


1957

An Analysis of Reporting to Parents of Secondary School Students

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AN ANALYSIS OF REPORTING TO PARENTS
OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

A Research Paper
Presented to
the Faculty of the Graduate School
Central Washington College of Education

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

by
Edwin T. Anderson
August, 1957

THIS PAPER IS APPROVED AS MEETING
THE PLAN 2 REQUIREMENT FOR THE
COMPLETION OF A RESEARCH PAPER.

Daniel Oppleman, FOR THE GRADUATE FACULTY

G Meyer, CHAIRMAN

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

The task involved in the education of the child is one that requires the cooperation of the home and school if it is to be performed more effectively. Parents want the best education possible for their children and the reports on the children's progress are the best possible method of informing them.

A survey of the educational literature of recent years revealed much dissatisfaction with the system of reporting to parents.¹ Some critics contend that the usual system of reporting represents the most retarded phase of American education.² With all the research in this field, there is evidence that progress is being made. While no "perfect" method has yet been devised, a constant study of the problem will develop a method of reporting to parents which will be both effective and instrumental in the establishment of better parent-teacher relationship in grade reporting.

¹William L. Wrinkle, Improving Marking and Reporting Practices (New York: Rinehart and Company, Inc., 1947), p. 6.

²Ruth Strang, "Reporting Pupil Progress," School Executive, 72:47, August, 1953.

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. The purpose of this research was to analyze various types of secondary school methods of reporting to parents so that the faculty and parents would be better able to work out a progress report for Prosser High School. This report should furnish information to the parent as to the objectives of the school, be understood by parents and pupils, and not necessitate too much clerical work for the teachers.

Importance of the study. The present typical report card was developed to fit the conditions of American life as it existed many years ago. Conditions then were different from those of today. Most schools were small. Many school buildings were used as community centers where parents and teachers were acquainted, and the parents had an understanding of what the schools were trying to do.

Today, school enrollments have increased enormously. With this has come a more complex and complicated society. The modern school program includes the "three R's" of the past along with "a multiplicity of subjects, activities, and 'extra' activities."³ Because of the complexity of

³Robert O. Evans, Practices, Trends, and Issues in Reporting to Parents on the Welfare of the Child in School (New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1938), p. 7.

living conditions, parents have less opportunity to know the teachers of their children.

Parents and teachers are beginning to realize this problem exists and are showing an interest for a meeting of the minds to work out a better means of communication between the school and the home. This working together for mutual understanding should provide for better public relations for the schools. There will be better understanding because the parents will know the problems of the teachers and the teachers will know what the parents expect of the schools.

It is important to study the principles of reporting pupil progress on a national level. It is also very important to study the local situation because of the uniqueness of the community. The method of reporting pupil progress, although based on broad general principles, must be designed to meet the individuality of the local school system.

"There is no best way to report to parents, but if a report tells the parents what they want to know or if what it says makes sense, then it is a good report."⁴

To prepare an improved report to parents, the writer first reviewed the literature of recent years in order to become familiar with the ideas and practices in other

⁴Bess Goodykoontz, "A Report on Report Cards," National Parent Teacher, 50:12, October, 1955.

localities. This material was compiled by the writer and then studied by the parents and teachers of Prosser High School who used the information, along with their ideas, to prepare a pupil progress report later reported in this study.

II. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

Typical report card. A typical report card is a document which provides for evaluating pupil performance in a number of school subjects, either in percentages or on a scale, which recognizes several levels of performance above the passing grade. The list of factors to be evaluated may also include items such as conduct, effort, cooperation, citizenship, etc. Information on attendance and promotion is also given. Generally included in this document is a brief note to parents explaining the evaluation plan used, invitation to communicate with school officials, and instruction to sign and return the card promptly.⁵

Report card now in use at Prosser. This card consists of the name of the student, the grade and year. The subjects are listed and an achievement grade of A, B, C, D, or X, is placed after the subject. There is a space at the bottom of the card to write in the days present, days absent, and times tardy. On the back of the card is a short explanation

⁵Evans, op. cit., p. 11.

of the grading letters and a space for the parent's signature.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Evaluation, reporting pupil progress, and report cards have been topics for group discussion as often as conventions for school principals have been held. The time and study devoted to the problem of evaluating and reporting pupil progress compares with the amount of medical research on the common cold and with about the same success.

I. JUSTIFICATION FOR REPORTING TO PARENTS

To begin a study of reporting pupil progress, there are two things to be kept in mind: (1) What is the philosophy of reporting to parents? (2) What is the purpose of reporting to parents?

Cagle states the problem very well by saying:

The end toward which we are directing all our efforts is the maximum growth and development of each student. Evaluations and reporting are only a means to that end. In any effort we should first give priority to our ends or purposes and then consider the means or processes by which we make those ends a reality.¹

The old and still present and controversial purposes of report cards were listed by McNally as follows:

¹Dan F. Cagle, "How May We Make the Evaluation and Reporting of Student Achievement More Meaningful?" National Association of Secondary School Principals Bulletin, 38:24, April, 1955.

