An Evaluation of the Pupil Progress Reporting System of the Elementary Schools of Ogden, Utah

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AN EVALUATION OF THE PUPIL PROGRESS REPORTING SYSTEM
OF THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS OF OGDEN, UTAH

by

Glenn Thomas

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirement for the degree
of
MASTER OF SCIENCE
in
Education

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Logan, Utah

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INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Study

Modern education today is concerned with the growth and development of the whole child. It is the school's obligation to report to the parents the progress the child is making. The system of reporting the progress of students to parents is important in any school because it is often the only contact between the parents and the teacher. The modern school should seek to provide the most satisfactory types of reports known. Continuous evaluation of the reporting system is of prime importance in order to assure a good report of the child's progress to the parents. As experience points the way to improvement, it seems the methods of reporting should be revised accordingly.

The primary purpose of the research project undertaken in this study was to evaluate the pupil reporting practices in the elementary schools of Ogden, Utah. This appraisal is important in determining the degree to which it serves its purposes. The school district should have a reporting system that is in harmony with the educational program of that district. If the educational philosophy of the school district is a belief in the growth and development of the "whole" child, the reporting system should be set up in line of this basic belief.

The importance of this study is reflected in the interest of the educational world in the subject of reporting pupil progress to parents. It would be hard to find a single school problem that is the object of more attention. A general feeling of unrest has existed, and there is a marked tendency in various parts of the country for educational systems
to modify and reconstruct marking and reporting practices. A dissatisfaction is being expressed toward the older methods of reporting, and many educators, parents, and students are attempting to build more satisfactory methods.

The need for this study was shown (1) by the lack of common interpretation for the basis of reporting pupil progress, (2) the wide range of variation in the practices of reporting, (3) the lack of accomplishment of the purpose of reporting, and (4) the general dissatisfaction of both teachers and parents. In the light of these needs, critical constructive evaluation was necessary.

Statement of the Problem

The problem undertaken in this study was to evaluate the reporting system being used in the elementary schools of Ogden, Utah during the school year 1955-56 (1) to determine to what extent it met the needs and desires of the people involved—the teachers, the parents, and the pupils; (2) to review the opinions of various authorities in the field on the subject of reporting pupil progress; (3) to determine to what extent the system accomplishes its purposes; and (4) to determine possible changes and make recommendations.

Delimitations

Certain limitations must be recognised in the data gathered by the writer. The evaluation of the methods of reporting pupil progress to parents is probably most satisfactorily attained through the survey method of research wherein the questionnaire is used, however, there are limitations in interpreting the information on the part of the respondent. All people do not interpret the meaning of a word or sentence in the same way; for this reason, interpretations may not always be correct or uniform.
It must also be kept in mind that this study consists of an evaluation of only the elementary schools in Ogden, Utah.

Definition of Terms

The following definitions have been used in making this study:

1. "Parent-teacher conferences" are planned meetings between the parent and teacher at a time decided upon in which they discuss the progress of the child.

2. "Whole child development" pertains to a child making progress in all areas of development, which includes physical, social, and emotional progress, as well as intellectual.

3. "Traditional report card" refers to rating a child's progress in terms of other members in the class, or a fixed standard wherein the indication of progress is made by percentages, symbolic letters of "A, B, C, D, E", or numbers of 1, 2, 3, and 4.

Early Developments of Reporting

During the past hundred years the methods of reporting progress of the students to parents has undergone considerable change. One of the earliest records of a report to parents was published in 1640 in the "Horace Mann Common School Journal." Beavis and Judd (26, p. 184) in reviewing the article commented that the writer reported dissatisfaction in sending home reports to the parents. He felt it was difficult to accomplish the aim of producing better quality of achievement and conduct on the part of the pupils through the cooperation of the parents, because there was danger of making the report so long that the teacher failed to make clear to the parent exactly what was accomplished in each subject. In this case report, the contributor stated that in some schools the practice had been adopted of using printed reports in which by a system of figures or letters, the advancement and behavior of the students could
be sent home informing the parents of the progress made. This 1840
teacher solved his problem by making cards of white, blue, yellow, and
red, representing "Entire Approbation", "Approbation", "Indifferent",
and "Censure". Distribution of the cards was made by the teacher on
the basis of what the pupil deserved.

During the time when the McGuffey readers were popular, children
were classified and progress was reported according to the grade number
of the book from which the child was able to read. Morris (21, p. 114)
makes this comment:

At the end of the term the grade of the book and the page
number from which each child was reading was recorded in the
register to be used as the beginning point when the new term
began. Classification, grade status, and reporting of grade
in reading were thus dependent upon a textbook.

By the middle of the 1890's the traditional report card came into
use. Subject matter became the dominant characteristic of the curricu-

Lum. LeBaron (17, p. 322) makes this statement:

Later, following the trend in scientific and industrial
development of the country, the schools tried to put an exact
and quantitative evaluation on each child's progress. Parents
were then told that John rated 87 per cent in reading, 71
per cent in arithmetic, and 92 per cent in English. It took
some time to discover the errors, but eventually research
established the fact that a percentage mark was not an accurate
evaluation. The question 'Eighty-seven per cent of what?'
needed to be answered. Assuming that a teacher could accurately
evaluate a child's progress on a percentage basis (an assumption
which, incidentally, has been proved by research to be untrue),
the question of whether the 86 per cent was based on the child's
own ability, or on the relative progress of all children of his
age remained unanswered.

Questioning the worth of traditional report cards became common
talk by about the year 1914; but little was done about it until approxi-
mately 1925, when studies and experiments in various forms began to be
advanced along several lines. During the period beginning with about
1918, several learned groups were studying and attempting to define the
aims, purposes, and objectives of education. There was a wide contrast between the findings of those groups and the type of school indicated by the traditional report card wherein the child was supposed to retain in memory a large amount of the facts arbitrarily selected by the teacher. The "Seven Cardinal Principles" provides a good example of the objectives coming from the learned groups. Four of the seven "principles" were concerned with character, education, and citizenship, and one with health education.

Other developments which have broadened the educator's outlook and changed the concepts of evaluating pupil progress are (21):

1. The concept of democracy as defined by Kilpatrick that if it is to be learned it must be practiced, which means to respect the individuality of each child and accept him socially; to recognize the importance of the individual to the group and the group to the individual.

2. The study of child development has taught much about how children grow and learn.

During the 1930's and 1940's, many schools developed substitutes for the traditional way of marking. These changes were usually accomplished by manipulating the symbols or supplementing the symbols. In either event the errors and inadequacies have persisted. The system was then reduced to only two categories—"S" for satisfactory progress and "U" for unsatisfactory progress.

**Reporting Practices in the Ogden City Schools**

The methods of reporting pupil progress to the parents of the elementary grades have followed the same general trends as many other school districts.

The Ogden City Schools have held on to the traditional "ABCDE" report card to the time of this report in the secondary schools (grades
7 to 12). In 1950 a slight revision was made wherein the grade of
citizenship was added to each subject. This grade was designated by
"Satisfactory", "Generally Satisfactory", and "Unsatisfactory" ("S",
"G", and "U").

In 1932 a major revision was made in the elementary school report
card. The most important changes made at that time was the abolition
of the "ABCDEF" marking system of subject matter in favor of a three
point check system. A list of the subjects taught and a list of character
traits were checked six times per year. This report card remained in
effect without change for eighteen years.

The pupil reporting system discussed in this study came into use
in 1950. It was designed by a committee appointed in 1949 to formulate
a report card for all grade levels of the Ogden City Schools. This
committee was composed largely of members of the former Cumulative
Record Committee which had functioned the year before and had developed
the cumulative record card. One of the purposes for a revision at that
time was because the old report card did not transfer well onto the cumu-
lative record. This committee was composed of three assistant superin-
tendents, the elementary supervisor, and five principals. One of these
principals was in charge of a high school, one was in charge of a
combination junior-high and elementary school, and three were in charge
of elementary schools. Since many of the meetings were held during school
hours, no teachers or parents were included on the committee. This
system of reporting had been in operation for five years. The study here-
with undertaken is an evaluation of this reporting system.

The system consists of four separate report cards for the various
elementary grades: (1) the kindergarten, (2) the first grade, (3) the
second and third grades, and (h) the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades. Samples of these report cards are found in Tables I, II, III, and IV in Appendix B of this study.
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purposes of making a review of the related literature was to report the findings relative to: (1) the need for cooperation in making an evaluation of reporting practices, (2) the present philosophies and objectives of education, (3) the various ways of reporting pupil progress to parents, (4) the purposes of reporting pupil progress, (5) trends, and (6) standards for determining a good system of reporting pupil progress to parents.

Cooperation Essential to the Study of Reporting Practices

As the writer analysed the literature on the subject of reporting and observed the many school districts throughout the country that have made studies and formulated plans, with various degrees of success, he became impressed with the importance of teamwork and cooperation with the people concerned; the teachers, the parents, and the students. Unfortunately, some schools made studies and adopted new reporting proceedings only to abandon them after a short trial period because of opposition from parents or because of teacher dissatisfaction. Whitman (37, p. 58) made a tour of many school communities throughout the country that had made revisions and adopted new reporting systems. He reported that parents and teachers in many communities had rebelled against the new marking and reporting systems adopted because of misunderstanding the system.

Authorities in the field agree that the success of any reporting plan is dependent not only upon the plan itself but also on the degree of understanding and support received from parents and teachers (2, 4,
5, 11, 14, 35). One way of securing parent and teacher understanding and support is to give them the job of helping to formulate the plan. If the parents and teachers are responsible for what they formulate, it is reasonable to assume it will have their support. In agreement with this thought, Selmeier (14, p. 15) has this to say:

The marking and reporting system should be developed democratically with the cooperative participation of the persons concerned. Some one person must be held responsible. However, the director must not put on a "one man act", and devise a reporting system which he personally considers best, and then arbitrarily impose it upon all the teachers to employ. Teachers not only take pride in the marking system which they plan but also assume individual and group responsibility for its proper use and success.

The making of changes in the reporting of pupil progress are often very difficult because they become rooted in the philosophy of the school and in the attitudes of teachers, parents, and pupils. Therefore, unless parents, teachers, and students work together in the planning they will not understand it, and they will not give it the attention it deserves (35). For this reason, the problem of evaluating reporting practices is local. It is much better for a school district to develop its own form to meet local needs than to copy the report that is being used by some other school district.

Philosophy of Education of the Elementary School

The present day philosophies of education are based on the understanding of child growth and development, the training of the "whole" child, the recognition of individual differences, and of learning through experience. The study of child growth and development provides the information that the child grows physically, mentally, socially, emotionally.

Educators of today believe there is much more to education than learning the three "R's"—reading, writing, and arithmetic—though...
these are still included. These educators place the emphasis on the individual pupil and the development of the "whole" child.

Writers generally agree that the reporting practices should be consistent with the educational philosophy of the school it serves. Several basic issues are hinged about this point in evaluating pupil reporting practices. For as Strang (35) says: "If the school's policies of promotion and marking are not sound, if its teachers have not learned to observe and understand children—then the best record form in the world will not function." From this statement it is observed the problem may be in part, one of organizational management. Regarding this important point Shane and McSwain (31) report: "The improvement of elementary school policies in reporting pupil progress is partly an organizational problem, in the sense that actual modification in the structure of the school is required for the advance in practice."

It is not inferred that organizational change needs to always precede evaluation. Scottney (30) states that these processes may actually determine the degree of the effectiveness of the quality of teaching that is done; it may give reason to doubt the value of the instructional methods or material to consider them for revision or cast them out as being ineffective. Evaluation in this manner may actually aid the instructional program by pointing out defects.

An interesting trend observed that has direct bearing upon reporting practices is the emphasis given to the child development point of view in recent years. De Fencier (10) makes the following statement in comparing the trends of the subject-matter approach with the child-development approach:

One of the trends resulting from the child-development approach to education is the placing of greater emphasis on
the all-round or total development of the child. The subject-
matter approach which is certainly followed in some schools,
rarely is mentioned in any of the articles on reporting.
Subject-matter is considered but a part of the child's intel-
lectual development. The phrase: "intellectual, social,
physical, and emotional development" occurs frequently. Other
recurring phrases are "the wholeness of the child," "develop-
ment," and "all-round growth." The idea that learning takes
place according to the child's own pattern and that growing
proceeds at his own rate and in his own pattern is also
given consideration. The trend among those persons who are
concerned about all phases of better teaching, including report-
ing, appears to be toward considering the child as a whole
and reporting on his total development.

Objectives of Education

There must be a philosophy of education in order to determine
the objectives of the educational program. Experiences and learning
activities should be set up to carry out the objectives. Considerable
research is being done in evaluating pupil progress in terms of the
objectives of education. Effort is being made to state these in terms
of behavior change. Wrinkle and his colleagues (38) conducted one
of the most thorough experiments in marking and reporting practices.
For ten years they tried out a variety of methods in the campus high
school of Colorado State College of Education at Greeley. A conclusion
from this study is as follows (38, p. 63):

Until a school identifies its objectives clearly, in
terms of what it wants boys and girls to do as a result of
their school experiences, no form of practice in reporting
can be adequate.

It would seem that the objectives should be set up first and then
a program developed in terms of these objectives. Wrinkle (38, p. 97)
offers the following criteria in the evaluating of objectives for teach-
ing: Is the objective (1) understandable, (2) stated as a behavior,
(3) based upon the needs of the learner, (4) socially desirable, (5)
achievable, and (6) measurable?
After the philosophy of the school has been defined and the objectives stated, the next steps are given in brief by Rothney (30) as follows:

You will decide what important changes you are trying to produce in pupils. You will then state how these changes may be expected to be shown in pupils' behavior and you will measure the changes that take place. You then study and interpret the observed changes so that your reports will be meaningful to the pupil himself, to his parents, and to anyone who wants to know what progress a particular pupil is making.

As far as possible, progress reports should be based upon objective data. If educators believe that the goals they set are worthwhile, then effort should be made to evaluate progress toward that end.

Purpose of Progress Reports

There seems to be general agreement as to the purpose of reporting that it should provide information necessary for a sound working relationship between the home and the school in the guidance of the child, and to improve the child's life experiences for which the school is responsible. If the reporting system does not fulfill this requirement, then it should be revised (10, 11, 15, 16).

