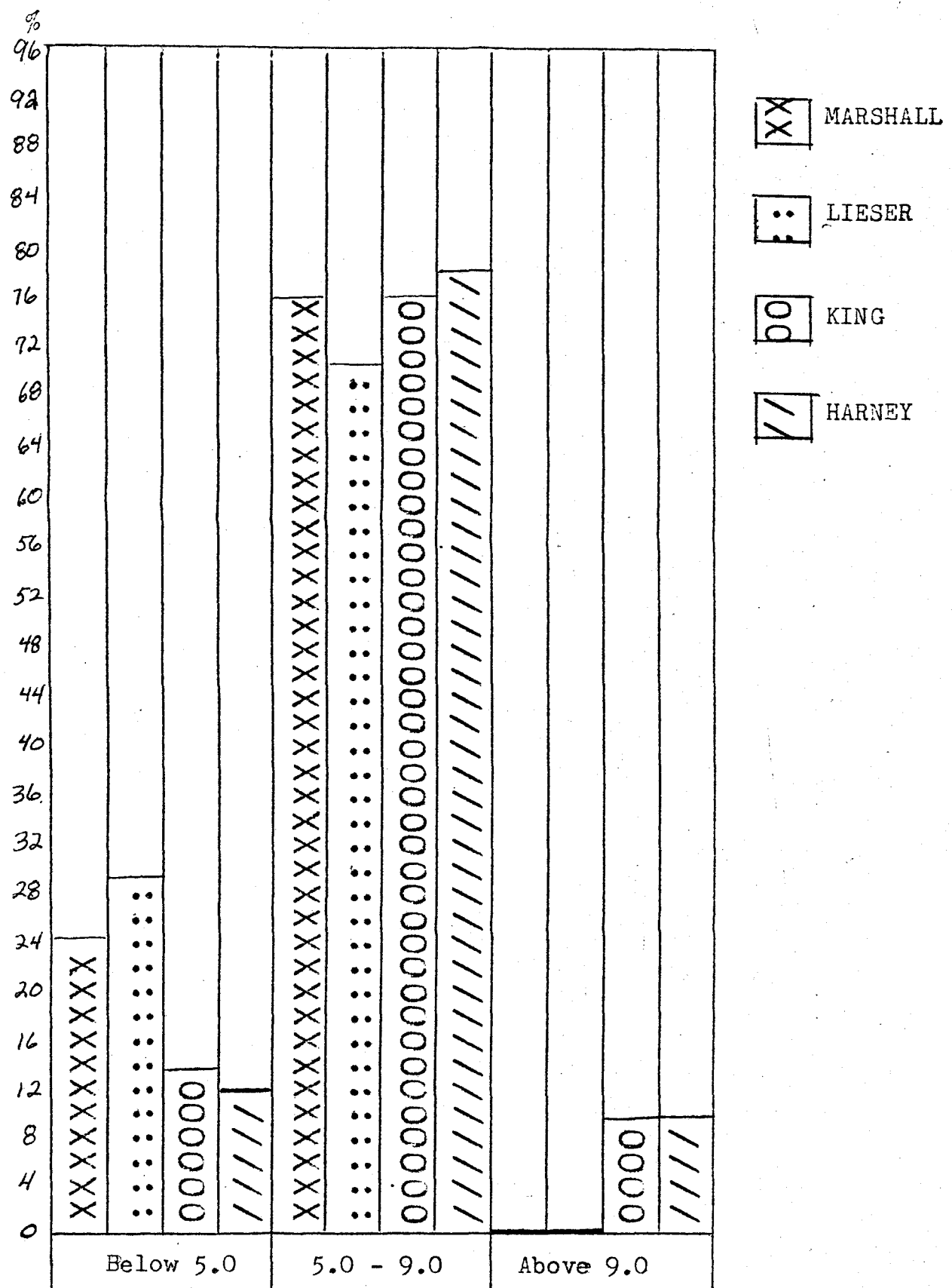
-  MARSHALL
-  LIESER
-  KING
-  HARNEY

Below 5.0 5.0 - 9.0 Above 9.0

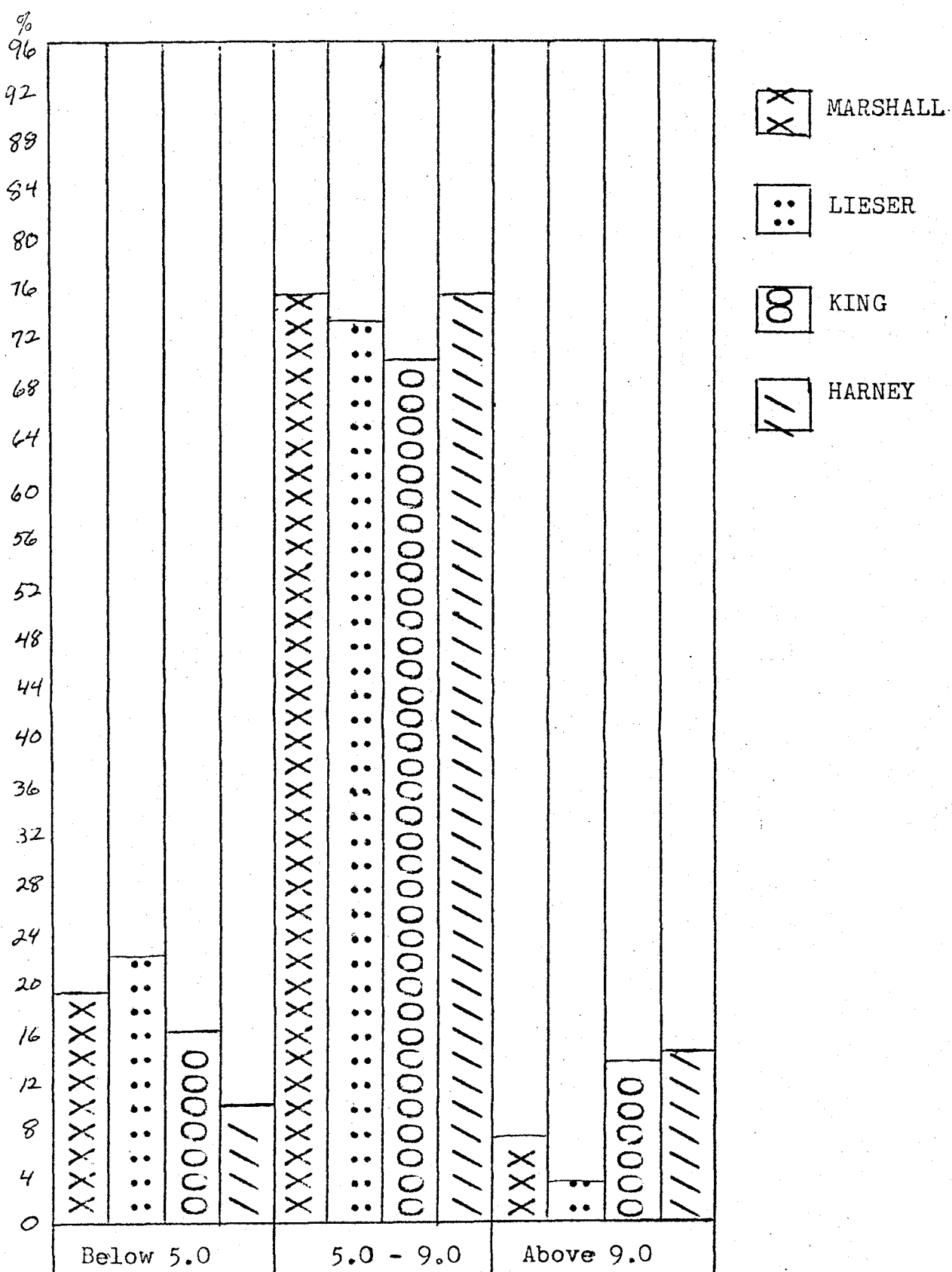
PERCENT OF STUDENTS BELOW 5.0, BETWEEN 5.0-9.0, AND ABOVE 9.0 ON THE LANGUAGE PORTION OF THE C.T.B.



PERCENT OF STUDENTS BELOW 5.0, BETWEEN 5.0-9.0, AND ABOVE 9.0 ON THE MATH PORTION OF THE C.T.B.



PERCENT OF STUDENTS BELOW 5.0, BETWEEN 5.0-9.0,
AND ABOVE 9.0 ON THE TOTAL BATTERY PORTION OF THE C.T.B



GRAPH O

The average grade point equivalent for each school on the C.T.B. Test is illustrated on Graph O. In the area of reading all schools, with