1. a motivation to academic achievement;
2. a disciplinary device;
3. a device to help to make decisions concerning promotions or to assist in interschool transfers;
4. a public relations instrument;
5. a means of informing parents on pupil progress.²

Many educators hold the opinion that the chief purpose of reporting to parents is to make available to parents, and to the teacher, that information which will enable them to work together constructively for the best growth of the child.

Strang listed the following purposes:

1. to spur the child on to greater achievement;
2. to increase the effectiveness with which the child learns;
3. to facilitate grade placement;
4. to provide a bond of understanding between the home and the school.³

"Make haste slowly" is a good rule to remember when anticipating any changes in school practices, and particularly when that change has to do with reporting to parents. If changes are to be accepted, they need to be built on understanding of the basic principles by all who are to use and receive the reports. Change for change's sake can never be an acceptable educational practice. Changes which do not lead to real improvement are perhaps worse than no change at all.

²H. J. McNally, "Report Card Report," N. E. A. Journal 44:350, September, 1955.

³Strang, op. cit., p. 49.

In a survey of junior high schools throughout the United States as to reasons for changing report card practices, Roelfs found "that revisions were most concerned with: (1) the system of indicating school behavior; (2) mechanical features such as size, color, type of paper, etc.; (3) enlarging the scope of reporting; (4) the marking system for subjects."⁴

It is logical that no set pattern of reporting can be developed which would guarantee for all schools their best possible reporting method. Teacher load, teacher ability, type of community, school system, and pupil needs are a few factors which must be considered in determining the type of report most adaptable to a particular school.

What steps can be taken to improve the report to parents? Strang states that parents and teachers should study the problem together.⁵ Believing that the point of view of the parents should weigh heavily in deciding school policies, and that a sound working relationship between the home and school is vital in the education of youth, interested and dedicated parents should be invited to sit with the report card committee. As the first step, if public acceptance of educational policy changes is to be effective, parents

⁴R. M. Roelfs, "Pupil Progress Reporting in Junior High Schools is Changing," Educational Administration and Supervision, 41:485, December, 1955.

⁵Strang, op. cit., p. 48.

must have a part in educational planning.

McNally sums it up very well by stating that there is no "best way" to report to parents. No specific solution will fit all schools but a number of constructive suggestions can be derived from schools where the problem has been worked out. These are:

1. All teachers should be involved in any movement to improve the reporting practice.
2. Parents through the P.T.A. should be involved in any change.
3. The committee should work on a method of reporting that will fit the school community.
4. Good reporting should be flexible; that is, different kinds of reporting should be used, such as notes to parents, telephone calls, personal conferences, etc.⁶

Before a study of the various types of marking could be made, a set of criteria had to be established. As a second step, the following set of questions served as guides in formulating a report to parents in order that there would be general agreement as to the characteristics the reporting programs should possess:

1. Did the plan for the type of report card to be used actively involve the parents?
2. In implementing the plan, was consideration given to insuring continuous reporting to the pupil so he knows how he is doing?
3. Does the report cover the many important phases of pupil development or is it confined to marks of achievement scholastically?
4. Is the reporting of a positive nature emphasizing strengths as well as constructively analyzing weaknesses?

⁶McNally, op. cit., p. 351.

5. Does it disclose trends and growth patterns?
6. Is the instrument understood by those concerned?
7. Are suggestions given which help the pupil improve his work?
8. Does the teacher have time to prepare and present the report?

II. WHAT PARENTS WANT ON A REPORT CARD

One of the problems of effective reporting to parents is finding what parents want on a card to show pupil progress in school. The many surveys in the literature that have been conducted to determine parents "wants" tend to arrive at different conclusions. This may be answered by Bolmeier's statement that "a reporting system used in one locality successfully may not prove satisfactory elsewhere due to the individuality of the local school community."⁸ The following surveys are interesting and helpful in the total scheme of change.

Capehart reported an experiment tried at Cedar Hill School, Oak Ridge, Tennessee, to determine what method parents wanted used to report pupil progress. At the time they were using a type of report that was a combination of a written narrative report and a parent-teacher conference. Parents were asked the question, "Which of the following

⁷Richard Lattin, "Home Reports," Education, 77:362, February, 1957.

⁸E. B. Bolmeier, "Principles Pertaining to Marking and Reporting Pupil Progress," School Review, 59:15, January, 1951.

methods of reporting pupil progress do you prefer?" The school received 251 replies with the following briefly paraphrased and tabulated results:

Replies	Percent
1. Present method	48.4
2. Conference method	7.0
3. A,B,C,D,F method	6.6
4. Informal letter	.8
5. A,B,C,D,F method supplemented by teacher comments	27.5
6. A system where the teacher checks certain objectives supplemented by a space for teacher comments	4.6
7. Other methods	2.7
8. No response	<u>2.4</u>
	100.0 ⁹

This survey shows that while there were some parents interested in other types of reporting, the general feeling was to keep the type of report that was in use.

