

Prairie View A&M University

Digital Commons @PVAMU

All Theses

8-1951

**A Program for the Improvement of Public Relations in the
Elderville District Schools Longview, Texas**

Elzie Roscoe Williams

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.pvamu.edu/pvamu-theses>

A PROGRAM FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF PUBLIC RELATIONS IN THE
ELDERVILLE DISTRICT SCHOOLS LONGVIEW, TEXAS



WILLIAMS

1951

N
Ref
371.2
W671p

A PROGRAM FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF PUBLIC RELATIONS IN
THE ELDERVILLE DISTRICT SCHOOLS
LONGVIEW, TEXAS

By

Elzie Roscoe Williams

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

Master of Science

In The

Graduate Division

of

Prairie View Agricultural and Mechanical College
Prairie View, Texas

August, 1951

The W. R. Banks Library
Prairie View A. & M. College
Prairie View, Texas

LC221.3
L6W54

BIOGRAPHY

The writer, Elzie Roscoe Williams is the sixth child of Ned E. and Adah Williams. He was born in Gregg County, August 4, 1895. His parents lived sixty-two years on their farm in the Greenville Community, near Longview, Texas. The writer's childhood days were spent in Gregg County. He began his education in a two-teacher rural school in the Greenville Community, now known as the Ned E. Williams Industrial High School.

After completing the seventh grade, the writer attended Butler College, Tyler, Texas. From this school he finished his high school career and the two years of college work. He also attended Hampton Institute in Hampton, Virginia. He received his Bachelor of Arts Degree from Wiley College, Marshall, Texas in 1936.

The writer has taught in the public rural school of Gregg County, Texas for thirty-one years, and in the summer school of Butler College, Tyler, Texas in 1942. In the Summer of 1948, the writer entered the Graduate Division of Prairie View College.

He was married to Miss Eula Lee Boothe in 1921. To their union were born three sons, Edwin R., Winston A. and James N. Williams. The last two are graduates of Prairie View A&M College.

The writer's present position is Superintendent of the Elderville Common School District # 5, Longview, Texas.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

For their constant consideration and unfailing cooperation, my thanks are given to my advisers, Doctors, J.L. Brown and J.M. Drew.

I am deeply grateful to Mr. C.A. Wood, Director of Public Relations at Prairie View A&M College and to Professor J.B. Holland, a visiting professor from Topeka, Kansas, who made many excellent suggestions and criticisms for the improvement of this thesis.

Thanks are given to all of the staff of Prairie View A&M College for the hospitality rendered to me while I sojourned at Prairie View A&M College.

DEDICATION

To my wife, Mrs. Eula Lee Williams and children, Edwin R., Winston A. and James N. Williams and the boys and girls of the Elderville Common School District # 5, Gregg County, Texas, this study is affectionately dedicated.

E.R.W.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
A. Statement of the Problem.....	2
B. Purpose of the Study.....	4
C. Scope and Limitation of the Study.....	6
D. Definition of Terms.....	7
E. Review of Similar Studies.....	7
F. Method of Procedure.....	13
II. A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ELDERVILLE SCHOOL DISTRICT.....	14
III. THE ORGANIZATION OF A PUBLIC RELATIONS PROGRAM.....	18
A. The Nature and Purpose of the Program.....	18
B. The Board of Education and Public Relation.....	24
C. The Superintendent and Public Relations.....	25
D. The Principal and Public Relation.....	27
E. The Teachers as Public Relation Agents.....	29
F. Other Agencies.....	30
G. Public Relation Mediums.....	30
IV. THE PUBLIC RELATION PROGRAM FOR ELDERVILLE DISTRICT.....	33
A. Bulletins to the Homes.....	34
B. School Exhibits.....	34
C. Open House.....	35
D. School Visitations.....	35

E. Home Visitations.....	36
F. Reports to the Home.....	36
G. Parent Teacher Association.....	37
H. Assemblies and Special Programs.....	38
V. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION.....	40

BIBLIOGRAPHY

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

The school occupies a place in the community that can not be usurped by any other service institution. Sponsors of favorite service institutions have striven to remove the school from its pedestal of usefulness, but they have been unable to supplant the school in the minds of the people. It matters very little whether an individual represents the upper or the lower strata of human society, he views the school with a motivating pride that is in itself stimulating to the most casual observer; or he views the school and its program and purposes with a disgust that is frightening, exasperating and highly significant. His attitude towards the school is a human reflection of the picture of the school that has been fixed in his mind over a period of years or at the climax of a series of events or occasions.

Whether one looks upon the school with awe and reverence or pride, or disgust and exasperation, it stems from the impression that the school has made upon him and the public in general. Any individual who is responsible, then, for the opinions of the people in the community, must, if wishing success, fashion a relationship between the public and the school that is wholesome, enlightening and progressive. This relationship must touch every facet of community life, and find expression in their work, play and cultural pursuits.

Statement of the Problem

For the last thirty years the writer has been connected with the Ned E. Williams Industrial School. He has served in the school as teacher, Principal and is now the Superintendent of the Elderville District in which the Ned E. Williams School is located. Because of those experiences the writer has a vantage point that gives him a prospective that is very much unlike that of most others. It is to be noted that the writer is not attempting, in this treatise to crystallize a problem per se. His contact with the school district during the last thirty-two years, either as teacher, principal or superintendent, has gained for him an insight into the motives and actions of the people. This insight has helped to refine the problem that surrounds the school with reference to the community. The writer will propose answers to the different facets of the problem that he knows to be fundamental in the community.