The basis for such evaluation must be meaningful to the teacher, the parent, and the child. Regarding this matter Miles Carey (7, p. 13-14) makes this statement:

If an evaluation is to be in harmony with the common learnings' philosophy of education, it must provide for an assessment of progress in terms of the ability of the individual pupil. It must provide for a weighing of items other than subject achievement, such as attitudes, understandings, character, and personality qualities, citizenship traits and study habits. It also must encourage cooperation between pupil, teacher, and parents.

Types of Reports to Parents

One of the prime purposes of making a review of the educational literature regarding the practices found throughout the nation on
reporting pupil progress to parents is to study the problems, conditions, and solutions to the problems as worked out in other areas, and to observe the trends as reported in publications in the professional field as to the use of the various ways of reporting. The term trends here refers to published information and not to a survey of general practices. Special consideration is given to determining if trends are following the educational philosophy as set forth by professional educators and supporting research.

De Pencier (9) points out that there are problems in many phases of reporting. There are problems in (1) the kinds of marks or ratings given on a report card, (2) the content of the report card, (3) the frequency of issuing reports, (4) the teacher load caused by reporting, (5) the relationships of teacher and student, and teacher and parents regarding reporting, (6) the communication between the home and school, and (7) the training of teachers in child study and guidance.

There is considerable variation in the types of reports that are being used.

The writer examined thirty report cards on loan from the Research Division of the National Education Association. These report forms were in use during the 1953-1954 school year. The cards were from twenty-two different school districts representing twenty different states from the various geographical areas in the United States. An analysis of these reports revealed twenty-seven of the thirty contained space for parent and teacher comments. There was considerable variation in the amount of space provided for these comments. Most of the reports showed concern for the physical, mental, social, progress of the child. Most of the reports contained a statement or a brief
letter from the Superintendent of the school to the parents, recognizing
the limitations of the report and encouraging parents to visit the
school.

Reactions to Traditional Methods of Reporting Pupil Progress

There are two underlying philosophies of education, one emphasizing
fixed standards of performance, which is termed "traditional," and the
other emphasizing individual needs and abilities which is termed as more
recent. The "traditional" report card neglected most aspects of growth
and concentrated on factual achievement.

Strang (34) states there are three methods of marking that are in
use at present: (1) marking only on a comparative basis, (2) marking
only on an ability basis, and (3) a dual marking system. Wrinkle (39)
seriously questions the value of these methods. He asks:

Is the symbol supposed to indicate the achievement of the
student in terms of an absolute scale, in terms of other
students in his class, or in terms of his own ability?
These problems have to be answered before any symbols used
can have meaning apart from the local situations in which
they are used.

Regarding reporting students' progress on a basis of standard of
performance, the N. E. A. Research Department makes this statement (23):

The standard for marks may be either absolute or relative.
If the standard is absolute, the child is marked according to
how nearly his work approximates a theoretically perfect
performance. If the standard is relative, the child is marked
according to how his work compares with the average performance
of a group.

In only a few types of work is there a commonly accepted
standard of perfection. Too often the standard for a perfect
performance is wholly in the mind of the class-room teacher
and is therefore intangible and fluctuates from year to year.
Nor would the standard of one classroom teacher necessarily
be the same as that of other classroom teachers. Even in
mathematics one classroom teacher may emphasize correctness in
computation, which may mean no more than a good memory for
formulas, and another classroom teacher may emphasize a grasp
of mathematical principles; their marks on a piece of work may
be quite different.
Now, considering the second phase of the question of comparing the performance of a child with the performance of the other members of the class, a continued statement is made from the N. E. A. Research Department (23):

A child's work may be compared with the average performance of his class. If so, the teacher may use such a device as the normal curve to determine marks. Since the chances are slight that the abilities of the children in any one class will fit the normal curve, and it is likely that the class will have in it a large number of pupils whose work is well above or below the average for their age and grade, classroom teachers often prefer to compare the work of their pupils with that of much larger groups, such as the "norms" of standardized tests.

It is important that an understanding be made as to what is meant by the term "norms." Regarding this matter, Rothney makes this significant statement (30):

If standardized tests are used, it is essential that we be clear about the term "norms." A norm tells us only the typical performance of the group on which the test was standardized. The fact that a particular group of pupils has scored above or below that norm does not reveal whether or not that class is doing superior or inferior work. To decide the quality of work, we would need to compare the purposes, facilities, curriculum, and instruction of our group with the norm group. The business of comparing a child's performance with some vague "potential" based on scores of general intelligence is virtually outmoded.

Before a measurement of a child's progress in terms of his "ability" can be made, the term must be defined. This is very difficult. Psychologists have not been able to decide upon the full meaning of this term. Regarding this matter, Rothney (30) makes this comment:

In our discussion here we shall omit the ambiguous words ability and aptitude. Until research clears up the confusion as to whether ability or aptitude are things which are changing or things which do not change and until we decide whether they are goals to be achieved or determiners of goals, we should talk about them with great discretion.

It is very difficult to mark a student against an undefined standard such as "ability." The condition of slow learners or children of low
mental ability always getting low grades, led to the use of marking according to individual ability.

There is definite indication that marking a child in terms of an absolute scale, in terms of other students in the class, or in terms of an undefined "ability" standard may be seriously questioned. Since none of these methods are satisfactory, it would seem justifiable to eliminate them in favor of placing emphasis upon the progress the individual child is making as compared to his previous record.

Types of Marks and Reports

A review of the literature indicates there are six ways of reporting pupil progress discussed. They are sometime used alone and sometimes in combinations. They are (1) percentage grades, (2) symbolic grades, (3) passing, failing marks, (4) letters to parents, (5) checklists to show progress toward educational goals, and (6) conferences with parents. A discussion of these types follows.

Percentage Marks. It was common practice in many schools traditionally, to use the percentage type. This way of marking is based on the scale of 0 to 100. The mark is supposed to tell the per cent of the work given that the student had learned. Regarding this type of marking, the N. E. A. Research Department has this to report (23):

Experiments have shown that teachers cannot make such a fine distinction as percentage grades call for. At best they can distinguish differences of about five percentage points. Hence they cannot claim that there is a real difference between a grade of 84 and one of 85 except on tests of factual material. Another criticism is that there is, and can be, no rigid definition of the three reference points—0, 100, and the passing mark.

One such experiment conducted by the N. E. A. in determining the reliability of percentage marks was reported by Strang (3h), where 111 teachers, grading the same arithmetic paper, gave marks ranging between 21 and 88 per cent.
Symbolic Grades. These may be defined as grades that divide pupils into three or more, usually five, groups on the basis of their achievement. Usually letters such as A, B, C, D, and F, but sometimes numbers, as I, II, III, IV, and V, are used to characterize the student's work.

Such grades as mentioned above may be defined by a single word, as A is excellent, B is good, C is average, D is unsatisfactory, and F is failing; or each mark may be defined by per cent, as A equals 95 to 100 per cent.

The literature on marking practices states that symbolic grades provide some broad discriminations, however, there is considerable agreement that symbolic grades have no intrinsic meaning (1). An experiment is offered to have a group of teachers independently rate any given piece of work. Even a supposed perfect paper will be ranked from A to D (3). After ten years of research and study on the subject, Wrinkle (3) makes this statement: "One conclusion is inescapable, it is impossible to tell what an A B C D F mark based upon local school standards of achievement means, unless the achievement or ability level of the school giving the mark is also known." Dr. Wrinkle further calls it a fallacy that any one can tell from an A B C D F mark assigned what the student's level of achievement is or what progress he has made.

Another writer, Rogers (23), supports the statement that marks are not reliable conveyors of information wherein she states:

If a child makes an A in mathematics the assumption is that he has done well in that subject. The report does not make clear, however, whether the A indicates superior attainment in quantitative concepts of thinking or merely a good memory for prescribed methods of getting the answers.

The literature shows a trend away from the use of percentages and symbolic grades. The greatest single change in marking practices since 1900, as stated by Wrinkle (3), has been the departure from marking
based on the percentage, to the use of five letters. The next step from this was to two letters, S for satisfactory and U for unsatisfactory. It was then found that the more the marks were reduced, the less they could tell. The use of S and U made marking more simple and was looked upon as an improvement. With two letters, marking of pupil progress did not make marks so important, and did not discourage the slow student.

The literature shows trends away from specific marks to general marks. It also indicates a trend of reducing the number of symbolic symbols. At first there was the 0 to 100 scale; this was reduced in many schools to the five point symbolic scale. Then to a three point scale such as S G U, then to a two point scale, such as U and S or F and F. Wrinkle (36) describes these changes from the conventional types to other less complex symbolic types simply a manipulation for simplicity and convenience. He states that the possible departures are (1) to manipulate the symbols, (2) to supplement the symbols, (3) to make fundamental change involving a different approach. Wrinkle further reports that if we assume that marks tell anything, the more the number of marks are reduced the less they tell.

Further examination of literature indicates that symbolic marks were reduced because marks have at times fostered an unwholesome spirit of competition, and caused feelings of frustration and anxiety. Placing a high value on marks leads to the temptation to cheat. Moreover, marks have a tendency to place a barrier in the way of developing desirable habits of cooperation. Then too, parents and children frequently attach more importance to marks than to the social attitudes engendered and the knowledge gained (10, 11, 16, 15, 22, 23).

The literature clearly indicates that the manipulation of marking symbols or the reducing of marking symbols may not improve reporting practices. Wrinkle (36) adds this statement:
Progress in the improvement of marking and reporting practices cannot be achieved by the mere manipulation of symbols. About the best that can be said for the substituting of 5 and U or H, 5, and U for A B C D F marks is that there-
after the school is brought face to face with the fact that what it thought was a problem in marking is fundamentally a curriculum problem. If students quit working when the incentive of marks is removed, and the staff is unwilling to admit that they can be stimulated to learn only by the use of such extrinsic pressures, then the staff has discovered something fundamental. That is why it actually is a good thing for a school to try the 5 and U marking system.

Wrinkle (30) further declares that the continued use of marks as a means of reporting to students and their parents is based on a number of fallacies:

Among these are the beliefs that (1) people succeed in out-of-school life about the same as they do in school, (2) that the mark is a pay check, (3) the mark is a defensible introduction to adult life, (4) anyone can achieve any mark he wishes if he is willing to make the effort, and (5) the mark can be used as a means to an end without it eventually becoming thought of as an end in itself. A critical exami-
nation of these beliefs lead to one conclusion which is that all of them are unsound.

Check-list Forms. A review of literature points to the check-list type of report as being mechanically the most practical. It does not infer that the check-list is the best. The literature merely indicates that check-list is the simplest way of reporting more information in less time with less effort and at the same time have a record of what is reported (30). On the disadvantage side, there is a tendency for check-lists to become detailed and lengthy. The likelihood of misunder-
standing tends to increase in proportion to the number of details included in the report (21).

The Narrative Type of Report. This type of a report is where the teacher writes a letter or note telling of the child's progress to the parent. The literature indicates that the narrative type gained favor for a while and then slowed down (21). The large amount of writing
involved in preparing this type of a report create a task out of proportion to the results (10). Some teachers have difficulty in expressing themselves in writing, therefore, it may be misunderstood. Le Baron (17) reports that the possibilities of misinterpretation involved in using informal letters are present to a greater degree than in the use of the formal printed report form. Personal letters allow more freedom in reporting a child's progress, yet, they are sometimes so generalized they leave the parents as misinformed as did the old report card (31). It must be kept in mind, however, that frequently an explanatory statement, a personalized word of commendation regarding the child's progress can mean more than all the marks on the report card. Personalized notes effectively written by the teacher or parent do have value.

Effects of Report Cards Upon Students, Teachers, and Parents

Another factor to be considered is the undesirable results that may come from the practice of issuing report cards. Unfortunately, the report card is often used chiefly to judge the child, and is held as evidence for or against him rather than as a device to help him. Dorothy Rogers (28) makes the following statement concerning the effect of the traditional report card upon the child:

Marks come to have a disproportionate value in the child's thinking. He learns to work for marks instead of for rewards intrinsic in the task itself. He will be judged by his marks not by the satisfaction and enjoyment he derives from the learning experience.

Many a child goes through untold torture from the moment he receives his report card until he musters up courage to deliver it into the hands of father or mother.

We may wrongly assume that only children who make low marks suffer when report cards are handed out. Just as miserable is the child who aspires to make all A's and finds a B on his report. Many teachers do not realize the damage done to children's egos by low marks because they were themselves among the better pupils in the school.
The traditional report card also had adverse effects upon the teachers. Quoting Rogers (23) further she states:

Many teachers testify that they find making out report cards the most unpleasant of their teaching duties. When meeting the downcast faces of some of the children as they receive their cards, the conscientious teacher feels twinges of unhappiness or even guilt. Teachers frankly confess that they do not know how to mark children. They do not know what factors should be included in a mark.

Parents are also confused. Rogers (23) continues:

Parents, too, are confused. They rarely understand the philosophy of evaluation on which the card is based. If the child makes low marks, the parent may develop guilt feelings for somehow having failed as parents. This emotionalization of the report card experience cancels any constructive value it might otherwise have....

Unfortunately, report cards do their share in complicating sibling relationships. Their marks are compared by the parents on the false premise that any child in the family can, with equal effort, do as well as any other.

**Parent-Teacher Conferences**

The most widely discussed method of reporting found in recent literature on the subject of reporting is the parent-teacher conference, which may be described as a meeting scheduled by the school for the purpose of exchanging information about the growth of the child in relation to school activity. It is agreed by many authorities that this way of reporting is more meaningful than any other method of reporting pupil progress and growth (1, 2, 5, 9, 10, 14, 21, 25, 32).

There are many advantages reported in the literature of parent-teacher conferences. Misunderstandings between the parent, the teacher, and the child can be clarified. For the child with a slow rate of growth, the conference provides an opportunity for making explanation instead of merely giving him low marks. Instead, the child may be able to get a feeling of security by knowing that the parent and the teacher are both working together for his interest. Individual differences can
be met more favorably with the conference. Regarding this, Otto (21) makes the following statement:

Individual differences can be met by grouping children on the basis of age and all-round maturity, eliminate the use of comparative and competitive marking-systems, and report to parents by means of individual parent-teacher conferences. In these conferences the emphasis is upon the progress the individual child is making as compared to his educational status last year and two years ago.