The Pasadena, Texas, situation was a good example of the failure to include the parents in preparation of a report card. A group of "experts" of the schools thought the five letter system of A,B,C,D,F, was too discriminating so they made up a new series of letters, S,N,U,X, to replace the old letters. The S was defined as satisfactory, N as normal, U as unsatisfactory, and X as failure. The reason for the change by the schools was to follow the ideal of making grades less competitive. This matter caused much

⁹Bertis E. Capehart, "Reports to Parents," The Nations Schools, 50:46, December, 1952.

discussion so a vote of the parents was taken. The results were:

Of the 2605 votes cast, 433 or 16.6 per cent favored the S,N,U,X system and 2144¹⁰ or 82.3 per cent wanted to restore the five letter system.

In this case one cardinal principle was violated, namely, the disregard of personnel who have vested interest in a policy practice and then effecting a change without their consent or opinion.

In an effort to determine parents' opinion on a report card for elementary school children, Joseph Wetmore, principal of Union Lake and Commerce Schools, Michigan, made a survey. Parents were asked to mark the relative importance of the following information about their children:

1. How your child compares with other children in his class in subjects such as geography and spelling?
2. How your child achieves according to his ability to achieve?
3. How your child's marks compare with those of the last marking period?
4. How your child behaves in school?
5. A conference between the teacher and parent held periodically?
6. How much effort your child is putting forth to obtain his education?
7. How does your child get along with others?¹¹

¹⁰Howard Whitman, "Report Cards: EGFU, SNUX, or ABC," Colliers, 134:61, September 17, 1954.

¹¹Joseph Wetmore, "What Parents Want to Know," Exchange, 13:9, December, 1954.

The two most popular statements were those concerned with how the child was getting along with others and the amount of effort the child was making to obtain his education.

The second group of statements had to do with the type of report parents wished to receive:

1. The five point scale, A,B,C,D,F, on a standard card.
2. The three point scale, E,S,U, on a standard card.
3. Number grades based on 100 per cent on a standard card.
4. Informative letter written by the teachers to parents.
5. A conference between parents and teachers held periodically.¹²

Results indicate that parents want to hold to the type of report with the five point scale despite the fact that it did not tell them the things they wanted to know as evidenced by replies to the first questionnaire.

Even though the above survey dealt with parents of elementary school children, it must be remembered that they soon will be parents of high school students and that their attitudes are not likely to change.

Wiles cited a survey of carefully selected sampling of 387 parents of secondary school students conducted by a committee of the Portland Council of the Oregon Parent-Teacher Association. It was found that the majority of parents would like the report card to include the following information about their children:

¹²Ibid.

1. Social habits -- adjusts to children and desires to improve -- 60 per cent.
2. Intellectual habits -- pride in work, completes work on time -- 62 per cent.
3. Special interests -- extra-curricular activities -- 69 per cent.
4. Rating on tests -- 95 per cent.
5. General achievement to be expected of a child of his age -- 79 per cent.
6. General achievement to be expected of a child of his grade -- 88 per cent.
7. Space for parent comments -- 61 per cent.
8. Space for teacher comments -- 84 per cent.¹³

The results of this survey indicated that the parents are interested in their children's general habits, general achievement and teachers' comments.

III. TYPES OF REPORTS TO PARENTS

Five-letter grades. The five-letter report card or the card now in use at Prosser High School is a card which lists the subjects the student is taking with a space after each subject for the teacher to place the grade A,B, C,D,F. There is an explanation of the marks on the card to inform the parents of the meaning of the grade. A means excellent; B means good; C means average, D means below average; and F means failure. Also on the back of the card is a space for the parents to sign. Under the grades on the front of the card is a space to put the days absent, days present, and the times tardy.

¹³Kimball Wiles, Teaching for Better Schools (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1952), p. 232.

It is a major fallacy to assume the extent of the achievement or progress by a student by a symbol grade or mark. The symbol or mark may be a comparative excellent or poor, as compared to a group norm. Growth may have or may not have been effected by the student. The single mark can not stand alone with validity. Beeman states:

Unfortunately separate evaluations of pupil behavior are not always provided for and in many instances such evaluations are officially or unofficially incorporated in the evaluation of achievement. When this is done a pupil's grade is determined both by his achievement and his behavior and a good deal of information about the pupil's performance is lost.¹⁴

Cagle questions the reliability of the five letter system on the basis of the Starch-Elliott Study which involved the photostating of a geometry paper and distributing it to 116 high school mathematics teachers to be marked. Their ratings for the paper ranged from 28 per cent to 92 per cent or from F to A.¹⁵

By surveys, research and argumentation, Wrinkle showed that the five letter marking system is supported by six fallacies:

1. The mark is an effective conveyor of information.
2. Anyone can achieve any mark he wishes if he is willing to make the necessary effort.
3. People succeed in out-of-school life about the same as they do in school.
4. The mark is comparable to a pay check.
5. Marking practices provide a justifiable introduction to competitive adult life.
6. ~~The~~ mark can be used as a means without it eventually being recognized as an end in itself.¹⁶

¹⁴Phillip N. Beeman, "Characteristics of High School Report Cards," National Association of Secondary School Principals Bulletin, 40:64, September, 1956.

¹⁵Cagle, op. cit., p. 26.

¹⁶Wrinkle, op. cit., p. 49.

