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## Constructing a pupil progress report for the primary department of Pine Village (Indiana) School

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CONSTRUCTING A PUPIL PROGRESS REPORT  
FOR THE PRIMARY DEPARTMENT OF  
PINE VILLAGE (INDIANA) SCHOOL

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A Thesis  
Presented to  
the Faculty of the School of Education  
Indiana State Teachers College

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

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by  
Freda M. Dysert

June 1955

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The thesis of Freda M. Dysert,  
Contribution of the Graduate School, Indiana State  
Teachers College, Number 759, under the title --  
CONSTRUCTING A PUPIL PROGRESS REPORT  
FOR THE PRIMARY DEPARTMENT OF  
PINE VILLAGE (INDIANA) SCHOOL

is hereby approved as counting toward the completion  
of the Master's degree in the amount of 8 hours'  
credit.

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## CHAPTER I

### THE PROBLEM AND ITS IMPORTANCE

One of the most controversial aspects of the public school system is that of reporting pupil progress. For the most part, the type of report made is determined by the philosophy of education held by the school administrators, unless custom and tradition are more influential.

Statement of the Problem. It was the purpose of this study (1) to examine some of the report cards used by outstanding school systems in the country; (2) to secure from parents of local primary children their views concerning items most informative; (3) to ask elementary educators, including some in teacher-training institutions and some in the field, to evaluate the items rated by the parents; (4) to determine the thinking of writers well-known in the range of elementary administration as to types of reports that are considered best; (5) to investigate similar studies made previously; and (6) to construct a report card that fulfills the requirements of both parents and school in a specific situation, incorporating into it as many of the recommended features as possible.

Importance of the Problem. In too many instances, the pupil progress report is almost the only contact between home and school. If the marks are satisfactory to both child and

parent, little thought is given to the actual learning that is taking place. Rarely do the parents question the quality of either teaching or learning. The objective seems solely to be the maintenance of the marks if they are high, or the elevation of them if they are low.

Parents must be helped to see that the progress report really translates the spirit of the school and the philosophy it supports. They need to be in sympathy with this spirit and philosophy, and to understand the report well enough to interpret its story, or the working relationship anticipated will be lost.

Quaintest of the appeals for home-school co-operation is also one of the oldest. Reported by Quick, and attributed to Karl von Raumer, a German educator who taught in Nuremburg about 1850, is this thought:

The relations between the parents and teachers are most important; as a constant co-operation is necessary. The father should ask the teacher, How does my son go on at school? and the teacher again should ask the father, How does he conduct at home? Thus will be established the most healthy species of influence.<sup>1</sup>

Lane emphasizes that the school is an institution in which the primary purpose is to foster the continued growth of children--to help each child to maximum physical, intellectual, social, and emotional growth. He states the problem

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<sup>1</sup>Robert Herbert Quick, Essays on Educational Reformers, (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1912), pp. 341-342.

effectively when he says:

Now there can be no such thing as growth at school and no-growth at home, or vice versa. There can be no such thing as one kind of growth at school and an entirely different kind of growth at home. The child's life is continuous and unless both home and school unite in a close partnership to make his growth continuous, the child is heavily penalized and suffers accordingly. Obviously, then, any program of education sponsored by the school will utterly fail of its purpose unless it is closely and effectively co-ordinated with that education which is continually going on in the home.<sup>2</sup>

Writing about the techniques of reporting, Dougherty, Gorman, and Phillips conclude:

The report card is without question the chief means of reporting to pupils and parents the teacher's interpretation of the pupils' progress over a designated period of time. The report card communicates through other symbols some of the more important interpretations which are recorded to the pupils' credit on the school records.

The major concern in reporting is to provide a sound working relationship between the school and the home in the guidance of the individual children common to both institutions. It is important to keep the supporting public informed, to stimulate teachers to become better acquainted with their pupils, and to express the spirit of the school and the philosophy underlying its program.<sup>3</sup>

Ayer notes that the report card is used to convey information concerning the pupil's development and school progress to parents, and though it is the source of no little

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<sup>2</sup>Robert H. Lane, The Progressive Elementary School, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1938), p. 157.

<sup>3</sup>James Henry Dougherty, Frank Hermon Gorman, and Claude Anderson Phillips, Elementary School Organization and Management, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1950), p. 199.



dispute, it is one of the most widely used of all forms of accounting.<sup>4</sup>

More than seventeen years ago, he undertook the preparation of a series of basic child accounting forms. Since that time these forms have been widely used in Texas and other states. From experience with them, and from an analysis of numerous studies by advanced students of child accounting in his classes

. . . it seems reasonable to suggest that parents are entitled to receive information concerning the status and progress of their children and that their ability to co-operate with the public school program will be greatly enhanced by a better understanding of the information contained in the child accounting records of their particular children.

Child accounting records help parents to:

1. Understand the nature and abilities of their children.
2. Understand the scholastic progress of their children.
3. Understand the physical and social development of their children.
4. Co-operate with the work of the school.
5. Provide more favorable home conditions.
6. Become more familiar with the aims and work of the school.
7. Interview teachers and administrators concerning their children.
8. Advise children in decisions concerning the curriculum, home work, use of leisure time, choice of college, and choice of vocation.
9. Evaluate the work of their children.
10. Evaluate the work of the school.
11. Appreciate the need for better school facilities and services.
12. Co-operate with programs of guidance.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Fred C. Ayer, Practical Child Accounting, (Austin: The Steck Company, 1953), p. 10.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 24.

Strang expresses today's goals of reporting in this way:

Although parents want a periodic report primarily to learn about their children's progress, they also gain other information from it. They learn about the school. One type of report tells them that the school is primarily interested in the pupils' achievements in the content fields and tool subjects. Another seems to say that the school is concerned with the well-rounded development of every child. Still another form indicates that the school is trying to focus the teachers' and parents' attention on what the child can become. If an enlightened public interest in education is to be developed, reports to parents must convey accurately the philosophy and goals of the schools.

. . . . .

Reports to parents are an instrument of child guidance. Indeed, this is their central value. By helping parents to understand their children better, the effective report promotes more constructive parent-child relationships.<sup>6</sup>

Pertinent to the problem is a statement by Maas in a thesis on home reporting of pupil progress:

A good index to the home-school relations and to the guiding philosophy of education practiced by any school system is the method of reporting the progress of students to the home. These reports show the degree of understanding which both parents and teachers have achieved in the community.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Ruth Strang, Reporting to Parents, (New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1947), p. 2.

<sup>7</sup>Leroy John Maas, "A Study of the Home Reporting of Pupil Progress: A Review of the Literature and an Analysis of the Results of a Questionnaire Study From Which Practical Procedures are Formulated" (unpublished Master's thesis, School of Education, George Washington University, Washington, D. C., 1945), p. 9.

Sources of Data. Material used in this study was found in educational magazines, unpublished theses provided by the United States Office of Education, textbooks on school administration and methods of teaching, bulletins published by companies interested in education, and the only textbook and monograph relative to the problem which are known to the author. Material found in the tables was obtained from a survey of opinions of parents and educators.

Limitations of the Study. Since the card to be derived from this study will be used to report pupil progress in the primary department of the Pine Village, Indiana, School only, the philosophy of the one school and the opinions of the parents with children in that department are the major concern here. No effort was made to secure opinions from parents in other communities. In order to balance the study, the opinions of a corresponding number of educators were recorded.

Procedure. Climaxing three years of frequent group conferences with parents in the Pine Village School who had children in the primary department, it was felt that sufficient background had been built for a change in reporting methods. While these parents' interests had moved farther up as their children were promoted, their opinions and expressions of confidence had been passed along and were very helpful in securing co-operation from each succeeding group.