The writer shall attempt to analyze the problem on the basis of two fundamental assumptions. First, we assume that the public relations program of Elderville District is inadequate. Second, we assume that there is a need for a more practical public relations program, adapted to the needs of the pupils in the school and the philosophy of the schools in the Elderville District.

In the light of these assumptions this study proposes to answer the following general questions:

1. What are some indisputable evidences that the public relations program in Elderville District is inadequate or impractical?
2. What type of public relations program is best suited for the schools in the Elderville District?

To carry out the study answers to the following more specific questions will be sought:

- A. Does the public relations program as now established embody the cardinal aims of progressive community relationships?
 1. Is the relationship between the school and the community educational in scope?
 2. Does the school's public relations program make for integrated social behavior?
 3. Is the public relations program cultural in nature?
 4. Does the public relations program provide an avenue for economic enlightenment?
- B. Does the program utilize all the officers and media through which a public relations program may be integrated and made effective in community life?
 1. Does the Board of Education provide an avenue through which the schools' aims may be disseminated?
 2. Does the Superintendent utilize his office as a public relations station?
 3. Does the Principal of the schools promote the

aims of such a program?

4. Do the teachers and the presidents of school organizations make good public relations agents?
5. Are school activities and school workshops used to interpret the school program?
6. Does the school make use of the radio and special day activities to acquaint people with the school program?

Purpose of the Study

The conditions that exist in the Elderville District with reference to the public relations program are comparable to the conditions found in all the similar districts in East Texas. It has been the writer's observation that very little purposeful public relations activity is actually carried on. The superintendent is faced with the responsibility of promoting a public relations program that will be practical. Until recently the writer had given the matter of public relations very little consideration and little study. This has been due to the fact that very few studies have treated that phase of the school official's responsibility in a manner that would make it fundamental in school administration.

Some studies have pointed out the possibilities of different agencies in the school as mediums of public contact, but only one¹ has tended to organize all of the

¹Piereson, F.R. "Public Relations Program for Charlton-Pollard High School, Beaumont" Master's Thesis, 1950S, P.V. College.

factors for the single purpose of bringing them into focus upon the same objective. That study is beset by the limitation that it is concerned with an urban situation, in the main, and its recommended features must be pared to accommodate the situation that will be defined in this study.

The purpose of this study is to accomplish the following:

1. Point out the aims and functions of a public relations program.
2. Provide a plan for the use of that part of the general public relations program that may be used in a school situation that is comparable to what is found in the Elderville School District.
3. Stimulate further study in the field of public relations at the rural district level.
4. Provide a comprehensive guide for evaluating the public relations program in a rural district.

The writer holds that an activity that possesses such possibilities as may be found in a well organized, practical public relations program would justify more extensive study than has been undertaken in the field of school organization.

Some form of public relations is carried on by the Board of Education in order to register the reading of the public pulse on questions concerning the school. The superintendent and teachers maintain some public relation in order to be assured a degree of security in their

elective position. None of the segments of the school have utilized, nor have they had sufficient material to help them utilize, a public relations program that could be integrated at all levels. The need for the study is being attributed to one or more of the following conditions that are listed below:

1. Public relations activities in the Elderville District has been unorganized and haphazard.
2. Very few rural schools organize the public relation programs for optimum exploitation.
3. The nature of the Elderville District requires a definite public relations program and no comprehensive guide is available.

Scope and Limitation of the Study

The study will include a public relations program for the Elderville School District and other school districts of similar size, organization and composition.

The program will contain such recommendations as will make a public relations program workable with such modifications as will be necessary for adjustment to a particular situation. It is intended that the study will include a program of public relations that will include every agency and officer of the Elderville School District, and utilize every media through which the schools within the district may interpret their programs to the public. It is not intended that this program would apply to the larger schools nor to larger nor less analogous districts where a full-time publicity director is available.

Definition of Terms

There are two terms the writer feels whose con-
ceptive definition should be clear. No attempt is made
to use the dictionary definition as a whole or in part
with reference to either term.

School District. School district is to be inter-
preted as being that territorial designation for school
organization purposes.

Public Relations Program. Public relations pro-
gram is to be interpreted as the ways and means, accepted
by the school officials, as the media through which the
school program may be interpreted to the people of the
community and the district.

Review of Similar Studies

"Developing School Reports"

Philip H. Falk¹ is committed to the policy of putting
a great deal of emphasis on school reports. "Developing
reports is not a mere perfunctory duty of the superinten-
dent. The superintendent should help citizens to make
their decisions concerning school matters and their eyes
should be opened. Thus the report from the school must be
one people can read and will read. The superintendent
steered away from dry statistics in the making of his re-
port to a pictorial report. In order to make this report

1

Falk, Philip H., "Developing School Reports"
School Executive, September 1949, p. 74.

effective he called in teachers from every area for suggestions. The mathematics teacher, the art teacher, English teacher and all the vocational teachers to help compile and refine the booklet. The report was then made to the Board of Education, then to all the staff members of the school, to the Presidents of all local civic, fraternal and religious organizations, offices of doctors and dentists, officers of the Parent Teacher Association and finally to persons suggested by the Board of Education as well as to every family in the community. Such a report found an intelligent reception when the Superintendent came forward to make it publicly."

Ted L. Taylor¹ points the way to school interpretation and the development of public relation in his treatise, "How to Stage an Effective Parent Night". Parent night or open house is one of the most valuable public relations. Thus this affair should not be handled in a haphazard manner. To conduct a parent night seven questions should be answered, namely:

- (1) What is the community's attitude towards the school?
- (2) Is the school specialized?
- (3) What is the extent of the school program?
- (4) What facilities are available?
- (5) How many parents can be expected to attend?
- (6) Will recent alumni be invited?