Satisfactory and unsatisfactory. As a departure from the five-point scale, some schools adopted the less discriminatory system of satisfactory and unsatisfactory or the S and U or two grade scale. It proved satisfactory in some schools and unsatisfactory in others. A point which has been made before and which should always be remembered is that there is no perfect marking system for all schools.

The S and U marking system has its advantages.

Bramlette "considers it an improvement over the five-point scale because it is more general, the mark is less important and because it did not discourage the poor student."¹⁷ Competition for grades on the part of the student was minimized because there was no longer the goal of A,B,C, for which to work.

The system of S and U marking assumes competition for grades on the part of the student is non-existent, and that self-evaluation and desire for improvement is inherent. This form of marking neglects to include some form of intelligent communication between teacher and pupil for constructive evaluation and fails to encourage maximum effort by the student for improvement.

An attempt to solve the problem of stimulating students to greater heights, the grade of H, an honor grade, was

¹⁷Merle Bramlette, "Is the S and U Grading System Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory," Texas Outlook, 26:29, April, 1942.

included. Some schools added plus and minus to the H and S grades with the result they were back where they had started, with six grades rather than five.

Himsl suggests two or three things in a sarcastic way about the S and U marking system:

1. We should have a system so designed as not to impress the pupil with his success or failure lest it warp his personality.
2. The psychology of classification may disturb his social balance.
3. He may develop a complex if he knows his abilities or limitations.¹⁸

Whitman states that:

1. The system is socialistic and unfair.
2. The student receives no satisfaction from accomplishment.
3. There is no recognition for the student who works hard.
4. Children are not motivated.¹⁹

In the case of number four listed above, Wrinkle states:

If the students quit working when the incentive mark is removed, and the staff is unwilling to admit that students can be stimulated to learn only by the use of such extrinsic measures, then the staff has discovered something fundamental. Instead of a report card problem it becomes a curriculum problem.²⁰

The matter of competition is always brought up when the S and U grading system is discussed. Whitman offers the opinions of two educators along this line:

¹⁸Mathias A. Himsl, "Wanted: Report Cards Parents Can Understand," Nation's Schools, 33:23, February, 1944.

¹⁹Whitman, op. cit., p. 61.

²⁰Wrinkle, op. cit., p. 52.

Sam Fleming, former Superintendent of Seattle Public Schools said, "I have met with parents and teachers for over three years on this problem of report cards and I have found they favor competition, so we have it."

Ernest C. Ball, Superintendent of Schools, Memphis, Tennessee states, "The job of the schools is to create a desire to achieve to do a job well. We haven't found any way to sugar coat this process. As for competition, if it is a normal healthy situation, I can see no objection at all. Distinctions are constantly being made among children on the school grounds. Some are better at sports than others and some are found to be better scholastically. They've got to find out sooner or later."²¹

Parent-teacher conferences. The plan of inviting parents to discuss the students' progress in school is an excellent idea because the likelihood of misunderstanding is reduced by a face-to-face conversation. Also, the teacher can work more effectively with the youngster if he knows the home life, the parents, what the student does after school, what problems the parents have, and other helpful information. The parents can help the school if they know what the school is trying to do and what success and difficulties it is having.

Haas states the advantages very well:

Parents, teachers and principals work cooperatively on a common problem. Improved understanding of mutual problems has come about through open friendly discussion. Teachers go beyond mere judgment passing in evaluation of the progress of their pupils and go toward an analysis of children's difficulties with suggestions for improvement. Hence through the conference and exchange of

²¹Whitman, op. cit., p. 68.

comments a closer bond²² will gradually develop between parents and teachers.

The most serious objection to the conference method of reporting is that it demands a heavy investment of time. In the departmentalized schools the teacher may have approximately one hundred students and if the teacher gave each parent fifteen minutes, the time would run into several days of continuous reporting. In elementary schools where teachers have twenty-five to thirty students, the plan is feasible and practical.

Another problem, but one which is not too serious, is the matter of records. The discussion between parents and teacher does not result in a record which the school must have.

Morris sums up the disadvantages of the parent-teacher conference method as follows:

1. Teachers are not trained in guidance and are unable to recognize symptoms of insecurity and maladjustment.
2. No records of the conference for the permanent record card.
3. Time element.
4. Cooperation blocked by prejudices or emotions on the part of the parent or the teacher.²³

Letters to parents. The obvious substitute for the

²²Ruth Haas, "An Experiment in Changing Reporting Practices," Educational Leadership, 11:493, May, 1954.

²³Lucille Morris, "Evaluating and Reporting Pupil Progress," Elementary School Journal, 53:147, November, 1952.

conference plan is the informal letter plan. To overcome the shortcomings of the traditional report card, a number of schools have adopted a letter to parents. This is an attempt to tell parents things about the child that could not be conveyed by a report card. As with the conference plan, it is most workable in elementary schools which are not departmentalized, and in core programs where one teacher may work with one group of students for three or four hours a day.