After the examination of numerous report cards which had been obtained from schools known for their work in this field, cards which had no appeal to either administration or parents were discarded. From those which were usable, a list of items was compiled and mimeographed. Using the list as a guide, the parents chose their preferences for the local accounting form. The voting was done at a group meeting so that any question might be cleared, but each individual made his own choices.

This same list of items was then printed and distributed to a select group of professors of elementary education in teacher-training institutions, and to teachers active in the field. Among the former were several who are well-known to every student of elementary education.

Since forty parents were involved in setting up the new report card, an equal number of educators was asked to help evaluate their selections. Of this group, only 3 failed to respond. Thus the opinions of the educators represent more than ninety per cent of the original group.

Choices of both parents and educators are shown in table form in Chapter III. A list of the items used is to be found in the Appendix, along with the names of those who aided this study.

The chapters to follow discuss the choices of the two groups and review related studies.

## CHAPTER II

### A REVIEW OF RELATED STUDIES

Interest in the welfare of children is as old as the instinctive love of the primitive woman for her first-born. From the time of the Savior's immortal words, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of them, my brethren, ye have done it unto me," down to the ambitious program set forth in the White House Conference 'Children's Charter', child welfare has held its place among the loftiest of human ideals . . .<sup>1</sup>

Educationally speaking, the pendulum of practice has swung from one extreme to the other in the search for better methods. It began with the theory that subject matter was all important, and that it was excellent mental training to memorize long passages from texts, even though the material learned served no practical purpose. Gradually moving to the other excess, it became the fashion to allow the child to do as he pleased when he pleased, to study if he felt like studying, and to take any tangent he chose. Either course has been found wanting.

Most schools choose a middle-of-the-road course as the wisest to pursue. The objectives of subject matter and the whole-child are co-ordinated so that the pupil is given a foundation in fundamentals and at the same time allowed some freedom as he goes along.

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<sup>1</sup>Ayer, op. cit., p. 4.

Children being what they are, they can be helped to want to do or to learn by the manner in which the work is presented. While a teacher sometimes needs to be combination soothsayer, oracle, prophet, and witch doctor, patience will accomplish what neither severe order nor complete chaos have been known to do. Since all the experiences of life are not sweet and simple, children will not be harmed emotionally by meeting with some difficulties.

Harry Emerson Fosdick tells the story of a remark made by his father as he went to work one morning. He left word for his son to cut the grass if he felt like it, adding as a seeming after-thought that he had better feel like it. Fosdick calls that the best advice he ever had and recommends that if one does not get the tasks one likes, then learn to like the tasks one gets.<sup>2</sup> Unjust is the teacher who fails to help her pupils acquire some of that philosophy.

O'Donnell states it as well when she says:

Let's face the issue. Placid security which leads to future frustration is false security . . .<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Harry Emerson Fosdick, "The Best Advice I Ever Had", The Reader's Digest, 64:63, April, 1954

<sup>3</sup>Mabel O'Donnell, "Teacher Readiness Is Important, Too", A Monograph for Elementary Teachers, No. 73, (Evanston, Illinois: Row, Peterson and Company, 1954). p. 2.

Rowna Hansen, summarizing her study of report cards in 1939, wrote:

Recently constructed curricula treat subject-matter as a tool and the child himself as the center of concern. While standards of educational achievements have been changing, as reflected in recently constructed curricula and in teaching methods, the report cards seem to have retained the more traditional idea of education. This traditional procedure is shown by the marking of subjects separately and by regarding the child's behavior as a unit and of evaluating them under one term such as 'conduct' or 'deportment' rather than regarding specific instances of individual behavior in relation to specific situations.<sup>4</sup>

If the philosophy of the school is one wherein the child is the first consideration but where fundamentals are also regarded as essential to success later on, then the report card must reflect this point of view. Reports should be made in subject matter areas. But just as important is his ability to get along with others in work and play, and the way in which he tackles assigned tasks.

The school which puts the child ahead of the subject matter is not consistent when the report cards indicate only progress in academic achievements to the exclusion of all other factors. It has advanced in one line of action but not in the other.

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<sup>4</sup>Rowna Hansen, Report Cards for Kindergarten and Elementary Grades, cited by Henry J. Otto, Elementary School Organization and Administration, (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1944), p. 244.

An examination of the home-school reports made in numerous schools shows that there is a wide variation in types. Current practice extends from elaborate check-lists on every phase of child development to almost no accounting at all.

To meet the needs of both home and school, the development of a new method of reporting must be a co-operative task. By studying the desires of each group, and setting down in simple language the items to be recorded, harmony develops that is invaluable.

Ayer describes some of the difficulties which are sure to be encountered:

One of the greatest needs in reporting is the standardization of the symbols, terms, and procedures used. Considerable progress . . . has been made in the standardization of marks and descriptive terms, but far too many of the items, ratings, and comments which now appear on report cards carry different meanings respectively to the pupils, parents, and teachers who read them.<sup>5</sup>

Reports should inform the parents as to the progress their children are making, assist them in closer co-operation to allow for further progress, and bring about more friendly relations between home and school.

No longer is it enough to report only on academic advancement. Realizing that the subject matter is not of first consideration in teaching, recognition must be given to the social and emotional factors of growth, and the habits of work

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<sup>5</sup>Ayer, op. cit., p. 131.



which affect and determine the child's educational growth. It follows that these factors should be included in the inventory.

Types of skills and habits essential to progress in the primary grades differ from those expected of older children. Such diversity of need should be reflected in the detail of the account. It is not desirable to use the same report form for all grades.

The material should be presented in a truly instructive way, helpful to all concerned. It should place emphasis on the progress of the pupil and show outstanding achievements. It should point out problems without being too discouraging, but the achievements must never be over-stated.

Roelfs lists several principles which are helpful in developing or revising a new report:

1. A progress report should not be static; it should change as the standards and objectives of the school change. If these are well considered, it will follow that the report form is not changed too often.

2. The first step in any change in the method of reporting pupil progress is an examination of the whole educational philosophy.

3. Reporting procedures and material should be tailor-made for the individual school system, and modified even within a school system in accord with the variations in expected behavior and education aims at the different age levels.

4. Development of the progress report is primarily an administrative problem, but real progress demands careful planning and co-operation with teachers and citizens.

5. Changes in the reporting system should be undertaken to benefit the child rather than the teacher; however, practical considerations such as available teacher-time cannot be ignored.

6. The revision of a report form is not likely to be successful if it is a task imposed on a group.

7. School staff members, as well as parents and pupils, need to be prepared for a change in reporting methods. Explanations and question-answer sessions help to insure proper use and interpretation of a new system.

8. Pupil criticism is often valuable.

9. A small-scale try-out of a proposed revision before it is formally adopted for an entire school or school system is a sound practice.<sup>6</sup>

Reinoehl and Ayer suggest a list of clearly-defined principles to make the home report serve its true function:

1) Simple in form. Use simple language which pupils and parents can easily understand.

2) Objective. Use terms and symbols about which there can be no mistake as to their exact meaning.

3) Definite. In concise terms direct attention to specific evidence of growth, where genuine effort produced definite gains in the learning product.

4) Meaningful. Limit the report to such information as is constructively helpful in securing the parents' active co-operation in the child's education.

5) Broad in scope. Include in the report along with the intellectual, the physical, emotional, and social aspects of child growth and development.

6) Positive. State all items on habits, attitudes, and achievements in learning in positive terms.

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<sup>6</sup>R. M. Roelfs, "Steps in Changing Pupil Progress Reports", The School Executive, 73:53, October, 1953

7) Personal appeal. Comment on the favorable and unfavorable conditions revealed by the report in a way that causes parents to receive it as a personal message.

8) Distinctly individual. Select the qualities in a pupil most appropriate for reporting. Aim to stimulate further growth. Avoid suggestions that might destroy worthy ambitions.