Other common sense advantages pointed to by writers are as follows:
(1) The teacher gets a better understanding of the child's background, and whether or not he has been accepted by his parents. (2) The parents have a chance to find out what they can do to help both the teacher and the child to make the life experiences of the child more enriched. (3) The parent-teacher conference helps the child to understand what is expected of him. He can enjoy the benefits and results that come from common understandings. (4) It is possible to explain a child's slowness or quickness in terms of his own rate of growth. (5) Problems that sometimes bother the teacher, the parent, or the child singly, may often be solved cooperatively in conference. (6) The parent has an opportunity to view samples of work accomplished and other cumulative records (1, 5, 7, 9, 16, 17, 32).

The literature indicates that present day education has changed emphasis from subject-matter goals to those of child development. The mastery of subject matter is essential not as an end in itself, but as a means of making the life experiences of the child more enriched. If the philosophy and objectives of education have changed to meet these needs, then reports to parents should be changed to tell them what we are emphasizing.

Walter G. Sites says (32):
The elimination of grades, grade cards, and all forms of pupil home reports will emancipate the teacher from one of his most arduous tasks. An organized program of parent-teacher conference in the elementary schools seems to be the only satisfactory solution to this communication problem.

Some school administrators have hesitated to adopt the parent-teacher method of reporting because they have felt that some teachers may lack knowledge concerning the techniques of conducting conferences.

Rogers (32) makes this comment:

In-service training would be necessary to develop teachers in the art of holding a conference, establishing rapport, interviewing, counseling, closing a conference, and summarizing the conversation for record purposes.

Teachers are often reluctant to talk to parents frankly. They hesitate to mention deficiencies or make unpleasant observations. Since the child is not necessarily present, these conferences should be characterized by frankness and sincerity. Parents appreciate a straightforward approach more than sugar-coated platitudes. In-service training and experience will help teachers gain self-confidence and will make them competent in knowing to discuss and how.

Much planning and preparation is necessary for an effective parent-teacher conference program. The teachers, parents, and community must be receptive to the idea before conferencing periods are set up. These problems are not insurmountable. Administrators, teachers, and parents can grow together through group planning and group thinking. Once the plan is agreed upon, it is then necessary for the faculty group to work out a conference scheduling program, skills in conducting a conference, and a record system.

Rogers (29) states:

The success or failure of the conference will depend on this planning. Both teachers and parents report that these interviews promote a better understanding of the child and his problems than could possibly come from written reports. Parents and teachers also agree that: (1) Conferences provide an opportunity for them to evaluate the student progress and plan constructively for his future. (2) Conferences provide a better means of emphasizing the total growth of the child than a written report. (3) Conferences provide teachers with
an opportunity to understand their pupil’s home situations and problems. (a) Conferences help parents to understand their own children better.

De Fencier summarizes the discussion in this manner (10):

In general, the trend seems to be toward wider use of the conference technique in reporting, toward recognition of the limitations of the conference method, and toward some administrative adjustment to make reporting an integral part of the school program instead of an appendage....

Thus, it can be seen that the trends in reporting reflect, more or less, the same concepts and outlooks that are found in other phases of education today. Emphasis is on consideration of the whole child and on techniques which will bring about his all-round development.

**Criteria for Evaluating a Reporting Plan**

When an evaluation is made of the reporting practices of a school system, there are a great many items that enter into the study. Certain guides are helpful in determining what action should be taken. In order to obtain this criteria for appraising the reporting plan, current periodicals, books by well-known authors in the field of education, and the latest research were read extensively. The writer has chosen three authorities who have offered lists of ideas indicating what should be included in a good report and how the study should be conducted. In the listings that follow, the reader will notice a high degree of similarity in items appearing in the lists. The criteria listed gives ideas on standards that reporting plans should meet.

The following are suggested as criteria that any school may use in appraising its present reports and in building more effective ones.

V. H. Rogers (29) says some generally accepted principles that apply to reports are:

1. A report must consider all aspects of growth. Psychiatrists and psychologists have proved to us that the school cannot teach reading, writing, and arithmetic while neglecting the whole child.
2. A report must reflect the child’s growth in terms of his capacities and abilities. All children do not learn in the same way and at the same rate. Individual growth patterns must be considered.

3. A report must contribute to an understanding between the home and the school. The unity of the most important people in the child’s world—his parents and his teachers—is necessary so that the child does not find himself in the midst of adult misunderstanding and conflict.

After a period of ten years study on pupil progress reports to parents, Anne Reid McAllister (18) offers this list of items that should go into making a good reporting system:

1. Consider the whole child which would not be limited to scholastic achievement only.
2. Avoid judgement of the child in competition with others.
3. Protect the sensitive feelings of the slow learning child.
4. Challenge the child of superior ability.
5. Eliminate jealousy and other anti-social traits fostered by competitive marking system.
6. Help foster improved family relationships and help parents avoid making unreasonable demands upon children.
7. Help parents to look upon the education process as a cooperative undertaking.
8. Encourage teachers and parents to make increasing use of the conference as a means of helping children.

Another writer, Otto (25, p. 252-255), offers the following criteria that should prevail in any good reporting plan:

1. The content and procedures of the reporting plan should genuinely reflect the philosophy and objectives of the school. The aspects of children’s development which teachers are urged to foster and appraise should coincide with the things on which teachers are asked to report to parents.

2. The reporting plan used in a given school should be the result of thoroughgoing faculty study of the philosophy and objectives of the school and the development of appraisal and reporting practices consistent therewith.

3. Under the leadership of the school staff, parents and pupils should be led to a full understanding and appreciation of the school’s philosophy and objectives and how the reporting plan is related thereto.

4. The report should include an appraisal of all phases of a child’s development. School objectives as well as parent interest are broader than academic fields. Parents are interested in the physical, social, and emotional development.
5. The evaluation procedure should make provision for self-evaluation by the child in respect to specific behavior-objectives. Individual and group evaluations are integral parts of ongoing school activities.

6. Evaluation and reporting procedures should stimulate interest in self improvement and in placing value upon quality of work for its own sake rather than for marks.

7. The reporting plan should emphasize the child as an individual and as a member of a social group. Comparisons with class mates should be avoided.

8. The reporting scheme should be suitable to the age level of the children, even if variations in the plan must be developed for different age or grade groups.

9. Reports should be a confidential matter, of concern only to the school, the parent, and the child.

10. If the reporting plan includes a periodically issued card, it should be supplemented with at least one personal conference per year with the parents.

11. Written reports, regardless of their type and form, should make provision for narrative statements or comments by the teacher. A personalized word of commendation can mean more than all the marks or checks on the card.

12. The form of the written report should also provide a space on which parents may write comments or suggestions. Reports to parents should provide a two-way means of communication.

13. The report to parents should require much teacher thought and activity in continuing appraisal of children’s development and in adequate reporting to parents, but it should require a minimum of clerical work by the teacher.

14. The reporting plan should serve as an effective public relations tool. The method of reporting to parents should bring about cordial relations between the home and the school, assist in revealing to parents the objectives, program, and methods of the school, and in building parent respect for the professional competence of teachers and administrators.

Criteria for Evaluating the Reporting Practices of Elementary Schools

The criteria developed to evaluate the Ogden Elementary Schools were developed by the writer after a critical analysis of professional literature. It was evident that the method of reporting pupil progress for the
past five years should be appraised for the purpose of arriving at conclusions as to its value as a reporting plan. The attainment of educational values which come from the method of reporting should be understood by the parents, teachers, and pupils before it will be successful. This same principle holds true for the parent-teacher conference or any other plan that may be adopted by the school district.

Evaluation of the method of reporting pupil progress was made in relation to the following criteria obtained from the study of related literature:

1. The method of reporting used in a school should be evaluated cooperatively by administrators, teachers, and parents in the light of the findings of research and study in child growth and development.

   Understanding is a prime essential. The success of any reporting plan is dependent not only upon the plan itself, but also on the degree of understanding and support received from parents and teachers.

2. The reporting system should be in harmony with the educational philosophy and objectives of the school it serves.

   Each school district must work out its own reporting plan on the basis of its own philosophy, objectives, and staff.

3. The report should be an estimate of the growth of the "whole" child, which includes his physical, social, and mental progress.

   The parent-teacher conference makes possible a thorough discussion of the child's physical, social, and emotional development (36).

4. The report should provide for the individual growth pattern of children. The progress of the slow child as well as the gifted child should be shown. The report should be based upon the study of children, respect for the individual, and recognition that the child grows according to his own growth pattern and at his own rate.

5. The report to parents should bring about a strengthening of home, school, and community relationships through common interest in the child.
6. The report should indicate the progress of not only the child individually, but his social group adjustment as well. However, comparison with others should be avoided.

7. The report should be a confidential matter to the parent, child, and teacher.

8. Single symbolic grades are not an accurate means of reporting pupil progress. One cannot tell what such a mark means unless the standard from which the mark was derived is also known.

9. The trend is toward fewer and more meaningful reports.

10. The report should require a minimum of clerical work. A great amount of the teachers' concentrated thought should be given, however, to evaluating the child's progress.

11. The report should provide for a program of guidance. It should stimulate teachers and parents to study the child more intensively. It should encourage the child to want to improve.
PROCEDURES

The Board of Education and the Superintendent of the Ogden City Schools felt a need for an evaluation of the reporting system, and in January 1956 a committee was appointed composed of the following: one assistant superintendent, one personnel and guidance director, three principals—one each from the elementary, junior, and senior high—three teachers, three parents, and one member of the board of education. The appointed chairman for the group was the writer of this study.

One of the first steps in this study was an action by the committee to obtain a bibliography of current references on the subject of reporting pupil progress. Many publications of books and periodicals were carefully reviewed and discussed by members of the committee. This review of related literature was made for the purpose of selecting criteria to be used in evaluating the methods of reporting pupil progress. Another decision at the outset was to make the study democratic. It was agreed that teachers, parents, and students should be invited to participate.

In an attempt to determine to what extent the reporting system met the needs and desires of those involved, the parents, the teachers, and the students were consulted. This was done by administering a different questionnaire to each group.

These questionnaires were designed after careful study and critical thinking. Members of the committee assisted in the formulating of the questions. They were asked to give comments as to whether the items were important, clearly stated, and understandable. A further testing of the
questionnaire was made by having twelve teachers evaluate the teacher questionnaire, twelve parents evaluate the parent questionnaire, and thirty-five students evaluate the student questionnaire. Each of these groups made a critical evaluation. Many of their suggestions were adopted and incorporated in the final forms. This analysis improved the questionnaire greatly. Further review was made by the research committee of the Ogden City Schools and approval was given.

The teachers and parents questionnaires were then delivered by the investigator to each of the eighteen elementary schools in the district. Carefully worded instructions were printed on each questionnaire.

In order to get a reliable cross section of sampling from the parents, the cumulative card file of each student was used. Counting through this alphabetical card file, every twentieth parent or guardian was selected to answer the questionnaire. Care was exercised to send only one questionnaire to a family. In cases where more than one member of a family had been selected, the card was returned to the file and the next name was used. The names of the parents who received the questionnaire were selected in this manner in all of the eighteen elementary schools.

The instructions to the school principal were that the teacher questionnaire was to be delivered to each teacher in the classroom. It was felt that if each teacher had an opportunity to complete the questionnaire alone, a more accurate report of her true feelings could be obtained.

The children's questionnaire was administered personally by the investigator to classroom groups of fourth, fifth, and sixth grade students in thirteen schools. Only one classroom group was selected in each school. An alternating plan by grades was used, that is, if the questionnaire was given to a fourth grade group in one school, a fifth
grade group was selected in the next, and in the next school a sixth
grade group. In this manner an almost equal cross section of students
from each of the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades was obtained. In order
to make the sampling more representative, schools were selected from the
north, south, east, and west, as well as the central parts of the
district.

The questionnaire for children was administered by the investigator
in a situation that was intended to be as informal as possible. The same
careful instructions were given each group. The students were told
to report their true feelings. Each question was read carefully aloud
by the investigator to the students. In this way, students having dif-
ficulty in reading could express their opinions.

The teacher questionnaire consisted of 16 questions. Each teacher
made evaluation by indicating to what extent each item listed met his
needs and desires. This was done by placing a check mark under one of
the four columns—"great extent", "moderate extent", "small extent", or
"very small extent." All of the 203 elementary teachers in the district
received the questionnaire. Of this number 200 took the time to answer
and return it to the investigator. Two-hundred-and-sixty out of 203
makes a return of 92 per cent.

The questionnaire for parents consisted of 16 questions. Evaluation
was made by the parents by indicating to what extent each of the items
listed would meet their needs and desires. This was done in the same
manner as was explained in the teacher questionnaire. There were 490
parents who received the questionnaire, and 414 were returned. Four-
hundred-and-forty-one out of 490 gave a return of 90 per cent.

The student questionnaire was given to 400 students with 100 per
cent return.
Results of the findings from the questionnaires were describes. Summaries and conclusions were written up, and then recommendations were given on the findings of the study.
The purpose of this chapter is to determine the attitudes of teachers in the elementary schools of the Ogden School District toward the system of reporting pupil progress to parents in use in the elementary schools during the school year 1955-56 and toward various other methods of reporting. This action was necessary in order to determine to what extent the system of reporting met its purposes, and the needs and desires of the teachers.

The success or failure of any system of reporting rests primarily with the teacher, and in order for any system to be effective, the teacher must have some understanding of the philosophy, aims and purposes of education. She must also understand the reporting system, believe in it, and have a vital part in determining improvements.

The opinions of the teachers were obtained through the use of a questionnaire. A copy of the questionnaire is found in Appendix A. The determining of the questions for the questionnaire were decided upon by the Committee that assisted in making this study.

The following consists of a listing of each question found in the questionnaire, the reasons for asking the question, and the data as indicated by the reactions of the teachers. This information is followed, at times, by significant majority opinions expressed by the Committee.

For the convenience of the reader, the data shown in the teacher questionnaire found in Appendix A under the headings of great extent and moderate extent have been combined to indicate those favoring the
proposal. The data shown in the questionnaire under small extent and very small extent have been combined to indicate those not favoring the proposal. Only the combined figures will be given in this chapter in reporting the reactions of the teachers to the questions.