1

Taylor, Ted, "How to Stage an Effective Parent Night" School Executive April 1951, p. 43.

(7) How much can be spent?

The best formula for good results would imbibe a procedure that would reveal truthfully the scope and nature of the following:

1. Class instruction in all subjects,
2. School facilities,
3. Athletic program,
4. Health program,
5. Children activities,
6. Library facilities,
7. Teaching methods,
8. Clinical activities in Language Arts,
9. Work in art and craft,
10. Vocational guidance

A typical plan and program for such a night would include the following:

1. Invitations--Parents, alumni and friends, sent three weeks in advance of date.
2. Posters--Sings, programs would be done by the art class.
3. Publicity--Local newspapers, radio, school paper, alumni newsletters, announcements in organizations.
4. Guide--Ushers, trouble shooters and messengers.
5. Program:
 - a. Gymnasium--Basketball, tumbling
 - b. Theater--Dramatics, visual education, academic activities, reading clinic
 - c. Exhibit--Arts, crafts, hobbies and science

d. Dance--For pupils and for parents and alumni

e. Music--Background and for dance

6. Alumni--Exhibit of past work of alumni.

These procedures may be used as guiding principles in making the open house effective.

1. Keep the visitors moving by attraction rather than by force.
2. Make each exhibit alive. Let each tell its own story.
3. Balance academic work with art, athletics and craft.
4. Don'd be afraid to inject a little humor.
5. Wear a smile and be ready to shake hands with everyone.
6. Make guest feel important and at home.

The old maxim, "seeing is believing" is still important. Parent night has no substitute for fostering good public relations.

F.E. Henzlik feels that good public relation is good business as it has something to do with the security of persons in the position they hold. He says,¹ "A successful superintendent maintains good personal and public relations. This requires the ability to formulate a program that is not only acceptable to the Board of Education but a clear forceful interpretation to the average citizen. He must divorce himself from the attitude that the

1

Henzlik, F.E., "Superintendent Hold Your Job" School Executive January 1951, p. 67.

less people know of school affairs the better off they are.

Oftimes a superintendent who is anxious to gain support for his program criticizes his predecessor. It may gain support temporarily but the opponents will begin to look for weak spots in his proposals. It is poor personal and public policy.

The members of the family of the superintendent must realize their position of responsibility. Poor personal relation hampers public relations.

In brief a superintendent who would hold his job would attend to the following:

1. He must keep the public fully informed.
2. He must rise on his own merits and not by criticizing his predecessor.
3. He must present to the community a picture of healthy family relation.

E.W. Rushlon¹ regards a working with the community and groups in the community as being a fine avenue through which a public relations program may be developed. His thought was the results of the survey of Orangeburg, South Carolina. It was revealed that the educational programs for both youth and adults were woefully inadequate. The problem revolved around a lack of understanding of needs of the school. As soon as the needs for such things as

1

Rushlon, E.W., "Working With Community Groups" School Executive September 1941, p. 72.

better equipment, plant facilities, instructional material and services were revealed the superintendent, teachers and pupils swung into action.

Parents were appraised of the need through homeroom mothers, P.T.A. programs, community night, which offered an opportunity for parents and pupils to enjoy recreation at school and school night which brought out the parents for a night at school. This would enable them to get first handed the status of school work and activities.

Pupils became interested and enthusiastic in the response to help the school. They were given an opportunity to interpret the school program through plays and programs. The newspapers joined the crusade and showed what youth would and could do if schools were improved now.

As a result a group of citizens, teachers, school board members, high school pupils and school administrators sat around a table and made plans for school improvement.

The combined effort resulted in an increase in the revenue which made possible more instructional material, aids and equipment; a broader teacher welfare program, increases in teachers' salaries; and improved pupil transportation services.

1
Rushlon, E.W. "Working With Community Groups"
School Executive September 1949.

Method of Procedure

In formulating a program of public relations for the Elderville School District the writer is faced with the following responsibilities: (1) Determining the nature of a program that may be adapted to the Elderville District, (2) finding studies, editorials, experiments and observations that are similar or related to the study that the writer has undertaken, (3) outlining a public relations program in the light of the suggestions and the criteria found in studies, editorials and observations, and (4) justifying the selection of the item in the suggested program. With these problems in mind the writer selected the method of procedure described below:

Chapter II contains a history of the Elderville School District, together with its organization and a brief description of the schools that are included in the district. Chapter III contains a review of the principles, aims and practices that go to make up the operation of such a program by the agencies in the school or the district. Chapter IV outlines a program of public relations for the Elderville School District. Taking into account what each school may do as well as pointing out what the entire district may do, form the core of the program. Chapter V will contain the summary and conclusions.

CHAPTER II

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ELDERVILLE SCHOOL DISTRICT

The center of the Elderville School District is situated at a point seven miles southeast of Longview, Texas in Gregg County near Gregg County Airport. The entire district is composed of approximately 121 square miles of territory. The land is well adapted to farming. Farming is the chief means by which the people in the communities make their living. There are 274 families in the entire district, seventy-five per cent of which own their farms, while fifteen per cent own their residence but work by the day. Only ten per cent of the populace are tenants of some sort or another.

The school system comprises two school units. The Ned Williams Industrial School and the Easton Elementary School are the two units in the district.

The Ned Williams Industrial School was organized in 1884 in accordance with the "community system"¹ under the leadership of Professor John W. Lucas and Mr. Ned Williams, together with the citizens of the community. In 1888 Professor Ned Williams was elected principal and served until his death in 1945 as either principal or superintendent.