9) Co-operative. Suggest how parents can help in improving conditions when remedial or corrective measures are in order. Provide for a reply on receipt and examination of the report. A detachable part of the reporting form could be used for this.<sup>7</sup>

Otto believes it is essential that the card express the objectives of the school program and rate pupil progress in a manner which conforms to the policies of the school and which conveys to the parents the relationship of the child to the desired goals.<sup>8</sup>

Hollies made a general analysis of a representative sample of report cards to be used as a reference for any group setting up a new reporting system. Comparison was made between the results of her findings and those of previous studies in the field, to provide an indication of the trends in reporting practices, and show the development of educational aims and objectives in the different parts of the country.

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<sup>7</sup>Charles Myron Reinoehl, and Fred Carleton Ayer, Classroom Administration and Pupil Adjustment, (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1940), pp. 324-325.

<sup>8</sup>Henry J. Otto, Elementary School Organization and Administration, (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1944), p. 244.

Two hundred sixteen report cards were included in Hollies' study. They came from one hundred twenty-three communities representing 39 states and the District of Columbia. Of all the communities approached, 91% responded, so that a good representative sample was maintained.

As a result of the findings in this study, and the comparisons Hollies made with previous studies, the following trends appear to be developing in the elementary school report card:

- 1) The name "report card" is giving way to some extent to less stilted titles such as "progress report" or "report of pupil progress".

- 2) Four times a year has become the most popular interval for sending reports to the home, which means that reports are being issued less frequently than they used to be.

- 3) Parent and teacher comments are becoming increasingly common in report cards, although teacher comments still appear much more frequently than do parent comments.

- 4) Attendance is still considered to be of prime importance in reporting to parents.

- 5) A section on "character" or "character traits" is now included in nearly all the reports being sent out; sometimes this section takes precedence over the section on scholarship.

- 6) The traits included are becoming more specific, and are covering a wider range of activity.

- 7) Traits tend to be marked on a two point scale. They are not necessarily graded in the same manner as scholarship.

- 8) Some mention of health is made on over half the cards, and this is becoming an increasingly common feature.

9) Music and art are usually included, but they are treated as skills rather than appreciation.

10) Extracurricular activities are still relatively rare features of the card.

11) Scholarship is still included on practically all cards, although there are evidences that it is being reported in a different manner, either by listing the specific skills within each subject, or by describing the child's general approach to academic work, apart from specific subjects.

12) The number of points in the marking system is steadily decreasing.

13) The term "failure" is beginning to disappear from report cards, and to be replaced by more constructive terms such as "needs help".

14) Nearly all the cards include some message to the parents. This message is very frequently signed by the superintendent.

15) Most of the messages are within the reading ability of anyone with elementary school education.

16) The messages are being expanded beyond a request for the parent's co-operation in achieving stated goals in the education of the child.<sup>9</sup>

Maas found the trend, judging from a study of the literature on reporting, brings the following challenges to both the progressive and conservative school:

1. To determine goals or aims which are to serve as bases for pupil rating and reporting.

2. To properly and adequately evaluate pupil growth through the use of such rating scales.

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<sup>9</sup>Sheila M. B. Hollies, "The Elementary School Report Card - 1950" (unpublished Master's thesis, School of Education, Boston University, Boston, 1950), pp. 51-52.

3. To prepare the "most adequate" vehicle for notifying parents of these ratings of growth.

4. To gather all significant data in one central place.

5. To economize on teacher time in each of these procedures.

6. To eliminate, as far as possible, clerical copying of materials.

7. To encourage and secure pupil participation in each of the above activities.

8. To secure the most satisfactory student growth, on all reporting levels, through co-operative efforts of pupil, parent, and teacher.<sup>10</sup>

Further, Maas summarizes his study of results from a questionnaire sent to parents, teachers, and pupils:

This questionnaire study has revealed some very definite facts concerning the make-up and use of the report of progress sent to the home, as expressed by parents, students, and teachers.

The first, and in many ways the most important, is the fact that there is the triple relationship involved in the use of any type of home reporting.

There is the very definitely expressed opinion that there should be provision for both parents and students to express their opinions about the progress represented by the report.

The educational aims of the school, though at times rather hazy in the minds of even school people, should be definitely expressed in the reporting system used by the school.

There is agreement that marks or grades be determined on the basis of ability of the student. Marking according to the average of the class was also favored. Ranking

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<sup>10</sup>Maas, op. cit., p. 62.

according to national norms can be given to both parent and pupil during the conference period.

The majority opinion favors the expression of the evaluation in terms of letters with percentage equivalents. Parents and students favored absolute percentage marks while teachers favored letter marks with word or phrase equivalents.

The preferred form of report is the printed card with the printed folder type running a close second. As an effective method of reporting, the teachers also favored the personal letter.

The majority opinion was in favor of the report form to be used for one semester. This is in harmony with some of the opinions and findings related in the literature.

The listing of all subjects and traits on the same form was favored by all groups rather than the use of one card for each subject.

The point of emphasis desired in reports include subject matter, character traits, and social traits. In brief, the report desired is the one that would reveal an all-round evaluation of the student. However, there seems to be much more emphasis placed upon the first phase by both parents and students.

The fact that the home report is issued for both the parent and the student is of significance, especially when a school attempts to improve its marking methods.

Parents, students, and teachers prefer reports to be issued every six weeks. The use of supplementary reports to be issued as needed is not to be overlooked.

Both parents and teachers feel that reports of progress should be sent to the home through the mails while the students feel that they should be trusted to carry them home.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>Maas, op. cit., pp. 78-79.

Hill made an analysis of 443 school report forms from all school levels and revealed the following:

1. All but one per cent of the folders were four pages in length.
2. Seventy-three different titles were used with "Report of \_\_\_\_\_" predominating.
3. The modal frequency of issuance was six times per year.
4. Four out of five cards carried some message to parents.
5. The five-point scale was the one most commonly used.
6. Courtesy, co-operation, effort, perseverance, conduct, and obedience were traits found common to all levels.
7. Ninety-six per cent reported on some phase of attendance,
8. Fifty-five per cent of the cards contained no health report.<sup>12</sup>

Hildreth suggests that newer cards are being used in elementary school containing information in three main categories:

1. A rating or description of habits, attitudes, and personal traits.
2. A rating of the degree of success in achieving the objectives of the major activities undertaken during the term.

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<sup>12</sup>George E. Hill, "The Report Card in Present Practice", Journal of Educational Method, XV:3, (December, 1935), pp. 115-131.



3. A rating of achievement in basic skills.<sup>13</sup>

Hildreth further notes the changes in the types of ratings most often used in the reports:

1. Grades or markings in the form of numbers or letters indicating a pupil's comparative rank in class.

2. Other sets of symbols indicating ability in proportion to achievements.

3. Check marks to indicate in a list of traits those in which the pupil has shown good or poor progress.

4. Comments or descriptive statements that highlight features of the pupil's development and his strong and weak characteristics.<sup>14</sup>

There are still dissatisfactions felt in the ranks, however. Sanders states that education recognizes the wholeness of the child. He believes that the report, on the other hand, emphasizes an impossible division of the child. He feels that the physical status, social adjustments, emotional stability, mental development, and personal welfare of the child represent the same thing viewed from different angles. None exists apart from the others; none can be separated for examination and recording. He concludes:

School reports have led to lying, cheating, stealing, and suicide. Anguish and heartbreak, persecution and

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<sup>13</sup>Gertrude Hildreth, *Child Growth Through Education*, (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1948), p. 375.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., pp. 375-376.

punishment are too common for sympathy. False values are inevitable. Wrong attitudes are developed. Surely it is time that reports should be recognized for what they are and used as an aid, instead of a hindrance, to education. Surely it is time that parents and teachers seek together an understanding of education and the objectives of the school. Then only can the report card have significance as related to the educative process. Then only will its message from teacher to parent and pupil have proper interpretation.<sup>15</sup>

Brown<sup>16</sup> questions whether parents like the so-called modern report card and suggests that it might be well to take a Gallup poll of mothers and fathers to find out how receptive they are to them.

