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An Analysis of the Classroom Interruptions Presenting Themselves in the Lakeview Elementary School

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AN ANALYSIS OF THE CLASSROOM INTERRUPTIONS PRESENTING THEMSELVES IN THE LAKE ELEMENARY SCHOOL

A Thesis
Presented to
The Graduate Committee of
Central Washington College of Education

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

by
Robert F. Logue
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I. HYPOTHESIS

Educators spend much time and effort studying ways in which they can understand and solve problems in education today. Often problems are avoided or overlooked because of their seeming insignificance. A frequently stated problem in education today, and possibly a source of many instructional difficulties, is the problem of the daily interruptions in classroom procedure.

This study will attempt to help teachers and administrators identify the interruptions in the instructional program. It will also attempt to suggest procedures for administering a school program that keeps the interruptions to a minimum.

Many of these interruptions in classroom procedure are incidental in nature, but may be distracting and time-consuming. They may tend to diminish the teacher's effectiveness. They may detract from the maximum teaching effort as they divert students' attention from the teacher's planned program. The teacher is likewise diverted by being asked to concentrate on two things at one time. If a teacher is to achieve his maximum teaching potential, he must
then strive to reduce these classroom interruptions by better methods of administration and organization.

Unscheduled interruptions that plague the beginning teacher should be understood by school administrators. Principals should take into consideration the fact that new teachers may lack perfected organization during the first few months of the year, and that many interruptions may tend to add confusion to daily classroom procedures.

Experienced teachers also have similar problems of varying degrees, but as the teacher "grows," and becomes more adept in the classroom, his organization may become more effective. When the principal has achieved efficient organization of school functions, then classroom interruptions in the school may be understood and minimized.

The size of a school may affect its organization in some cases. The modern elementary school of today is functional in design. All available space is designed to serve a purpose. Second floors and basements are not found in the newer elementary schools; consequently, administrators and office personnel find that organization and communication in a school involve some difficulties.

The modern elementary school may have twenty to twenty-five rooms spread out over an area of two or three acres. With no inter-com system, it is possible that
problems concerned with organization and administration may occur.

II. PURPOSE

The questions which this study has tried to answer are:

1. What are the classroom interruptions?
2. What hour of the day do interruptions occur?
3. Can the sources of interruptions be determined and studied so that solutions can be worked out to give the teacher more instructional time?
4. What people are likely to interrupt a class?
5. Is lack of organization causing interruptions?
6. If disorganization occurs, can the problem be solved by the teachers cooperating and working with the principal?
7. What are the time durations of individual interruptions?
8. On what days of the week do interruptions occur most frequently?
9. At what hour of the day do interruptions occur in individual classrooms?
10. Can suggestions be found to help eliminate interruptions?

It is possible that interruptions cannot be completely eliminated, but from this study it is hoped that teachers
and administrators will be able to evaluate their particular situations and minimize interruption problems.

It was interesting to note that researchers have found all interruptions do not come from the school office. A large percentage of breaks came from other sources. George L. Young concluded that students who were involved in athletic and music activities seemed to be the main people causing interruptions in our schools. Interruptions occur with early and late dismissals and are a serious threat to teacher morale.

Mr. Young's study was made on the secondary level in a midwest community. People involved in athletics and music were by no means the only people involved, although they were the leading interruptions. There were many other activities that Mr. Young believed a serious threat, not only to the organization and administration of our schools, but also to the very morale of our instructors.

An attempt to suggest ways of minimizing interruptions and many of the suggestions may come from administrators, teachers and pupils.

Other purposes of the study have been to determine the origin of interruptions and the relationship between

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disciplinary problems and classroom interruptions. Also included will be an evaluation of teaching duties that reduce teachers' instructional time.

Extra-curricular activities may be a factor determining interruptions for some staff members; if so, it is the hope of the author that these activities, be as they may, will reveal themselves under a prolonged study.
CHAPTER II

METHODS, MATERIALS AND DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

I. METHODS AND MATERIALS

This study was confined to the classrooms of the Lakeview Elementary School, a member of the Highline Public Schools, District Number 401.

Permission for the study was granted by the superintendent and building principal early in the month of September, 1957. The observances took place in a controlled three week period which was begun on the 7th day of October, 1957. It was agreed that the initiation of the study would be prolonged until new teachers in the building could get accustomed to the procedures of organization and administration. With the agreement of the principal, the study was terminated on the 25th day of October.

At the time of the study there was a single sixth grade in the school and the five lower grades were composed of two classes each. This made a total of eleven teachers recording interruptions. Each teacher received a daily tabulation sheet every morning at 6:45 A.M. These same sheets were collected at the end of each school day and tabulated.

The study was limited by the fact that only one
school had an opportunity to participate in the study. The Highline School District encompasses a wide variety of cultural and community life; therefore, it would seem indicative of problems found in other communities and states.

A daily recording sheet was given each teacher for a period of three weeks or fifteen school days.¹

Similar studies have been made; for example, the Hartsell Study that took place in three North Carolina counties revealed a staggering number of interruptions.² Statistics from the Hartsell Study will be revealed and explored in later chapters. This study took place in the public schools, over all grade levels, thus indicating a wide range of study. The Highline District is located in one county and may not seem representative; however, when one looks at the geographical location of the schools, it can be noted that the district begins within the Seattle city limits, spreads out to a large suburban community, and encompasses small rural areas. Lakeview Elementary School might be considered an excellent experimental school because being located on the fringe of a small community in a suburban neighborhood, it indicates a good cross section of the district itself.

¹See Appendix A.

During the winter of 1956-57 a pilot study on classroom interruptions was distributed to every sixth grade teacher in the Highline School District. The results of the pilot study were instrumental in preparing the daily tabulation sheets that were distributed during this survey. Also, during the time of the pilot study, four conferences were held with building principals. The purposes of the conferences were to give background material and possibly help out with the construction of a feasible surveying instrument. Results of the conferences proved very valuable in the planning, construction, and issuance of the daily tabulation sheet used in this controlled study. Talking with the principals and discussing their problems brought to light areas that otherwise might have been overlooked.

It was felt that a tabulation of ten minute intervals throughout the day for a three week period would be adequate time to accumulate information needed for a formal study. An area was left for comments in case of a prolonged interruption or possibly need for further explanation.  

On the first day of the study a set of directions was presented to the teacher along with the tabulation sheet.  Both sheets were thoroughly explained to the

3See Appendix A.

4See Appendix B.
participating teachers at a staff meeting. The teachers were to write down the interruptions as they occurred, followed by the reason. The staff members were instructed not to write down any interruption under two minutes. Also on the daily tabulation sheet there was a column headed "duration" or the time in minutes that the interruptions consumed. In the final column the teachers were to insert the classification or the degree to which the interruption halted activities.\(^5\) All during the study personal contact was maintained with all the staff members so as to insure validity to the daily evaluation sheets. In a controlled study of this nature, with a staff harmony seldom surpassed, validity was insured.

When the study was completed the participating teachers were asked to contribute to the final stage of the study. Each teacher was given a list of forty-five suggestions to curb interruptions.\(^6\) They were asked to read each suggestion carefully and classify it 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5. A classification of 1 indicated that the teacher did not think the suggestion would help in curbing interruptions. The classifications progressed through 5 which indicated that a suggestion would be extremely helpful.

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\(^5\)See Appendix B.

\(^6\)See Appendix C.
II. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

School patrol. Two rooms participate in the school patrol in the Lakeview Elementary School. They are both fifth grades and responsibilities are shared during the year. In the near vicinity of the school there are four crosswalks considered danger areas by the Washington State Patrol. In order to supply protection for all students in the school, it is necessary that the patrol members be at their assigned corners three times during the day. In the morning, they are required to be at their corners from 8:30 A. M. until 9:00 A. M. When the primary grades are dismissed at 2:30 P. M., the patrol members report to their positions and are relieved at 2:45 P. M. The upper grades are dismissed at 3:30 P. M. and patrol people report to their stops at this time and are relieved at 3:45 P. M. Usually the school patrol is composed of two or three squads made up of one classroom and they rotate every week. When all members of a single room have participated, the patrol may be turned over to the other fifth grade. A squad that is on duty with members at every dangerous corner is composed of nine members or about one-third of a class.

Cadet observation. At the time of the study there was a student teacher or cadet teacher working on the program. He was scheduled to observe varied activities on
on different grade levels throughout the school during the
three week period.

Film projector. Listed as an interruption, this
item refers to the minutes lost setting up the projector,
screen, sound equipment and the like.

Music teacher. This refers to occasions when the
music personnel (vocal, instrumental, or consultant) find
it necessary to actually enter the classroom situation un-
announced.