The school has grown from a one teacher, one room, box building to the plant described below. The Ned Williams school unit is composed of five buildings; one administration

¹
Ely, Frederick, Development of Education in Texas
p. 159.

building which contains four classrooms, an auditorium, the Superintendent's and Principal's office, cloakroom, library and a part of the classrooms that accommodate the high school department. The building dominates the center of the campus.

The Homemaking building consists of three classrooms and a food's laboratory.

The Vocational building houses the Agriculture classrooms, the Agriculture shop and a shoe shop.

The Primary building houses the three lower primary grades.

The school is equipped with electricity, running water and sanitary toilets.

The school has an enrollment of 230 students and is staffed by ten teachers, one of which is the Principal of the school.

The Easton Elementary School is housed in a five room building. Prior to 1940 there were two elementary schools in that section of the district. Post Oak Elementary School and Easton Elementary School were consolidated in 1940. There were enough over-load in scholastics in both schools to justify another teacher and as a result this school unit (Easton) has four teachers on the faculty and an enrollment of 130 pupils.

There is no white school in the district. The white pupils in the district are transported to Longview, Texas to school.

The writer is Superintendent of the Elderville School District.

The 1950 census shows that there are 384 Negro children of school age in the district. Two buses transport the pupils to school.

There are eight Negro churches in the district, with a total of more than 1800 members. There are two white churches in the district.

There are only three illiterates in the communities. The low illiteracy rate is due to the fact the Vocational Agriculture teachers have carried on an adult education program for more than twenty years.

The school offers three different courses, namely:

- (1) The General Course, which is composed of the designated courses required by the Texas Educational Agency for graduation from high school, plus at least three years of vocational training and enough electives to total sixteen high school units,
- (2) the Vocational Course, which is composed of one less unit of English and Social Studies than are required by the Texas Educational Agency for graduation from high school, plus four years of vocational training and enough of the electives to complete the required 16 units,
- (3) the Trade Course, which is composed of specialized vocational agriculture training and shoe making. Specialized vocational agriculture training includes special and concentrated work in the field that the student chooses. The school offers specialized vocational agriculture training in dairying, swine production, poultry

raising for boys and girls, dairying for girls, home-making and plain and fancy sewing for girls.

If a person graduating from the vocational course wishes to attend college, it is necessary for him to take the other required units in English and Social Studies.

The school sponsors the following organizations as its major extra-curriculum organizations, The Parent-Teacher Association, The New Farmers of America and The New Homemakers of America.

The extra school organizations in the community are, The Free and Accepted Masons, The Order of Eastern Star, The Heroines of Jericho, The Boy Scouts of America and the Extension Service Clubs.

CHAPTER III

THE ORGANIZATION OF A PUBLIC RELATIONS PROGRAM

The Nature and Purpose of the Program

For some unexplained reason public school educators did not become interested in their patrons' reactions to educational offerings before the economic depression of the thirties. However, with the loss of public revenues and the barrage of criticism aimed at the schools during the depression years, overtures were made to take the public into confidence regarding the operation of the educational system.

At the same time schools changed from child-centered institutions to community schools.¹ With the coming of the community school it was natural for teachers and administrators to regard seriously the relation of the school to its community. Public relations became an integral phase of education. At first the school was primarily interested in selling its program to the community, especially at times when the budget was being considered and when it was necessary to float a bond issue. At these times pressure was exerted upon the community in the form of campaigns, dependent upon emotional appeal for success. Educators soon found this form of community relations failed to inspire confidence in the schools over a long term. It was

1

Saunders, C.M., "The School's Role in Community Relations" School Executive December 1948, p. 49.

found that each campaign of this type usually needed a bigger and more intensive push to keep the public interested. The point of diminishing returns was all too soon reached.

The public obtained from these campaigns a fragmentary picture of education and only a small phase of the program was "sold". But the public wanted to know about many phases of education. Sensing this desire, the school next began to formulate a program of "interpretation". This form of community relations is still practiced by many educational systems. Special funds allocated for this work are written into the school budget.¹ A director is hired to guide the interpretation crusade in many large school systems. In other systems it is considered a part of the chief administrator's job.

It was soon discovered that it was far better and more effective to carry on at all times a program that would sell the school to the public than to try to high pressure the public when the school was in need of some type of support. It was such a concept that the whole idea of public relations program came into being. It imbibed the philosophy that there should exist at all times a relationship between the school and the public of such nature that the public would gain an over-all picture of the school as it operated from day to day in the interest of the public rather than at a time when the school was in need of support. It was felt that this public relations program should

1

Saunders, C.M., Op. Cit., p. 49.

operate and be effective at every level of school administration throughout the school program.

Public relations constitute the twofold service of (1) keeping the public intelligently informed regarding the educational program and school conditions and (2) appraising the school officials and employees of community conditions and the people's attitude towards the educational program.¹ It is clear then that a public relations program has to do with maintaining such contacts with the public that it can readily understand what is going on within the school with respect to its educational program and the direction of its culture.

The three significant purposes involved in public relations must be (1) the sound improvement of the educational program for all learners, (2) the maintenance of an adequate educational organization, and (3) the educationally efficient operation of the organization.²

The above purposes may be realized only through cooperative action between the public and the school, and that cooperation depends upon the development of mutual understanding and shared wholesome attitudes. Hence the specific purposes of a desirable program of public relations should be:³

¹
Kyte, George C., The Principal at Work, p. 399.

²
Ibid.

³
Ibid.