Brown further states that new report cards attempt to measure appreciation, expression, attitudes, health habits, etc., things that he believes parents are much better able to rate than teachers.

. . . if we are to keep the report card intelligible to the parent, we educators cannot bewilder them with our professional jargon of goals, objectives, and basic study skills . . . Parents wish to know definitely what the scholastic attainment of their child is. And in most cases they resent having a report card colored by a lot of pleasant or unpleasant adjectives.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>Eugene Sanders, "Behind the Report Card", The Nation's Schools, 31:3 (February, 1943), pp. 31-32.

<sup>16</sup>L. W. Brown, "Newfangled Reporting", The School Executive, 61:3, (November, 1941), p. 33.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 33

Miller concurs when he suggests reports from the parents to the school.

Customarily, reports go from the school to the home of the pupil. A report more helpful to the development of the child could be a report from the home to the school. What is important is not the English the child uses in English class but the English the child uses around home; not the class marks in social studies but the extent to which the child plays with the children of the neighborhood and fits into the situation or improves upon it; not how well the child reads in reading class but what the child reads and how much he reads out of schooltime. These indicate the differences resulting from the school learning experiences. If some means of gaining from parents verbal evaluations of changes in the child's mode of behavior could be put into operation, the school program could be geared more directly to the job for which it exists.<sup>18</sup>

Writing of an effort to improve reporting in one Texas school, Rayne notes that teachers usually justify the sending of reports because the parents need to be informed concerning the type of work their child is doing.

. . . Few concede that grades are given for the purpose of urging the home to take corrective measures for the child's attendance, conduct, or progress. School people seldom admit that reports are a part of a highly competitive system which urges the pupil to do better than others in his group. Yet when the report to parents is analyzed, it is found that these reasons are the very basis of its issuance. Further thinking will disclose that the shifting of responsibility for the type of work done by the pupil in school to the parent in the home is a symptom of a weakness which permeates the entire school set-up. Probably one great good that the report should do would be to promote co-operative efforts for the student's good.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>Van Miller, "Remarks About School Marks", School Board Journal, 119:3 (September, 1949), pp. 25-26.

<sup>19</sup>Eleanor Rayne, "And Now To Make Out Grades", Educational Method, XXI:8 (May, 1942), pp. 387-390.

Many schools do follow the philosophy that the child should progress steadily and fail in nothing. Edmund describes the work of such a school and its method of developing a new report card to fit the philosophy. Says she:

The new report eliminates failure. There is no such thing as failure in physical development in the normal, healthy child. A child grows taller and broader in the natural course of continuing to live. Mental growth is just as inevitable. No child fails in his own right. A child's heritage, his parents, his environment, his school fail him, and in their failure these agencies make it appear that the child has failed. A child may also fail in comparison with other children. But, so long as he does the best he can with what nature and his environment have bestowed upon him, he does not fail . . .<sup>20</sup>

In a unique allegory written by Irish can be found the summary of all that this and similar studies have found or can ever hope to find about reporting pupil progress.

. . . For a wise parent remembers that, by careful teaching, we can help the child to grow - but we can help him to grow only at his own rate and in his own pattern. We help him to grow only if we help him to want to grow. We shape the pattern only if we help him to want to shape it.

A report card is neither a club to beat the child into that pattern, nor is it a measure by which all children may be judged. It is a record of taking stock, so that we may . . . know what has been done, what needs to be done, and the direction now to be taken in the doing . . .<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>Rose Link Edmund, "An Experiment in Report Card Making", Childhood Education, XI:6 (March, 1935), pp. 249-254.

<sup>21</sup>Betty Irish, "What Is A 'Good' Report Card?" Educational Leadership, IV:VII (April, 1947), pp. 433-434.

## CHAPTER III

### CHOOSING ITEMS FOR REPORTING

In many communities, visits to the school by parents have actually been discouraged, either actively or by such inferences that they do not feel welcome. Parents are not consulted about their hopes or plans for their children, and are not aware of the real work being done or left undone in the school. The report card is their only means of contact, and the story it tells is so indefinite or hazy as to be useless.

Regardless of the mouthed invitations to visit, parents can sense whether or not they are really wanted and welcome. Too often the same individuals who prefer that the parents refrain from 'interference' in school affairs are also the first to criticize the community for lack of school spirit or its failure to back the faculty in times of crisis.

There is an old axiom about locking the barn door after the horse is stolen. It is just as foolish for a teacher to wait until she needs help before she makes the acquaintance of her pupils' parents. It is better to invite them in for informal gatherings to discuss the work in progress, tests and test results, or mutual interests of any kind, before any problem actually arises.

If parents have been solicited for opinions, are kept advised of school proceedings, and are aware of the work that is being done, much of the dissatisfaction usually expected as due course can be avoided.

As with any other problem, the items on the report card to be used for the accounting of pupil progress need to be discussed with the parents. (This can be done even though the reporting system is not being altered.) Parents may have ideas or suggestions that will give the teacher a new insight into the field, or they may be misinterpreting some phase that the teacher had felt was very clear. Talking these items out before they are used will save misunderstanding later on. An ounce of prevention is still worth a pound of cure.

In the Pine Village, Indiana, School, regular meetings with the parents of children in the primary department are held. Usually these meetings take place the week before report cards are sent home. Aims and goals for the period, results of standardized tests, samples of pupils' work, and similar details are discussed. Each child's workbooks are on display on his desk so that his parents have the opportunity to see what he is doing. Record is kept in the intervening weeks between meetings of particular events which the teacher feels need to be called to the parents' attention. These have their place on the agenda. An occasional movie pertinent to the age level involved, or a speaker who can help to clarify a point under

discussion helps to vary the programs.

These meetings have provided the basis for this study while giving the parents a background essential for their share in the development of a new pupil progress report.

The tables which follow show the frequency of mention of various items in academic and social categories when rated by the parents. These were found to be points which were most clear to them and which they felt were worth reporting for their particular children. While a different group might choose some points at variance with these, the card in construction will be used for this group until its practicality is determined. Thus their opinions on its make-up are the deciding factors.

The items were discussed in two meetings with the parents. Differing views on each topic or agreement that certain of the items were of extreme importance to both school and home highlighted these discussions.

Cards from other schools were examined so that the parents could see what had been done in other localities. Some of these were discarded at once because of their methods of reporting. Others were regarded as good but unwieldy in that the marking and interpreting would be too time-consuming.

From the remaining cards, and from suggestions made by parents and teacher, a list of items was accumulated. This list, mimeographed, was distributed to the parents for the

purpose of individual selection of items preferred.

Table I, which follows, shows the frequency of mention in parents' opinions on work habits. The independence exhibited in solving the problems at hand, and the application of the skills learned to new and practical situations can lead to success or retardation. These are not always regarded by parents as important but often reflect the very example shown them by the adults with whom the children associate.

Every teacher is familiar with the child who can never seem to get started on the work assigned. He has the mental ability needed; he has the materials at hand with which to work; he has listened to the directions. But it seems easier somehow to procrastinate than to get busy.

Just as well-known is the child who starts with a big rush but never quite completes what he sets out to do. Often, it is not a lack of ability but a lack of the drive needed to feel satisfaction in a job well done.

All of these are habits of tremendous value in the summation of the work the individual does. Certain of them were of more importance from the parents' viewpoint than others. Some are the same as others in meaning, differing only in the choice of words used to state the case. At times, the choices the parents made are not those professional people might choose. The parents saw the items through their own eyes, as was right and good.