Room mother. At every grade level, two mothers of
pupils in the room are selected by the classroom teacher
to help with room activities throughout the year. On rare
occasions their activities infringe on classroom scheduling.

Secretary. During the course of the day it is neces-
sary for the school secretary to deliver notices and announce-
ments. When she entered a classroom, the teachers were in-
structed not to note her on their survey sheets unless the
duration was over two minutes.

Another teacher. This refers to instances when one
teacher will enter another teacher's classroom for any rea-
son heretofore unscheduled.

Principal. Reference is made to the building prin-
cipal carrying out his administrative duties or just ob-
serving in classroom situations.
**Speech therapist.** Once a week the speech therapist is in the building taking care of pupils who may have speech impediments.

**Music students.** (Leaving and entering) Twice a week students in the fourth, fifth and sixth grades may have the privilege of being instructed in instrumental music. These people leaving and entering the classroom sometimes disturb the classroom.

**Banking.** This refers to grades three through six when they have the opportunity of banking money under the school plan every Tuesday morning at nine o'clock.

**Eye test.** Once a year the students have their eyes tested by a group of mothers who volunteer to test the children.

**Nurse.** Ordinarily the nurse is not scheduled in the classroom, but sometimes it is necessary for her to come to the room and speak with children or the teacher.

**Weights and measures.** Early in the year and again at the end of the year the children are weighed and measured for height.

**Visiting college supervisors.** Three new first year teachers in the building and a cadet required visits from their college supervisors.

**Pupils.** Any student entering a strange classroom unscheduled for purposes of organization or information is classified as a pupil.
CHAPTER III

A REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Although problems of classroom management have been under continual study, relatively few studies of classroom interruptions have been published. Probably many districts carry on surveys of similar problems, and see no reason for publishing the results. The four related studies mentioned in this work are the only analytic works found to mention specifically classroom interruptions.

Hartsell found in her study that a high percentage of interruptions seemed unnecessary, and of questionable importance. The study took place on the senior high school level and found that many interruptions were unavoidable, but most reflected a lack of planning. The study was made in three North Carolina counties and concluded that interruptions reached proportions that were indeed troublesome. Out of 1,159 daily interruptions studied one specific day in the three counties, the breakdown was as follows: 863 were pupils, 112 principals, 109 teachers, 90 parents, 6 superintendents, 21 supervisors, 107 other school personnel and 31 outsiders. It might be interesting to note that in

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schools with good teacher-pupil planning, most of the interruptions took place during the first half of the first hour and the last half of the last hour each day.

Prewett in his study found that classroom interruptions were the most frequently mentioned barriers to good teaching in a poll of 400 classroom teachers. In this particular study barriers were broken down into four major sub-headings. They were: (1) classroom, (2) within the school, (3) within the community, and (4) personal.

The first item that was considered the major barrier to teachers in the classroom was "interruptions." There were fourteen other classroom barriers that fell considerably behind classroom interruptions.

The second category was barriers within the schools. Here Prewett listed such things as noisy buildings, too many benefit "drives," teacher cliques, inadequate special facilities, and eleven other items.

The fourth division in Prewett's study had to do with personal factors and although they seemed important, little relationship to interruptions was obtained. It was concluded that schools with overcrowded conditions were

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3Ibid.
handicapped and teachers were being taken for granted by their administrators.

Brown in his studies offered three ways of organizing unscheduled interruptions so they may be minimized. 4

1) List items which in your opinion should be routine at an early date.  
2) List items that should be routine at a later date.  
3) List those which should not be routinized.

Miss Jettye Fern Grant performed an interesting study in the Berkeley Public Schools. 5 In this case the tabulations were the result of a district-wide concentrated study on the elementary level. Eighty-nine activities not scheduled in the original time allotments were uncovered in the Berkeley Public Schools. Many of the activities at times took the part of interruptions and closely paralleled the Lakeview Study. An example of paralleling information would be school patrol and instrumental music being listed as top disturbances in both studies. The mimeographed information on the Berkeley Study did not specify time consumed by activities nor the duration of the study; however, listed below are paralleling items that appeared in the final analysis of both the Berkeley and Lakeview Studies.

5Jettye Fern Grant, "Activities Which Take School Time but are Not Included in the Time Allotment," (Berkeley: Berkeley Public Schools, 1956). (Mimeographed.)
1. School patrol
2. Instrumental music lessons and orchestra practice
3. Fire drills and related activities
4. Primary students handling lunch and milk money
5. Parents coming to classrooms
   a. to leave money
   b. to bring a lunch
   c. to pick up work for child who is absent
   d. to explain something
   e. to ask favor
   f. to confer with teacher
6. Visits by supervisors
7. Visits by other teachers seeking information
8. Children leaving room to seek the nurse
9. Eye examinations, arrangements and reports
10. Hearing tests, arrangements, reports, etc.
11. Nurse-teacher conference
12. First aid
13. Speech correctionist
14. Notices from the office to be read and signed, or information needed
15. Borrowing materials (books, maps, projector)
16. Discipline problems

It was interesting to note that eye examinations and hearing tests were frequently mentioned in both studies.

In the following chapter an attempt to break down activities with their duration will be made. It is the time consumption on many of these activities that indicates reorganization in many cases.

E. E. Lewis in his book lists sixteen very excellent ways in which interruptions may be curbed.

1. Allow teachers to use clerical help for school letters relating to school activities and planning.
2. Insist that the janitor clean the blackboards.
3. Provide simplified printed forms for all regular school reports, notices, etc.
4. Adjusting teaching load according to experience and health of teachers.
5. Receiving instructional supplies in advance of actual use.
6. Eliminating periods of 5, 10 and 15 minutes before a class begins and before it ends.
7. Distributing advisory responsibility for student activities in a way that it would by systematic rather than a series of interruptions.
8. Provide for qualified student messengers and assistants by the principal so that the teacher load would be lessened.
9. Provide new teachers with summarized statements of the established rules, regulations and policies enforced in the school building (brief and specific).
10. Settling promptly discipline cases referred to office of principal.
11. Adequate scheduling of:
   a. playground supervision
   b. noon supervision of building
   c. lunch hall supervision
12. Reducing to a minimum the interferences with usual routine of the daily schedule (interruptions by visitors, etc.).
13. Removing promptly objectionable and incorrigible pupils.
14. Reduce daily subject preparations per teacher.
15. Help teacher discover time saving methods for written quizzes and daily testing preparations.
16. Rest room on each floor of a large building for teachers and pupils--possibly self-contained.6

The students themselves were asked to offer opinions on how interruptions might be alleviated. The following is a list compiled from student opinions.

1. Get paper and books, have money changed before school.
2. Let first graders carry their own money.
3. See our pals before school and at relaxation period.
4. Carry our own books to school.
5. Let child be in charge of lost and found locker.
6. Learn to manage better.

7. Put mailbox outside classroom for notices.
8. Find out about children absent when the group is on the playground.

Teachers interviewed by Lewis offered the following suggestions on curbing interruptions.

1. Make good use of mailboxes.
2. Provide request box in principal's office.
3. Inform parents of best way and time to make contact with children.
4. Confine lunchroom business to the first 20 or 30 minutes of the day.
5. Provide a central location for athletic equipment and another for lost and found.
6. Have notices and announcements for the day on the bulletin board when teachers arrive.
7. Teachers and pupils plan cooperatively to provide themselves with materials and to make arrangements about equipment they need for the day.
8. Keep materials and equipment that teachers share with each other in a convenient location.
9. Have book case in convenient location for supplementary readers and music books that are used by several groups.
10. Keep section of bulletin board for posting telephone calls.

The principals contributed seven points that seemed important from the administrative point of view.

1. Provide handbook at beginning of year to supply information on routine matters.
2. Work out a school calendar in cooperation with teachers. (post on bulletin board)
3. Provide parents with information on how to contact child.
4. Place announcements and notices for the day on bulletin boards or in teachers' mail boxes before teachers arrive.

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7 Ibid.
8 Ibid.
5. Use well-qualified pupils to help in the office the first thirty minutes and immediately after school.

6. Work out arrangements for leaving messages at office so teachers and students may call for them at their convenience.

7. Principal and staff members work together.

Here are fourteen possible stimulants for classroom interruptions. Many of these have been mentioned before and would be eagerly contested by both administrators and teachers; however, even the slightest indulgence in educational thinking along these lines will reward the author.