the exception of Lieser, are above grade level. King and Harney schools are from one to one and one half years above grade level which indicates the reading levels on the C.T.B. Test of the students entering McLoughlin Junior High from Harney, Marshall, and King were quite impressive.

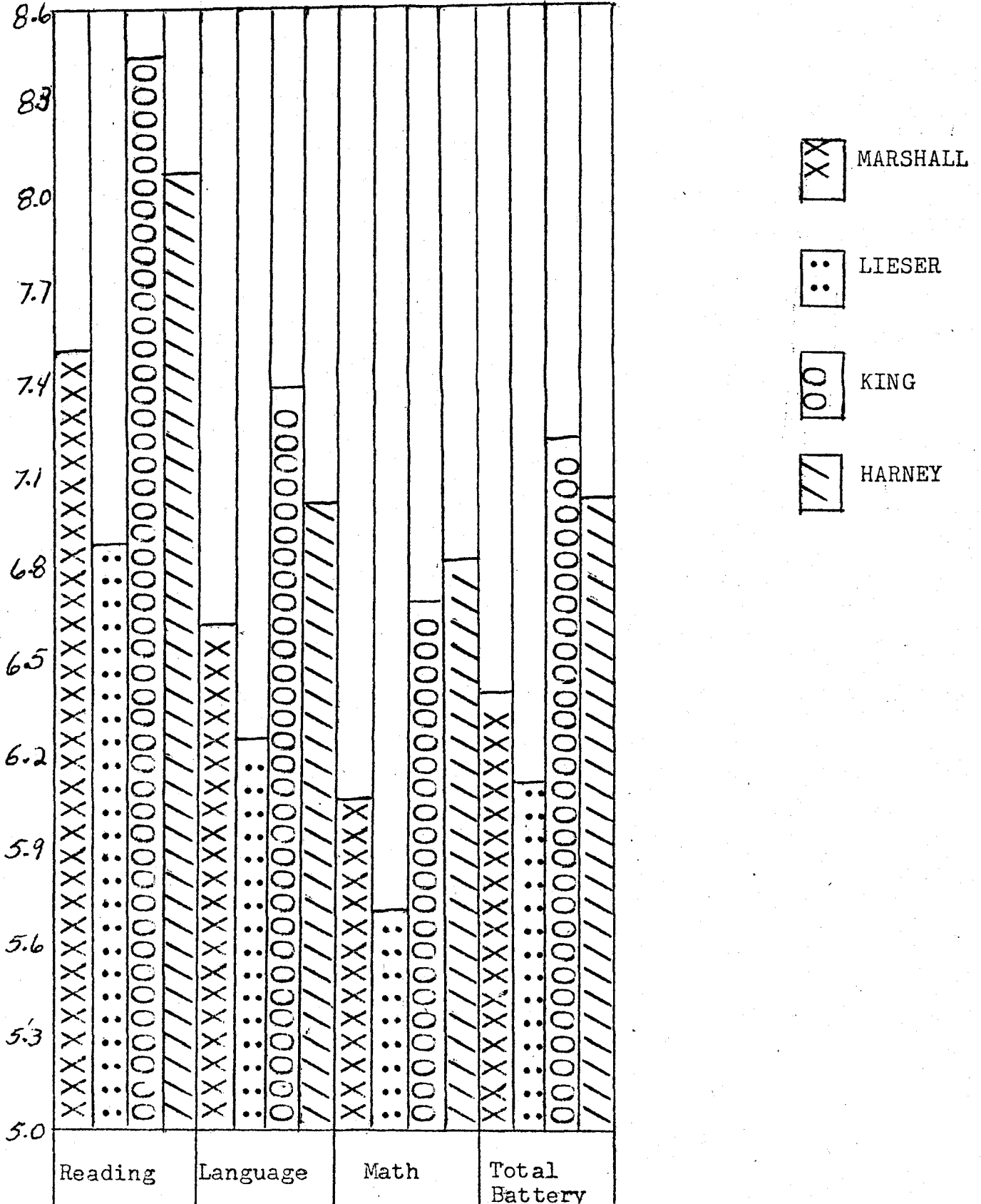
The results of the language section of the C.T.B. Test show King at 7.4 Grade Point Equivalent and Harney at 7.0. Marshall and Lieser are well below these figures. Lieser was nearly one grade level lower than the other three schools on the language portion of the test.