TABLE I  
FREQUENCY OF MENTION IN PARENTS' OPINIONS  
ON WORK HABITS

Items mentioned	Number of responses*
Makes good use of materials	22
Listens and follows directions	22
Uses extra time to advantage	20
Shows interest and pride in work well done	16
Works up to ability	16
Contributes ideas in planning class activities	16
Does work accurately	16
Thinks, chooses, and works independently	16
Begins work promptly	10
Is a good thinker	10
Is neat	10
Follows through and completes work on time	10
Applies knowledge to practical situations	8
Shows self-confidence	8
Asks for help only when needed	8
Does work neatly	8
Completes what he attempts	8
Begins work on time	6
Is resourceful	6
Completes work on time	6
Works consistently	6
Is a good housekeeper	4
Works independently	4
Uses free time wisely	4
Completes work begun	4
Does his best	4
Has materials ready	2
Listens carefully to directions	2
Follows directions	2
Follows directions well	2
Listens attentively	2

\*A total of forty parents were involved in the study.

Having provided the materials with which to work, the table shows that the parents want them used to good advantage. Especially is this worth-while with primary children. They have a tendency to wastefulness.

Parents want the children to listen carefully to directions and follow them meticulously. They are anxious that the children begin work promptly and complete the work on time.

They want a show of self-confidence, with the children thinking, choosing, and working independently. Parents want their children to do their best, and to show interest and pride in work well done.

Nowhere did the parents indicate that one must do as well or better than a neighbor. It would seem that they are becoming more ability-conscious.

Table II shows the frequency of mention in the realm of social habits, as chosen by the same group of forty parents. Most of the items specified in the table have been brought out in previous meetings with these parents as being synonymous with happiness in school situations and later life. The ability to get along with others, to accept responsibility and then to fulfill it, to take criticism and make of it a stepping-stone to improvement, will take the child a long way toward his goal in life. The parents are aware of the significance of these details, as shown in their choices for accounting, recorded in Table II.

TABLE II  
FREQUENCY OF MENTION IN PARENTS' OPINIONS  
ON SOCIAL HABITS

Items mentioned	Number of responses
Respects rights, feelings, and opinions of others	24
Obeys and respects authority	22
Co-operates in group and classroom activities	18
Accepts helpful criticism	14
Takes care of property	14
Works and plays well with others	14
Assumes responsibilities	14
Fulfills responsibilities	12
Adjusts easily to new situations	12
Respects property of others	10
Shows pride in home, school, and community	10
Is cheerful and happy	10
Respects property rights	10
Is responsible	10
Shows good sportsmanship as a follower	10
Is courteous	10
Meets difficulty with courage	10
Respects rights of others	6
Is courteous to adults	6
Plays fairly	6
Assumes responsibility for own behavior	6
Observes school and playground safety rules	6
Accepts and uses criticism	4
Observes school and classroom regulations	4
Helps plan and carry out group activities	4
Shows helpfulness toward others	4
Is kind and considerate	4
Is thoughtful of others	4
Behaves courteously	2
Is fair and square	2
Claims only his share of attention	2
Gets along well with others in the room	2
Gets along well with others in play	2
Behaves well	2
Works well with the group	2
Enjoys group activities	2

Among the items most frequently mentioned in Table II were those dealing with relationships with others, co-operation, responsibility, authority, and criticism.

Parents want to know whether their children respect the rights, feelings, and opinions of others. They are anxious that their offspring work and play well with others. Parents desire co-operation in group and classroom activities. They hope the children will assume and fulfill responsibilities within their capacities. They feel that the children should accept and use helpful criticism. Parents want the children to show pride in home, school, and community.

Table III shows the facets of the language arts that were deemed most important from parents' standpoints in regard to accounting. It is possible to know the words, know the rules, know how to write clearly, and yet not to apply the skills that have been learned. In discussing the details listed, it was emphasized that it is as valuable to apply these skills as to learn them in the beginning.

No doubt every teacher can relate an incident similar to the one in which the parent became incensed at the reading grade his young daughter was receiving. He was provoked to remark that she knew her words for she could read with the book behind her! He failed to see that she had memorized what was on the page but did not recognize the same words in another type of textbook.

TABLE III  
FREQUENCY OF MENTION IN PARENTS' OPINIONS  
ON LANGUAGE ARTS

Items mentioned	Number of responses
Understands what he reads	20
Shows growth in phonics and other word analysis	12
Shows interest in reading	10
Reads with understanding	10
Shows growth in the habits and skills of reading	8
Reads so others enjoy listening	6
Attacks new words independently	6
Shows growth in reading skills	4
Reads at speed for grade	4
Reads aloud smoothly and naturally	4
Knows words and phrases	2
Helps himself on new words	2
Writes clearly and neatly	20
Tries to improve writing	14
Uses proper letter formation	12
Is developing muscle control	4
Is making progress in manuscript writing	2
Writes legibly	2
Uses good position	2
Writes neatly	2
Makes correct letter forms	2
Knows how to study new words	12
Retains spelled words	12
Masters new words	10
Spells correctly in written work	10
Spells words used in this grade	8
Uses correct speech habits	12
Expresses ideas clearly and freely	10
Is gradually progressing in language	8
Speaks clearly and correctly	6
Expresses ideas well	4
Tries to use correct language	4
Expresses self clearly orally	4
Expresses self clearly in writing	4

Table III was divided into four sections of the language arts: reading, writing, spelling, and language.

In the section on reading skills, it was apparent that understanding claimed first place in the minds of the parents. The report card needs to show whether the children are growing in reading skills, which would include phonics and other methods of word analysis. Reading so that others enjoy listening, smoothly and naturally, is of consequence.

Writing clearly and neatly, using proper letter formation, and trying to improve carried the most weight in the category of penmanship.

If the children know how to study new words and then retain them, they are fulfilling the desires of their parents in the subject of spelling.

Expressing ideas clearly and freely, while trying to use correct habits of speech, will satisfy the requirements for primary language.

In almost every case, the items chosen above are the ones the teacher believes are paramount in the fields in which they are to be used.

Table IV indicates the frequency of mention of items for reporting in arithmetic. This subject, like the others, has more aspects than simply the solving of problems. The child's understanding of the processes involved must be taken into consideration.

TABLE IV  
FREQUENCY OF MENTION IN PARENTS' OPINIONS  
ON ARITHMETIC

Items mentioned	Number of responses
Shows growth in understanding	14
Reasons out problems	14
Works accurately with numbers	8
Knows number facts	4
Is accurate in the use of number facts	4
Grows in informal use of numbers	4
Shows readiness for numbers	4
Solves written problems	2

Preferences in this area were the accuracy shown in the use of numbers, the growth in understanding exhibited, and the ability to reason out problems without having to be told whether to add or subtract.

The field of arithmetic is limited at this grade level but it is the foundation for all arithmetic that is to come later. Thus the burden of proof is placed upon the establishment of habits which will be helpful in the more difficult work to follow.

After the selection of items by the parents, the original list was printed and sent to forty educators with instructions to mark the items they would find most helpful on a report card.

Since these people could not possibly know the local situation, and had no knowledge of the philosophy involved, the choices they made must of necessity reflect their own thinking on elementary education. Many mentioned the fact and suggested that the items used should depend largely on the local conditions.

Individual lists were marked more profusely by the educators than by the parents. Some of this can be attributed to the fact that the parents knew the full story behind what was being done, while the educators could only surmise from the facts contained in the short explanatory letter which accompanied the list. Some of the educators wrote that they considered each item of some importance. Undoubtedly, they knew that limits have to be placed on the number of items used on a report card. Often two very similar items were marked but no preference given for one over the other.

Table V shows the frequency of mention in educators' opinions on work habits. The newer trends in dealing with boys and girls in a classroom are evident in the choices these teachers made. Some of the messages accompanying the returned lists indicated that there was some acquiescing to those trends while true feelings would have it otherwise. Consequently, do the choices reflect preferences or is the influence of a minority ruling the majority?