Possible stimulants for interruptions:
1. Passing to and from recitation seats
2. Passing to and from drinking fountain
3. Being excused from the room
4. Greeting visitors
5. Fire drills
6. Signals (p.a. system, inter-com)
7. Pencil sharpening
8. Collecting materials
9. Calling the roll
10. School patrol
11. School lunch delivered
12. School milk delivered
13. Caring for wraps and lunches brought from home
14. Passing in or out of building, or from room to room

After much consideration of the previously mentioned small potential interruptions, it was felt that the teacher definitely needs a short period of time each day for "catching up."

Catching up jobs could involve such things as checking

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papers, telephone calls to parents or possibly a conference with their principal. Organization during the period from 3:30 P.M. to 4:00 P.M. could possibly help minimize the correction of papers during the evening hours. Conferences with the Lakeview School principal brought out that good teacher-principal organization could eliminate the following interruptions.

1. Going from room to room with lost and found articles.
2. Visiting classrooms to get money changed and just visiting.
3. Delivering lunch money to small brothers or sisters.
4. Borrowing and returning physical education and other equipment that should be kept in a central location.
5. Interruptions that could be announced on the bulletin board or in notices for the day.

Significant results were obtained from the Bay City, Michigan Schools. Correcting tests, moving piano, posting lessons and other similar "odd jobs" can take away from 21 per cent to 69 per cent of the instructional day. The average teacher in that system spent sixteen minutes a day just correcting papers. One of the greatest destroyers of teacher morale is the seemingly insignificant problem of classroom interruptions. Neighboring teachers that must rely on borrowing books can be a constant source

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of interruption. At times, teachers are interrupted during a "free" period to take the place of someone who is sick or away at the moment. As far as the students are concerned, the main interrupters are the patrol people and the music people. In other studies done on the senior high level, athletics have come to mean interruptions of various natures.

Many of the ideas brought to light in the Lakeview Study paralleled the points mentioned in Lane's, "The Principal in the Modern Elementary School." After considerable editing, the following items were thought to be the most important and thought-provoking.

1. Set up faculty of teachers comparable in ability, enthusiasm and vision.
2. Give teacher liberty plus guidance, to work on educational program.
3. Organize school on basis of social maturity.

The principal might ask himself--

1. Does the school appear well organized?
2. Is the school well organized?
3. Are children and teachers friendly and courteous?
4. Do I (principal) handle human relationships happily and effectively?

The following are major problems of school organization:

1. Badly managed playground
2. Lack of equipment and supplies
3. Faculty cliques

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4. Congested play areas
5. Evidence of poor work habits
6. Student discipline low in general

Many teachers experience several interruptions throughout the day. George L. Young writes that athletics and music people seem to be the main interrupters in schools. As a result of these situations, many times the teacher's morale suffers. Mr. Young mentions that in some cases faculty committees have been introduced to insure staff harmony, pleasant teaching conditions, and better instruction. Also the committee could be called in to take necessary action involving a possible unprofessional teacher.

Marion Cranmore has an answer to one major problem. Daytime and evening fatigue can be reduced if full utilization is made of the 3:30 P. M. to 4:00 P. M. period at the end of the day for correcting papers and the like.

Many authors agree that administrators can become so engrossed in "office procedure" that they fail to recognize problems of the students, staff, and plant. Mr. Sears bears this out when he explains,

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There is great danger that a school staff, or that a principal may be so conscious of the central office that habits are formed of working in terms of central office directions rather than in terms of the needs of the children in the community. 14

A situation may very well work in reverse. When teacher organization or petty personnel problems begin to cut into the administration of a school, one loses sight of the very foundations of our educational system.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND RATED SUGGESTIONS

I. FINDINGS

The final analysis of facts and figures brought out many points of interest. Tabulation of the instruments showed that some teachers have very serious problems regarding interruptions.

All teachers involved in the Lakeview Study cooperated to the fullest extent. The attitude of cooperation among the staff was kept high by a feeling of professional growth. Two teachers remarked that a few items should be studied further by the district to further alleviate problems of interruptions. The teachers proved to be very frank and "free" in talking about interruptions and methods of elimination.

Determining the existing conditions was the job of the survey. Determining the therapy to be used will be a real problem because all situations are not similar; however, it was generally agreed by the teachers that a high degree of planning and organization should be put forth by the teacher and administrator.

No doubt some of these so-called interruptions can and will be contested, but the fact remains that they
were mentioned and tabulated by teachers.

During the three week period of observation there were 219 interruptions recorded. Results were interesting and showed that certain interruptions took the immediate lead in tabulation. Far in the lead were interruptions initiated by students entering a foreign classroom within the school. It is shown in Table I that students caused 19.6 per cent of the total interruptions recorded in the school during the three week period.

Students entering classrooms were recorded at a moderate rate except in one third grade room and one fifth grade room. Table I shows that the third grade teacher, designated "F," recorded 35.7 per cent of all student interruptions. Many reasons were given for the third grade interruptions, but mainly they revolved around reasons of asking for information, and delivering bulletins and notices. A fifth grade teacher recorded 30.9 per cent of all student interruptions with similar reasons the main causes. Student interruptions did not occur in the other third grade. This might be explained by observing the floor plan of Lakeview Elementary School.¹ Teacher "E," with no student interruptions, is located

¹See Appendix D (floor plan).
in a room that is away from many activities of the playground, office, and school itself. Teacher "F" with a high percentage of interruptions is located near a play area and is in direct line of communication between rooms, lunchroom, and the main office.

The average length of a student interruption is recorded in Table II as 3.4 minutes. The longest duration mentioned was 2 minutes.

It is interesting to note that throughout the weeks, for some unexplained reason, student interruptions occurred at an unusually low rate on Tuesdays and Fridays. Wednesday had the most interruptions with a high of 30.2 per cent. Monday and Thursday were the next highest with 25.5 per cent of all interruptions. It is shown clearly in Table III that they were fairly consistent except for Tuesday and Friday, and the teachers were unable to explain this situation.

Table IV indicates that student interruptions occurred mainly in the hour between one o'clock and two o'clock. Some reasons for this may be traced to the noon play period. Frequently students are guilty of returning from the playground after the last bell has rung and school has begun. Also, students often leave articles of clothing on the playground which must be returned to the owner, or placed in the lost and found.
### Table I

KINDS AND DISTRIBUTIONS OF INTERRUPTIONS EXPERIENCED BY THE INDIVIDUAL TEACHERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Students</th>
<th>School Patrol</th>
<th>Basic Teacher</th>
<th>Music Students</th>
<th>Principal</th>
<th>Secretary</th>
<th>Another Teacher</th>
<th>Custodian</th>
<th>Weights &amp; Measures</th>
<th>Eye Tests</th>
<th>Room Mother</th>
<th>Father</th>
<th>Cadet Observation</th>
<th>Film Projector</th>
<th>Speech Therapist</th>
<th>Nurse</th>
<th>Banking</th>
<th>Sick Child</th>
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All teachers: 143 20 2 20 15 32 7 2 11 13 1 10 3 1 1 6 13 6 1 8 1 1 1 1 219

% of total: 19.6 9.1 9.1 6.8 14.6 3.2 5.1 5.8 4.6 13.4 14.1 27.5 27.4 13.6 14.1 14.1 14.1 14.1 8.6
### Table II

**Durations of Interruptions**

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# TABLE III

## CALENDAR OF INTERRUPTIONS

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<th>Discipline</th>
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The teachers felt it was better to send messengers as soon as possible after the bell had rung and before lessons had begun, rather than to interrupt later in the afternoon in the middle of a lesson. These reasons would tend to account for all the interruptions between one and two o'clock.

Thirty-two and one-half per cent of all student interruptions occurred in the hour from one to two o'clock.

Other important time areas for student interruptions were the hours beginning at ten o'clock, eleven o'clock, and two o'clock. Twenty and nine-tenths per cent of all student interruptions occurred in the hour two to three o'clock. Ten and eleven o'clock both registered 11.6 per cent of student interruptions. The low hour for any of the days was twelve o'clock which registered 9.3 per cent of the total student interruptions.