1. To keep the public continually and fully informed regarding the objectives, conditions and needs of the schools.
2. To keep school officials and employees continually and thoroughly informed regarding the essential educational needs of the pupils and informed regarding the reactions of the public to the existing educational program.
3. To assist all citizens to be competent in their appraisal of the education program so that they may provide adequately for the essential needs of the pupils.
4. To clarify professional practices with respect to the instructional treatment of current social tendencies and problems, in order to meet essential needs of individuals and communities.
5. To develop intelligent, sympathetic understanding between parents and teachers in meeting the needs of every child, and efficient cooperation based upon a thorough insight into the responsibilities of the home and the school.
6. To establish co-operative relations between the school and all other institutions and agents of the community in matters of public welfare, with particular emphasis upon sound educational purposes.

The school administrator is vitally concerned with the formulation of a program of public relationship that may be appraised according to standards that are generally accepted.

Such a program has a reasonably sound basis and is less liable to lead to failure. A principal should keep in mind these general standards that his public relations program should meet. They are as follows:¹

1. A public-relations program should be based on the desire and the practice of telling the truth. This standard involves marshaling and presenting all essential facts impersonally, unselfishly and honestly. It implies consideration of the rights and interests of every person in order to avoid unnecessary and unwise injury of any person. Stress should be given to the actual nature of a situation or condition rather than to insinuations about it. From a tenable professional point of view, interpretation should be based upon sound educational purposes.
2. The program of public relations should be continuous. This standard implies keeping the public regularly rather than sporadically aware of the educational program. It includes also keeping the school officials and affected employees constantly in touch with community and school conditions. It involves keeping the officials and employees conversant with the attitudes of the public, or organized groups, and of individuals toward the educational program.

¹
Kyte, G.C., Op. Cit., pp. 400-401.

Reber¹ has this to say concerning the continuity of a public relations program. "A public relations program should be continuous, not a fire-bucket brigade for emergencies. A principal, who waits until the need arises before informing his public of a drastic change in his school program usually finds the public not ready to accept his proposals due to a lack of understanding. There is no substitute for continuity of action--a day-by-day, year-by-year program, including the months is essential."

3. The public relations program should be conducted with thoroughness. In the interest of the children fundamental information should reach each person in the community. Every available, essential, and constructive means should be utilized to (a) provide mutual understanding, (b) create warranted respect and (c) further the best possible educational program.

4. The public relations program should be effective. Information should be presented in such a way as to appeal to the persons for whom it is intended. Clarity, definiteness and interesting manner of treating every item presented are requisite. Utterances and writings should be understandable to the group addressed. Every presentation should be dignified and forceful, never imperious and dogmatic.

1

Reber, D.D., "The Principal Interprets His School" Bulletin 152 National Association of Secondary School Principals February 1948, p. 73.

The Board of Education and Public Relation

The Board of Education occupies a unique and strategic position in the American educational system as it is organized today. To be a member of the school board in a local community is one of the greatest compliments any citizen can receive. It is also one of the greatest responsibilities. It offers an opportunity for outstanding and constructive public service. It requires unselfish and intelligent devotion for the common good of all.

The Board of Education represents the pivotal point in an educational system. It is the policy making agency of the entire system. It has all to do with approving or rejecting the budget. It is in position to accelerate or retard the rate of educational progress. It is in position to keep in touch with the pulse of the community and the pulse of educational trends. Walter D. Cocking says,¹ "For a board member to have knowledge alone concerning a situation is not enough. In addition the public expects of him the wisdom of Solomon, the patience of Job, the meekness of Moses, the humility of a burned out electric light bulb, the sagacity of Henry Ford and the initiative of a jet propelled plane."

To participate effectively in school policy making requires understanding, judicial competence, vision, courage, sincerity, unselfishness and teamwork. The members of the

1

Cocking, Walter D., "The Importance of a Good School Board Member" School Executive, February 1951, p. 7.

Board of Education are in position to get an unadulterated, undiluted draught of educational reactions in the community. They are in position to get the facts concerning the school first handed. Members of the Board of Education may serve as a public relations agent and may do so effectively because of their position. One of the principal functions of public relations is to keep the people informed. If such be true the people of the community will accept the views of the members of the board because they are regarded as one of the citizens of the community group. In a conversant manner the members of the Board of Education can sell the school to the community. The presence of confidence and the knowledge that the members are elected by the people make the members of the Board of Education valuable public relations agents. The Board of Education is the principal channel through which floods of information is carried from the school to the public. It is the harmonizer of community and professional viewpoints.

The Superintendent and Public Relations

The superintendent of schools occupies an important position in public relations program. Because of his position, he serves as the balance wheel of the educational system. He is charged with the responsibility of working with the Board of Education, working with the school administration, and superintending the affairs of the system. He is the executive officer of a public corporation.¹

1

Miller, Ward I., "Working with the Board of Education" School Executive September 1949, p. 66.

Keeping the public informed is a cardinal principle of public relationship. The superintendent is in the best position to have all the information, as he is in contact with both the people through the Board of Education and the school system that he superintends.

A thorough knowledge and awareness of the elements of all proposals must be the stock in trade of the superintendent. Inaccurate, incomplete or indefinite presentations will result only in postponement, disapproval and failure. Many important recommendations have been postponed and tabled because the superintendent lacked the facts desired by careful and discriminating members of the Board of Education. The superintendent must decide what is ready for consideration and what must be held back, with what speed the program can be realized, and what techniques and strategy he must employ in securing approval.¹ Secrecy that arouses suspicion on the part of the Board of Education or the members of any other pressure group that might influence the Board of Education finds expression in the attitudes of these groups toward the school. Their attitudes have a tremendous effect on the school program.

The superintendent is a representative of the teachers and the school as well as an agent of the people. He is in position to bring about the understanding between the public and the school. As a public relations agent he must

1

Miller, Ward I., "Working with the Board of Education" School Executive, p. 66.

imbibe the following qualities:¹ He must be thorough, frank, have a conviction, able to weigh considerations on the basis of their merits and willing to allow all concerned to participate in school planning.