TABLE V  
FREQUENCY OF MENTION IN EDUCATORS' OPINIONS  
ON WORK HABITS

Items mentioned	Number of responses*
Contributes ideas in planning class activities	15
Works independently	14
Shows interest and pride in work well done	12
Listens and follows directions	12
Makes good use of materials	11
Works up to ability	11
Uses free time wisely	10
Does work accurately	10
Begins work promptly	9
Asks for help only when needed	8
Judges his own work	8
Follows directions well	7
Thinks, chooses, and works independently	7
Shows self-confidence	7
Is a good housekeeper	7
Listens carefully to directions	6
Is able to work independently	6
Does work neatly	6
Follows through and completes work on time	6
Does his best	6
Listens attentively	5
Is resourceful	5
Uses extra time to advantage	5
Completes work on time	5
Completes work started	4
Has materials ready	4
Begins work on time	4
Applies knowledge to practical situations	4
Is a good thinker	4
Puts spare time to good use	4
Is neat	3
Work is neat	3
Completes work begun	3
Follows directions	2
Works consistently	2

\*A total of thirty-seven educators responded to the survey.

In spite of the difference in number of items marked, the choices of the educators follow closely the pattern set by the parents. Of the eight items marked most frequently, six were found on both tabulations in relatively the same position.

The professional group preferred that the children contribute ideas in planning classroom activities. They set a premium on working independently. The students were expected to work up to ability and to show interest and pride in work well done. The educators felt that the materials should be used to good advantage. The children should listen and follow directions. It was preferable to use free time wisely and to do work accurately.

Actually, very little disagreement on the habits that make good workmen can be found in the two lists of choices. Even accord in the preferred wording can be noted.

Table VI pictures the frequency of mention in educators' opinions on social habits. Too often the work that is done is determined by one's ability to co-operate with those with whom one is in regular contact. Courtesy, respect, sportsmanship, and attitude toward responsibility contribute to or detract from success scholastically. Teachers are acutely aware of the fact, for numerous examples present themselves daily. That awareness is mirrored in the preferences expressed in the table to follow.

TABLE VI

FREQUENCY OF MENTION IN EDUCATORS' OPINIONS  
ON SOCIAL HABITS

Items mentioned	Number of responses
Is cheerful and happy	15
Works and plays well with others	14
Helps plan and carry out group activities	14
Respects rights, feelings, and opinions of others	11
Co-operates in group and classroom activities	10
Observes school and playground safety rules	10
Observes school and classroom regulations	10
Accepts and uses criticism	10
Shows good sportsmanship as a follower	8
Assumes responsibility for own behavior	7
Takes care of property	7
Adjusts easily to new situations	7
Shows pride in home, school, and community	7
Is courteous	6
Is thoughtful of others	6
Respects rights of others	6
Gets along well with others in play	6
Enjoys group activities	6
Assumes responsibilities	6
Is responsible	6
Obeys and respects authority	6
Respects property of others	6
Is making good adjustments	5
Behaves courteously	4
Is kind and considerate	4
Shows helpfulness toward others	4
Plays fairly	4
Claims only his share of attention	4
Gets along well with others in the room	4
Earns worthwhile group approval	4
Takes correction in good spirit	4
Respects property rights	4
Meets difficulty with courage	4
Works well with the group	3
Fulfills responsibilities	3

Teachers give priority to the child's frame of mind in the field of social habits. They want him to be cheerful and happy. (It is well to remember, however, that some of the factors contributing to a child's unhappiness are beyond the power of a teacher to dispel. This truth accepted will aid in the prevention of frustration which could add to the misery.)

Educators want their pupils to be able to work and play well with others. Along with this, the ability to help plan and carry out group activities is commendable. It is desirable to respect the rights, feelings, and opinions of others.

For the good of the individual as well as the group, children should observe school, classroom, and playground rules and regulations.

Also high among the preferences was the ability to accept and use criticism to improve socially.

In these or very similar wordings, the parents found concurrence with the professional group in the realm of social habits.

Table VII expresses the frequency of mention in the opinions of educators on language arts. Due to the variety of methods used in subject matter areas, greater differences could appear in the selections made by the parents and the educators. But one highway is often as good as another. The point lies in making sure that the destination is reached as quickly as possible and without mishap.

TABLE VII  
FREQUENCY OF MENTION IN EDUCATORS' OPINIONS  
ON LANGUAGE ARTS

Items mentioned	Number of responses
Understands what he reads	22
Attacks new words independently	18
Shows growth in reading skills	12
Shows readiness for reading	11
Reads so others enjoy listening	10
Shows interest in reading	10
Shows growth in the habits and skills of beginning reading	9
Helps himself on new words	8
Reads aloud smoothly and naturally	8
Shows growth in phonics and other word analysis	8
Uses study skills	7
Knows words and phrases	5
Reads at speed for grade	5
Reads during spare time	4
Reads with understanding	3
Writes clearly and neatly	18
Tries to improve writing	13
Writes legibly	10
Uses proper letter formation	9
Is making progress in manuscript writing	9
Is developing muscle control	6
Good position	6
Writes neatly	6
Makes correct letter forms	5
Uses correct letter formation	0

TABLE VIII  
FREQUENCY OF MENTION IN EDUCATORS' OPINIONS  
ON LANGUAGE ARTS

Items mentioned	Number of responses
Knows how to study new words	15
Spells correctly in written work	14
Is able to use the words of his grade in simple sentences	12
Retains spelled words	11
Spells words used in this grade	8
Masters new words	5
Expresses ideas clearly and freely	16
Listens to others with interest	16
Enjoys hearing stories	12
Uses correct speech habits	12
Listens attentively	10
Tries to use correct language	9
Expresses self clearly orally	7
Contributes to interest of class	7
Speaks in an interesting way	6
Speaks clearly and correctly	6
Expresses ideas well	6
Expresses ideas clearly in writing	6
Progresses steadily in written English	5
Speaks in clear, simple sentences	3
Is gradually progressing in language	1

Like the parents, educators place emphasis in reading on the child's ability to understand what he reads. But the latter group wants the pupils to be able to attack new words independently. Value proportionately is given to growth in reading skills. Educators believe children should show readiness for reading. They should read so others enjoy listening and show interest in reading.

Both educators and parents desire writing that is clear and neat. Both are anxious that the children try to improve writing. Third place is given by the teachers to writing legibly. But they also prefer that proper letter formation be used.

Teachers feel that the child's ability to study new words is the key to success in spelling. However, if he uses the words at all, he should be able to spell correctly in his written work and should be able to use the words of his grade in simple sentences. He needs to retain spelled words.

Ideas expressed clearly and freely are most desirable in language. Listening to others with interest is comparable in importance. The pupils should enjoy hearing stories at this level and should use correct speech habits, according to the preferences of the professional group.

Table IX shows the opinions of the educators in regard to arithmetic. As was previously stated, the fact is known that little formal number work is done at this level, but importance must be given to that which is taught as foundation structure.

TABLE IX  
FREQUENCY OF MENTION IN EDUCATORS' OPINIONS  
ON ARITHMETIC

Items mentioned	Number of responses
Reasons out problems	14
Shows growth in understanding	12
Shows readiness for numbers	11
Solves written problems	10
Is learning number facts	9
Is accurate in the use of number facts	8
Knows number facts	7
Works accurately with numbers	5

Reasoning out problems is of foremost consideration to the professional people. They prefer that the children show growth in understanding and readiness for numbers as second and third choices. The ability to solve written problems is next in importance, while knowledge of facts and the accuracy with which these are used complete the list.

As has been noted throughout, the opinions of parents and professional people vary far less than one would expect. It must be remembered that this particular study was made with parents who had considerable background in discussing factors which contribute to school success. Thus their ideas may differ from groups of parents who lack that advantage.