Question One: In your opinion, to what extent is the philosophy underlying our report card consistent with the educational philosophy of the Ogden City Schools?

If educators believe that the goals they set are worthwhile, then a statement of what those goals are and how they can be achieved should be stated. This must be done before effective action can be taken to evaluate progress toward that end. It is therefore, important for reporting practices to be consistent with the educational philosophy of the school they serve. In order to determine to what extent this was so, the above question was submitted to the teachers.

The reactions of the teachers to the above question indicated that 65 per cent felt the report card was consistent with the educational philosophy of the Ogden City Schools. Thirty-five per cent of the teachers felt the report card was not consistent with the educational philosophy of the Ogden City Schools.

In evaluating these reactions, the majority of the Committee felt that 65 per cent of the teachers considered the report card to be consistent with the educational philosophy of the school was significant. However, considering more than one-third of the teachers to be of the opinion that the report card was not consistent with the educational philosophy of the school indicated that something needed to be done to make the report more consistent.

It is also of value to note that some teachers indicated their
feelings by asking the question: "What is the educational philosophy of the Ogden City Schools?" This would mean that the educational philosophy should be clearly stated, and it should be clearly understood by the people concerned.

**Question Two:** In your opinion, to what extent does the effort spent in preparing the report card place a burden of clerical work upon the teacher?

While it was the general opinion of the Committee that the reporting system should be designed and utilized primarily for the purpose of helping the student rather than the teacher, yet, they also felt that clerical work should be kept at a minimum. In an effort to determine to what extent the preparing of the report card placed a burden of clerical work upon the teacher, the above question was submitted.

A tabulation of results from the questionnaire indicated that 62 per cent of the teachers felt the preparing of the report card placed a burden of clerical work upon the teacher. Thirty-eight per cent stated the preparing of the report card did not place a burden of clerical work upon the teacher.

The majority of the Committee considered this to be evidence of value in making the evaluation.

**Question Three:** In your experience, to what extent is the comment space on the report card used by parents and teachers?

The comment space on the report card is for the purpose of permitting the teacher and the parents to communicate regarding the various aspects of the child's development. It is believed the comment space may effectively supplement the marking system and make
the report a two way communication. It was considered of value to
determine to what extent the comment space was being used in order
to determine the utility of the report.

The reactions of the teachers showed that 30 per cent felt the
comment space on the report card was used by parents and teachers.
Seventy per cent of the teachers stated the comment space on the
report card was not being used by parents and teachers.

The majority of the Committee considered this to be valuable
evidence in that 70 per cent of the teachers state the comment space
on the report card is not being used by parents and teachers. It
indicated the burden of the report rests with the marking system.

Question Four: To what extent does the report card provide useable
information on the various phases of child development for future use
on the cumulative record?

The report to parents should provide for a program of guidance.
It should stimulate teachers and parents to study the child more
intensively. It should provide for encouragement. An effective
cumulative record provides an account of the degree of this develop-
ment for the teacher and the parents.

In responding to this question, 31 per cent of the teachers
stated the report card provided useable information on the various
phases of child development for future use on the cumulative record.
This may be compared with 69 per cent of the teachers that indicated
the report card did not provide useable information on the various
phases of child development for future use on the cumulative record.

The reactions of a majority of the Committee to this data was
that most of the teachers felt the report card did not provide useable
information for the cumulative record. However, it was not determined whether the reason for this condition was with the report card or the cumulative record. The Committee agreed that the data was significant.

Question Five: To what extent is the present report card diagnostic, that is, does it give reasons for the cause of the behavior indicated and tell how it can be improved?

It seems only logical that a report to parents should tell what the child's progress in school is, why it is as indicated, and provide for the parent steps for improvement. If the report does not provide these things, the parent may not know what action to take.

The reactions of the teachers to this question showed that 6 per cent felt the present report card was diagnostic. This may be compared with 94 per cent of the teachers that felt the report card was not diagnostic. That is, it did not give reasons for the behavior indicated nor tell how it could be improved.

It was the unanimous opinion of the Committee that the reactions given by the teachers to the above question provided evidence of a serious weakness of the report card.

Question Six: To what extent, in your opinion, would the "ABCDE" system of marking meet our reporting needs in the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades?

Since many teachers had expressed a desire for this way of marking to be used in these grades, the Committee felt that this method of reporting should be considered for evaluation.

A tabulation of the reactions of the teachers to the above question showed that 76 per cent felt the ABCD system of marking would meet the reporting needs in the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades. Twenty-four
per cent felt the ABCD system of marking would not meet the reporting needs in the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades.

The opinions of the Committee indicated considerable concern for the implications involved in these reactions. It is generally agreed by authorities in the field that this way of reporting is not accurate. A review of the limitations of this way of marking is reported in the Review of Literature. Three members of the Committee offered opinions that this way of marking may be a means of bridging the gap between the elementary and the junior-high school since the junior- and senior-high schools are using this way of marking.

**Question Seven:** To what extent would the narrative type of report, that is, where the teacher writes a note or letter telling of the child's progress, meet your reporting needs?

Since this way of reporting had been used in other schools with various degrees of success, and since it had been reported as a useful means of reporting the progress of many phases of child growth, it was felt that the narrative way of reporting should be offered to the teachers for consideration.

The reactions of the teachers to this question showed that 51 per cent felt the narrative type of report would meet their reporting needs. There were 49 per cent of the teachers that indicated the narrative type of report would not meet their reporting needs.

It was anticipated that this method of reporting would not meet with much favor since the comment space on the report card (discussed in Question Number Three) was not being used. The large amount of time used to prepare the narrative report for teachers with large
numbers of students usually presents a problem out of proportion to the results.

A summary of the opinions of the Committee indicates that the narrative way of reporting would be too time consuming and that it may degenerate into a form letter. However, it was recognized that a skillfully prepared letter, prepared by a teacher who is capable of writing so that parents can understand, may be an effective way of reporting.

**Question Eight:** To what extent would the check-list type of report card, that is, where the teacher checks a list of items indicating a child's progress, meet your reporting needs?

A very popular method of reporting pupil progress to parents is the check-list. A check mark or letter symbol is used to substitute for a sentence. The present report card used in the elementary schools of Ogden is a form of a check-list type. Provision is made for a three way evaluation signified by the letters "S" meaning satisfactory, "G" meaning generally satisfactory, and "U" meaning unsatisfactory. It was felt important that the teachers react to this question.

The reactions of the teachers to this question showed that 52 per cent believed the check-list type of report card would meet their reporting needs. Forty-eight per cent of the teachers believed the check-list type of report card would not meet their reporting needs.

Like the teachers, the opinions of the Committee were somewhat equally divided regarding use of this type of reporting. However, it was agreed after studying many report cards on loan from the National Education Association that mechanically, the check-list type of report
card provides one of the most convenient of the various departures from the conventional way of marking.

**Question Nine:** To what extent does the present report card permit the teacher to express to the parents the actual progress the child is making?

As the Committee progressed with the study, the above question was constantly being asked. In determining the value of the report card as a means of reporting pupil progress this question was presented for consideration.

The reactions of the teachers to the above question indicated that 33 per cent stated the report card permitted them to express to the parents the actual progress the child was making. Sixty-seven per cent of the teachers stated the report card did not permit them to express to the parents the actual progress the child was making.

A majority of the Committee making this study considered the data given in the reactions of the teachers to the above question as offering evidence indicating the inadequacy of the report card. This evidence is that a majority of the teachers felt the present report card did not permit them to report to the parents the actual progress the child was making.

**Question Ten:** In your opinion, to what extent is the present report card consistent with the learning process?

While this question is somewhat related to Question One regarding the report card being consistent with the educational philosophy of the school, it was felt attention should be focused to determine to what extent the report card is consistent with the learning process.
The data from the teacher questionnaire showed 36 per cent of the teachers felt the report card was consistent with the learning process. Sixty-four per cent indicated the report card was not consistent with the learning process.

The majority of the Committee considered this data, which indicates most of the teachers believe in various degrees that the report card is not consistent with the learning process, to provide evidence indicating a serious weakness of the report card.

**Question Eleven: In your opinion, to what extent does the report card provide stimulation for the slowly maturing child?**

A frequent criticism of the report card given by parents and teachers to the Committee assisting with this study was that it did not provide encouragement for slowly maturing children. It was reported that these children frequently came home with negative frustrating attitudes. Therefore, the above question was asked to determine to what extent the report card provided stimulation for the slowly maturing child.

The reactions of the teachers to this question showed that 23 per cent stated the report card provided stimulation for the slowly maturing child. Seventy-two per cent of the teachers stated the report card did not provide stimulation to the slowly maturing child.

It was the opinion of a majority of the Committee that the data indicating 72 per cent of the teachers who believed the report did not provide stimulation to the slowly maturing child provided evidence indicating a deficiency in this respect.
Question Twelve: In your opinion, to what extent does the report card provide stimulation for the gifted child?

It was the stated opinion of many parents and teachers who met with the Committee making this study that they felt the present report card did not provide stimulation to the gifted child. It was stated that since the "S", "G", and "U" symbols were being used on the present report card signifying "Satisfactory", "Generally Satisfactory", and "Unsatisfactory", if a student was working for a grade, all he had to do was put forth enough effort to keep out of the "U" (the former "F") territory. Therefore, the above question was asked of the teachers.

An analysis of the reactions of the teachers to this question showed that 17 per cent felt the report card provided stimulation for the gifted child. Eighty-three per cent of the teachers felt the report card did not provide stimulation to the gifted child.

The majority of the Committee felt that for 83 per cent of the teachers to report that the report card did not provide stimulation to the gifted child provided evidence indicating a weakness of the report card. Some members believed, however, that the answer to this question and the previous question is found in the area of objectives, child study, and methods, and not in the area of reporting.

Question Thirteen: To what extent does the present report card permit the teacher to give a true and honest report of the child's progress?

It was reported to the Committee making this study by some teachers that if some children take home a report card indicating poor grades they are punished, scolded, or deprived of privileges. Parents sometime assume that their child can obtain any grade he
wishes by putting forth the necessary effort. Many teachers know
that this may be impossible. Therefore, the teacher may hesitate
to give a true and honest report by means of the report card because
of the harmful implications to the child.

The reactions of the teachers to this question showed that
21 per cent stated the report did provide for the teachers to make
a true and honest report of the child's progress. Seventy-nine
per cent stated the report card did not provide for the teachers
to make a true and honest report of the child's progress.

The majority of the Committee making this study composed of
parents, teachers, and administrators felt that for 79 per cent of
the teachers to report the present report card does not permit them
to give a true and honest report of the child's progress to the
parents indicated a serious deficiency. They felt that if the report
was not a true report it had little value.

It is interesting to note the reactions of the teachers to the
above question were somewhat similar to their reactions to Question
Nine regarding the report card showing the actual progress the child
was making.

Question Fourteen: To what extent would parent-teacher conferences
meet your reporting needs?

From the many discussions conducted by the Committee with parents
and teachers regarding the different aspects of reporting pupil
progress, there seemed no substitute for the actual first-hand
knowledge from face-to-face contact between teacher and parent re-
garding the child's progress. Many teachers and parents requested
a desire for parent-teacher conferences to be adopted as a means of
reporting. In order to determine to what extent the teachers desired this method of reporting the above question was submitted.

The data giving the reactions of the teachers to the above question showed that 85 per cent felt that parent-teacher conferences would meet their reporting needs. Fifteen per cent of the teachers felt that parent-teacher conferences would not meet their reporting needs.

The majority of the Committee making this study interpreted the above data to mean that 85 per cent of the teachers favored parent-teacher conferences as a means of reporting pupil progress. Question Fifteen: To what extent would alternating report cards with parent-teacher conferences during the school year meet your reporting needs?

Many of the parents and teachers indicated they would like to have parent-teacher conferences alternating with the report card during the year as a means of reporting pupil progress. This, they felt, would provide the advantages of both. Therefore, the above question was submitted to the teachers for their consideration.

The reactions of the teachers to this question showed that 91 per cent indicated the alternating of report cards with parent-teacher conferences would meet their reporting needs. Nine per cent of the teachers stated that alternating the report card with parent-teacher conferences would not meet their reporting needs.

The unanimous opinion of the Committee was that the above data provided important evidence to be reviewed in considering a revision.
Question Sixteen: To what extent does the present system of marking a child's progress according to his ability meet your desires?

Considerable discussion was given by the Committee assisting with this study in determining the values of marking a child's progress according to his ability. Since the term "ability" as a standard of student achievement, as reported by many teachers, was so difficult to determine, it was felt advisable to present to the teachers the above question.

The reactions of the teachers to the above question showed that 35 per cent felt the present system of marking the child's progress according to his ability would meet their desires. Sixty-five per cent indicated the present system of marking the child's progress according to his ability would not meet their desires.

The Committee considered the data provided by the teachers to the above question indicating a majority of the teachers not in favor of marking a child's progress according to his ability as significant evidence.

Question Seventeen: To what extent would the placing of the child's actual reading level on the report card help in reporting his progress?

Many teachers expressed the opinion before the Committee making this study, that the present report card does not give the specific information regarding the child's progress that the parent is entitled to know. With the plan being used of marking the child's progress according to his ability, he may be enrolled in the sixth grade, but actually reading on a third grade level. It was felt by some teachers and parents that the parent should receive this information on the report card. In order to determine to what extent the teachers desired
the placing of the child's actual reading level on the report card, the above question was presented.

The reactions of the teachers to the above question showed that 83 per cent felt the placing of the child's actual reading level on the report card would help in reporting his progress. Seventeen per cent felt the placing of the child's actual reading level on the report card would not help in reporting his progress.

The above data provided evidence to the Committee that a large majority of the teachers desire the actual reading level to be placed on the report card.

Question Eighteen: To what extent does the present frequency of issuing report cards (four times during the school year) meet your needs?

In evaluating the present reporting system the frequency of issuing report cards was frequently discussed with the Committee assisting with this study. In order to determine to what extent the present plan of issuing report cards four times per year met the needs of the teachers the above question was presented.

The reactions of the teachers to this question showed that 89 per cent felt the present frequency of issuing reports meets their needs. Eleven per cent indicated the present frequency does not meet their reporting needs.