The Principal and Public Relation

The science of education requires that the schools of a democracy be kept close to the people. For a long time the teachers in a school and especially the principal have gone over-board with reference to that philosophy. They have felt that merely going to church, sitting in Sunday School, teaching Sunday School, attending entertainments with the people in the community, going to visit with the families in the community was doing community work. The writer is committed to drawing a hard and fast line between that type of community participation and operating a public relations program. Let us keep in mind that a public relations program has as its purpose the molding of opinions, the conditioning of the mind and the fixing of attitudes by the dissemination of facts about the school and its work in such way that these people are willing to support its program because of its worthwhileness. It is altogether possible for a principal to be a professional leader in the community or a cultural leader in the community, yet lack the foresight to sell the school to the community.

¹

Miller, Ward I., Op. Cit., p. 66.

The penetration of the school into the community is the measure of success of the school program, and its effects are reflected either in a vital, civic-minded community or in a dispirited and divided populace. In order that the school may penetrate into a community, the principal must take the lead in the public relations program. He must vitalize his responsibilities as a professional leader, an executive, a community leader and as a counselor to the extent the school can take a hand in the improvement of the community in the areas where those factors may be effective.

In order to get the results desired the principal should plan as follows:¹

1. Conduct a continuous survey of all significant phases of the school and its community and make a critical analysis of the data obtained.
2. Determine the possible means to be utilized in administering and directing a public relations program.
3. Consider the possible agents to participate in planning and executing the public relations program.
4. Organize the personnel and agencies into a workable program.
5. Training the agents as efficient, constructive operators of the program.
6. Put the program into operation and maintain its efficiency.

¹
Kyte, George C., Op. Cit., p. 402.

7. Appraise the results in terms of defensibly sound purposes.

It is quite necessary that the principal should let his program include individual contacts, group contacts, direct publicity, parent education and adult education. He may use four media to effect these ends; namely, written agencies, visual agencies, oral agencies and social agencies. The operation of these media give variation and color to the program.

The Teachers as Public Relation Agents

The teachers constitute the largest employed group in the school system. They are the most important group of employed agents in the public relations program. The teachers are important factors in a public relations program because they have widespread community contacts as members of religious, fraternal and civic organizations.¹

The principal may assist the teacher during meetings and conferences in becoming constructive public relations agents. Teachers should have a thorough grasp of community conditions, of the schools' educational policies and purposes, and of the school program as a whole. Teachers then should participate in (1) gathering the essential data about the community and the school (2) developing the public relations program, and (3) in serving whenever possible as public relation agents.

¹
Kyte, George C., Op. Cit., pp. 403-404.

The teacher must consider her responsibility as a public relations agent as paramount at all times. She must send the pupils home happy, enthusiastic and understanding regarding her daily school experiences. In contact with the parents the teacher must show a wholesome interest in the welfare of the children. She must foster a spirit of cooperation and understanding between himself and the parent. Cordial greetings inspire confidence.

Other Agencies

Some other agencies that may be used in the public relation program are the custodian, because of his contact with a large number of adults, the school Nurse, the Attendance Officer and even the pupils in the school. These agencies may use the media that are mentioned in the next paragraph.

Public Relation Medium

Jacobson¹ points out the following mediums are quite effective in building up the proper public relation between the school and the people in the community.

1. Bulletins to the homes
2. School exhibits
3. Open house
4. School visitation
5. Education Week

¹
Jacobson, et al, Duties of the School Principal, pp. 702-711.

6. Visits to the homes
7. Reports to the home
8. Informing teachers and other school employees
9. Interpreting the school to the pupils
10. Featuring the school on radio and television
11. Commencement programs
12. Annual reports
13. Alumni Association
14. Parent Teacher Association
15. Special day programs

These different media are employed differently by the different groups and in different situations.

Kyte¹ mentions the following media as useful in cementing the right type of public relation.

1. Teachers' report to parents
2. Teachers' visits to parents
3. Teachers' social contacts
4. Student publications
5. School assemblies and entertainments
6. Pupils' field trips
7. Parents' visits to school
8. Parents' participation in the school activities
9. Newspapers
10. Radio programs concerning the school

¹
Kyte, G.C., Op. Cit., pp. 404-405

Saunders¹ is a bit more comprehensive in his views of interpreting the school to the community and states his criticism of such mediums as are listed above. "The open house is another device for interpreting the school to the people. An evening or a day is set aside for parents and friends to visit the school. Sometimes students attend and visitors see a typical school session; at other times the adults take the place of students. Exhibits of school work are displayed.

In other instances speakers are used to discuss the school situation. Local as well as outside speakers are used. Newspapers, radio, and mimeographed materials provide other media. The good features of the educational system are usually stressed and the inferior aspects are mentioned briefly or not at all. The superintendent's report, the survey and the Board of Education's reports are examples of this sort of interpretation." This type of interpretation, while it may inform people it does not encourage a complete understanding of the whole school.

¹
Saunders, C.C., Op. Cit., p. 49.

CHAPTER IV

THE PUBLIC RELATION PROGRAM FOR ELDERVILLE DISTRICT

The public relation program in the Elderville District will be designed to support every purpose that is outlined in this study. It will be designed to disseminate information, to encourage further participation in school activities, to make further use of the school as a cultural agency and to promote progress. It is felt that the public relation program of the school should help to disspell those conditions that stand in the way of educational progress. The writer is face to face with a situation within the district where consolidation seems to be the answer. The attitudes of the people in the community that would lose the school locale are bitterly against such a move. The writer, as Superintendent of the District, is attempting to face that problem and has hopes of eradicating it through a program of public relations. It is well to keep in mind that point as you survey some of the activities of the public relations program.