Once the tabulation of choices was completed, the items rating high in both groups stood out clearly. In academic work, three for each subject were selected to be used on the new progress report. It has been understood from the beginning that these were on a trial basis.

In Reading, listing was given to understands what is read, shows growth in reading skills, and reads so others enjoy listening.

For Writing, uses proper letter formation, writes clearly and neatly, and tries to improve writing were the choices.

Preferences in Spelling were knows how to study new words, remembers words studied, and spells correctly in written work.

High in the Language section were expresses ideas clearly and freely, tries to use correct language, and is progressing in language.

In Arithmetic, works accurately with numbers, reasons out problems, and shows growth in understanding numbers will be used.

Habits and attitudes from the tables on work and social factors were grouped together in one section. The order in which they appear was fixed by the printer. These are: makes good use of materials, begins work promptly, listens and follows directions, thinks, chooses and works independently, does his best, completes work on time, shows interest and pride

in work well done, works and plays well with others, co-operates in classroom activities, assumes and fulfills responsibilities, obeys and respects authority, accepts and uses criticism, and shows pride in home and school.

By the same method with the parents, agreement had been reached that the report should contain a record of attendance, with days present, days absent, and times tardy being shown. Also to be recorded are height and weight in a section on physical growth.

In attempting to simplify the marking and at the same time utilize what experience has shown to be most practical, five levels of grading are available: A, B, C, D, and F. But these are not based on percentage, as is true in most instances. Rather they are interpreted as superior, good, average, poor, and failing. A check denotes a rating of satisfactory in the habits and skills. No mark is used in case of unsatisfactory advancement in these categories.

Since the music and art are not the work of the regular primary teacher, the special teacher made her own choices for reporting them. In Music, enjoys singing and listening to music and has a feeling for rhythm tell the story. She chose tries to improve handwork and expresses ideas in an interesting way for reporting on Art.

All this is contained on the inside of an easy-to-read folder,  $5\frac{1}{2}$  by  $8\frac{1}{2}$  when closed, and light green in color.\*

The front of the folder has the name of the school, the name of the town and state, and the title, "Progress Report to Parents, Grades 1 and 2." An attractive picture, supplied by the printer, shows a teacher ringing the bell at the school-room door while children play nearby. Included here also are pupil's name and grade, dates of the beginning and ending of the current school year, teacher's and principal's names.

The final page has space for parents' signatures after the reports have been examined. Record is made of the pupil's grade for next year, with the date and the teacher's signature.

While there is room for comment on the final page should either teacher or parent feel so inclined, it was very generally agreed that written comments would be more appreciated on a separate sheet of paper. Especially is this true if the comments are suggestions or recommendations for improvement. Such remarks may be fully understood at the time they are given. But report cards are usually kept by the family as mementoes, and written remarks may not be regarded in the same light a few years after they are written.

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\*A copy of the report form may be found in the Appendix.

## CHAPTER IV

### SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was (1) to examine some of the report cards used by outstanding school systems in the country; (2) to secure from parents of local primary children their views concerning items most informative; (3) to ask elementary educators, including some in teacher-training institutions and some in the field, to evaluate the items rated by the parents; (4) to determine the thinking of writers well-known in the range of elementary administration as to types of reports that are considered best; (5) to investigate similar studies made previously; and (6) to construct a report card that fulfills the requirements of both parents and school in a specific situation, incorporating into it as many of the recommended features as possible.

The new pupil progress report climaxes more than three years of study, of meeting regularly with parents of children in the first and second grades of the school, of talking together about methods of reporting, and comparison of the preferences of the parents with those of professional people in regard to items for reporting.

Among the various media used in these years have been personal letters from teacher to parent concerning the child's work. Also on trial was a mimeographed check-list of items

similar to those listed in the tables found in Chapter III. Each time a new method was used, along with the old report card, it was first discussed at a meeting with the parents so that they were prepared in advance. Afterward, they made known their ideas about the method.

Movies of school in action or of some topic of interest to parents of young children added their information to the plan. Several times, speakers were invited in to discuss with the parents mutual problems concerning their children.

Using these meetings as a background, various types of report cards were examined and considered. From them and from suggestions by individual parents, a list of statements which might be used for accounting pupil progress was assembled.

Each parent marked his own choices on this list, with the understanding that those statements receiving the majority of votes would be tried on the local card.

Similar lists were sent to an identical number of educators in order to make sure that the standards coincided with professional views.

The checking of items preferred was actually the culmination of an extended project with a specific purpose - a new report card which would reflect more nearly the philosophy of the school and the more complete picture which the parents desired about their children's progress.

Meetings will continue to be held with the parents.. A record will be kept of comments concerning the progress report. When sufficient evidence points to a needed change, a revision will be made.

The printer's plates for the new card were saved so that it will be possible to make minor changes without the expense of setting up a new form altogether.

While differences of opinion exist among writers and teachers as to the best method of reporting pupil progress, most of them will agree that the local conditions, the philosophy of the local school, and the desires of the parents are the best guides to the determination of the type to use.

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## APPENDIX

Copy of explanatory letter sent to educators with check-list:

Pine Village School  
Pine Village, Indiana  
August 14, 1954

Mrs. Margaret White Boutelle  
Department of Education  
University of Florida  
Gainesville, Florida

Dear Mrs. Boutelle:

The parents of my first grade pupils and I have been doing some research preparatory to revising our report card. Through many discussion periods and the examination of numbers of cards from schools known for their work in this field, we have compiled a list of habits and skills representative of varied thinking.

Could we buy one dollar's worth of your time to check your preferences? In this way, we can compare our choices with those of the experts whom you represent. We'll be highly honored if you will help us.

Sincerely yours,

(Mrs. Robert Dysert)

Educators asked to aid study:

Arbuthnot, Sue: University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Nebraska.

Artley, A. Sterl; University of Missouri, Columbia, Missouri.

Arvin, Mabel; Primary Teacher, Independence School, Attica, Indiana.

Barnes, F. P., University of Illinois, Urbana, Illinois.

Bechtol, Patricia; Burris School, Muncie, Indiana.

Behrens, Dr. Minnie S., East Texas State Teachers College, Commerce, Texas.

Bever, Emma Jane; Primary Teacher, Kramer School, Attica, Indiana.

Biggs, Elizabeth; Primary Teacher, Williamsport School, Williamsport, Indiana.

Blessing, Nellie; former Primary Teacher, Danville School, Danville, Indiana.

Boutelle, Margaret White; University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida.

Brayton, Margaret; Ball State Teachers College, Muncie, Indiana.

Brewer, Dr. Madison; University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Nebraska.

Burnett, Pauline; Primary Teacher, Locust Grove School, Ambia, Indiana.

Calvert, Beulah; Primary Teacher, Center Grove School, Greenwood, Indiana.

Cook, Raymond F., Clark University, Worcester, Massachusetts.

Davis, Dr. Helen Caldwell; State College of Education, Greeley, Colorado.

Dolch, Dr. Edward William; University of Illinois, Urbana, Illinois.

## Educators asked to aid study:

Duncan, May Kenney; University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky.

Eubank, Louis Allen; University of Missouri, Columbia, Missouri.

Fordyce, Joseph Warder; University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida.

Gates, Dr. Arthur I., Columbia University Teachers College, New York, New York.

Greene, Harry A., State University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa.

Horton, Margaret; Primary Teacher, Washington Schools, Washington, Indiana.

Hughes, Dr. Vergil Herbert; University of Arizona, Tucson, Arizona.

Kavanagh, Theresa; Clark University, Worcester, Massachusetts.

Kenworthy, Mary Jane; Primary Teacher, Williamsport School, Williamsport, Indiana.

Kitchen, Bertha; Primary Teacher, Robinson (Lovington) School, Robinson, Illinois.

Kroeker, Lillian M., Montana State University, Missoula, Montana.

Leath, Eva; Intermediate Teacher, Attica School, Attica, Indiana.