The Committee unanimously decided the evidence provided by the above data as obviously indicating a large majority of the teachers are satisfied with issuing reports four times per year.
ANALYSIS OF QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARENTS

The purpose of this chapter is to determine the attitudes of the parents of the children in the elementary schools of the Ogden School District toward the system of reporting pupil progress in use in the elementary schools during the school year 1955-56 and toward various other methods of reporting. This action is necessary in order to determine the extent the system described herein of reporting meets its purposes in providing the information the parents need and desire to know regarding the child's progress.

It seems logical to assume that in order for any system of reporting to be meaningful, the parents along with the teachers must have some understanding of the philosophy and purposes of education the reporting system represents. In order for the parents to understand the system and believe in it, they should have a vital part in its construction.

The above stated purpose is to be accomplished by describing the data received from the Parent Questionnaire (found in APPENDIX A) showing parent responses to the methods of reporting pupil progress in the Ogden elementary schools, and various other methods. The questions used were decided upon by a Committee composed of three parents, three teachers, three principals, and three administrators.

The sampling decided upon by the Committee was that one questionnaire would be sent into one home out of every twenty children enrolled. This made a total of 490 parents or guardians that received
the questionnaire. Of this number 411 were answered and returned. Four-hundred-and-forty-one out of 490 gave a return of 90 per cent.

The following consists of a listing of each question found in the questionnaire, the reasons for asking the question, and the data as indicated by the reactions of the parents. Since the reasons for asking some of the questions are the same in this questionnaire as those described in the teacher questionnaire the writer considers it unnecessary to give as much introductory information which would only be repetitious. The description of the data is followed, at times, by significant majority opinions expressed by the Committee.

In reviewing the data that follows, it must be remembered that many parents themselves were schooled under the traditional marking system; it may have been the only system they have had experience with. The reporting system described in this study has been in effect five years. Parents have had experience to various degrees in the use of this system. However, in the questions that follow, parents are being asked to express opinions on the different aspects of reporting of which many of them may have had little or no experience or training.

For the convenience of the reader, the data shown in the parent questionnaire found in Appendix A under the headings of great extent and moderate extent have been combined to indicate those favoring the proposal. The data shown in the questionnaire under small extent and very small extent have been combined to indicate those not favoring the proposal. Only the combined figures will be given in this chapter in reporting the reactions of the parents to the questions listed.
Question One: In your opinion, to what extent does the present report card indicate to you the actual progress your child is making in school?

The Committee felt the parents had a right to know the actual progress the child was making in school. In order to determine to what extent the parents felt this was being done the above question was presented.

The reactions of the parents to this question showed that 66 per cent felt the report card indicated to them the actual progress their child was making in school. Thirty-four per cent of the parents felt the report card did not indicate to them the actual progress their child was making in school.

The reactions of the majority of parents to the above question were somewhat in reverse to the reactions given by a majority of the teachers. The Committee making this study considered the data of 65 per cent of the parents indicating the report card did indicate the actual progress of the child was evidence favoring the report card. However, it was feared the 35 per cent of the parents who believed the report card did not indicate the actual progress the child was making, may represent the group of parents whose children receive low grades or the gifted children.

Question Two: To what extent is the present system of marking your child's progress according to his ability satisfactory to you?

Since marking a child according to his "ability" is so difficult to determine by teachers, it was felt advisable to determine to what extent it was satisfactory to the parents.

The data indicating the reactions of the parents showed that 66 per cent felt the present system of marking the child's progress
according to his ability was satisfactory to them. Thirty-two per cent of
the parents felt that this system of marking the child's progress was
not satisfactory to them.

The Committee making this study noted that the reactions of the
parents to the above question were somewhat opposite to the opinions
expressed by the teachers in question sixteen. It was considered as
evidence in favor of the report card for 66 per cent of the parents to
state that marking their child's progress according to his ability as
being satisfactory to them.

Question Three: To what extent is the present report card under-
standable to you in determining the progress your child is making in
school?

In an effort to determine to what extent the language of the
report card and the symbolic letters used were understood by the
parents, the above question was submitted to the parents.

The reactions of the parents to this question showed that
66 per cent stated the present report card was understandable to them
in determining the progress their child was making in school. Thirty-
four per cent of the parents indicated the present report card was not
understandable to them in determining the progress their child was making
in school.

The majority of the Committee considered this data as favoring
the present report card. However, the data was also considered
significant in indicating 34 per cent of the parents stated the report
card was not understandable to them in determining the progress their
child was making in school.
Question Four: In your opinion, to what extent does the present report card provide for encouragement for slowly maturing children?

In order to determine to what extent the report card provided encouragement for the slowly maturing child the above question was offered to the parents for their reactions.

The data taken from the questionnaire for parents showed that 57 per cent felt the present report card provides encouragement for slowly maturing children. Forty-three per cent of the parents felt the present report card did not provide encouragement for slowly maturing children.

Interpretations of the above data by the Committee making this study indicates the following: (1) Since the term "slowly maturing child" was not defined, many parents may not have known what was meant. (2) The majority of parents may never have had a slowly maturing child in school, therefore, they may not have fully understood the meaning. (3) The parents with slowly maturing children were probably in the minority. (4) Many parents may not care to admit they have a slowly maturing child. These opinions by the Committee may have some effect in determining the reasons for the difference between the reactions of the parents and those of the teachers (shown in question eleven of the teacher questionnaire) to the above question.

Question Five: To what extent does the present report card permit you to express to the teacher the things you would like her to know about the child?

It was the opinion of most of the members of the Committee making this study that the report should provide for a two way communication between the home and the school. It was felt that the parent may have
information regarding the child that the teacher needs to know. In order to determine to what extent the report card meets this requirement the above question was provided for consideration.

The reactions of the parents indicated that 45 per cent stated the present report card permitted them to express to the teacher the things they would like her to know about their child. Fifty-five per cent of the parents stated the present report card did not permit them to express to the teacher the things they would like her to know about their child.

It was the opinion of a majority of the Committee making this study that the evidence supplied by the above data indicating the majority of the parents sampled believed the report card did not permit them to express to the teacher the things they would like her to know about the child.

**Question Six:** To what extent does the report card stimulate your child to work harder?

The motivating values of the present report card were frequently discussed in Committee meetings. Many people consider a criterion of a good report to stimulate the student to a greater action. In an effort to determine to what extent the report card stimulates students to work harder, the above question was submitted.

The reactions of the parents to the above question showed that 68 per cent believed the report card stimulated their child to work harder. Thirty-two per cent of the parents believed the report card did not stimulate their child to work harder.

In evaluating the above data it was pointed out by members of the Committee that the majority of the parents sampled felt the report provided stimulation to make their child work harder. No information
is given here for slow maturing children or gifted children.

**Question Seven:** To what extent does the S, G, U, way of marking give you an understanding of your child's progress?

The present report card consists of a check-list type of a report card using symbolic letters of S, G, and U. In an effort to determine to what extent this way of marking gave the parents an understanding of the child's progress the above question was presented.

The data from the parent questionnaire indicated that 62 per cent of the parents reported the "S, G, U," way of marking gave them an understanding of their child's progress. Thirty-eight per cent of the parents reported the "S, G, U," way of marking did not give them an understanding of their child's progress.

The Committee indicated by a majority that the above data provided evidence favoring the present report card.

**Question Eight:** To what extent does the present frequency of issuing report cards (four times during the year) meet your needs?

The reactions of the parents to this question showed that 93 per cent stated the frequency of issuing report cards four times per year met their needs. Only 7 per cent of the parents stated the issuing of report cards four times per year would not meet their needs.

The reactions of the parents were in general agreement with the teachers in being satisfied with the present frequency of issuing reports.

**Question Nine:** To what extent would the placing of your child's actual reading level on his report card meet your desires?

It was felt the parents had the right to know the actual reading level their child was on. Therefore, the above question was submitted
to the parents for their consideration.

The reactions of the parents sampled showed that 91 per cent felt the placing of the child's actual reading level on his report card would meet their desires. Nine per cent of the parents indicated this action would not meet their desires.

Both the parents and the teachers were in general agreement (teachers 83 per cent) regarding the placing of the child's actual reading level on the report card.

**Question Ten:** To what extent would the "ABCDF" way of marking in the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades meet your desires?

In appearing before the Committee conducting this study, many people felt that something needed to be done to bridge the gap between the elementary and junior-high. Since the junior-high was using the traditional method of reporting, it was felt that perhaps it should be adopted in the above named grades. Therefore, the above question was presented to the parents.

The reactions of the parents to this question showed that 78 per cent reported the "ABCDF" way of marking in the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades would meet their desires. Twenty-two per cent of the parents reported the "ABCDF" way of marking in the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades would not meet their desires.

It is significant to note that 78 per cent of the parents sampled indicated to various degrees approval for the "ABCDF" way of marking in the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades.

In the light of the above evidence, the majority of the Committee making this study felt that a more intensive study of evaluation be conducted among parents and teachers regarding child growth.
Question Eleven: To what extent would the narrative type of reporting, that is, where the teacher writes a note or letter telling of your child's progress meet your desires?

The above question was submitted to the parents in order to determine to what extent this method of reporting would meet their desires.

The reactions of the parents to this question showed that 73 per cent stated the narrative type of report would meet their desires. Twenty-seven per cent of the parents stated the narrative type of report would not meet their desires.

The Committee considered this data as evidence indicating the majority of parents (73 per cent) would be satisfied with the narrative way of reporting.

Question Twelve: To what extent would the check-list type of reporting, that is, where the teacher checks a list of items indicating your child's progress, meet your desires?

In order to determine to what extent this type of report met the desires of the parents, the above question was submitted to the parents for their consideration.

In responding to this question, the parents sampled indicated that 64 per cent of them felt the check-list type of reporting would meet their desires. Thirty-six per cent of the parents felt the check-list type of reporting would not meet their desires.

Interpretation of the data by the majority of the Committee are:
(1) A majority of the parents sampled would be satisfied with the check-list way of reporting. (2) The parents were more in support of this way of reporting than the teachers even though the advantages are usually considered with the teachers because of the convenience of
preparing this type of report.

**Question Thirteen:** In your opinion, to what extent does the present report card permit you to receive a true and honest report of your child's progress?

In an effort to determine to what extent the present report card permitted the parents to receive a true and honest report of their child's progress the above question was presented to the parents for their reactions.

The reactions of the parents to the above question showed that 66 per cent believed the present report card permits them to receive a true and honest report of their child's progress. Fifty-four per cent believed the present report card does not permit them to receive a true and honest report of their child's progress.

Regarding the above data, it was agreed by a majority of the committee making this study that for a majority of the parents sampled to believe the present report card did not permit them to receive a true and honest report of their child's progress provided significant evidence. This evidence was also supported by reactions of the teachers wherein they were in harmony with those of the parents to the above question.

**Question Fourteen:** To what extent would parent-teacher conferences regarding your child's progress meet your desires?

The reactions of the parents to this question and the following two questions were placed in the questionnaire to determine to what extent the parents were interested in parent-teacher conferences as a way of reporting. Since many authorities in the field have recognized the value of this way of reporting, and since a large majority of the
teachers expressed a desire for this way of reporting, considerable concern was felt regarding the attitude of the parents.

The data taken from the parent questionnaire showed that 69 per cent of the parents stated that parent-teacher conferences would meet their reporting desires. Eleven per cent of the parents stated that parent-teacher conferences would not meet their desires.

From the above data, a majority of the Committee making this study concluded that 69 per cent of the parents sampled want parent-teacher conferences, and that this data supports the teachers' desires wherein 65 per cent of them wanted parent-teacher conferences.

**Question Fifteen:** To what extent would alternating the report card with parent-teacher conferences during the school year meet your desires?

Since many parents and teachers had expressed a desire for parent-teacher conferences to members of the Committee, and since many had expressed a desire also for some form of written report, the above question was presented to determine the extent alternating of report cards with parent-teacher conferences during the school year would meet the desires of the parents.

The reactions of the parents to the above question showed that 62 per cent felt that alternating the report card with parent-teacher conferences during the school year would meet their desires. Eighteen per cent felt that alternating the report card with parent-teacher conferences during the school year would not meet their desires.

A review of the above data by the Committee was made and a majority concluded that 62 per cent of the parents sampled want to alternate the report card with parent-teacher conferences, and that this data
supports the teachers' desires wherein 91 per cent of them want to alternate the parent-teacher conferences with the report card.

Question Sixteen: To what extent would you be willing to spare the time for parent-teacher conferences?

Since many parents are employed, concern was expressed by members of the Committee as to whether the parents would be willing to spare the time for parent-teacher conferences. The above question was presented in order to determine to what extent they would be willing to spare the time.

The reactions of the parents to the above question indicated that 91 per cent stated they would be willing to spare the time for parent-teacher conferences. Nine per cent of the parents stated they would not be willing to spare the time for parent-teacher conferences.

It was concluded from the above data that 91 per cent of the parents sampled would be willing to spare the time for parent-teacher conferences.
ANALYSIS OF REPLIES TO STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

The purpose of this chapter is to determine the attitudes of the students of the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades in the elementary schools of the Ogden School District toward the system of reporting pupil progress in use in the elementary schools during the school year 1955-56 and the effects this reporting system may have upon these students. This action is necessary in order to determine the extent the system meets its purposes in providing for the needs of the students.

The reason for this action is because reporting is a direct concern to not only the teacher and parents, but also to the child. If the basic purpose of public schools in providing education for all, is to produce maximum individual development, then the reporting system should be consistent with this objective by stimulating continued effective effort to learn. It is generally accepted that a child's social and emotional adjustment has much to do with his educational progress. Since the report card is a report to the student as well as to the parents, he may not be able to understand the complexities of it, and he may become frustrated and confused from the pressures that evolve from it.

In an effort to determine to what extent the report card meets the needs of students, the following questions were presented in the form of a questionnaire to a sampling of 400 students of the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades. All 400 of the students returned the
questionnaire which gave a return of 100 per cent. The details of
this questionnaire are more fully described in the Procedures of this
study. The reason older elementary students were used in the sampling
is because it was felt by a majority of the Committee members making
this study that the judgement of the older students would be more
mature. The student questionnaire is found in APPENDIX A.

The following consists of a listing of each question found in
the questionnaire, the reason for asking the question, and the data
as indicated by the reactions of the students.