Math again appears to be the lowest academic area for all schools represented. Here King and Harney are slightly below grade level with Marshall one year behind and Lieser one and one half years below the average grade level for their age. One should also note that in every category the schematic pattern of the schools has remained stable with the exception of math. In this area Harney has again jumped above the other three schools.

On the total battery portion of the C.T.B. Test it is once again apparent that King and Harney are near or above grade level and Marshall and Lieser are one half to one full grade level lower.

AVERAGE GRADE POINT EQUIVALENT FOR EACH SCHOOL ON C.T.B.

G.P.E.



SURVEY

The third portion of this study deals with a survey given to the seventh grade students at McLoughlin Junior High in April, 1973. This survey dealt with the social adjustment of the students during their first year at the school.

Seven questions were included in the survey. Two were based upon the students' social adjustment at McLoughlin Junior High. The next two were directed toward their preparation for adjustment to junior high school while attending elementary school. The last three questions dealt with student involvement at McLoughlin.

One of the questions on this survey pertained to citizenship points earned by the students. Due to the fact that a large majority of the students were not sure how many points they had received, no results from this question could be computed.

On the survey a student was asked to record his feelings on a continuous spectrum running from a negative response, such as "I haven't", to a positive reaction such as "great". For graphing purposes, two other responses were added which are, "it's ok" and "good". In addition to an initial reply the students were also given an option of explaining their answers. Some of the more common explanation will be mentioned.