The following employees of the school system would participate actively in promoting the program: Superintendent of schools, principal of each school, teachers in each school, custodians in each school, bus drivers in each school and the employees in the school lunch room.

The activities discussed would be used primarily in promoting the relationship.

1. Bulletins to the Homes. School news is sent to many homes through the school newspaper. A well-edited school paper, explaining changes in the services offered by the school, describing the curriculum and extra-curricular activities, noting honors or awards which have been earned by pupils, and listing professional activities of the staff, has been found to be very effective in the program of school interpretation. In addition it provides an effective way of developing school spirit within the student body.¹

The superintendent of the Elderville District proposes to utilize that method and all such bulletins and newspapers would be sent to every home in the district.

2. School Exhibits. One of the most effective methods of interpreting the school to the public is through school exhibits. Schools may display their work in specially built cases in the corridors of the building. Such exhibits, changed at regular intervals, usually show the more spectacular result attained in fine arts, homemaking and industrial arts. Some schools utilize the merchants show windows, take advantage of free space at community fairs and stage regular town exhibits.²

The program planners in the Elderville District will make use of the exhibit method of school interpretation.

¹ Jacobson, et al, Op. Cit., p. 702.

² Jacobson, Ibid.

The exhibits will be placed in both schools on the basis of the class and not according to school. Special exhibits will be prepared for church fairs that are held during the "Harvest Home Period".

3. Open House. Open house has largely superseded exhibits. At such affairs in secondary schools, talks are given by various members of the faculty upon such topics as "College Entrance", "New Curriculum Provisions", "Extra-curricular Opportunities", "The Social Program", "Guidance" and a number of others.¹

Open house activities will be sponsored by each school in the Elderville District. This will be done at a time when total visitation from the other school is possible. Teachers from both schools will help in preparing the program for the day. A vitalized assembly exercise will be held at which time some of the skills will be demonstrated. This demonstration will be followed by a talk with reference to the areas of possible expansion and the needs of the school to meet the challenge.

4. School Visitations. Parents and patrons are always more interested in the spectacular part of the school program than in the real core of learning activities.² During school visitations special effort should be made

¹
Jacobson, et al, Op. Cit., p. 703.

²
Ibid.

to show the worthwhileness of all phases of school activities. Inspection of these activities with pupils' interpretation is valuable and informative.

A premium will be placed on school visitations. Pupils will be urged to encourage their parents to come to the school. Visitation days will be stressed on which days the regular class work may be seen together with the spectacular.

5. Home Visitation. The matter of home visitation is very controversial. Teachers are reluctant to visit homes unless they are invited to do so. People resent intrusions. Some teachers favor home visitations when a problem involving the child is to be solved.¹

It is felt that home visitations should fall just short of the "must" category in the Elderville School District. Visitations should be what the word implies rather than what the school teachers have made them. There is a hard and fast line between visiting and dropping in to find out something and never come back until you want to find out something else. Parents tend to be secretive of strangers. It is intended that home visitations will destroy the stranger attitude on the part of the parents and the teachers. The teachers must come to know the people and the problems will be revealed to them.

6. Reports to the Home. The reports to the home should

1

Jacobson, et al, Op. Cit., p. 705.

interpret the work of the child to the home. Rather than giving only marks, the reports should be diagnostic, showing strong points, showing weak points, suggesting remedial procedures and perhaps including a generalization. It should be added that reports of this character cannot be sent home frequently because of clerical work involved in their preparation.¹

In the Elderville District the traditional card has been used. In the high school department the letter grade is used to denote the pupil's standing while in the elementary department the numerals are used. One column denoted deportment. Nothing was definitely informative concerning the child except the teacher's idea of the progress made. A committee will be formed to survey types of progress cards and suggest a more informative card for the use in the school. It is highly probable that the committee will draft a card to suit the needs for which the card will be intended.

7. Parent Teacher Association. The national objectives of the Parent Teacher Association were conceived for the betterment of the relation between the parents and the teachers, and to interpret the work of the children in the schools to their parents at home. There are instances when the Parent Teacher Association has strayed far from their objectives. It has attempted to at times interfere with

¹Jacobson, et al, Op. Cit., p. 705.

administration, teaching and with policy making. It has been the financing agency in some instances. It need not be a stumbling block, but it must be directed in order to channel its resources.¹

The Elderville District has two Parent Teacher Associations. One association is sponsored by each of the two schools in the district. With the direction of the Superintendent and some key members of the community a District Parent Teacher Association will be formed. This association will consider the problems of the entire school district that have to do with the schools. Special P.T.A. committees will attend to problems of the different schools. One committee from the general association will take care of the affairs of the different schools. Its members shall come from all over the district, but with a majority from the community where the school is located.

8. Assemblies and Special Programs. These programs are designed to interest the people who are anxious for the spectacular. Most of the programs are judged by the popular response of the audience. Oftimes the core of the program is overlooked in our response to popular appeal. Assemblies and special programs can be made a worthwhile agent for public relations if properly fashioned.

Assemblies and special programs will be a part of the public relations program. Oftimes the school is able to interpret its program to the public by participating on

¹
Ibid., p. 712.

special day activities at the various churches, or with other organized groups. The choral group is able to furnish the music on various occasions. One must be careful not to exploit the students in connection with these activities. Not only will each school have its programs and assemblies but there will be combines of programs also.