Question One: Do you like to receive your report card?

The above question was asked in order to determine to what
extent the students liked to receive their report card.

The reactions of the students to this question showed that
81 per cent of the students stated they liked to receive their report
card almost always; 17 per cent of the students indicated they liked
to receive it sometimes, and 2 per cent of the students indicated they
almost never liked to receive their report card.

Question Two: Do you like to show your report card to and discuss it
with your parents?

The Committee making this study felt it important to determine
the extent to which students like to talk over with their parents the
things that are on the report card. Therefore, the above question
was presented to the students.

The reactions of the students to this question showed 83 per
cent of the students liked to show their report card to and discuss
it with their parents almost always. Thirteen per cent of the students
liked to show their report card to and discuss it with their parents
sometimes, and 4 per cent stated they almost never liked to receive their report card and discuss it with their parents.

**Question Three**: Do you like to show your report card to and discuss it with other boys and girls?

It is generally felt that the report card should be a private matter, and that it should reflect the individual progress pattern of the child. It may have harmful effects if the child makes comparisons with other students. Therefore, the above question was asked in order to determine to what extent students liked to show and discuss their report card with other boys and girls.

The reactions of the students to this question showed 34 per cent stated they almost always liked to show their report card to and discuss it with other students. Fifty-one per cent of the students said they sometimes liked to show their report to and discuss it with other boys and girls. There were only 15 per cent that indicated they almost never liked to show their report to and discuss it with other boys and girls.

**Question Four**: Do you believe teachers are "fair" in the marks they give to you?

The child can not help being affected by the decisions of the teacher concerning his progress. Deep feelings of hate and other harmful attitudes may result if the child believes the teacher has not been fair in the marks she gives. In order to determine how the students felt about this matter of "fairness" in marking the above question was presented.

The reactions of the students to this question showed 51 per cent felt the teachers were almost always fair in the marks they gave.
Fourteen per cent of the students stated teachers were sometimes fair in the marks they gave, and 2 per cent of the students reported that teachers were almost never fair in the marks they gave.

**Question Five: Do your parents offer you money or prizes for good marks?**

It is generally accepted that each child has his own individual growth pattern. The report to the parent should be a record of this growth pattern. For slow maturing children the progress may be slow, and there is nothing the child can do about it. If parents offer prizes, money, or other awards serious conflicts or frustrations may result within the child. In order to determine to what extent parents were conducting this practice with their students the above question was presented.

The reactions of the students to this question showed that 23 per cent of them stated their parents almost always offered them money or prizes for good marks. Thirty-one per cent of the students stated their parents sometimes gave them money or prizes for good marks. There were 46 per cent of the students whose parents almost never gave them money or prizes for bringing home good marks on their report card.

**Question Six: Are your parents ever angry at the teacher because of the marks you get?**

It is generally agreed the report to parents should bring about a strengthening of home and school relations so that all may work together harmoniously in the interest of the child. As a means of determining some of this information, the above question was presented to the students.
The reactions of the students indicated that 12 per cent of them stated their parents were almost always angry at the teacher because of the marks they got. Fourteen per cent of the students stated their parents were sometimes angry at the teacher because of the marks they gave. Seventy-four per cent of the students stated their parents were almost never angry at the teacher because of the marks she gave.

Question Seven: Are your parents ever angry at you for the marks you get?

The reasons for offering this question were the same as the reasons given in question five. With this information in mind parents should not make unreasonable demands upon their children regarding the progress the child is making in school. In order to determine if the parents get angry at the child for the marks he gets the above question was presented.

The reactions of the students to this question showed 14 per cent of the students indicated their parents were almost always angry at them for the marks they received, 25 per cent of the students stated their parents were sometimes angry at them for the marks they get, and 61 per cent of the students sampled indicated their parents were almost never angry at them for the marks they brought home.

Question Eight: Do teachers threaten you with poor marks if you don't do "this" or "that"?

Some teachers use the threat of low marks as a means of motivation. Authorities (2h) generally agree that the threat of failure tends to set up negative frustrating influences on the children that tends to impede educational gains. In order to determine to what extent marks
were used for this purpose the above question was submitted.

The reactions of the students showed 16 per cent of the students reported that almost always their teacher threatened them with low marks if they didn't do "this" or "that", 28 per cent stated sometimes their teacher threatened them with low marks, and 56 per cent of the students reported their teacher almost never threatened them with low marks if they didn't do "this" or "that".

**Question Nine:** Do you believe teachers give low marks in school work to pupils who are naughty in their room?

Many teachers believe marks are needed to motivate students to proper application and conduct. Students may believe the marks they get are not a true indication of their achievement in the subjects indicated, but rather for other reasons that may not be defined. Under these conditions it may be difficult for the parent to determine what is meant. In order to determine to what extent marks were being used in this manner the above question was presented to the students.

The reactions of the students showed that 21 per cent of the students stated they believe teachers almost always give low marks in school work to pupils who are naughty in their room. Forty-two per cent of the students stated that sometimes they believed teachers gave low marks in school work to pupils who are naughty in their room. On the other hand there were 37 per cent of the students who believed teachers almost never gave low marks to students because they were naughty in their room.

**Question Ten:** Do you talk with the teacher about the marks you get on your report card?

Increasing numbers of people are coming to believe that the child, as well as the parents and teacher, is affected by decisions concerning
that child's growth and that he should have a part in it. If the
principles of human worth and democracy are believed in, then the
process of learning self evaluation is vital. In order to determine
to what extent students talk with the teacher regarding the marks they
should get, the above question was presented.

The reactions of the students to the above question showed that
41 per cent of the students stated they almost always talked with the
teacher about the marks they should get, and 31 per cent reported they
sometimes talked with the teacher about the marks they get on their
report card. However, 55 per cent of the students reported they
almost never talked with the teacher about the marks they receive on
their report card.

**Question Eleven:** Do you feel you must cheat in order to get a good
report card?

Undesirable social qualities such as cheating must be avoided in
any reporting system. In order to determine to what extent the present
report card stimulated such behavior, the above question was presented.

The reactions of the students to this question showed that 9 per
cent of the students considered in the sample reported that they
almost always felt they must cheat in order to get a good report
card. Only 4 per cent stated they sometimes had to cheat in order to
get a good report card. Eighty-seven per cent of the students reported
they felt they almost never had to cheat in order to get a good report
card.

**Question Twelve:** Does the report card make you feel like wanting to
do a better job next term?

It is generally felt that a good report should stimulate the child
to want to improve. In order to determine if the report card provided this, the above question was submitted to the students.

The reactions of the students showed that 70 per cent of the students reported the report card almost always made them feel like wanting to do a better job next term. Sixteen per cent stated the report card sometimes made them feel like doing a better job next term. Fourteen per cent reported the report card almost never made them feel like wanting to do a better job next term.

**Question Thirteen: Do the grades on your report card ever make you feel like hating the teacher?**

A good report card should bring about good relations at school as well as at home. Effective learning cannot be carried on when a student has an attitude of hate toward the teacher. In order to determine the degree to which the report card caused such negative attitudes the above question was presented to the students.

The reactions of the students to this question showed 15 per cent of the students reported that almost always the grades on their report card made them feel like hating the teacher. Sixteen per cent of the students reported that sometimes the grades on their report card made them feel like hating the teacher. However, 69 per cent of the students sampled reported the grades they received on their report cards did not make them feel like hating the teacher.

**Understanding the marking system**

In an effort to determine if the students understood the "500" marking system, questions were asked of the students regarding each.
The reactions of the students indicated that 91 per cent of the students indicated they knew what the "S" means. Ninety-three per cent of the students reported they knew what the "G" means, and 97 per cent of the students reported they knew what the "U" means on the present report card.
SUMMARY

The primary purpose of the research project undertaken in this study was to evaluate the pupil reporting practices in the elementary schools of the Ogden City School District in determining to what extent these practices meet their purposes and to determine possible changes. In the introduction, the importance of this study was indicated, the problem defined, the sources of data were given, and the procedures used in this investigation were stated.

After critically analyzing professional literature, criteria were developed to appraise the findings. This chapter is a summarization of data obtained for this study from teacher, pupil, and parent questionnaires arranged in relation to the criteria. The application of these criteria to the reactions in the questionnaires provided the basis for determining the degree to which the purposes of reporting were met, and as a means of indicating where improvement could be suggested.

The following is a statement of each criterion and a summary of the reactions to the questionnaire as related to the criteria.

Criterion One

The method of reporting used in a school should be evaluated cooperatively by administrators, teachers, and parents in the light of the findings of research and study in child growth and development.

The reporting system described in this study was designed by school administrators. There were no teachers or parents that participated as members of the committee responsible for its construction.
Criterion Two

The reporting system should be in harmony with the educational philosophy and objectives of the school it serves.

The data obtained from the teacher questionnaire indicated that 65 per cent of the teachers stated the report card was consistent with the educational philosophy of the school district. However, a significant 35 per cent of the teachers stated it was not consistent with the educational philosophy of the district.

Sixty-four per cent of the teachers stated the report card was not consistent with the learning process.

Criterion Three

The report should include an estimate of the growth of a child in all aspects of growth, physical, social, intellectual, and emotional. Many authorities believe the parent-teacher conferences can supply this need.

The data obtained from the teacher questionnaire showed 85 per cent of the teachers stated the parent-teacher conference method of reporting would meet their needs. Ninety-one per cent of the teachers indicated that alternating the report card with parent-teacher conferences would meet their reporting needs.

Eighty-nine per cent of the parents indicated the parent-teacher conference method of reporting their child's progress would meet their desires. Ninety-one per cent of the parents indicated that they would be willing to spare the time for parent-teacher conferences. Eighty-two per cent of the parents indicated that alternating the report card with parent teacher conferences during the school year would meet their desires.
Fifty-one per cent of the teachers preferred the narrative type of report, and 73 per cent of the parents stated they preferred the narrative type of report.

**Criterion Four**

The report should provide for the individual growth pattern of children. The progress of the slow child as well as the gifted child should be shown.

Seventy-two per cent of the teachers felt the report card did not provide encouragement for the slowly maturing child.Eighty-three per cent of the teachers felt the report card did not provide stimulation and encouragement to the gifted child.

Fifty-seven per cent of the parents indicated the report card provided encouragement for the slowly maturing child. On the other hand, 43 per cent of the parents stated the report card did not provide encouragement to the slowly maturing child.

The data from the student questionnaire showed 54 per cent of the students reported their parents offered money or prizes to them for good marks; assuming the child could bring home the mark he wishes by putting forth the effort and disregarding the sensitive feelings of the slow maturing child. Forty-six per cent of the students stated their parents almost never offered them prizes for good marks.

**Criterion Five**

The report to parents should bring about a strengthening of home, school, and community relationships through common interest in the child. The report should help foster improved family relations and help parents avoid making unreasonable demands upon their children.

The data from the student questionnaire showed that 74 per cent of
the students stated their parents did not get angry at the teacher because of the marks they received. Twenty-six per cent of the students stated their parents did get angry at the teacher for the marks they get.

Sixty-one per cent of the students reported their parents almost never got angry at them for the marks they get. Thirty-nine per cent of the students reported their parents did get angry at them for the marks they received.

Sixty-nine per cent of the students reported the grades on their report card did not make them feel like hating the teacher. Thirty-one per cent of the students reported the grades they received made them feel like hating the teacher.

Seventy-nine per cent of the teachers reported the report card did not permit them to give a true and honest report of the child's progress to the parents.

Fifty-five per cent of the parents reported the report card permitted them to express to the teacher the things they would like the teacher to know about the child. On the other hand, 45 per cent of the parents stated the report card did not permit them to report to the teacher the things they would like to know about the child.

**Criterion Six**

The report should indicate the progress of not only the child individually, but his social group adjustment as well. Comparison with others should be avoided. Jealousy and other anti-social traits fostered by comparative marking should be eliminated.

Data from the student questionnaire showed that 87 per cent of the students reported they did not need to cheat in order to get a good report card.
Sixty-three per cent of the students believed teachers gave low marks to students who are "naughty" in their room.

Sixty-eight per cent of the parents reported the system of marking their child's progress according to his ability was satisfactory to them.

Sixty-five per cent of the teachers reported in the teacher questionnaire that the system of marking a child's progress according to his ability was not satisfactory to them.

**Criterion Seven**

The report should be a confidential matter to the parent, child, and teacher.

According to the data received from the student questionnaire, 85 per cent of the students stated they liked to show their report card to and discuss it with other boys and girls.

Eighty-three per cent of the teachers felt the placing of the child's actual reading level on the report card would help in reporting his progress.

Ninety-one per cent of the parents reported the placing of the child's actual reading level upon the report would meet their desires.

**Criterion Eight**

Single symbolic grades are not an accurate means of reporting pupil progress. One cannot tell what such a mark means unless the standard from which the mark was derived is also known.

Fifty-two per cent of the teachers stated the present system of using the "SGU" way of marking permits the teacher to express to the parent the actual progress the child is making.

The data from the parent questionnaire indicated 62 per cent of the
parents stated the "SCU" way of marking permitted them to have an understanding of their child's progress.

Seventy-six per cent of the teachers felt the "ABCD" way of marking would meet their reporting needs in the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades.

Seventy-eight per cent of the parents stated the "ABCD" way of marking would meet their reporting needs in the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades.

**Criterion Nine**

The trend has been toward fewer and more meaningful reports. Eighty-nine per cent of the teachers felt the present frequency of issuing reports to parents (four times during the year) met their desires.

Ninety-three per cent of the parents felt the present frequency of issuing report cards met their needs.

Data received in the student questionnaire showed 98 per cent of the students felt the teacher was fair in the marks she gave.

**Criterion Ten**

The report should require a minimum of clerical work. However, a great deal of the teacher's thought should be given to evaluating the child's progress.

The data obtained from the teacher questionnaire showed 62 per cent of the teachers felt the preparing of the report card placed a burden of clerical work upon the teacher.

**Criterion Eleven**

The report should provide for a program of guidance. It should stimulate teachers, and parents to study the child more intensively. It should encourage the child to want to improve.
Ninety-four per cent of the teachers felt the present report card is not diagnostic, that is, it does not give reasons for the cause of the behavior indicated or tell how it can be improved.