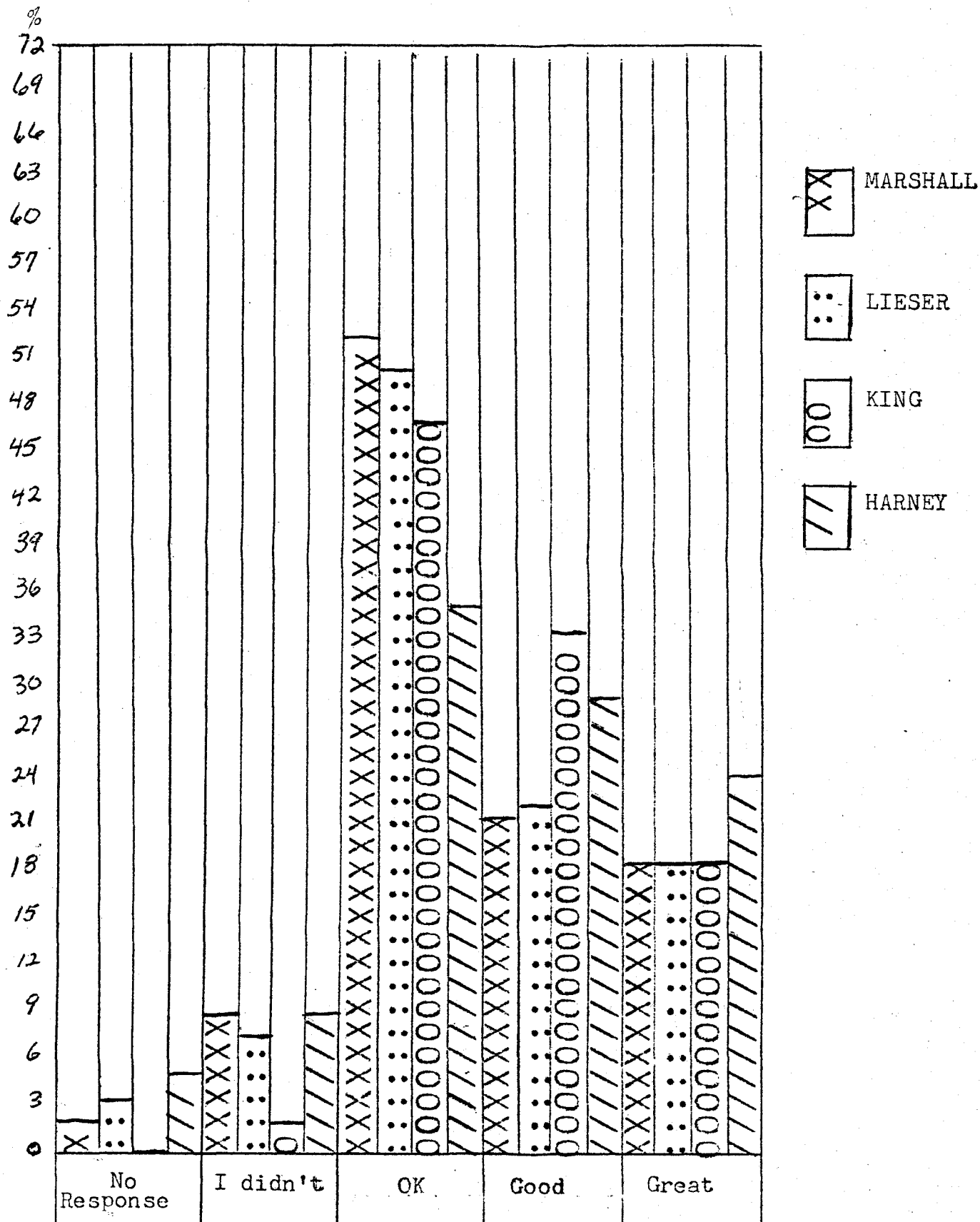
GRAPH P

The question on Graph P which states, How do you like clubs, activities, people, etc. at McLoughlin Junior High was intended to bring out an overall attitude of how the students felt toward the social environment at school. All four elementary schools gave very similar answers, however, Harney and King did have a slightly higher percentage of more positive responses.

There were some interesting comments made by the students that dealt with clubs, activities, people, etc. at McLoughlin. The comment that was repeated most often was that all the activities and clubs were for eighth and ninth grade students. Many students felt that they did not know how to become involved in the clubs. Another feeling also became very apparent at this point in the study. Many of the students felt that last year they were the "big guys", whereas this year they saw themselves as "little seventh graders".

In summary, it appears that most students were fairly pleased with McLoughlin, but they do desire to have more opportunity for clubs and activities.

How do you like clubs, activities, people, etc. at McLoughlin Junior High?