McNally states:

The letter to parents approach to reporting pupil progress could be the modern approach but sometimes it backfires. Some teachers did not understand the purposes and possibilities of the report and as a result, the narrative frequently degenerated into a series of cliches or even worse included injudicious, uncomplimentary and acid remarks which antagonized parents. Furthermore since not all teachers can write well some reports achieved only negative results.²⁴

In another study by Goodykoontz, parents protested the letters with the following questions:

1. What does the report mean?
2. Is Johnny a good student? If so, how good?
3. Is he accurate?
4. Is he accurate for his grade?
5. We know he can play well with others but can he spell?
6. Why can't we have A,B,C,D,F?²⁵

Whitman cites a statement by R. J. Newberg, Principal

²⁴ McNally, op. cit., p. 351.

²⁵ Goodykoontz, op. cit., p. 12.

of the Edith C. Baker School of Brookline, Massachusetts, who had experimented with the letters to parents in place of the report card for three years. "We abandoned the letters to parents because we couldn't get parents to recognize failure in the letter type form. We went back to the A,B, C,D,F."²⁶

Check lists. A short cut to writing letters by teachers is the development of forms to be checked. A check mark is thereby made to substitute for a sentence. Instead of the teacher writing, "He gets along well with other students," the statement is printed on the form and if it applies, the statement is checked. Sometimes both negative and positive evaluations can be made by using the S and U instead of the check mark.

This is mechanically the most usable of the various departures from the traditional card. It is the simplest way to report more information in less time and with less effort.

The main disadvantage is that it becomes too detailed and lengthy. It is too much for the parents to digest because it is too involved. However, according to Wrinkle, "The advantages warrant the prediction that in the years ahead this form or report will be the most common change

²⁶Whitman, op. cit., p. 59.

from the traditional card."²⁷

Diagnostic type. This type of card contains the grade for achievement using the five-letter system of A,B,C,D,F, accompanied by a check list for showing development in basic objectives. These give the parents and students clues to the reason for the letter marks assigned and suggest approaches toward improvement.

McNally states:

Perhaps the greatest sin of omission of report cards has been the failure to give reasons for unsatisfactory growth or achievement. Only when the parent and child understands the causes in back of unsatisfactory progress can they take constructive steps to bring about improvement. Hence good reporting should be diagnostic.²⁸

With the five-letter system of reporting, one of the main disadvantages was that the mark of A,B,C,D,F meant very little. There were no reasons given for the grade so the student and parent could work together to improve.

Stiles lists some of the advantages of a report card with achievement grades as well as objectives of the course listed and pupils' progress rated in these objectives:

1. Presents a rating in achievement in the subject in comparison with that of other pupils and in addition it indicates pupils progress toward specific objectives of the course.
2. Through information regarding personal and social

²⁷Wrinkle, op. cit., p. 58.

²⁸McNally, op. cit., p. 350.

- development of the child it informs parents of the importance of such growth as a goal in education.
3. Makes provision for commendation to pupils for worthwhile participation in class activities.
 4. Encourages parent cooperation with the school as now the parents know the reasons for²⁹ the mark and how to help the student improve.

McQuaggle surveyed a small school where the diagnostic type card was used. Of the 78 parents reporting:

- 67 parents said the report was understandable and meaningful and liked it better than the single grade.
- 9 parents said they needed additional explanation.³⁰
- 2 parents said they liked the older report better.

The faculty of Worthington High School of Worthington, Ohio, decided their reporting system should be modified. There was general feeling that parents wanted and were entitled to more information from the school concerning their child than the five marks of A,B,C,D,F. A decision was made to ask the Parent-Teacher Association to supply a committee of parents to work with the high school faculty.

Parents were asked, "What additional information would you like to receive about the progress of your child?"

The parents agreed that they wanted some type of a check list of traits and objectives for each subject

²⁹Lindly J. Stiles, "Up-to-Date Reporting," School Executive, 65:52, January, 1946.

³⁰Carl McQuaggle, "Two Grades Per Course", Nation's Schools, 52:48, August, 1953.

besides the A,B,C,D,F. After a few meetings various items were suggested and classified under three headings: (1) study habits, (2) attitudes--interest, (3) adjustment--cooperation with school officials and cooperation with students.³¹

Bolmeier carried on a similar survey and lists factors to be rated.

1. Achievement on tests.
2. Quality of recitation.
3. Quality of completed assignments.
4. Promptness in completing work.
5. Persistence for mastery.
6. Attention to class activities.³²

³¹Ray Hieschman, "What Parents Want to Know," National Association of Secondary School Principals Bulletin, 39:27, April, 1955.

³²Bolmeier, op. cit., p. 15.

CHAPTER III

RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

For many years parents and teachers of Prosser High School felt that the report card was not adequate. It was the traditional card with a grade for achievement in each subject and the attendance data. The matter of changing the card had been brought up from time to time, but it was difficult to know how to proceed. During the second semester of 1957, the problem was revived. With the analysis of the literature from this paper, a new card was devised that was accepted by the school and community.