Eighty-six per cent of the students stated the report card made them feel like wanting to do a better job next term.

Sixty-eight per cent of the parents felt the report card stimulated their child to work harder.
CONCLUSIONS

From a study of the data gathered and presented from this investigation, the following conclusions have been reached:

1. A program of continuous evaluation of the reporting system by administrators, teachers, and parents through teamwork and cooperation is important.

2. A clearly defined statement of the educational philosophy and the objectives of the school in simple understandable language is essential.

3. The reporting system should be worked out democratically with the cooperative participation of administrators, teachers and parents.

4. Measuring a child's progress in terms of fixed standards are inaccurate unless such standards can be defined.

5. There is no one single best method of reporting. Each of the different ways have advantages and disadvantages. The type suitable to a school will be determined by the educational philosophy of the school and the needs of the people concerned as worked out by cooperative group planning.

6. The most widely discussed plan found in recent literature is the parent-teacher conference method of reporting.

7. The data indicated that parents favored the present report card more than the teachers did.

8. The present frequency of issuing reports (four times per year) is satisfactory to a large majority of parents and teachers.

9. A majority of teachers and parents agreed that the report card did not permit the parents to receive a true and honest report of the child's progress.

10. Most of the students like to receive their report cards.

11. Most of the students indicated the receiving of their report card helped to make them want to work harder the next term.
12. A higher percentage of approval was indicated by both parents and teachers for the parent-teacher conference method of reporting than was shown for any other method.

13. By percentage, the next choice indicated by both parents and teachers was the plan of alternating the report card with parent-teacher conferences during the school year.

14. Ninety-one per cent of the parents indicated they would be willing to spare the time for parent-teacher conferences.

15. A majority of teachers and parents liked the narrative type of report, that is, where the teacher wrote a note or letter stating the child’s progress.

16. The report card is not a private matter with students.
Eighty-four per cent of the students indicated that they liked to show their report card to and discuss it with other boys and girls.

17. The individual growth pattern of children may not be understood by many parents since 54 per cent of the children reported their parents offered them money or prizes for good marks on the report card.

18. A point in favor of the report card was indicated wherein most of the students reported they liked to show their report card to and discuss it with their parents.

19. Interest in the type of report that would provide an estimate of the growth of the "whole" child in all aspects of growth was shown by parents and teachers wherein they indicated by majority preference for the parent-teacher conference and narrative way of reporting. These two methods of reporting are generally recognized by authorities favoring the child development approach.

20. As a means of bridging the gap between the elementary and junior-high school, a majority of the teachers and parents indicated a preference for the "ABCDEF" method of reporting in the 4th, 5th, and 6th grades.

21. Research has shown that the use of symbolic letters or numbers is not an accurate means of reporting pupil progress unless the standard from which the symbols were derived is also known.

22. If changes in the system of reporting pupil progress are to be made they must come gradually, and any change must be built on the understanding of all who are to use and receive the reports.
23. The values of parent-teacher conferences are many as shown by the different authorities that have made studies and reports in schools where parent-teacher conferences are practiced. The hazards lie in the areas of teacher, principals, and parents not believing in it and not being adequately trained for it.
RECOMMENDATIONS
REPORT CARDS ALTERNATING WITH PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

The following recommendations are given as a result of the findings and conclusions of this study:

1. It is suggested that action be taken by the school administration to provide a clearly defined statement of the educational philosophy and the objectives of the elementary schools of the Ogden City School District.

2. Steps should be taken to have a program of continuous evaluation in the Ogden City Schools of the reporting practices to be done by administrators, teachers, and parents through cooperative effort.

3. That the parent-teacher conference method of reporting be studied and used in the elementary schools of the Ogden City School District with the following reservations:

   (1) That a program of inservice-training for teachers and parents be provided in the areas of organizing, planning, and conducting parent-teacher conferences.

   (2) That the training program precede the adoption of parent-teacher conferences in the schools.

   (3) That parent-teacher conferences be started immediately in the schools where the parents and teachers are trained, ready, and acceptable to it.

   (4) That the teachers be thoroughly prepared through study and planning before scheduling parent-teacher conferences.

   (5) That the change over from the present reporting plan be gradual by beginning in the primary grades and expanding into the intermediate grades.

   (6) That the parent-teacher conferences be used as an alternating plan with report cards two times each per year.

   (7) That the administration take the necessary steps to organize for the parent-teacher conferences to be a part of the regular school day.
(8) The plan found on the following pages is offered as a suggested guide in organizing, planning, and conducting parent-teacher conferences.

Parent-teacher Conferences a Solution to the Problem

To eliminate some of the deficiencies of reporting by means of a report card, a more adequate method of reporting must be used to meet the needs of students, teachers, and parents. A method that will provide an opportunity for parents and teachers to share their knowledge of a child and plan together to guide his development. A method that will help parents in understanding that every child grows at his own rate, and that his development should be evaluated in terms of his own interests, abilities and capacities for learning and for contributing to group living. A method that will help the teacher to be sure that parents are aware of the fact that each child is growing and learning all the time and that home and school together are responsible for guiding his growth. A method that will give teachers an opportunity to impart to parents a more complete description of the child's life in school than would be possible in a written report. A method that will give parents an opportunity to tell the teacher many interesting and helpful facts about the child's life at home. A method that will give parents and teachers an opportunity to share in the improvement of the life experiences of the "whole" child.

The Parent-teacher Conference is the suggested method of reporting to meet these needs. It is the proposed plan for the Elementary Schools of the Ogden City School District.

Background and Preparation Necessary

The success of the Parent-teacher Conference method of reporting pupil progress is determined by: (1) the sincere belief of its worth,
(2) the willingness to give of time and energy, (3) the planning, (4) the skill in conducting, (5) the following objectives.

Many authorities in the field of education believe that it is the most effective means of reporting pupil progress. The success will largely be determined by the degree of preparation. The teachers, parents, and community must be receptive to the idea. The planning must be done cooperatively by administrators, teachers, and parents in the light of the findings of research and study in child growth and development. Once the plan is agreed upon, in-service training is necessary to develop teachers in the art of holding a conference, establishing the necessary rapport, making the interview meaningful, counseling and guidance, bringing the conference to a proper conclusion, and summarizing the conversation for record purposes.

**Objectives**

In planning the Parent-teacher Conference, the measure of success achieved will be determined by the sincere belief of administrators, teachers, and parents in the worth of certain objectives. Hansen (13) in quoting Buhler and others offers the following objectives to be considered in the planning of conferences:

1. Learning details about the child's school environment that may have direct relationship to his development.

2. Learning details about the child's home environment that have direct relationship to his development.

3. Interpretation by both the parents and teacher of the total of the child's experiences and reaction to those experiences while at home and at school. Often parents and teachers have quite different impressions of a child's persistence or initiative; they see him in very different kinds of situations. This sharing of accounts of behavior of the child tends to unify parents' and teachers' understanding of him.
4. Planning the conferences cooperatively assures that a consistent guidance plan can be given so that the child meets the same kinds of demands at home as at school.

**General Plans**

The authority for putting the parent-teacher plan into operation will come from the Superintendent. After this word is given, much planning is necessary. Provisions should be made for the following:

1. **Parent-teacher conferences must be a vital part of the regular school program.** Time must be set aside for them as part of the school day.

2. **The school principal must have a thorough understanding of the values of parent-teacher conferences.**

3. **Teachers must be well trained in the skills of conducting parent-teacher conferences.**

The principal or teacher of the school will call a general meeting of parents and teachers at which the benefits may be decided upon. The date, time, and general plan of scheduling may be discussed.

**The Principal's Part in Planning**

As the chief administrator of the local school, the principal has the responsibility of motivating an awareness of the important place reporting has in the development of successful home-school relationships. After this has been achieved, the next step is to provide in-service education of teachers in the area of constructing parent-teacher conferences. Some of the ways this may be accomplished are as follows:

1. **Provide workshops on how to conduct a parent conference with demonstrations and role playing.**

2. **Make a list of questions that parents commonly ask regarding the school and the progress the child is making. Discuss these in meeting.**

3. **Give individual teachers help on difficult problems. Conduct case analysis, and help formulate guiding principles that may be used in other situations.**

4. **Encourage group study meetings with parents. Have them become an active part of the planning and evaluating.**
In addition to the training aspects of the program, the principal must assume the leadership in the overall scheduling of the conference, and constantly build toward complete cooperation between the home and the school.

The Teacher's Responsibility

The teacher must possess a great deal of skill to give a meaningful evaluation of a pupil's progress and to have the parents feel comfortable in asking questions and in making contributions. The teacher must be genuine, friendly, and relaxed. The teacher must treat the parent's comments with interest and respect (8).

In preparing for the conference, the teacher assembles information about the child's growth and development. She prepares a folder for each child containing samples of work collected over a period of time, progress charts, attendance records, and anecdotal records of actual incidents.

In order for the conference to be really successful, the teachers should keep the following in mind:

1. Parents on the whole are anxious for their children to do well.
2. Parents and teachers together can guide the child better than either one alone.
3. Often, parents may offer valid and helpful criticisms and suggestions.
4. Adults as well as children have need for security and recognition.

The teacher arranges a comfortable place for the conference. Adult chairs placed at a table may be more informal than the formal authoritative effects of the teacher speaking from behind her desk. She should make the conference a two-way exchange of ideas.
General Guides for Conferences

D'Evelyn (8) suggests a number of points of importance which might be helpful as guides in parent-teacher conferences:

Not forgetting that each parent in unique in his personality and his problems, it may be helpful to list a few guides to conferences in general.

1. Responsibility for the success or failure of a conference rests primarily with the teacher. It is well to remember that success is relative, and each conference must be judged according to its own circumstances and results.

2. It is well to arrange for no interruptions during a conference. Nothing is more disturbing to the serious efforts of trying to think through a problem than to be interrupted at a crucial moment.

3. It is easier to build a cooperative relationship if the teacher is not seated behind a desk. Behind a desk the teacher is in the place of authority, not partnership.

4. The teacher's greeting should be friendly and relaxed. If he is hurried or tense, the parent will know it. It is difficult to discuss a problem with someone who looks as if he wished you were not there, or would soon leave.

5. Listen, and then listen some more. The teacher did not invite the parent in to deliver a lecture to him, but to get, as well as to give, help. Encourage the parent to talk, and then listen to what he has to say.

6. Find out how the parent is thinking and feeling about his child. This is important, because the teacher cannot understand the child's behavior until he knows the parent's attitude.

7. If a parent says he is worried about his child's behavior, follow through. Find out why he is worried. The teacher should not assume that he knows why. He and the parent may not feel the same way about the child.

8. If a parent gives what he thinks is the reason for a child's behavior, accept it, and lead the discussion on to the consideration of other possible causes. Behavior is the result of many causative factors, not of one.
9. If a parent suggests a plan of action accept it if at all possible to do so. It is better for the parent to try it than for the teacher to force one of his own. One of the goals in parent counseling is to try to get the parent to take the initiative. If the parent's plan fails, it is always possible to suggest others that may strike nearer to the root of the difficulty.

10. If the parent cannot suggest reasons for a child's behavior, or plans of action to deal with it, the teacher might suggest alternatives for joint consideration. "This might be a possibility. What do you think? You know all the facts of the situation better than I do." Or, "We might try this and see what happens. It may take us a while to find the source of the difficulty." Such an approach makes the parent a participant in the final decision for tentative plans, and leads to discussion that helps him to accept the plan as his own.

11. It does not help to argue with a parent. Arguing will arouse resentment and resistance.

12. It is better not to assume that a parent wants help or advice. Such assumptions usually bring resistance, because it implies a form of criticism.

13. Most parents cannot be objective about their own children. Therefore, do not criticize, either directly or indirectly. Criticism is fatal to the building of a cooperative relationship.

14. Avoid giving direct advice when the parent gives a statement of his problem and then leans back, saying, "Tell me what to do." Let any advice or suggestions grow out of mutual discussion and a growing insight on the part of the parent into the reasons for the behavior.

15. Do not get ahead of the parent in his thinking. In other words, the teacher should not try to push his thinking onto a parent before the parent is ready to see it through a process of discussion and mutual thinking.

16. Try to be aware of sensitive spots, and avoid embarrassing the parent by noting facial expressions, gestures, and voice. These all give a clue to the parent's emotions.

17. Be accepting. That is, accept anything the parent tells you without showing surprise or disapproval. If the teacher cannot do this, he will not get an honest picture of the parent's attitudes and feelings.
18. The teacher should be ready to recognize problems that are so difficult as to prevent him from giving sufficient help to the parent. Parents with complex emotional problems should be referred to the consulting psychologist of guidance specialist on the staff, who in turn will refer the individual to a psychiatrist if there is such need. If there is no one on the school staff to whom the teacher can refer, he should try to have available the names of specialists in the community. In referring, it is easy to say, "I wish I could help you, but I feel you need more help than I can give you. I have the names of two or three consultants if you wish them, or you may know someone yourself."

If the teacher is in a community where there is no one to whom he can refer the parent, he can do his best in seeing the troublesome behavior symptoms in the child, but he should not let the parent become involved in pouring out his emotions repeatedly. It will not help the parent beyond giving the temporary relief of tension that comes from telling your troubles to any good listener. This relief is necessary, but unless the teacher can help the parent go on to constructive planning, he is not giving real help.

19. It is helpful to try to close the conference on a constructive, a pleasant, or a forward-going note, such as a plan for further consultation, a definite date for the next conference, a statement of encouragement or reassurance, a statement of a plan for cooperative action.

If it is possible to state one basic implication brought out through the counseling techniques illustrated in this manual, it is this: Successful counseling depends on the relationship between the parent and the teacher. It must be a relationship that permits the parent to express his thoughts and his feelings with the knowledge that he will be listened to and understood by a sympathetic and accepting person, who in understanding and accepting helps him in turn to understand and accept both himself and his child. In looking back over the reported conferences, it will be seen that it was in those instances where such a relationship was established that the parent and the teacher moved on together to intelligent and constructive planning for the child.

Scheduling should be coordinated through the principal's office, so that when parents have more than one child in the same school, their appointments should be on the same day at successive periods.
The teacher sends parents an invitation similar to the following suggested form letter that could be used for this purpose:

School
Date

Dear Mr. and Mrs. ____________________

I am looking forward to sharing information with you about ____________________.