Reasons for student interruptions were numerous and are listed below:

1. Borrow felt pen
2. Notice
3. Lunch money for member of family
4. Athletic equipment
5. Announcements
6. Borrow materials
7. Borrow books and encyclopedias
8. Projection crew members
9. Messenger
10. Student council representative
11. Students desiring to sing to a class (unscheduled)
12. Health test (unscheduled)

The next most frequent interrupter, as indicated by Table I, was the school secretary. Again a grade level concentration was evident but not without just reason. One first grade reported 50 per cent of all secretarial interruptions while one third grade reported 40.6 per cent of the total. This might be explained by studying a floor plan of the school building.\(^2\) The plant is of new design and has no hallways between rooms or units. Twelve classrooms are located in three separate units in which there are four classrooms each. One room is a spare room used for supplies and library books. The secretary must walk "outside" on covered walkways to communicate between units. Since there are no hallways, she must enter the unit directly into a classroom situation. Lack of outside mail boxes makes it imperative that she enter the room to carry out her work. Once in the room and the message delivered, she has two alternatives. She may return outside and enter another classroom in the unit by an outside door, or she may continue on into a central storeroom of the unit where a supply

\(^2\)See Appendix D (floor plan).
room and lavatories are located, and enter classrooms via the storeroom. To avoid the elements every day on her rounds, the secretary would enter a unit by certain classrooms most of the time, make her rounds within the unit, and return outside. Naturally, the closest classroom to the central office would receive the most traffic and so it was in the Lakeview Elementary School. The three upper grades were located in the unit close to the office and had access to a spare room in the unit. The secretary would enter the unit through the spare room and consequently, no interruptions from the secretary were recorded.

Reasons for visits by the secretary ranged from notices to messages for the teachers and are listed here:

1. Notice
2. Supplies
3. Student records
4. Notes other than formal notices
5. Bulletins
6. Papers
7. Announcements

It was evident that some teachers were in positions where they were not interrupted when the secretary entered the room, and thus none were recorded. The shortest duration of a secretary's visit was two minutes and the longest duration reported was five minutes. The secretary
interrupted most, according to Table III, on Monday and Thursday. Each of these days had 28.1 per cent of her visits. Tuesday recorded 13.7 per cent, Wednesday 15.6 per cent and Friday 9.3 per cent of the total interruptions. Altogether, the secretary was responsible for 14.6 per cent of the total 219 interruptions. When one looks at Table IV, it is evident that the secretary made her rounds 37.5 per cent of the time between ten and eleven o’clock. Next would be 25 per cent of the time between nine and ten o’clock. The other hours were low except for two to three o’clock. In this hour she was responsible for 21.8 per cent of the interruptions.

Data reveals that the school patrol and music students were the next greatest offenders following students and the school secretary.

The school patrol caused 9.1 per cent of the total interruptions. The patrol is limited to the fifth grades. During the three week study one fifth grade had patrol two weeks since they rotate every week. One fifth grade recorded 30 per cent of the patrol interruptions and the other 20 per cent.

Patrols were needed on four crosswalks in the school service area. One patrol from 8:30 A. M. to 9:00 A. M. was required. A patrol shift was needed from 2:30 P. M. to 2:45 P. M. to escort primary children home.
The last patrol shift was from 3:25 P. M. to 3:45 P. M. The patrol interruptions were evident in the morning when people would come in late from their crosswalks. At 2:30 P. M. there were disturbances when students were leaving and again at 2:45 when they returned. In Table II it is indicated that the shortest duration of a patrol interruption recorded was two minutes while the longest was ten minutes. The mean was six minutes.

Fifty per cent of all patrol interruptions occurred on Wednesday mainly because changes in shifts were made on this day and to some students there was confusion. Fifteen per cent of these interruptions occurred on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday. No reason was found for Friday's low of only 5 per cent of interruptions.

Sixty-five per cent of all patrol interruptions occurred at nine o'clock in the morning. Twenty per cent occurred between two and three o'clock while 10 per cent took place after three o'clock.

The item that tied for number of interruptions in third place was instrumental music. Oftentimes, there were interruptions when these people were leaving the room and re-entering. Students at Lakeview have the opportunity of learning to play a musical instrument and a music teacher is at the school once on Tuesday and once
on Thursday. On each day he has practice for a beginning group and an advanced group. This instruction is limited to students in the fourth, fifth and sixth grades. Nine and one-tenth per cent of all interruptions were caused by the instrumental music people. Forty-five per cent of these were recorded in the sixth grade where participation is highest. Durations of interruptions by music people ranged from two to five minutes with a mean of 2.5 minutes. Fifty-five per cent of these occurred on Tuesday and 45 per cent occurred on Thursday. Eighty per cent of music interruptions occurred between nine and ten o'clock. Fifteen per cent occurred between one and two o'clock and 5 per cent between ten and eleven o'clock.

In fourth place, recording 6.8 per cent of all interruptions during the three week period, was the building principal. On some occasions the principal was recorded by the teachers when making his routine observations.

Table I indicates that of the total visits made by the principal, 26.6 per cent occurred in a first grade ("A"). This teacher was new to the building and this might explain the high percentage of visits. The other first grade had a high percentage of 20 per cent with no apparent reason. One second grade recorded 20 per cent of all interruptions and here again this was
a new teacher to the building and possibly explains the high percentage. Other grades recorded from 1 per cent to 6.6 per cent with four teachers not registering any interruptions by the principal. The shortest recorded visit by the principal was 2 minutes and the longest 5 minutes. The mean time was 2.5 minutes.

Table III explains that 53.3 per cent of interruptions or visits occurred on Monday. The beginning of the week gives the principal a time in which last minute explanations are talked over with some teachers. Twenty-six and six-tenths per cent occurred on Wednesday, 13.3 per cent on Friday and a low on Thursday of 6.6 per cent.

Most interruptions or visits by the principal occurred between nine and ten o'clock. Forty-six and six-tenths per cent was recorded in this hour. His next high area was between the hours of ten and eleven o'clock which recorded 26.6 per cent. The hour beginning at twelve was next with 13.3 per cent. The hours beginning at eleven and two o'clock each recorded 6.6 per cent of all the principal's interruptions.

The school nurse, another important member of an education team, was the sixth most frequently mentioned interruption. Along with the school nurse in sixth place, providing 5.3 per cent of all interruptions, was the school's eye testing program.
One must look at the nurse's program to better understand problems that occurred. The nurse was scheduled to be at the school every Tuesday between the hours of nine and one o'clock. Serving eleven classrooms in that short period of time sometimes was in itself a problem. Children who were ill or needed attention were sent to the spare classroom where the nurse would care for their needs. The recorded interruptions were when the nurse found it necessary to visit particular classrooms. The shortest visit recorded was 2 minutes and the longest duration was 20 minutes. The average interruption was recorded at 5.6 minutes.

A concentration occurred in the primary grades. The nurse's visits were 38.4 per cent in one third grade and 30.7 per cent in one first grade. Explanations for these high concentrations were not obtained, but it was learned from the nurse that usually her visits are concentrated in the primary area rather than the intermediate area. Seventy-six and nine-tenths per cent of her interruptions occurred on Tuesday and Table III shows that she did return to the school for two visits on Monday and one visit on Wednesday. Forty-six and one-tenth per cent of all her visits took place between the hours of nine and ten o'clock. Fifteen and three-tenths per
cent took place between ten and eleven o'clock and 7.6 per cent during the hours beginning at twelve, two and three o'clock.

The eye testing program sees to it that all students have their vision tested. This is part of the nurse's program, but is handled entirely by mothers from the community. The testing took place in all rooms during one session. Two teachers reported two interruptions because in these cases the testing was begun just before lunch and finished immediately after lunch. The interruptions were spread evenly over the grade levels by the very nature of the program. It was quite interesting to learn that the average eye test required 50 minutes of class time. They ranged from 20 minutes to 90 minutes throughout the whole school. Eighty-five and six-tenths per cent of the eye tests appeared on a Wednesday and 15.3 per cent on the following day, Thursday. Thirty and seven-tenths per cent of the interruptions appeared in each of the hours beginning at nine, ten and eleven o'clock. Seven and six-tenths per cent of the eye tests took place during the hour beginning at one o'clock.

The next item of importance was similar to the eye testing program and also part of the nurse's program. This, too, was handled by volunteer mothers of the community, and was labeled "Weights and Measures." All
students are required to be weighed and measured during the early part of the school year. The main difference was that students reported to the spare classroom where mothers recorded the information. This in itself was quite well organized, but it was felt by the teachers that if they could have known the exact time when their room was scheduled, their planning would show more organization. This item accounted for 5.1 per cent of the total interruptions recorded. They, too, were evenly distributed throughout the classrooms.

The average (mean) weights and measures session for the whole school lasted 22.8 minutes. The range was from 18 minutes to 30 minutes. Seventy-seven per cent of the weights and measures interruptions took place on Monday with the remaining 23 per cent occurring on Tuesday.

Most of the weights and measures interruptions were initiated during the first two hours of the regular school day. It should be mentioned here that the mothers did begin eye testing, weights, and measures in the primary grades on the days recorded. Twenty-seven and two-tenths per cent of the weights and measures interruptions were found in the first hour while 36.3 per cent were found in the second hour of the day. Eighteen and one-tenth
per cent were found to occur in each of the fifth and sixth hours of each school day.