I. ORGANIZING THE PARENT-TEACHER COMMITTEE

In order to initiate parent participation in preparing the card, the Parent-Teacher Association was contacted to find a time to discuss the matter before an interested group. At their next regular meeting, the traditional card in use was presented to the group for criticism. As each person offered his or her criticism, it was written on a blackboard. This group was a heterogeneous group in that it was composed of parents of elementary and secondary school children so the chairman did not dwell on the subject of high school cards too long. However, the seed had been planted and from this meeting interest was aroused. The chairman asked for volunteers to work with the parent-teacher committee and

because only four or five were needed, the persons most interested were chosen.

The same technique, that of criticizing the traditional card in use, was used at a teachers' meeting to pick five teachers to work on this committee.

The method of selecting the committee of parents and teachers was very informal and this informality was carried throughout the rest of the committee meetings. An important criterion in the selection of a committee was interest in the project.

II. STUDYING THE PROBLEM

At the first meeting of the committee, the problem of revising the report card was placed before the group. A set of criteria was needed as a guide so the committee adopted the list as prepared by Richard Lattin and recorded on pages 9 and 10 of this paper.

The lists of criticisms of the traditional card as listed by the Parent-Teacher Association and teachers were discussed and the following list of what parents want on a card was formulated:

1. Parents want to know how well their child is doing in each class.
2. Is he high or low in achievement in a class and why?
3. They desire ratings in attitude and cooperation.
4. They desire the five letter marking system as the achievement grade.

5. They desire a place for the teachers to sign the card.
6. They desire a place on the card for them to sign.
7. They want the days of attendance and times tardy on the card.

Before this meeting adjourned, the committee planned to have samples of various types of cards from other schools to study at the next meeting.

At the next meeting, the material gained from the analysis of the literature on various types of reporting was read. It was the feeling of the group that the diagnostic type of card suited best the list of "criteria and parents' wants".

From the samples of cards on hand, the committee selected those that had the diagnostic approach to reporting and studied them. Sunnyside High School had one of the better report cards of this type so their was used as a sample to start the formulation of the new card.

The sample card contained all the material of the traditional card with a list of objectives for the teacher to evaluate and to tell the "why" of the grade. In order to do this, each department had its own card of the same format but with different objectives to evaluate and different color. The reason for the different color for each department was for easier recognition.

The teachers of the committee felt that the objectives of the sample card were not stated as they would like them.

To overcome this, each teacher was asked to turn in a list of objectives they would like to evaluate to tell the "why" of the grade.

At the next meeting of the committee, typed samples of each department's report card were presented. Each new feature of the card was explained; the method of indicating progress, and ways in which they, the parent, could use the information. A few minor suggestions were made by the committee as to the statement of objectives, but everyone felt that the card should be tried at the next reporting time. Also, the committee suggested that the chairman present the new system of reporting to the regular Parent-Teacher Association to inform them of the committee's progress.

III. RESULTS OF THE STUDY

As the result of the study by parents and teachers, each department in the school has its own report card. This was necessary in order to explain the achievement grade. A different list of objectives was required on each card.

The example of the card typed on the next page has the information that will go home to the parents. This is a typed form so it is rather large. The printed form will be on 4½" by 6½" paper of different colors for each

QUARTERLY REPORT

PROSSER SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

SCHOOL YEAR _____

SCIENCE DEPARTMENT (example)

Report of _____ Teacher _____

Subject _____

GRADE:

_____	_____	_____
First Quarter	Second Quarter	First Semester
_____	_____	_____
Third Quarter	Fourth Quarter	Second Semester

OBJECTIVES

1. Knowledge of Subject
2. Promptness and Thoroughness
3. Accuracy and Neatness
4. Efficient Use of Class Time

1st Q. 2nd Q. 3rd Q 4th

	1st Q.	2nd Q.	3rd Q.	4th
1. Knowledge of Subject				
2. Promptness and Thoroughness				
3. Accuracy and Neatness				
4. Efficient Use of Class Time				

PARENT'S SIGNATURE

1st Quarter _____

2nd Quarter _____

3rd Quarter _____

S Indicates satisfactory attainment

/ Indicates need for improvement

- Indicates decided need for improvement

department.¹ This example is the card for the Science Department. The objectives for the other departments are listed below:

Home Economics

1. Cooperation and attitude
2. Efficient use of time
3. Initiative and effort
4. Home project

English

1. Knowledge of subject
2. Neatness
3. Promptness and thoroughness
4. Cooperation and attitude

Social Studies

1. Knowledge of subject
2. Cooperation and attitude
3. Promptness and thoroughness
4. Initiative and effort

Mathematics

1. Knowledge of subject
2. Accuracy in daily work
3. Promptness
4. Cooperation

Foreign Language

1. Knowledge of subject
2. Promptness and thoroughness
3. Efficient use of class time
4. Cooperation

¹Completed report forms in areas of Science, Home Economics, English, Social Studies, Foreign Language, Music, Physical Education, Agriculture, Industrial Arts, and Study Hall will be found on pages 32 to 36.

Music

1. Attitude
2. Cooperation
3. Knowledge of subject
4. Initiative

Physical Education

1. Condition, Speed, Endurance
2. Skills, Ability, Sportsmanship
3. Conduct, Cooperation, Use of Showers
4. Knowledge of game rules

Art

1. Originality
2. Effort
3. Promptness
4. Attitude, Conduct

Commercial

1. Accuracy, Speed
2. Carefulness in checking
3. Promptness and conduct
4. Following directions

Agriculture

1. Knowledge of subject
2. Following directions
3. Attitude and cooperation
4. Home project

Industrial Arts

1. Following directions
2. Cooperation and attitude
3. Skill in handling materials
4. Initiative

QUARTERLY REPORT

SCIENCE DEPARTMENT

Prosser Jr. - Sr. High School

School Year

Home Room

Report of

Class

Subject Instructor

1st Q	2nd Q	Exam	1st Sem.	3rd Q	4th Q	Exam	2nd Sem.

OBJECTIVES

1. Knowledge of Subject
2. Promptness and thoroughness
3. Accuracy and neatness
4. Efficient use of class time
5.

1st Q	2nd Q	3rd Q	4th Q

Parent's 1st Quarter

Signature 2nd Quarter

3rd Quarter

No mark indicates satisfactory attainment.
 + Indicates above average attainment.
 O Indicates need for improvement.

QUARTERLY REPORT

HOME ECONOMICS DEPT.

Prosser Jr. - Sr. High School

School Year

Home Room

Report of

Class

Subject Instructor

1st Q	2nd Q	Exam	1st Sem.	3rd Q	4th Q	Exam	2nd Sem.

OBJECTIVES

1. Knowledge of the subject
2. Cooperation
3. Follows directions
4. Efficient use of time
5.

1st Q	2nd Q	3rd Q	4th Q

Parent's 1st Quarter

Signature 2nd Quarter

3rd Quarter

No mark indicates satisfactory attainment.
 + Indicates above average attainment.
 O Indicates need for improvement.

QUARTERLY REPORT

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

Prosser Jr. - Sr. High School

School Year

Home Room

Report of

Class

Subject Instructor

1st Q	2nd Q	Exam	1st Sem.	3rd Q	4th Q	Exam	2nd Sem.

OBJECTIVES

1. Knowledge of subject
2. Neatness
3. Promptness and thoroughness
4. Cooperation and attitude
5.

1st Q	2nd Q	3rd Q	4th Q

Parent's 1st Quarter

Signature 2nd Quarter

3rd Quarter

No mark indicates satisfactory attainment.
 + Indicates above average attainment.
 O Indicates need for improvement.

QUARTERLY REPORT

SOCIAL STUDIES DEPT.

Prosser Jr. - Sr. High School

School Year

Home Room

Report of

Class

Subject Instructor

1st Q	2nd Q	Exam	1st Sem.	3rd Q	4th Q	Exam	2nd Sem.

OBJECTIVES

1. Daily work
2. Test work
3. Cooperation and attitude
4. Efficient use of time
5.

1st Q	2nd Q	3rd Q	4th Q

Parent's 1st Quarter

Signature 2nd Quarter

3rd Quarter

No mark indicates satisfactory attainment.
 + Indicates above average attainment.
 O Indicates need for improvement.

QUARTERLY REPORT

FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPT.

Prosser Jr. - Sr. High School

School Year

Home Room

Report of

Class

Subject Instructor

1st Q	2nd Q	Exam	1st Sem.	3rd Q	4th Q	Exam	2nd Sem.

OBJECTIVES

1. Knowledge of subject
2. Promptness and thoroughness
3. Efficient use of class time
4. Cooperation
5.

1st Q 2nd Q 3rd Q 4th Q

1st Q	2nd Q	3rd Q	4th Q

Parent's 1st Quarter

Signature 2nd Quarter

3rd Quarter

No mark indicates satisfactory attainment.
 + Indicates above average attainment.
 O Indicates need for improvement.

QUARTERLY REPORT

MUSIC DEPARTMENT

Prosser Jr. - Sr. High School

School Year

Home Room

Report of

Class

Subject Instructor

1st Q	2nd Q	Exam	1st Sem.	3rd Q	4th Q	Exam	2nd Sem.

OBJECTIVES

1. Attitude
2. Cooperation
3. Knowledge of subject
4. Initiative
5.

1st Q 2nd Q 3rd Q 4th Q

1st Q	2nd Q	3rd Q	4th Q

Parent's 1st Quarter

Signature 2nd Quarter

3rd Quarter

No mark indicates satisfactory attainment.
 + Indicates above average attainment.
 O Indicates need for improvement.

QUARTERLY REPORT

PHYSICAL EDUCATION DEPT.

Prosser Jr. - Sr. High School

School Year

Home Room

Report of Class

Subject Instructor

1st Q	2nd Q	Exam	1st Sem.	3rd Q	4th Q	Exam	2nd Sem.

OBJECTIVES

1. Effort (Tries to improve)
2. Knowledge of rules, skills, and strategy
3. Sportsmanship, cooperation
4. Showers, proper dress, care of clothing
5.

1st Q	2nd Q	3rd Q	4th Q

Parent's 1st Quarter

Signature 2nd Quarter

3rd Quarter

No mark indicates satisfactory attainment.
 + Indicates above average attainment.
 O Indicates need for improvement.

QUARTERLY REPORT

AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT

Prosser Jr. - Sr. High School

School Year

Home Room

Report of Class

Subject Instructor

1st Q	2nd Q	Exam	1st Sem.	3rd Q	4th Q	Exam	2nd Sem.

OBJECTIVES

1. Knowledge of subject
2. Following directions
3. Attitude and cooperation
4. Home project
5.

1st Q	2nd Q	3rd Q	4th Q

Parent's 1st Quarter

Signature 2nd Quarter

3rd Quarter

No mark indicates satisfactory attainment.
 + Indicates above average attainment.
 O Indicates need for improvement.

QUARTERLY REPORT

INDUSTRIAL ARTS DEPT.

Prosser Jr. - Sr. High School

School Year

Home Room

Report of

Class

Subject Instructor

1st Q	2nd Q	Exam	1st Sem.	3rd Q	4th Q	Exam	2nd Sem.

OBJECTIVES

1. Following directions
2. Cooperation and attitude
3. Skill in handling materials
4. Initiative
5.

1st Q	2nd Q	3rd Q	4th Q

Parent's 1st Quarter

Signature 2nd Quarter

3rd Quarter

No mark indicates satisfactory attainment.
 + Indicates above average attainment.
 O Indicates need for improvement.

QUARTERLY REPORT

STUDY HALL

Prosser Jr. - Sr. High School

School Year

Home Room

Report of

Class

Subject Instructor

1st Q	2nd Q	Exam	1st Sem.	3rd Q	4th Q	Exam	2nd Sem.

OBJECTIVES

1. Proper use of time
2. Initiative
3. Conduct
4. Attitude
5.

1st Q	2nd Q	3rd Q	4th Q

Parent's 1st Quarter

Signature 2nd Quarter

3rd Quarter

No mark indicates satisfactory attainment.
 + Indicates above average attainment.
 O Indicates need for improvement.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

I. SUMMARY

The general plan of this analysis was to investigate the information available from parents, from literature, and from other schools concerning the methods used in reporting student progress to the home. From the material available, it was hoped to present several recommendations that would result in a new type of report card for the Prosser High School.

In the investigation of the literature for the analysis, it became apparent that for several years there had been much dissatisfaction with the methods used in reporting to parents. Although education has changed in presentation, emphasis on goals and objectives, the report card has not changed to keep up with these developments. The same thing was true in Prosser High School. The report card had not kept up with the changes in education. While it was understood that no perfect method of reporting had yet been devised, many improvements have been made to improve a better parent-teacher relationship in grade reporting.

Reporting has passed through many types from the

beginning of public education. The range has been from no reporting at all to a check list of traits and objectives. Some of the types of reporting are percentage grades, symbols, such as A,B,C,D,F, and S and U, letters to parents, parent-teacher conferences, and check lists. In recent years there has been a trend toward reporting to the parents by bringing the parent into the educational process through parent-teacher conferences, letters to parents, and check lists. All of these methods were studied to find its use, its effectiveness, and if it could be applied to the situation to improve reporting in Prosser, Washington.

In the various studies on what parents want on a report card, surveys show that they want to know more about the strengths and weaknesses of their child. They want to know what they can do to help in this process of education which many educators believe to be their private domain.

In transferring grades to other schools, or to higher institutions, high schools must have a grade to put on the students' permanent record card. Anecdotal records, check lists, and reports of parent-teacher conferences are designed for reporting to parents, but the schools need a standard grade.

Which is best? There is no best method of reporting pupil progress which will fit all communities. Teacher load,

teacher ability, type of community and school system, and pupil needs are a few factors that determine the type of report. Of the methods studied, the parent-teacher conference seemed to have the most possibilities, but each school must take into consideration the problem of teacher ability and teacher time for these conferences. The check list of many objectives and traits has merit and many authorities are advocating more of this type of reporting. The investigation proved that parents wanted the five-letter system of A,B,C,D,F, and along with this they wanted to know why their child received the grade he did. From this information a method of diagnostic reporting was chosen for the local community.

Reporting pupil progress is a continuous problem for study. While the new card is meeting the needs of Prosser High School and community at present, the method for reporting pupil progress will be evaluated from time to time with valid criteria of education.

II. CONCLUSIONS

1. The report card should supply information that is of value both to the parent and to the teacher.
2. Each subject reported by the teacher should have a grade plus additional information which would indicate why the student achieved or did not achieve a particular

level in the subject study.

3. Report cards should receive continuous evaluation because of changes in philosophy of the school and community.

4. The objectives of the card should be consistent with the objectives of the school and the philosophy of the school.

5. Changes in reporting pupil progress should not be initiated without the full consent and general accord of all parties concerned.

6. If public acceptance of educational policy changes is to be effective, parents must have a part in educational planning.

7. Surveys indicate conflicting and varied viewpoints as to the method and content of report cards.

8. A single mark or symbol on a report card means little unless it represents the measure of a single value.

9. Research is not in agreement as to whether parents and educators desire the child to be evaluated on a comparative competitive system or on a system based on the individual child's ability to achieve.

10. Each department should have its own card so specific objectives may be listed for evaluation.

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