You are invited to come to my room, ____________________,
from __________ to __________.

Sincerely,

__________________________

teacher

If the above date and time are convenient, please sign below. If not convenient, please suggest a time which will be.

__________________________

parent's signature

New time suggested ____________________

This invitation is sent home with each child.

Parent's Responsibilities

The parents make arrangements to attend the conference. The time for reporting is accepted or adjusted by them. They should keep time and place firmly in mind, and plan to arrive on schedule. The parents should have information for the teacher well in mind. They should know what specific information they want from the teacher. They should plan to stay within the scheduled time.

Both father and mother should be encouraged to attend.
Student's Responsibilities

The child helps decide what samples of work should go into his folder to be shown to his parents. He knows he has a share in the reporting. He makes frequent progress appraisals with the teacher. He discusses with the teacher the subjects in which he feels he does well in, and the subjects in which he needs help. He talks about his special interests. He helps evaluate with the teacher his study habits and skills. He has a chance to compare his previous work with his present work and evaluate his own progress.

Conducting the Actual Parent-Teacher Conference

The atmosphere of the room where the conference is held should reflect orderliness, friendship, and warmth. The teacher and the parent should be seated comfortably at a table and there should be no interruptions. The child's folder and other records should be taken from the file and placed conveniently on the table.

When the parent enters the room and throughout the interview the teacher is to be friendly, relaxed, and genuine in inviting the parent to participate. The experience should be looked upon as something very real and natural. Remembering, it is a very natural thing for the teacher who lives with the child at school and the parent who lives with the child at home to get together and compare notes.

The teacher should see himself as the leader in the conference, but he should not dominate it. He should also see the parents as partners who have a big stake in the child's progress. He should talk on the level of the parent and avoid educational terms that may be meaningless and confusing to the parent.

To begin a conference, a good technique is to open the conference by expressing pleasure of having the child in the room and by describing
some interesting observation about the child or to relate some activity
the child participated in recently (16). No matter if it is just a
little thing, if it shows progress it is worth telling. It is a good
idea for the teacher to be on the lookout for all such bits of progress
to tell the parents, because it is the little bits of progress that make
up the bigger things. It is encouraging to both parents and the child
to be noticed and commented upon.

The teacher needs to give a thoughtful and honest evaluation of the
child's progress because parents have a right to know what he is achiev-
ing. The teacher should mention to the parent specifically how the
child has improved. This is done by leading the discussion from the
child's stronger areas to the weaker ones. The teacher and parent will
talk about the importance of not making the child feel that he is a fail-
ure and about the value of helping him to recognize the things which he
really does nicely as well as where improvement is needed. The teacher
may help the parent accept the child as he is, to be content with the
abilities he has; and to encourage him to do all he can without pushing
him to achievements for which he is not ready (16).

By being friendly and courteous and kindly and considerate and
having a deep feeling of respect for the parent, the teacher creates
a bond of friendship whereby information that is valuable can be received
and given easily.

The reporting conference should be a two way road; the parents should
be free to ask questions, and to tell of the things they know about the
child. The teacher listens carefully. Her willingness to do so comes
from the feeling that the parents have much to give. The things the parents
speak of may be the very clue the teacher needs for better understanding
the child. The teacher is ready to explain what is being done at school
and why it is being done. This gives evidence to the parent that what is done is done with a reason. The teacher listens to the suggestions given and considers them carefully. The teacher is careful not to condemn or blame the parent. She does not belittle what the parents do. She understands the things the parents do may be right for them as they see it, and that they can only do as they see. This attitude prevents antagonism and resentment.

As the contents of the folder are examined by the parents, comparisons of work done earlier in the year can be made with work done recently. The progress or the lack of it can be observed. The child's study habits and skills may be discussed as well as his knowledge of the subjects.

Other aspects of the child's growth and development are considered. The child's physical condition and health habits may be discussed. Such as his eating habits at home or at school. Does he get enough rest? Does he participate in games? Does he get tired easily? Is his progress being slowed down by physical deficiencies?

The child's social adjustment is important. What are his relations with others? Is he comfortable and happy with other children? Does he make friends easily? Is he developing thoughtfulness? Does he share with others? What about his qualities of leadership? Is he accepted? Does he have good ideas? Does he share responsibility? The parents and teacher talk about these things in the conference.

The child's mental and emotional growth may be discussed. Does the child show self control? Is he reasonably secure? Does he enjoy completing a task? Does he show carefulness, promptness, and self reliance? The child's use of books may be discussed. Does he share books? Does he like to read them. Does he comprehend what he reads? Does he make use
of the library? The child's progress in language may be discussed.
Does he use words well in expressing his thoughts? Other aspects of the
growth and development are discussed as needed (16).

When the child has a learning or behavior problem the teacher and
parents try to identify it, then move on to exploring the reasons. It
is best for each to decide what he can do to help after the child's needs
have been made clear. The teacher invites the parent to make suggestions.
Together they work out ideas and keep the focus of the conference upon
the child and his growth and development.

The teacher closes the conference by thanking the parents for com-
ing and extends an invitation to visit the school often. The parents
should leave feeling they understand their child a little better, and
that they have a more complete understanding of the school program and
their child's progress.

A few careful notes are made by the teacher of the conference. This
information may be used as reference for the next interview. It may also
aid in reminding the teacher of necessary action to be taken. The
amount of note taking that will be done will be determined by the
circumstances. It is determined by deciding each time what is the
courteous, considerate, and useful thing to do.

A report of the parent-teacher conference should be kept in the
cumulative record folder. A certain amount of continuity and consistency
from year to year. The details of this report should be worked out by
the school.

At the close of the conference, the teacher will make an evaluation.
This may be done by asking questions such as the following as stated by
Evans, in quoting Tantum (11):
1. Was the parent received cordially and made to feel welcome?
2. Was the attitude of the parent significant?
3. Could I find ways to assure the parent that I knew this child, that he was liked, that he did many things well?
4. What did we talk about? The child's social growth? Physical growth? Emotional growth? The child's ability to think and use skills?
5. What did I learn that helped me to understand the child?
6. Did the conference end on a friendly note with a hope of future contacts?
7. Was understanding furthered for both parent and teacher?
8. Did we plan together ways of helping the child?

Another questionnaire may be completed by the parent. The details of this form may be prepared by the school. These reactions may be recorded for the improvement of future conferences.

Values of Parent-teacher Conferences

As a method for reporting pupil progress, the Parent-teacher Conference has these advantages:

1. It provides a means for parents and teachers to communicate freely in pooling information for working together for the benefit of the child.

2. It makes possible to give a great deal of significant information about the child's progress that would not be permitted by a symbolic letter, number, check-mark or note.

3. Each child's progress is evaluated in terms of his own potentialities instead of rating him with how well he compares with others.

4. It provides an opportunity for the teacher to gain a better understanding of the home and family background of the child.

5. The child's future progress is considered instead of just his present status as is indicated on the report card.

6. A common bond of understanding can be built between the teacher, the parent, and the child.

7. It helps to clarify goals.

8. It provides an opportunity to report on the growth of the "whole" child including physical, social, emotional, as well as the intellectual development.
9. Encourages parent participation in the program of evaluation.

10. Gives assurances to the parent that the teacher values the child as a person and is anxious for his success.
LITERATURE CITED


(3) Barnes, Melvin W., et al. Report Cards Should Be Designed to Be Outmoded. Nation's Schools 52:54-56; October 1953.


(14) Harris, Fred E. What About Current Practices In Grading, Promoting And Reporting To Parents.


(37) Whitman, Howard. BOFU, SNFU or ABC. Colliers 134:58-60; September, 1956.

APPENDIX A

Questionnaires
QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

As you know, an evaluation of our reporting system is being made in the Ogden City Schools. In order to make this study more complete, the following questionnaire has been prepared. Please fill out the questionnaire and hand in to your principal. You do not need to sign your name unless you would like to.

1. In your opinion, to what extent is the philosophy underlying our report card consistent with the educational philosophy of the Ogden City Schools?  
   - Great | Moderate | Small | Very Small
   - 14  | 31  | 31  | 0

2. In your opinion, to what extent does the effort spent in preparing the report card place a burden of clerical work upon the teacher?  
   - Great | Moderate | Small | Very Small
   - 16  | 46  | 26  | 12

3. In your experience, to what extent is the comment space on the report card used by parents and teachers?  
   - Great | Moderate | Small | Very Small
   - 06  | 24  | 39  | 31

4. To what extent does the report card provide usable information on the various phases of child development for future use on the cumulative record?  
   - Great | Moderate | Small | Very Small
   - 06  | 25  | 44  | 25

5. To what extent is the present report card diagnostic, that is, does it give reasons for the cause of the behavior indicated and tell how it can be improved?  
   - Great | Moderate | Small | Very Small
   - 02  | 04  | 28  | 66

6. To what extent, in your opinion, would the ABCD system of marking meet our reporting needs in the 4th, 5th, and 6th grades?  
   - Great | Moderate | Small | Very Small
   - 36  | 40  | 14  | 10
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Great</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Small</th>
<th>Very small</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7. To what extent would the narrative type of report, that is, where the teacher writes a note or letter telling of the child's progress, meet your reporting needs?</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. To what extent would the check-list type of report card, that is, where the teacher checks a list of items indicating a child's progress, meet your reporting needs?</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.36</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. To what extent does the present report card permit you to express to the parents the actual progress the child is making?</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>.36</td>
<td>.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. In your opinion, to what extent is the present report card consistent with the learning process?</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.34</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. In your opinion, to what extent does the report card provide stimulation for the slowly maturing child?</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. In your opinion, to what extent does the present report card provide stimulation for the gifted child?</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.33</td>
<td>.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. To what extent does the present report card permit the teacher to give a true and honest report of the child's progress?</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.35</td>
<td>.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. To what extent would parent-teacher conferences meet your reporting needs?</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>.44</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. To what extent would alternating report cards with parent-teacher conferences during the school year meet your reporting needs?</td>
<td>.61</td>
<td>.30</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Great Extent</td>
<td>Moderate Extent</td>
<td>Small Extent</td>
<td>Very Small Extent</td>
</tr>
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<td>----------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. To what extent does the present system of marking a child's progress according to his ability meet your desires?</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>.37</td>
<td>.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. To what extent would the placing of the child's actual reading level on the report card help in reporting his progress?</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. To what extent does the present frequency of issuing reports (4 times during the school year) meet your needs?</td>
<td>.53</td>
<td>.36</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARENTS

The present elementary school report card has been used in the Ogden City Schools for five years. At the present time a study is being made to find how well it meets our needs. In order to make our study more complete, the following questionnaire has been prepared to find the reactions of parents. Please fill out this questionnaire and return it to school immediately.

1. In your opinion, to what extent does the present report card indicate to you the actual progress your child is making in school? [1.14  .52  .25  .09]

2. To what extent is the present system of marking your child's progress according to his ability satisfactory to you? [1.22  .46  .22  .10]

3. To what extent is the present report card understandable to you in determining the progress your child is making in school? [1.20  .46  .26  .08]

4. In your opinion, what extent does the present report card provide for encouragement for slowly maturing children? [1.22  .35  .26  .17]

5. To what extent does the present report card permit you to express to the teacher the things you would like her to know about your child? [1.14  .31  .25  .30]

6. To what extent does the report card stimulate your child to work harder? [1.22  .46  .22  .10]

8. To what extent does the present frequency of issuing report cards (4 times during the year) meet your needs? & \( \frac{54}{39} \) & \( \frac{05}{02} \) & great moderate small very extent extent extent extent

9. To what extent would the placing of your child's actual reading level on his report card meet your desires? & \( \frac{69}{22} \) & \( \frac{06}{03} \) & great moderate small very extent extent extent extent

10. To what extent would the ABCD way of marking in the 4th., 5th., and 6th., grades meet your desires? & \( \frac{51}{27} \) & \( \frac{13}{09} \) & great moderate small very extent extent extent extent

11. To what extent would the narrative type of reporting, that is, where the teacher writes you a note or letter telling of your child's progress, meet your desires? & \( \frac{49}{24} \) & \( \frac{16}{17} \) & great moderate small very extent extent extent extent

12. To what extent would the check-list type of a report card, that is where the teacher checks a list of items indicating your child's progress, meet your desires? & \( \frac{24}{40} \) & \( \frac{19}{14} \) & great moderate small very extent extent extent extent

13. In your opinion, to what extent does the present report card permit you to receive a true and honest report of your child's progress, & \( \frac{12}{34} \) & \( \frac{40}{14} \) & great moderate small very extent extent extent extent

14. To what extent would parent-teacher conferences regarding your child's progress meet your desires? & \( \frac{56}{33} \) & \( \frac{06}{05} \) & great moderate small very extent extent extent extent

15. To what extent would alternating the report card with parent-teacher conferences during the school year meet your desires? & \( \frac{51}{31} \) & \( \frac{11}{07} \) & great moderate small very extent extent extent extent

16. To what extent would you be willing to spare the time for parent-teacher conferences? & \( \frac{64}{27} \) & \( \frac{05}{04} \) & great moderate small very extent extent extent extent
### Questionnaire for Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>always</th>
<th>sometimes</th>
<th>almost never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Do you like to receive your report card?</td>
<td>.61</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Do you like to show your report card to and discuss it with your parents?</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Do you like to show your report card to and discuss it with other boys and girls?</td>
<td>.34</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td>.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Do you believe teachers are &quot;fair&quot; in the marks they give to you?</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Do your parents offer you money or prizes for good marks?</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Are your parents ever angry at the teacher because of the marks you get?</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Are your parents ever angry at you for the marks you get?</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Do teachers threaten you with poor marks if you don't do &quot;this&quot; or &quot;that&quot;?</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Do you believe teachers give low marks in school work to pupils who are naughty in their room?</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Do you talk with the teacher about the marks you get on your report card?</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Do you feel that you must cheat in order to get a good report card?</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Does the report card make you feel like wanting to do a better job next term?</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Almost always</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Almost never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Do the grades on your report card ever make you feel like hating the teacher?</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Do you understand what a &quot;G&quot; means on your report card?</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Do you understand what a &quot;U&quot; means on your report card?</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Do you understand what an &quot;S&quot; means on your report card?</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX B

Report Cards