Another item that received much attention was the case where a mother would come to the school either bringing a child or picking up a child and in some cases to have short consultations. It was school policy that these people were to stop at the office and receive permission to enter classrooms, but unfortunately, some parents bypassed the office and did cause several serious interruptions. These interruptions accounted for 4.6 per cent of all interruptions for the three week period. They were numerous in the primary grades where children are in their first years of school. Table I shows that one first grade received 40 per cent of these interruptions and at times was disturbed over them. The average duration of one such visit was 8 minutes and the spread was from 2 minutes to 15 minutes. There was no apparent reason for these grade concentrations. According to the teachers, mothers interrupted 30 per cent of the time on Wednesday, 20 per cent of the time on Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, and 10 per cent of the time on Monday.

Thirty per cent of these interruptions took place during the first and sixth hour of the day. This may be explained when one realizes that the primary students begin school during the first hour and are dismissed,
before the intermediate grades, during the sixth hour of the day. The second, third, fourth, and fifth hours each had 10 per cent of these interruptions.

Interruptions by other members of the staff accounted for 3.2 per cent of the total interruptions. Forty-two and eight-tenths per cent of these occurred in one room. This particular teacher was termed by the principal as an excellent teacher with much experience. This might be a reason for young beginning teachers to ask for help, but it was felt that the main reason was her location in a primary unit with one teacher without experience, and two teachers who were new to the building and its organization. One third grade teacher recorded 14.2 per cent and she, too, was located next door to a third grade teacher who was new to the building. The exact situations held true in the fourth and fifth grade situations, each with a new and untried teacher in the adjoining room. These interruptions ranged from 2 to 5 minutes with an average of 3.5 minutes. Teachers interrupted each other 11.2 per cent of the time on Friday and 12.2 per cent of the time on Monday and Thursday. Twenty-eight and five-tenths per cent of teacher interruptions took place during the fourth hour of the day beginning at twelve o'clock. Twelve and two-tenths per cent of these occurred during the first, second, fifth and
sixth hours of the school day.

Another item that ranked in importance with teacher interruptions was the fire drill. Distribution was even except for one teacher who explained that after the first interruption he and his class returned to their room only to be interrupted again by firemen using loudspeakers out on the playground in view from their windows. The average duration per room was 15 minutes (because of a program put on by firemen on playfield), and ranged from 10 to 20 minutes. The fire drill took place on a Thursday. Three teachers did not record the fire drill. The drill took place at two separate times—one program for the primary grades and one program for the upper grades; hence, the two different hours are mentioned on Table IV. Sixty-two and five-tenths per cent of all fire drills recorded took place during the second hour of the day while 37.5 of these took affect in the first hour of the day.

The speech therapy teacher accounted for 2.7 per cent of the total interruptions, along with school banking.

The speech teacher does most of her work in the first grade and Table I indicates teacher "A" had more students requiring therapy. These interruptions ranged
from 2 to 30 minutes. The mean as indicated in Table II was 9 minutes. She was at the Lakeview Elementary School 50 per cent of the time on Monday and 50 per cent of the time on Wednesday which are her scheduled days. All of her interruptions took place during the second hour of the day.

The majority of banking problems arose in the third grades. The only other grade to report problems with banking was a fifth grade with 16.6 per cent of the total interruptions. Teacher "F" recorded 50 per cent of banking interruptions, while third grade teacher "F" recorded 33.3 per cent of the interruptions. Banking interruptions ranged from 4 minutes to 25 minutes with an average of 16.6 minutes. Banking is scheduled on Tuesdays so all interruptions occurred in the first hour of that day.

There was no recognizable reason for interruptions in the fifth grade. Upper grade teachers explained that the majority of the time banking situations could be integrated with their everyday arithmetic subject matter. However, the third grade teachers complained that school banking lost its objective with this age group. The main problem was that students did not realize the fundamentals and rewards of saving money. Another problem was that students failed to comprehend the process of recording information in the bank books, necessitating continual
individual supervision by the teachers. The teachers strongly suggested further study of this problem with possible elimination of banking in this grade or a simplified banking program initiated for this grade level.

Very similar in all aspects to interruptions by a mother were the interruptions provided by fathers. One and three-tenths per cent of all interruptions were initiated by fathers. These three interruptions all took place in one room (Teacher "B"—See Table I). The visits ranged in duration from 2 to 4 minutes, the average being 3 minutes. Two of these interruptions (66.6 per cent) were experienced on a Thursday and the other interruption occurred on Friday. Fathers interrupted during the second, fifth and sixth hours of the day.

Two items that were only mentioned twice on the daily tabulation sheets were the custodian and the music teacher. The custodian interrupted twice in the third grade to borrow and return keys. The music teacher had stopped in once in the fourth grade and once in the sixth grade for lesson plan information.

Durations of custodian interruptions were both 2 minutes. They also occurred on a Thursday during the sixth hour of the school day.

Duration of music teacher interruptions were 2
and 3 minutes respectively. One occurred on Tuesday and
the other on Thursday. One took place during the first
hour of the day and the other during the second hour.

A room mother interrupted a fourth grade class for
5 minutes on Monday during the sixth hour of the day.
The reason given by the teacher was that the room mother
was preparing plans for a room party, but had not
scheduled a meeting with the teacher.

A student teacher or cadet was working in the
building at the time of the study and was mentioned as
an interruption when he observed a class. This observa-
tion took place in a first grade ("A") with a duration
of 60 minutes. The observation was on a Tuesday during
the second hour of the day.

A third grade teacher recorded an interruption
when she could not get a film projector to operate. The
interruption lasted three minutes. It occurred on Wed-
nesday during the fifth hour of the day.

There was a sick child recorded in a fourth grade
room on Wednesday with an interruption duration of 3
minutes. This incident happened during the sixth hour
of the day.

A discipline case was reported once during the
study. The sixth hour of the day on Wednesday in a fourth
grade class was the occasion. The duration was 3 minutes.
A college supervising teacher met with a fourth grade teacher on a Thursday during the fifth hour of that day. The duration was 35 minutes. The teacher felt that possibly the conference should have been scheduled at another time—possibly a recess or play period.

There was an accident recorded on a Wednesday during the fourth hour. It was brought to the attention of a fourth grade teacher, "H", and the duration was listed as 15 minutes.

An entirely different category was recorded in one third grade ("F") which stopped class procedure for 20 minutes. A bee flew in the door and resulted in class confusion and interruption.

Looking at the overall survey from the teacher's standpoint provided interesting statistics. First grade teacher ("A") accounted for 19.1 per cent of the total interruptions recorded by staff members. It was felt a strong reason for this grade level concentration was the location close to the plant office. Teacher "A" received the second highest total interruptions on the staff. Particular items that were numerous in this room included 16 recorded visits by the secretary for 50 per cent of the total secretary visits; the speech therapist for which the teacher received 83.3 per cent of the total
amounted to only 5 interruptions. Teacher "A" received 26.6 per cent of all the principal's visits, 30.7 per cent of all nurse's visits, and 40 per cent of all visits by mothers. Located so close to the office and being an experienced teacher on a young staff were strong reasons for this grade level concentration. Other items, possibly not so serious in nature, and their percentage for this teacher were students--4.7 per cent, other teachers--42.8 per cent, weights and measures--9 per cent, eye tests --7.6 per cent, fire drill--12.5 per cent, and cadet observation for which she received 100 per cent of the total mentioned. Table I indicates this teacher had a total of 42 interruptions, or 19.1 per cent of the total recorded interruptions.

Table V indicates that teacher "A" had 28.5 per cent of her total interruption in each of the first two hours of the school day, 19 per cent during the fifth hour of the day and 11.9 per cent during the sixth hour. The fourth hour comprised 9.5 per cent of her interruptions while the third hour contributed 2.8 per cent of her interruptions.

Teacher "B" received 6.3 per cent of the total interruptions in the school for this period of time. Being a new teacher to the building and being located
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**Total interruptions:** 78 48 12 12 31 35 3 219

**% of total interruptions:** 35.6 21.9 5.4 5.4 14.1 15.9 1.3

**TABLE V**

**TIME OF INTERRUPTIONS IN INDIVIDUAL TEACHER’S ROOMS AND THE PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL INTERRUPTIONS**
away from avenues of communication were strong reasons for teacher "B's" low tabulation. Teacher "B" received 100 per cent of the interruptions by fathers. Another high area recorded was visits by the principal for which she received 20 per cent of these items mentioned by the staff. She had one interruption by the speech therapist for 16.6 per cent and one visit by a mother for 10 per cent of the totals. She received 4.7 per cent of all interruptions by students, 6.2 per cent of all interruptions by the secretary, and 7.6 per cent of eye tests mentioned. Nine per cent of all weights and measures interruptions took place in her room.