Leighty, Hazel; Intermediate Teacher, Pine Village School, Pine Village, Indiana.

Martin, Forrest O., Principal, Pine Village School, Pine Village, Indiana.

Pickrell, Josephine; Primary Teacher, Williamsport School, Williamsport, Indiana.

Rhode, Lena Claire; Intermediate Teacher, Pine Village School, Pine Village, Indiana.

Educators asked to aid study:

Spitzer, Herbert Frederick; State University of Iowa,  
Iowa City, Iowa.

Stone, Martha Elizabeth; Ball State Teachers College,  
Muncie, Indiana.

Strang, Ruth May; Columbia University Teachers College,  
New York, New York.

Tate, Virginia Ann; First Grade Teacher and Critic Teacher,  
Eastern Illinois State Teachers College, Charleston,  
Illinois.

Vollrath, Louetta Pearl; Kansas State Teachers College,  
Emporia, Kansas.

Williams, Velda Mae; Kansas State Teachers College,  
Pittsburg, Kansas.

Winegardner, Mary Elizabeth; Intermediate Teacher, Winthrop  
School, Attica, Indiana.

INDIANA STATE  
LIBRARY

Directions: Check the items which you feel are clear and important enough to be included on a pupil progress report to parents. You may mark as many as you believe necessary to give a complete picture.

#### Work Habits:

- ..... Has materials ready
- ..... Is a good housekeeper
- ..... Makes good use of materials
- ..... Begins work promptly
- ..... Begins work on time
- ..... Listens carefully to directions
- ..... Follows directions
- ..... Follows directions well
- ..... Listens and follows directions
- ..... Listens attentively
- ..... Works independently
- ..... Applies knowledge to practical situations
- ..... Thinks, chooses, and works independently
- ..... Is able to work independently
- ..... Shows self-confidence
- ..... Asks for help only when needed
- ..... Uses free time wisely
- ..... Is a good thinker
- ..... Is resourceful
- ..... Puts spare time to good use
- ..... Puts extra time to good use
- ..... Uses extra time to advantage
- ..... Is neat
- ..... Does work accurately
- ..... Does work neatly
- ..... Work is neat
- ..... Completes work on time
- ..... Works consistently
- ..... Completes work started
- ..... Completes what he attempts
- ..... Follows through and completes work on time
- ..... Completes work begun
- ..... Judges his own work
- ..... Contributes ideas in planning class activities
- ..... Works up to ability
- ..... Does his best
- ..... Shows interest and pride in work well done

#### Social Habits:

- ..... Is courteous
- ..... Is thoughtful of others
- ..... Respects rights of others
- ..... Is kind and considerate
- ..... Shows helpfulness toward others
- ..... Behaves courteously
- ..... Is courteous to adults
- ..... Is courteous to classmates
- ..... Respects rights, feelings, and opinions of others
- ..... Plays fairly
- ..... Works and plays well with others
- ..... Is fair and square
- ..... Claims only his share of attention
- ..... Gets along well with others in the room
- ..... Gets along well with others in play
- ..... Behaves well
- ..... Works well with the group
- ..... Cooperates in group and classroom activities
- ..... Earns worthwhile group approval
- ..... Enjoys group activities
- ..... Helps plan and carry out group activities
- ..... Shows good sportsmanship as a follower
- ..... Fulfills responsibilities
- ..... Carries responsibilities
- ..... Assumes responsibilities
- ..... Assumes responsibility for own behavior
- ..... Is responsible
- ..... Obeys and respects authority
- ..... Takes correction in good spirit
- ..... Observes school and playground safety rules
- ..... Observes school and classroom regulations
- ..... Accepts and uses criticism

- ..... Accepts helpful criticism
- ..... Respects property rights
- ..... Respects property of others
- ..... Takes care of property
- ..... Is making good adjustments
- ..... Develops varied interests
- ..... Meets difficulty with courage
- ..... Adjusts easily to new situations
- ..... Shows pride in home, school, and community
- ..... Is cheerful and happy

#### Reading:

- ..... Understands what he reads
- ..... Knows words and phrases
- ..... Reads at speed for grade
- ..... Helps himself on new words
- ..... Reads aloud smoothly and naturally
- ..... Attacks new words independently
- ..... Reads during spare time
- ..... Uses study skills
- ..... Reads with understanding
- ..... Reads so others enjoy listening
- ..... Shows growth in reading skills
- ..... Shows readiness for reading
- ..... Shows interest in reading
- ..... Shows growth in the habits and skills of beginning reading
- ..... Shows growth in phonics and other word analysis

#### Writing:

- ..... Uses proper letter formation
- ..... Writes clearly and neatly
- ..... Is developing muscle control
- ..... Is making progress in manuscript writing
- ..... Writes legibly
- ..... Uses correct letter formation
- ..... Tries to improve writing
- ..... Good position
- ..... Writes neatly
- ..... Makes correct letter forms

#### Arithmetic:

- ..... Knows number facts
- ..... Is accurate in the use of number facts
- ..... Solves written problems
- ..... Works accurately with numbers
- ..... Reasons out problems
- ..... Grows in informal use of numbers
- ..... Shows readiness for numbers
- ..... Shows growth in understanding
- ..... Is learning number facts

#### Spelling:

- ..... Knows how to study new words
- ..... Is able to use the words of his grade in simple sentences
- ..... Retains spelled words
- ..... Masters new words
- ..... Spells correctly in written work
- ..... Spells words used in this grade

#### Language:

- ..... Expresses ideas clearly and freely
- ..... Progresses steadily in written English
- ..... Speaks in an interesting way
- ..... Is gradually progressing in language
- ..... Speaks clearly and correctly
- ..... Expresses ideas well
- ..... Listens attentively
- ..... Tries to use correct language
- ..... Expresses self clearly orally
- ..... Expresses self clearly in writing
- ..... Contributes to interest of class
- ..... Speaks in clear, simple sentences
- ..... Listens to others with interest
- ..... Enjoys hearing stories
- ..... Uses correct speech habits





## SAMPLE OF NEW REPORT CARD

**PINE VILLAGE SCHOOL****PINE VILLAGE - INDIANA****PROGRESS REPORT TO PARENTS****Grades 1 and 2****PUPIL** ----- **GRADE** -----**School Year Beginning** ----- **Ending** -----**TEACHER** -----**PRINCIPAL** -----

Tardiness and irregular attendance interfere with the child's progress. It is important that your child be PRESENT and ON TIME.

### ATTENDANCE

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Days Present -----						
Days Absent -----						
Times Tardy -----						

### Reading

Understands what is read						
Shows growth in reading skills						
Reads so others enjoy listening						

### Writing

Uses proper letter formation						
Writes clearly and neatly						
Tries to improve writing						

### Spelling

Knows how to study new words						
Remembers words studied						
Spells correctly in written work						

### Language

Expresses ideas clearly and freely						
Tries to use correct language						
Is progressing in language						

### Arithmetic

Works accurately with numbers						
Reasons out problems						
Shows growth in understanding numbers						

## SAMPLE OF NEW REPORT CARD

## Music

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

Enjoys singing and listening to music

Has a feeling for rhythm

## Art

Expresses ideas in an interesting way

Tries to improve handwork

## Habits and Attitudes

Makes good use of materials

Begins work promptly

Listens and follows directions

Thinks, chooses, and works independently

Does his best

Completes work on time

Shows interest and pride in work well done

Works and plays well with others

Cooperates in classroom activities

Assumes and fulfills responsibilities

Obeys and respects authority

Accepts and uses criticism

Shows pride in home and school

## Physical Growth

Height

Weight

## EXPLANATION OF MARKS

- A-----Doing superior work  
 B-----Doing good work  
 C-----Doing average work  
 D-----Doing poor work  
 F-----Doing failing work  
 √-----Satisfactory in habits and skills