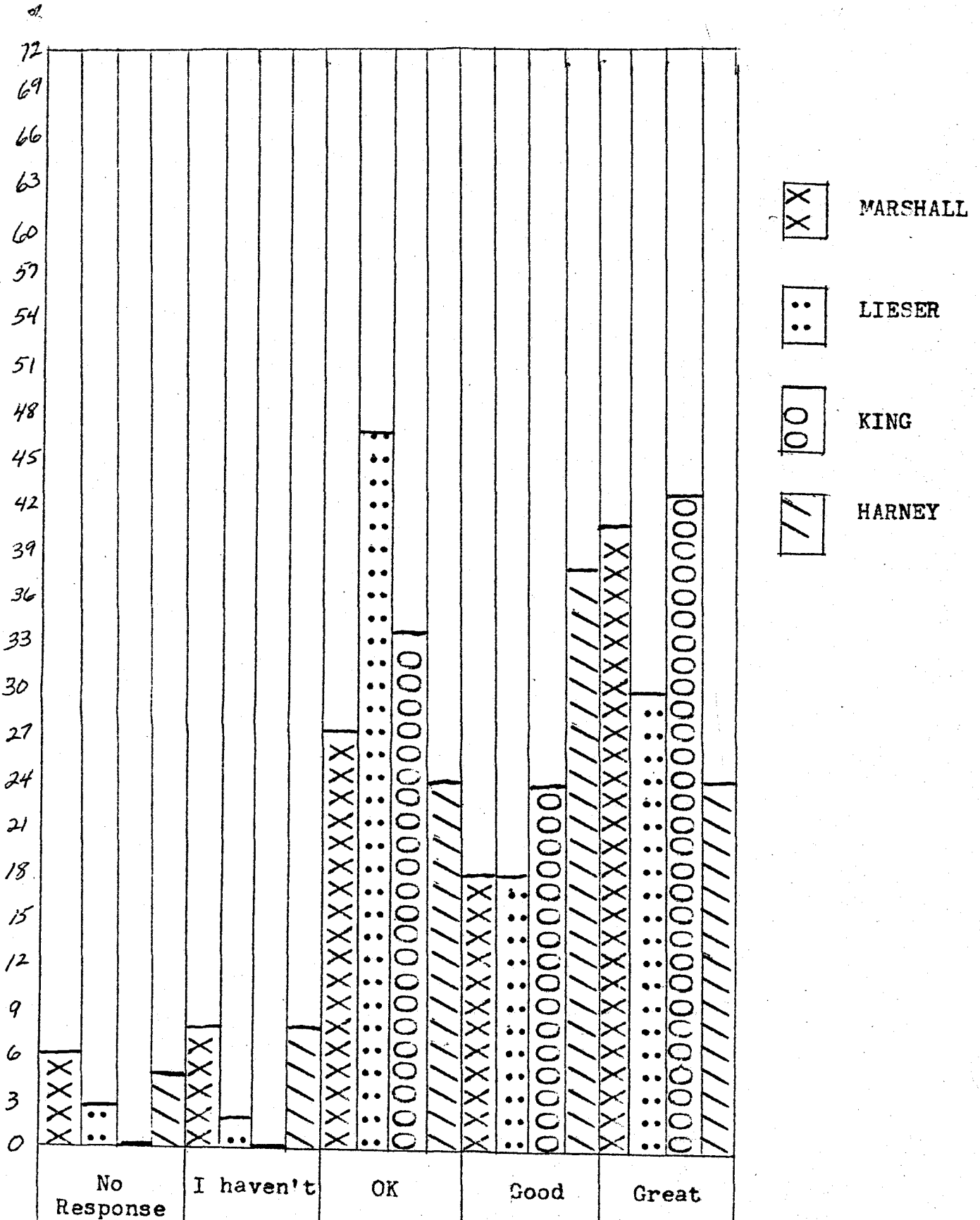


GRAPH Q

Most students felt very positive toward their adjustment to McLoughlin Junior High. This was shown on Graph Q. By looking at the graph one sees that three of the schools, King, Harney, and Marshall all rated high in the two top categories of "good" and "great" while Lieser students responded more to the classification of "it's ok". The most important fact that was found on this question was that very few students felt that they had not adjusted to McLoughlin.

Some comments were also written on the question concerning adjustment. Most students felt that some adjustments from grade school were hard to make at first, but as time went on it became easier. Two comments made from all elementary schools with the exception of King were that they had some difficulty adjusting to more than one teacher, and moving from class to class.

How do you feel you have socially adjusted to McLoughlin Junior High?

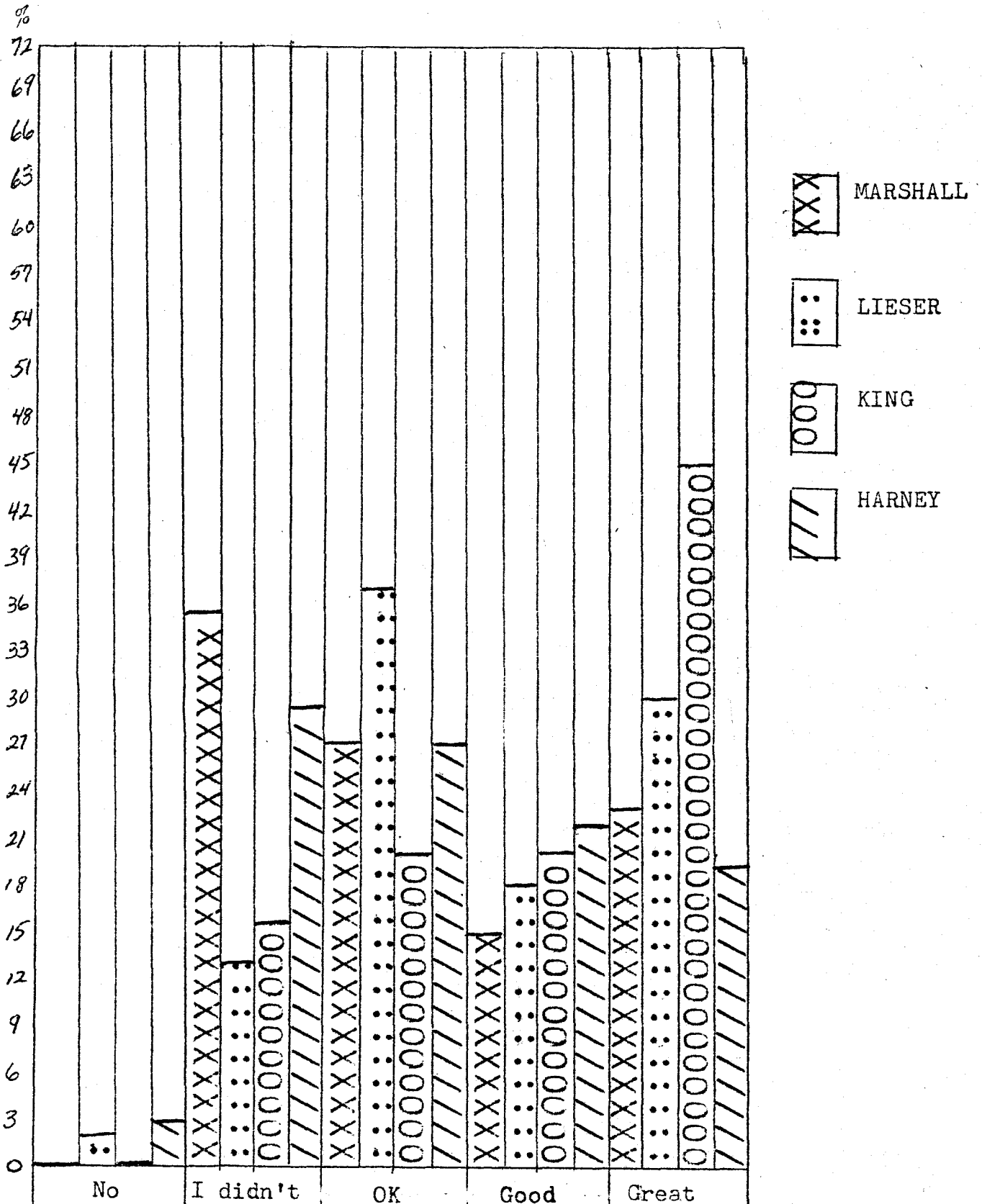


GRAPH R

Some interesting observations can be made in relation to the way students felt about clubs, activities, and people in the previous grade schools that they attended. One important point brought out was that there was a much higher percentage of King students who had more positive reactions to this question than students from the other three elementary schools. Forty five percent of the students from King classified the clubs, activities, people, etc. at their elementary school as "great".

Lieser students were charted with quite negative responses relating to academic adjustment at McLoughlin Junior High. These same students appeared to be much more positive toward the social adjustment at McLoughlin. This positive attitude is shown on Graph R where most Lieser students were pleased with the clubs, activities, and people at Lieser.