The main object in the matter is to break down the provincial idea with reference to the school system. Such an accomplishment will bring about consolidation.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The writer is compelled to take the long view of a public relation program. Too often the administrators of the school get in a hurry to develop the program and to establish in people the attitudes they desire. Too often administrators are prone to mistake the lack of information on the part of the people as a lack of interest. Too often administrators lean too far towards the spectacular rather than giving the public the core of the school's educational program. A public relations program must find its way into every facet of community life. The information that goes out from the school to the community must go in a continuous stream in order that it will condition the minds of the people. When ever the information is given out in the heat of a campaign it is liable to be the highly colored, too highly colored to be believable.

Every agent of the school is a publicity agent. The large schools do well to hire a publicity agent. The large schools do this while the smaller schools must rely on the school program to turn the eyes of the public towards the school.

It should be remembered that a public relation program must embody the truth concerning the school and its program. The school's personality should be reflected in all of the activities of the school. The community is keenly aware of the strong points and weak points of the school program, and

is concerned with what the school is and what it should be.

The school personnel should keep in mind the fact that all of their actions are weighed by the public in terms of the effect of those actions on the school and the school building and school children. In view of the facts summarized the writer has reached the following conclusions:

1. The public relations program must be continuous to be effective.
2. The public relations program provides information concerning the essential needs of the pupil. There should be no secrets concerning the school practices and program.
3. The program should provide a type of understanding that people will be able to appraise the work of the school and its relationship to the community.
4. The public relations program should keep the public informed concerning the latest trends in educational practices and the constant shifting of goals.
5. The program should serve to better the relationship between the school and other organizations that affect the lives of the pupils.
6. A public relations program should not be used to glorify the principal or a particular teacher.
7. All school employees are public relations agents in the broad sense and should be informed concerning the school program.
8. Rivalry should not be a part of the public relations program.

9. The Elderville School District should consolidate its schools in order that the resources would be pooled and utilized more fully.
10. The superintendent of the district must stand at the fountain head of public relations program and with his experience and good judgment give personality to the publicity that the school gets.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books

- Ely, Frederick, Development of Education in Texas
N.Y. Macmillian, 1925
xv, pp. 354.
- Grinnell, J. Erle, Interpreting the Public School
N.Y. McGraw-Hill Company 1937
xv, 454 pp.
- Jacobson, Paul B., Reavis, William, and Logdson, James D.
Duties of School Principals New York, Prentice-Hall,
Inc., 1950 xvii, 791 pp.
- Kyte, George C. The Fundamentals of School Administration
Boston, Ginn and Company, 1941
x, 496 pp.
- Moehlman, Arthur B. School Administration Boston, Houghton
1940 xvii, 929 pp.
- Moehlman, Arthur B. Social Interpretation N.Y., D. Appleton-
Century-Croft, Inc. 1938 xvii, 542 pp.
- Newson, M. William, and Langfitt, R. Emerson
Administrative Practices in Large High Schools
N.Y. American Book Company, 1940
xix, 807 pp.
- Otoo, Henry J. Elementary School Organization and Administra-
tion N.Y., D. Appleton-Century, 1934, xii, 845 pp.
- Reeder, Ward G. The Fundamental of Public School Administra-
tion N.Y., Macmillian Company, 1941
xix, 798 pp.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Articles

- Bennett, Birdenia "The Importance of School Publicity"
Department of Elementary School Principals, National
Education Association, Ninth Yearbook pp. 644-47, 1930.
- Cocking, Walter D. "The Importance of a Good School Board
Member" School Executive, Vol. 69 February 1941, p. 7.
- Elliott, Godfrey M. "Teacher-Community Relationships"
School Executive Vol. 55 August 1936, pp. 440-41.
- Foreman, Anna B. "A Report Card for Evaluating the Progress
of the Whole Child" Elementary School Journal, Vol.
41 November, 1940, pp. 195-205.
- Graham, Benjamin "Helping Citizens to Know Their School"
Department of Superintents, National Education
Association, Twelfth Yearbook Chapter IX, 1943.
- Henry, D.D. "Approaching the Public--New Style" The Nation's
School, Vol. 16, December, 1935, p. 24.
- Henzlik, F.E. "Superintendent Hold Your Job" School Executive
Vol. 69, January 1951, p. 67.
- Michael, Raymond S. "Values of a School Newspaper" Depart-
ment of Elementary School Principals, National Educa-
tion Association, Ninth Yearbook, pp. 559-566.
- Miller, Ward I. "Working with the Board of Education"
School Executive, Vol. 68, September 1949, p. 66.
- Mueller, A.D. "Public Relations and the Principal" The
Nation's Schools, Vol. 14, November, 1934, pp. 34-36.
- Reber, D.D. "The Principal Interprets His School" Bulletin
52 National Association of Secondary School Princi-
pals February 1948, p. 73.
- Reeder, Ward G. "The Place of the School Janitor in the Pub-
lic-Relations Program" American School Board Journal
Vol. 89, November, 1934, pp. 27-28.
- Rushlon, E.W. "Working With Community Groups" School
Executive Vol. 68, September 1949, p. 64.
- Saunders, Carleton M. "The School's Role in Community Re-
lations" School Executive, Vol. 68, December 1948
p. 49.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Articles

- Taylor, George D. "Constructive Contacts Between Parents and School" Department of Elementary School Principals, National Education Association, Ninth Yearbook pp. 613-617, 1930.
- Waller, J. Flint. "The School Personnel and a Public Relations Program" School Executive Vol. 51, 1932, pp. 517-518.
- Wolf, Florence, "Instructional Value of School Exhibits" Department of Elementary School Principals, National Education Association, Thirteenth Yearbook, pp. 253-257.

Theses

- Pierson, F.R., "Public Relation Program in Charlton-Pollard High School, Beaumont, Texas" Master's Thesis, Prairie View A&M College, 1940.