Fifty per cent of teacher "B's" interruptions took place during the first hour of the day, 21.4 per cent occurred during the second hour and 14.2 per cent during the fifth hour. The fourth and sixth hours supplied 7.1 per cent of her total interruptions.

The two second grades were unusually low in their tabulations. Teacher "C" in Table I recorded only 9 interruptions or 4.1 per cent of the total mentioned during the survey. She had 15.3 per cent of the eye tests (she tested at two different times), 10 per cent of interruptions by mothers and 12.5 per cent of the fire drills. This teacher also recorded 2.3 per cent of student interruptions, but she received 20 per cent of all
interruptions by the principal.

Thirty-three and three-tenths per cent of all her interruptions occurred during the second hour of the school day. Twenty-two and two-tenths per cent of her interruptions occurred during each of the third, fourth, and fifth hours.

Teacher "D" was one of two teachers recording a low of only 6 interruptions for the three week period. She was new to the profession and received a wide variety of interruptions. Six different interruptions occurred in her room, but they all took place either in the second or the sixth hour. Two and seven-tenths per cent of all interruptions happened to teacher "D." This teacher received 2.3 per cent of all student interruptions, 9 per cent of interruptions resulting from weights and measures, 10 per cent of mothers’ interruptions, and 7.6 per cent of eye testing interruptions. She also had 12.5 per cent of the fire drills and 7.6 per cent of the nurse’s interruptions.

In the third grade one certainly finds inequality regarding interruptions. Teacher "E," away from activity, recorded only 2.7 per cent of total interruptions and teacher "F" reported a staff high of 20.5 per cent of all interruptions mentioned in the study.
All of teacher "E's" interruptions occurred in the first hour of the day and included 50 per cent of all banking interruption mentioned. She also tabulated 10 per cent of visits by mothers, 7.6 per cent of eye test interruptions, and 9 per cent of interruptions resulting from weights and measures.

Teacher "F" on the other hand had a wide variety of interruptions distributed throughout the whole school day. Twenty-four and four-tenths per cent of her interruptions occurred in the second hour, 22.2 per cent of the interruptions in each of the fifth and sixth hours and 15.5 per cent in the first hour. Table V also reveals that her low hour was the third with only 6.6 per cent of her interruptions falling within its minutes.

Teacher "F" recorded a high of 45 interruptions during the three week period and the breakdown follows. She encountered 35.7 per cent of all student interruptions, 40.6 per cent of all secretarial interruptions, and 38.4 per cent of all interruptions due to the school nurse. Thirteen and three-tenths per cent of all principal's visits occurred in her room and 14.2 per cent of other teacher interruptions plagued her also. Table I indicates 100 per cent of custodian interruptions, 33.3 per cent of banking interruptions and 100 per cent of interruptions resulting from an ill-working film projector.
She recorded the regular amounts of interruptions from eye tests and weights and measures and fire drill, but recorded an entirely different interruption of an insect or bee.

Teacher "O" had 3.6 per cent of total interruptions and was another beginning teacher. Thirty-seven and five-tenths per cent of her interruptions occurred in the first hour while 25 per cent took place during the second and the sixth hours. Twelve and five-tenths per cent of her interruptions happened during the fifth hour. She received the only interruption from a college supervisor, and one of two interruptions by the music teacher.

Teacher "O" had 2.3 per cent of total student interruptions for the school, 6.6 per cent of the principal's interruptions listed and 20 per cent of interruptions resulting from a mother coming to school. Teacher "O" had normal distribution also when it came to weights and measures and eye tests.

Teacher "H" recorded a wide variety of interruptions during most hours of the day. He was the only one to report a single room mother interruption, a single interruption for a sick child, and a single interruption for a discipline case and a playground accident. This teacher received 7.1 per cent of all student interruptions, 15 per cent of the principal's interruptions,
3.1 per cent of the secretary’s interruptions, and 14.2 per cent of interruptions resulting from other teachers. Weights and measures along with eye tests were the same percentages mentioned for teacher “G.” Teacher “H” received 12.5 per cent of fire drill interruptions and 7.6 per cent of the nurse’s interruptions. Teacher “H” (fourth grade) had few interruptions, with 7.3 per cent of the total, compared with some other teachers. It was interesting to see the problem of music students develop at this time. Teacher “H” recorded 15 per cent of all interruptions resulting from music students.

His busiest hour of the day for interruptions was the sixth, recording 37.5 per cent of all his interruptions. Twenty-five per cent occurred in the first hour, 18.7 per cent in the second hour and 12.5 per cent in the fifth and seventh hour of the school day.

A fifth grade teacher (first year) also recorded 7.3 per cent of all the interruptions that took place. He recorded 16.6 per cent of the banking interruptions, 7.6 per cent of the eye tests, and 9 per cent of weights and measures interruptions. Teacher “I” also had 30 per cent of all music student interruptions and 20 per cent of school patrol interruptions. Seven and one-tenth per cent of all student interruptions also occurred in his room.
Thirty-seven and five-tenths per cent of all his interruptions took place in the first hour of the school day. Twenty-five per cent occurred during the sixth hour, 18.7 per cent during the third hour, and 6.2 per cent during each of the second, fifth and seventh hours of the school day.

Contrasting with teacher "I" was the other fifth grade teacher, "J." Teacher "J" had 31.5 per cent of all his interruptions during the first hour of the day. Thirteen and one-tenth per cent of his interruptions occurred during the sixth hour, 10.5 per cent during the second and fifth hours and 5.2 per cent during the third hour. Two and six-tenths per cent of his interruptions took place during the fourth hour as can be seen in Table V.

Teacher "J" had 17.3 per cent of the total interruptions mentioned. He had 30.9 per cent of the total student interruptions, which was unusually high, and 80 per cent of all patrol interruptions. Also recorded were 10 per cent of all interruptions resulting from music students, 6.6 per cent of all principal's interruptions, 28.5 per cent of other teacher interruptions and 7.6 per cent of all nurse's interruptions. This teacher had 12.5 per cent of all fire drill interruptions, 9 per cent of
interruptions caused by weights and measures and 7.6 per cent of eye test interruptions.

The last member of the staff to be discussed is the sixth grade teacher. In Table V we find that 57.6 per cent of this teacher's interruptions occurred during the first hour of the day. Twenty-six and three-tenths per cent of his interruptions took place during the second hour and 5.5 per cent during each one of the third, fifth and sixth hours.

Teacher "K" (sixth grade teacher) accounted for 4.7 per cent of the total student interruptions. He had one of two interruptions by the music teacher and 45 per cent of all music student interruptions. He also accounted for 6.6 per cent of all the principal's interruptions and 25 per cent of the fire drills. The sixth grade also had 7.6 per cent of the nurse's interruptions, 15.3 per cent of eye test interruptions and 9 per cent of the interruptions resulting from weights and measures being recorded.

Table V clearly shows that 35.6 per cent of all recorded interruptions occurred during the first hour of the school day. The second hour of the day was next with 21.9 per cent. Fifteen and nine-tenths per cent of the total interruptions took place during the sixth hour and 14.1 per cent during the fifth hour. Next was the
third and fourth hours of the school day with 5.4 per cent of the total interruptions mentioned. The seventh hour recorded only 1.3 per cent of the total interruptions.

Wednesday was the busiest day according to Table III with 25.1 per cent of all interruptions; next was Thursday with 23.7 per cent of interruptions. Monday and Tuesday each had 21.4 per cent of the total, while Friday had the least with 8.6 per cent of the total interruptions. There did not seem to be an explanation for this distribution.