How did you like the clubs, activities, people, etc. in school last year?



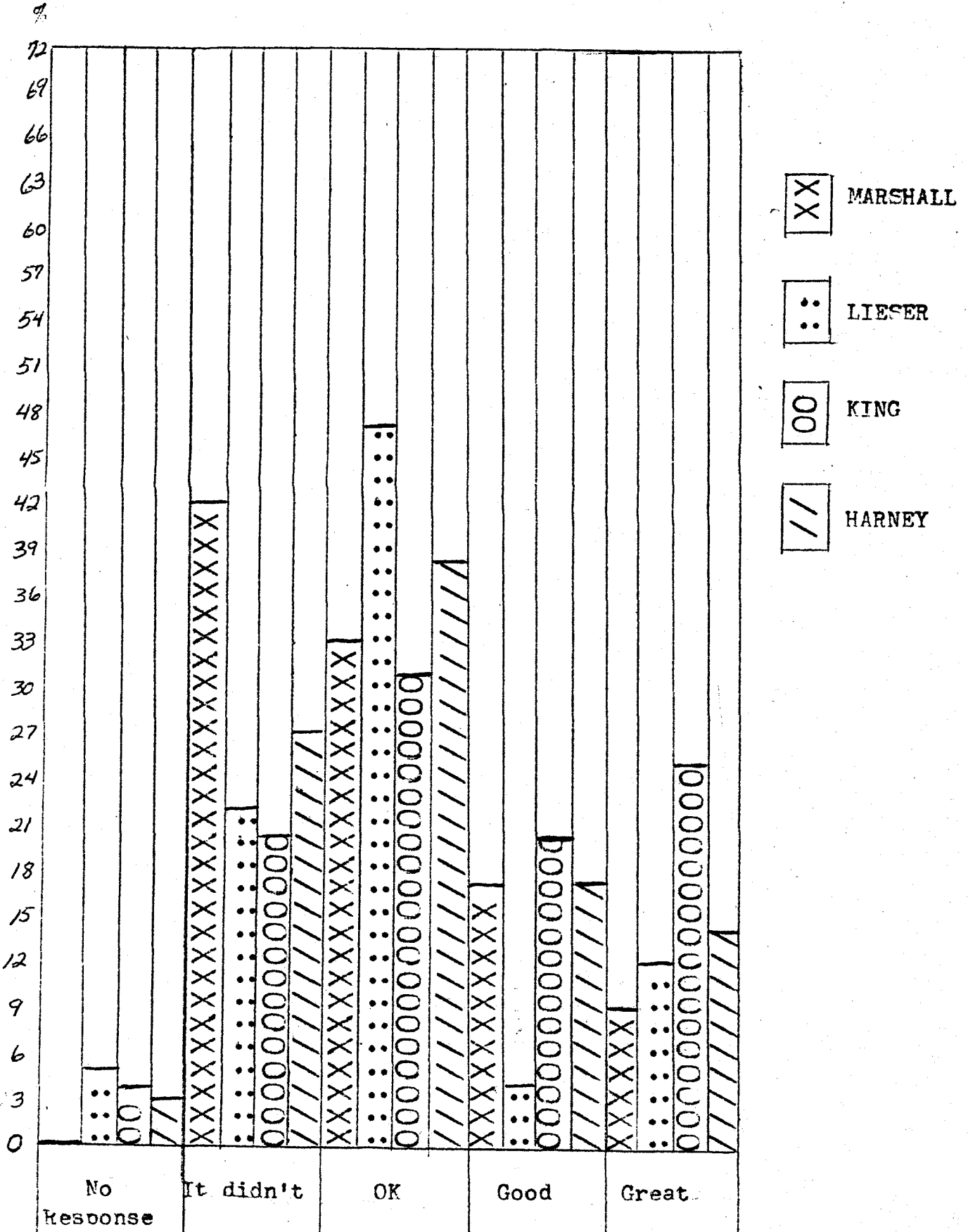
GRAPH S

Apparently, one of the most serious problems elementary schools face is socially preparing students for junior high. This study shows that all schools seemed quite weak in this aspect of education. As Graph S shows, the percentage of students in the two more negative responses ("it didn't" to "it's ok") far outweighed the percentage of students in the two more positive responses ("good" to "great"). The only school that had more "great" responses than negative "it didn't" responses was Martin Luther King.

The most interesting part of the social preparation from grade school came in the form of comments. Most students stated that the only preparation elementary teachers gave them was in the form of a threat. For example, after getting in trouble, the student would be told to straighten up because next year in junior high he would not be able to act in such a negative manner.

Another interesting comment was made by some students. They felt that students who had experienced more than one teacher and had the opportunity to change classes had an advantage in adjusting to junior high. One important point to clarify is that this comment was mentioned more by students from schools other than King.

How do you feel elementary school prepared you socially for McLoughlin Junior High?

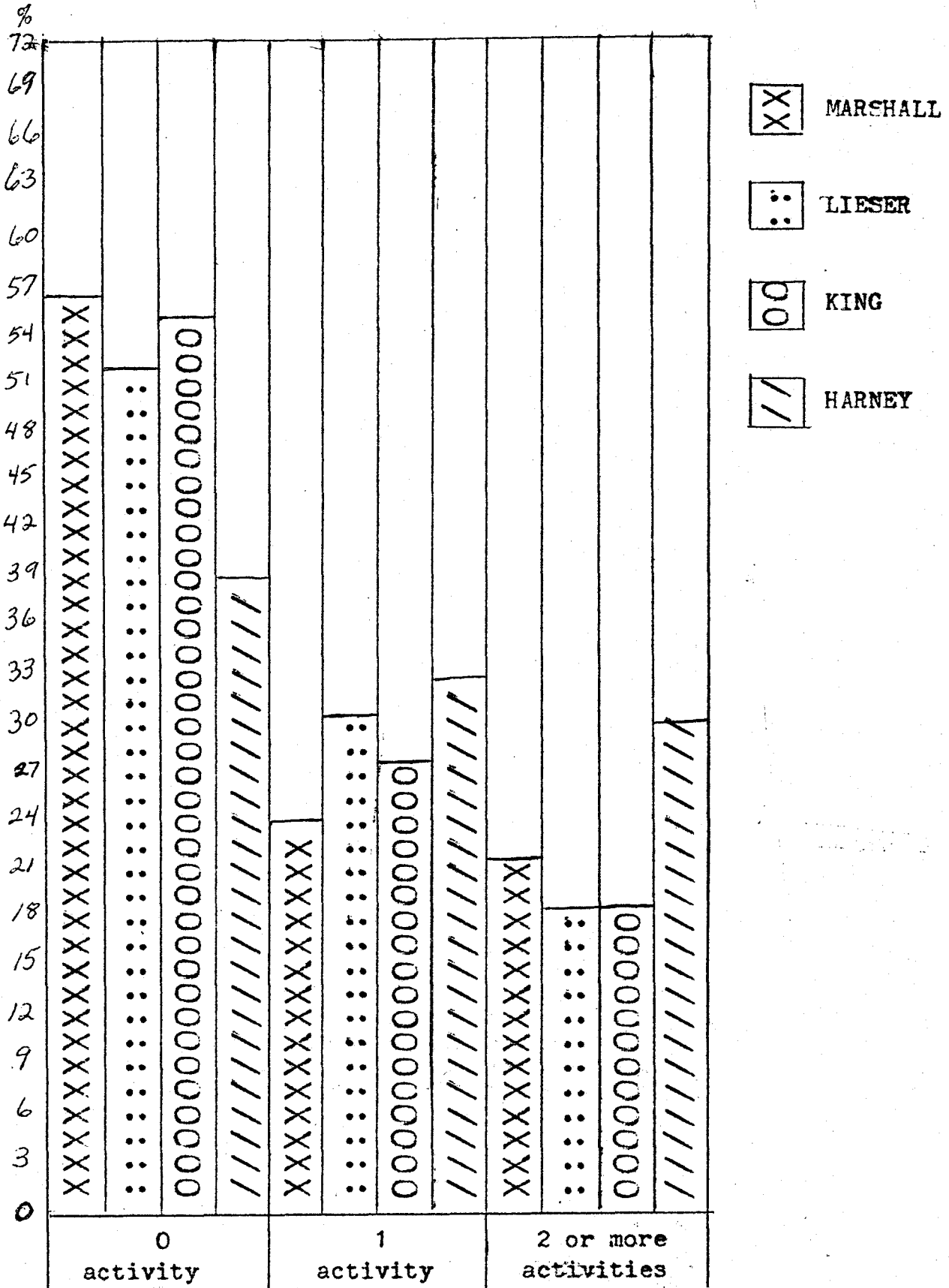


GRAPHS T and U

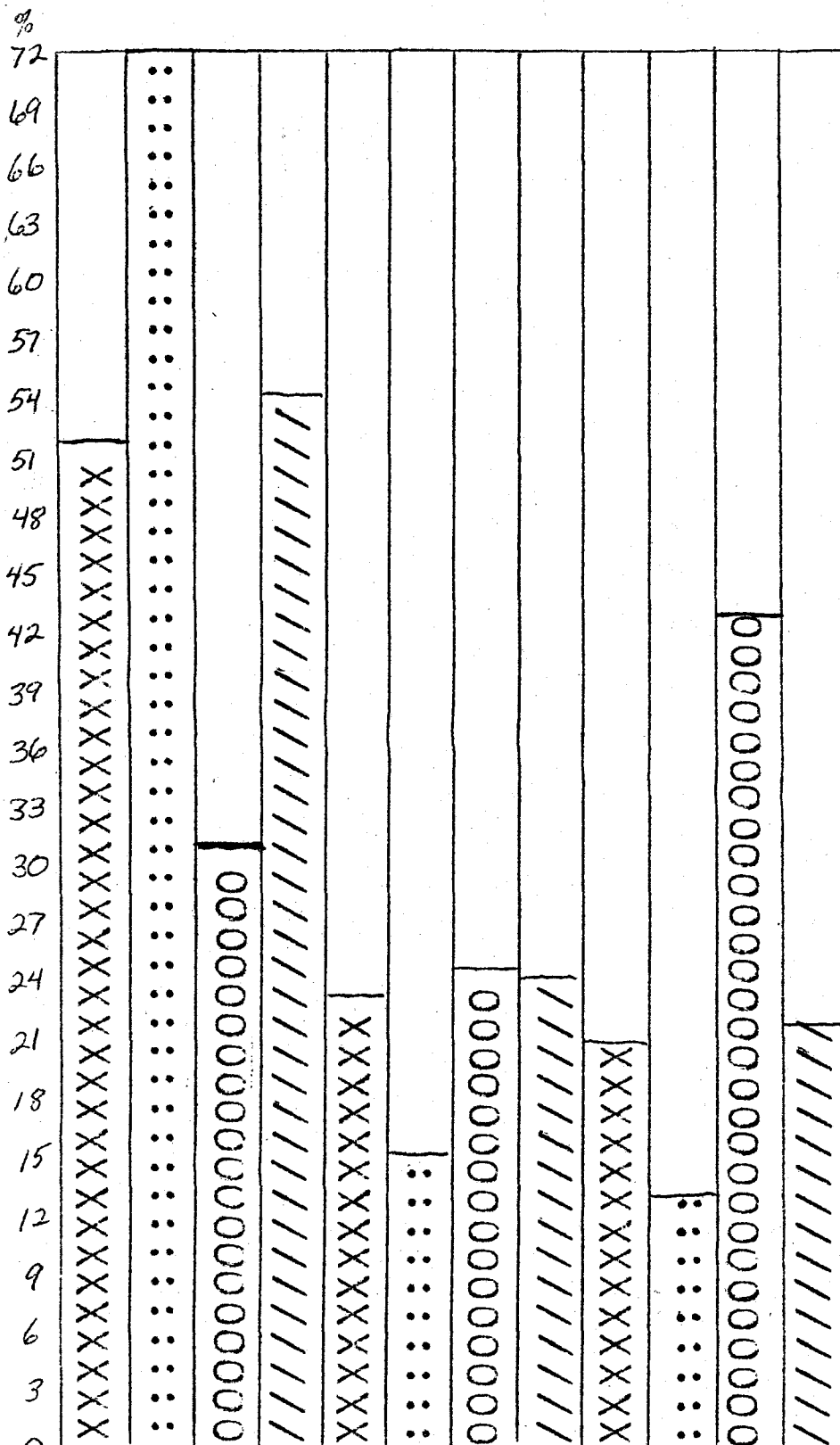
The last two questions on the survey dealt with participation in activities and classroom offices. On the question of activities, two points should be made. The first being that half of the students from all of the schools, with the exception of Harney, did not participate in any activities in their first year of junior high. It was also shown that Harney seemed to have a much higher percentage of students involved in activities than the other three schools.