II. RATED SUGGESTIONS

On the last day of the study a list of forty-five suggestions was given to each teacher. Each of the teachers involved in the study was asked to rate each suggestion as to the importance it would have in curbing interruptions. The rating scale is listed below:

1. No help in curbing interruptions
2. A little help in curbing interruptions
3. Some help in curbing interruptions
4. Considerable help in curbing interruptions
5. Extremely helpful in curbing interruptions

When tabulated, the list of suggestions rearranged

3See Appendix C.
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<th>Mean</th>
<th>Item Number</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<td>Keep materials and equipment that teachers share with each other in a convenient location.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Sending pupils to other rooms eliminated unless scheduled or absolutely necessary.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Receiving instructional supplies in advance of actual use.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Provide new teachers with summarized statements of the established rules, regulations and policies enforced in the school building.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Rest room on each floor of a large building for teachers and pupils—possibly self-contained.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Principal and staff members work together.</td>
</tr>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>Provide handbook at beginning of year to supply information on routine matters.</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Have book case in convenient location for supplementary readers and music books that are used by several groups.</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Make good use of mail boxes.</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Get paper and books, have money changed before school.</td>
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<td>3.6</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Centralizing administration and have the administrative functions performed in the central office.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>A study of instrumental music programs to see if time schedules and students are causing disturbances.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Adequate scheduling of playground supervision and noon supervision of building.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Weights and measures taken during a noon play period.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>System of room boxes where bulletin and information from the office may be delivered.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Place announcements and notices for the day on bulletin boards or in teachers' mail boxes before teachers arrive.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Distributing advisory responsibility for student activities in a way that it would be systematic rather than a series of interruptions.</td>
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<td>Provide a central location for athletic equipment and another for lost and found.</td>
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<td>3.2</td>
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<td>Work out a school calendar in cooperation with teachers (post on bulletin board).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rank</td>
<td>Mean Rating</td>
<td>Item Number on Instrument</td>
<td>Description</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Inform parents of best way and time to make contact with children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>Adequate scheduling of playground duty.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>Allow teachers to use clerical help for school letters relating to school activities and planning.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>34.1</td>
<td>Simplified system for school banking incorporated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>32.1</td>
<td>Settling promptly discipline cases referred to office of principal.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>40.1</td>
<td>Eye testing done during a noon play period.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>Provide simplified printed forms for all regular school reports, notices, etc.</td>
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</table>

**Table VI (Continued)**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Mean Rating</th>
<th>Item Number</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>27.</td>
<td>Adjusting teaching load according to experience and health of teachers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>25.</td>
<td>Insist that the janitor clean the blackboards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>35.</td>
<td>Reduce daily subject preparations per teacher.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
themselves in order of importance. The order was quite different in arrangement from the instrument given the staff members.

The suggestion that received the most points when their rating numbers were totaled was to keep materials and equipment that were to be shared by teachers in a convenient location.

Several teachers did share books in the school and considered this a very important item in classroom organization.

Second place was shared by four different items. One item suggested the elimination of sending pupils to other rooms unless it was absolutely necessary. Another item in second place requested instructional supplies in advance of actual use. These supplies are delivered on Mondays to Lakeview School and on rare occasions supplies have been delayed in shipment. The fourth item in second place suggested that a summarized brochure stating regulations and policies be given all new teachers.

Third place found a lone item suggesting that the principal and staff members work together on school functions and organization.

It should be mentioned here that the suggestions were completely unbiased and were not reflections of the
organization and administration of Lakeview Elementary School.

Fourth place was also a single item with the idea of a handbook for teachers at the beginning of the year to inform teachers of routine matters.

The item ranked fifth in importance was a minor problem in the Lakeview upper grades. This was the problem of a central location for supplementary books that was convenient for two or more teachers. Since the study this problem has been eliminated at Lakeview through reorganization.

The sixth ranking item pertained to good use of teachers mail boxes. Lakeview had no mail boxes, but teachers felt that when their staff increased in number, mail boxes would be time savers.

Three items were named to seventh rank. The first suggestion was to be sure and take care of supplies and the changing of money before school. Another item with equal votes was to have all administrative functions performed in the central office. The last article to appear in the position stated that a study of instrumental music programs should be made to see if they are taking valuable time.

Eighth place also had three items. The first suggested adequate scheduling of building supervision duties.
Another brought up the point of possibly weighing and measuring the children during a recess or play period. The last item ranking eighth provided for boxes on the outside of each room where office bulletins could be delivered.

Ninth place had two items with equal rank. The first suggested announcements be put on a centralized bulletin board first thing in the morning or placed in the teacher’s box. The other item mentioned the distribution of advisory responsibility for student activities in a systematic way.

Five items ranked in tenth place after final tabulations. First was that having to do with a central location of physical education equipment that is to be shared. Also, a central location for a lost and found box was desired. Another item mentioned working out a school calendar in cooperation with teachers. Staff members would then know when events and materials were happening and being used respectively. In this same ranking was the idea of providing simplified printed forms for all regular school reports and notices. Also, discipline cases should be promptly settled. Only one discipline case was mentioned in the study and the student was neither incorrigible or objectionable. The student merely became excited during a discussion period. The
last item ranking tenth pertained to a simplified system of banking. There was a definite feeling by primary teachers that the original purposes and ideals of the program are not comprehended at a primary level.

Three items ranked eleventh in this final instrument used in the study. One of them pertained to collection of lunch money and milk money during the first twenty or thirty minutes of each day. Lakeview School inaugurated a new cafeteria at the beginning of the year and was not plagued with this problem. Another item mentioned that discipline cases referred to the office should be settled promptly. The last item ranked here suggested eye testing of students be done during a play period. This suggestion paralleled the weights and measures problem.

Twelfth place had four items, the first of which suggested parents be informed of when and where to contact children during the day. Another suggestion involved cooperative planning being carried on by students and teacher. One item mentioned that messages could be left at offices and picked up by room messengers at the teacher's convenience. The last item ranked here suggested adequate scheduling of playground duty.

The thirteenth place was taken by a lone item regarding clerical help for teachers, relating to
Two suggestions ranked fourteenth and the first was the problem of scheduling teacher-administrator conferences which are sometimes very hard to arrange because of busy schedules and time allotments. Being a small, compact unit with only eleven teachers, Lakeview had no problem along these lines during the study. The other item pertained to teachers limiting their discussions to recesses, lunch hours or other free time.

Three suggestions were tied for fifteenth place. First, a bulletin board should be provided for daily announcements to be posted every morning. Secondly, well-qualified students should be selected to help in routine office duties, and thirdly, selection of qualified students to act as messengers would be very helpful.

Another single ranking item appeared in sixteenth place. This item was a problem at Lakeview and has since been eliminated, but it did pertain to having a student in charge of the lost and found locker.

Four items tied for seventeenth place and the first one applied to telephone calls being posted on a bulletin board. Another mentioned putting individual mail boxes outside each classroom door for messages and notices. Lakeview had no problem with the next item concerning school assemblies because no assemblies were scheduled.
Teachers, however, felt that scheduling attendance of teachers for supervisory time was important. The last item ranked seventeenth suggested fire drills be scheduled at exact times.

Two items ranked eighteenth and they reflected suggestions or new ideas for teachers and principals. One suggested a suggestion box and the other concerned the finding out of new time saving methods regarding daily preparations and testing.

Nineteenth was a lone ranking item referring to the adjustment of teaching loads to fit the experience and health of teachers.

The last items, or twentieth rankings concerned the custodian cleaning the boards at the end of each day, and the reduction of daily preparation per teacher.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

I. SUMMARY

Upon completion of the study, teachers were strongly in favor of organizational relationships that could be brought about by cooperative planning between staff members and the principal. This, they believed, was the key to curbing seemingly incidental breaks in the instructional program.

Many of the interruptions recorded happened only once or twice a week and some were less frequent. The point remains that daily instructional time—valuable time—is being lost due to interruptions. This time is not only very valuable to the teacher and child, but to the administrator, community and everyone having a wholesome, sincere attitude toward American education.

Among the many facets of our education system of today, classroom interruptions may seem far removed from some larger and more complex problems. But, if we are to seek out the barriers to good teaching, if we are to lure new people into the profession, then we must stand ready to take periodic glances at all our advances, no matter how small they may be. It was felt that the
Lakeview Study was a step in the right direction of professional growth.

Reasons why certain interruptions seemed to plague particular teachers have been discussed in the previous chapter; however, there are some points that need further mention in light of the overall study.

The school banking program was found to be a definite problem in the third grades. Teachers in these grades sincerely hoped that the administration would study this problem and possibly come up with an answer.

A definite tapering off of interruptions in the last week was evident. Teachers and parents began to realize how important time was in the schools. Teachers began to appreciate the fact that the building principal, when planning his daily program, depends so much on the cooperation of his staff and special teachers.

Mr. Gould explains in his book that management must always be the teacher's constant concern because schools are orderly places run on time schedules.¹

One of the biggest problems with beginning teachers is allocating time and organizing time schedules. Second only to "large classes," the problem of time scheduling

is the most pressing of all practical difficulties that face the willing teacher.\(^2\)

Administrators and teachers need to study this problem, for its solution is vital to the success of the program.

Teachers on the Lakeview School staff agreed that many of these interruptions could be cut down or even eliminated simply by good organization.