An interesting, but not surprising, thing happened when the students were asked how many had held offices this year. A much higher percentage of students from King were elected to offices compared with the other three schools. The reason for this may have been due to the fact that at King all sixth graders were together in one large complex. Because of this the students may have known one another better and created closer friendships than would have occurred in three or four self-contained classrooms.

Did you participate in any extra school activities? Sports, ski club, pep squad, music, others. Please list them.



Have you held any offices at school this year? Block, A.S.B., Homeroom, Others. Please list them.



- XX MARSHALL
- LIESER
- OO KING
- // HARNEY

0 office 1 office 2 or more offices

SUMMARY

One must keep in mind that this study was conducted over a period of only one year. A four or five year study would be much more significant. Also, as was stated before, it was a fact-finding study that I hope will provide information to help students in their transition from grade school to junior high.

From this study many generalization can be made. Due to the academic tools of grades and the C.T.B. Test, one can say that the seventh grade students as a group appeared to be strong in the field of reading. This strength has been pointed out on Graphs A,C,E,G,K, and O.

Math appeared to be the hardest academic area for the students to comprehend. The C.T.B. Test results in math were charted very low. However, when one looks at grades given to the students by teachers in the area of math, the outcome was very high. Also, Harney School Students seemed to be very strong in math. They consistently broke away from any set patterns that the other three schools developed.

Lieser Elementary must be considered in this summary. They were low in almost every academic field on both the C.T.B. Test and on grades. This fact is reinforced on nearly every graph in the study. Even though they rated low academically, Lieser students were charted as adjusting very well to the social aspects of junior high. One might have thought that low academic abilities correlated with low social adjustment, but this is not borne out by this study.

The study also indicated that the letter grading system does appear to be inconsistent. McLoughlin Junior High's grades seemed quite high and sometimes inconsistent with the C.T.B. Test scores. For example, 62% of the students surveyed in this study were below 6.8 on the math portion of the C.T.B. Test. However, only 23% of the same students received lower than a "B" grade in math. The grades in the remaining fields were also inconsistent. In band and orchestra there were no grades lower than a "B". In physical education there was only one grade below a "C". In summary, one can only say that the grade of "C" is not average at McLoughlin Junior High.

Finally, one must look at Martin Luther King Elementary School. The students from King appeared to be stronger academically and socially than the students at Marshall, Harney, or Lieser. These students were at or near the top in every field of this study. The students from King had more positive feelings about their elementary school and were also quite positive toward McLoughlin Junior High. From all of the information that has been collected it seems very apparent that the students from Martin Luther King do not have major difficulties in adjusting to their school program.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Through this study some constructive recommendations can be made. First, a similar study should be conducted over the next five years. This would tend to give any findings more validity. This study would also help the elementary schools to detect their problems at an earlier stage. Many teachers often wonder where their weaknesses lie. Through similar studies these could be identified. Finally, an extended study should help the junior highs in evaluating their programs to better fit the needs of its incoming students.

Second, each of the four elementary schools should objectively evaluate this study and their programs to find their individual strengths and weaknesses. If any of the feeder schools feel their present programs need to be altered, a task force should be formed. The responsibility of this task force would be to identify the specific problems and develop constructive solutions.

A third recommendation is that a task force be adopted to evaluate the reporting system presently used at McLoughlin Junior High. The findings of the task force should then be reported to the faculty and administrators thereby, revision could be made if needed.

Finally, many seventh grade students reported that most of the activities at McLoughlin were for eighth and ninth grade students and few were offered to them. Many students also indicated on their survey sheets that they would like to become

more involved, but they did not know how. If more efforts and money were allotted to create activities for seventh grade students they would perhaps feel more a part of McLoughlin Junior High and would then more readily adapt to the junior high environment.