Student interruptions were cut down when teachers allocated certain minutes of the day for messengers and only in emergencies are students now allowed to enter another classroom while a lesson is progressing.

The school patrol was a problem, but organization could have little effect here. One suggestion was made that patrol flags, coats, and hats be stored in another room where noise would be at a minimum when students were entering and leaving.

The administration is now looking into the problem of music students. Perhaps the individual teacher might elevate some noise by having instruments stored in another room, thus providing a quick exit for the student when the time comes for instruction.

The principal's visits are necessary many times, and sometimes they are just observations. The teachers felt this was no problem at Lakeview; however, Hockett writes,

Too often principals and superintendents have been the chief offenders in interrupting class activities, changing programs needlessly, and giving unnecessary additional tasks to an already overburdened teacher. Record making and report making by teachers for administrative needs should be strictly limited to essentials.

The secretary's visits were essential, but possible re-routing of her schedule could take the pressure off certain teachers.

Teachers agreed to visit during the noon play period or after school.

The problems of weights and measures and eye tests could be eliminated by testing during play periods or lunch periods.

Parents were informed of procedures for visiting school and this problem was all but eliminated in the weeks following the study.

The only other interruption that disturbed particular teachers was the speech therapist and that problem was discussed. Students now report directly to the spare room at a scheduled time.

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Ibid.
It is the hope that teachers do become aware of their scheduling because the time organization might be described as a conditioning process that we must all learn to adjust to.

II. IMPLICATIONS

Interruptions are not the only barriers to good teaching. Certainly it is not the interruptions as such that send a large portion of our men teachers and potential teachers knocking at the industrial doors of the communities each year. In Prewett’s Study, several other barriers to good teaching were mentioned other than classroom interruptions. But, the main problem seemed to be classroom interruptions and its effect on staff morale. Too much clerical work and the handling of discipline problems were mentioned as serious barriers to good teaching. Prewett mentions other items that are barriers to good teaching such as: noisy building, money collections, and different socio-economic groups not properly integrated in the community.

Teacher cliques, bossy teachers, uncooperative teachers and school philosophy and objectives were

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5 Ibid.
related to interruptions and teacher morale.

When teachers were asked to comment on their own personal barriers or grievances, the results were most interesting. Prewett goes on to list some results on personal barriers of individual teachers. These are tangible items mentioned specifically so that they might throw light on the "barriers" problem. Financial worries, afraid of not pleasing parents, and jealousy of other teachers social status all ranked high. Teachers involved in the Lakeview Study did not indicate that jealousy or petty conflicts existed to hamper their teaching. A fear of not being accepted by the teaching staff, and being hemmed in by the community were also mentioned by Prewett as prime factors that could form the embryo of teaching barriers. No time for relaxation during day, feeling that their teaching position is of no real importance, insecurity about where they stand with the administration, and having no real place to take personal or professional problems were listed as problems that could lead to serious emotional barriers.

"It is good teaching that changes the doodler into the architect, the prankster into the preacher, and the

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6Ibid.
7Ibid.
delinquent into a citizen.\textsuperscript{8}

It is hoped that teachers and administrators will form attitudes and patterns and be influenced to the point where adequate planning of all activities will have the fullest consideration.

It is suggested that further studies be made in possibly a smaller, more concentrated area. The mechanics of specific schools and classrooms could be studied more thoroughly, together with regulations governing various situations. Beginnings, methods, and culminations of class periods and class days need to be studied more intricately.

The aims and goals of some of the following items should be first listed and then intensive study undertaken.

1. Correspondence between teachers
2. Why room mechanics?
3. Why rules for the school?
4. Why room observations by the principal?

In regard to the fourth item listed above, Bolton, Cole and Jessup write about classroom visitation as follows:

"No classroom visit should be made without a \textit{definite purpose in mind}.\textsuperscript{9}\textsuperscript{9}

\textsuperscript{8}Ibid.

It is trusting a great deal to chance to enter a classroom unscheduled in the hope that all teachers will miraculously rise to the occasion.
BIBLIOGRAPHY
A. BOOKS


**B. PERIODICALS**


C. UNPUBLISHED MATERIALS

Grant, Jettye Fern. "Activities Which Take School Time But are Not Included in the Time Allotment." Berkeley: Berkeley Public Schools, 1956. (Mimeo graphec.)
APPENDIX
## APPENDIX A

### DAILY TABULATION SHEET

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<th>DURATION</th>
<th>CLASS</th>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>INTERRUPTION</th>
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**COMMENTS:**
APPENDIX B

DIRECTIONS
FOR USE OF DAILY TABULATION SHEET

TIME: There are ten minute time intervals located on the daily tabulation sheets. These time intervals will indicate to me when you are being interrupted during the day.

INTERUPTION: This item will indicate to me the individual or individuals, or, things that are interrupting you.

REASON: This will indicate to me what you believe the cause of the interruption is related to.

DURATION: The actual time in minutes, (as near as you can figure) that the interruption took. Please do not register anything under two (2) minutes.

CLASS: (Classification): In this column please indicate the seriousness of the interruption by using one of the code numbers from the list below.

1 - No distraction to class and teacher
2 - Little distraction to class and teacher
3 - Distracting to class and teacher
4 - Very distracting to class and teacher
5 - Distracting to the point of stopping classroom procedure
**APPENDIX C**

**SUGGESTIONS FOR CURBING INTERRUPTIONS**

The following are suggestions for helping to cut down or curb classroom interruptions. Please read the complete list over carefully and then place in the column after each suggestion the degree to which you would think it helpful or not. The degrees or classifications are as follow:

1 = No help in curbing interruptions  
2 = A little help in curbing interruptions  
3 = Some help in curbing interruptions  
4 = Considerable help in curbing interruptions  
5 = Extremely helpful in curbing interruptions

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<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Make good use of mail boxes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Provide request box in principal's office.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Inform parents of best way and time to make contact with children.</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>Confine lunchroom business to the first 20 or 30 minutes of the day.</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>Provide a central location for athletic equipment and another for lost and found.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Have notices and announcements for the day on the bulletin board when teachers arrive.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Teachers and pupils plan cooperatively to provide themselves with materials and to make arrangements about equipment needed for the day.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Keep materials and equipment that teachers share with each other in a convenient location.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Have book case in convenient location for supplementary readers and music books that are used by several groups.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Keep section of bulletin board for posting telephone calls.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Get paper and books, have money changed before school.</td>
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<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Let child be in charge of lost and found locker.</td>
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<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Put mail box outside classroom door for notices.</td>
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<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Provide handbook at beginning of year to supply information on routine matters.</td>
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<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Work out a school calendar in cooperation with teachers. (post on bulletin board)</td>
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<td>16.</td>
<td>Place announcements and notices for the day on bulletin boards or in teachers' mail boxes before teachers arrive.</td>
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APPENDIX C (CONTINUED)

17. Use well-qualified pupils to help in the office the first thirty minutes and immediately after school.
18. Work out arrangements for leaving messages at office so teachers and students may call for them at their convenience.
19. Principal and staff members work together.
20. Centralizing administration and have the administrative functions performed in the central office.
22. Adequate scheduling of attendance at assembly meetings.
23. Adequate scheduling of consultations with principal or superintendent.
24. Allow teachers to use clerical help for school letters relating to school activities and planning.
25. Insist that the janitor clean the blackboards.
26. Provide simplified printed forms for all regular school reports, notices, etc.
27. Adjusting teaching load according to experience and health of teachers.
28. Receiving instructional supplies in advance of actual use.
29. Distributing advisory responsibility for student activities in a way that it would be systematic rather than a series of interruptions.
30. Provide for qualified student messengers and assistants by the principal so that the teacher load would be lessened.
31. Provide new teachers with summarised statements of the established rules, regulations and policies enforced in the school building.
32. Settling promptly discipline cases referred to office of principal.
33. Adequate scheduling of playground supervision and noon supervision of building.
34. Removing promptly objectionable and incorrigible pupils.
35. Reduce daily subject preparations per teacher.
37. Rest room on each floor of a large building for teachers and pupils—possibly self-contained.
38. Weights and measures taken during a noon play period.
39. Fire drills scheduled to exact times.
40. Eye testing done during a noon play period.
41. Simplified system for school banking incorporated.
42. A study of instrumental music programs to see if time schedules and students are causing disturbances.
43. Discussions with other teachers limited to recesses, lunch hour and other free time.
44. System of room boxes where bulletins and information from the office may be delivered.
45. Sending pupils to other rooms eliminated unless scheduled or absolutely necessary.
APPENDIX D

FLOOR PLAN - LAKEVIEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL