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A Survey of the Literature in the area of Progress Reporting and Diplomas and Its Implication for Special Education

Ned Clark
Central Washington University

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A SURVEY OF THE LITERATURE IN THE AREA OF
PROGRESS REPORTING AND DIPLOMAS AND ITS
IMPLICATION FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION

A Thesis
Presented to
the Graduate Faculty
Central Washington State College

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

by
Ned Clark
December, 1968

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Dohn A. Miller, COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

Darwin J. Goodey

Hyrum S. Henderson

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND DEFINITION OF TERMS USED

Considerable discussion has arisen in educational circles in the last few years relative to methods of reporting pupil progress to parents of special education students. In Pateros, Washington, where the writer is a teacher of special education, this discussion began to take the nature of a serious study. The writer found the letter grade method, being used throughout the rest of the school, to be very inadequate. Since many special education students at Pateros traveled daily from other towns, conferences with parents were not always feasible. An attempt was made through survey and study of related literature to derive an acceptable form of progress reporting which may be used in the Pateros special education program. After reviewing current methodology in pupil progress reporting, valuable sections from various programs were utilized for the composition of the proposed system of reporting set forth in this paper.

Another consideration involved in this research was to determine the methods used in awarding diplomas for special education students. The desire to improve Pateros' present "Certificate of Attendance" for graduating special education students to something more motivating and rewarding was one of the main factors which served to stimulate this research.

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the Problem

There is no regular or recommended procedure set forth by the state of Washington pertaining to standards for graduation requirements for special education students. The purposes of this study were two fold: (1) to examine the progress reporting systems in an effort to derive a method of reporting which would serve the needs of students, parents, and school personnel; (2) to help establish graduation requirements for the special education students in the Pateros School District.

Importance of the Study

Nearly every parent is deeply interested in his child's progress in school. This applies particularly to parents of handicapped boys and girls. Realizing that the handicapped pupil has special problems which may make it more difficult for him to adjust in a complex society, the parent frequently displays great concern about the child's educational growth and development. Because of this concern it is essential that special educators provide these parents with detailed accounts of their children's school progress.

Teachers have long believed that every child has some potentiality of production and that each has the right to be treated as an individual. The writer, for some time, has

been aware of the wide range in individual differences of special education students. Their capabilities are as varied as the number of children. Their personality differences, individual abilities to learn, and many other characteristics provide proof for the variety of their differences. In light of these differences, teachers must provide means of evaluation which consider the individual performance of each student.

Teachers have the responsibility of attempting to mold these young people into productive human beings who can realize different methods of self-sustenance, who can attain self-realization, who can achieve satisfying human relationships, and who are aware of civic responsibility. Finding the best method of reporting individual growth of these students and thereby helping them to secure optimum levels of achievement becomes of utmost importance.

Limitations of the Study

This study was limited to researching available material pertinent to methods of pupil progress reporting and types of diplomas awarded to special education students.

II. DEFINITION OF TERMS USED

The following terms are defined for purposes of this study.

Special Education

An educational program designed to encourage individual development of students whose abnormal physical or psychological characteristics prevents them from receiving all around adjustment and progress.

Traditional Report Card

A concise document which used letter grades or a numbering system to rate the child's achievement in subject matter and often in character traits.

Parent-Teacher Conference

An oral conference between parents and teacher usually held at school to discuss the total development of the child.

Checklist Report

A list of child development characteristics covering all aspects of social adjustment, personal development, academic endeavor and prevocational achievements for the purpose of comparing the child's active performance to his potential performance.

Friday Letter

A letter sent home every Friday explaining the material that was covered in the class that week and special activities and problems which developed.

Standard Diplomas

The regular diplomas awarded in high schools that issue only one diploma to all students who graduate.

Multiple Diplomas

Different diplomas awarded for different types of programs completed or for different levels of achievement.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Current literature pertaining to teaching methods for special education students reveals little research in the area of grade reporting. Because of this lack of related literature pertaining specifically to special education progress reporting, it was necessary to adapt studies of regular classroom grade reporting systems to the purposes of this study.

At the present time, special education teachers are using a variety of methods of reporting pupil progress to parents. Some methods being used are: (1) a report designed especially for the special class, (2) a report used in the regular elementary school, (3) a letter to the parents, (4) a parent-teacher conference at school, and (5) a home visit. Methods vary, and most special education teachers agree that no one method is entirely satisfactory, but that a combination of some kind of written report and a conference provides an effective means of reporting (4:3).

I. TYPES OF REPORTING

A recent survey of 71 schools conducted in the state of Washington revealed the following grading practices (43:6):

District Special Ed. Grading Policy

	number	%
All students graded on curve	4	5
Special non-competitive grades	53	76
No grades for special ed.	6	8
Other grading system	8	11
	<hr/> 71	<hr/> 100%

Traditional Report Cards

The earliest report cards were developed as the school's major means of informing the pupil and his parents on the learning progress. They were concise documents which used letter grades or numbering to rate the child's achievement in four or five subjects.

The learner himself was overlooked except as his behavior and personality were refuted in the ambiguous category of "deportment." Viewing these early cards from our relatively sophisticated position today, we realize that the traditional report contained several deficiencies.

Mary Austin mentioned some of the misuses of report cards when she stated:

Frequently, early reporting practices resulted in poor attitudes on the part of parents and children. With the focus upon marks, too many people disregarded the values of learning and education. Pupils prodded by adults and teachers worked to obtain good grades or to "get by." In the hands of well meaning parents, reports could become lethal weapons to be used for bribery, cajoling, and to promote competition among children. Unfortunately, too many parents often withdrew love and reassurance from children whose grades were low, cheating and cramming were inevitable by-products of these situations (1:660).

Williams enforced this theory by saying:

One of the poorest uses of marks is to have them serve as a whip in order to force compliance with teacher authority. Students should not be threatened with low marks for failing to do certain tasks (39:90).

The following statement by Gaier shows one of the main problems encountered with the standard report card:

Since grades may cause the student to work from a sense of duty rather than from the sense of pleasure, needs and personal growth, the resulting learning is often meaningless and worthless. The student is expected to accept group norms as personal goals. The group standard is set up for all children to attain. Here the bright student feels that he has accomplished enough when he has measured up to the class norm and as a result, fails to profit from his school experience to the extent that he should. The poor student may be asked to accomplish the impossible in subjects from which he might learn much of value were it not for the pressure exerted. He may do just enough to "get by"; he is bland and apparently unconcerned about his poor showing. In order to maintain self-esteem and avoid conflicts in self-perception, the student may simply express an attitude of indifference (13:42).

Use of letter grades should be avoided, because letter grades can frequently result in misunderstanding. Parents usually think of A, B, C, as implying certain levels of performance. To them an A is an A regardless of who earned the grade. It is very difficult to establish a double standard for letter grades (14:134-137).

Special education teachers dislike the task of making "true to life" reports that must show the slow progress the special education children make. The teachers feel that they will face parental displeasure and they find it extremely difficult to make accurate evaluations of children

whose mental processes are often hard to follow and who pose problems that frequently stump the experts (37:169).

Perhaps the greatest weakness of report cards has been the failure to give reasons for unsatisfactory growth or achievement (29:350).

Like other educators special education teachers are very much aware of the differences in mental abilities and interests of their students. That these differences are not always taken into consideration when reporting pupil progress and the consequent effects on students are pointed out by Neff:

In spite of the knowledge administrators and teachers possess about the capacities of children, about the varying rates of learning in proportion to differing physical and mental abilities and about their inner drives and motivations, there is still the question of grading one child against another, including plans for a given percentage of failures within the class. Parents and educators are becoming more verbose about effects of comparative grading. Add the fear of failure with their built-in attributes of competition and pressure and it is easy to see what it is that is affecting the mental health of students. Doctors are concerned about the numbers of stomach ulcers occurring among elementary and secondary population. Suicide is also on the increase (31:24).

The use of semester grades to indicate achievement may be a very direct threat to many retarded children because of their learning difficulties and past experience with failure (11:24). Mental health is threatened with the mentally retarded because of pressure of failure. Reinforcement of established negative attitudes may occur. A

highly negative self-concept is frequently associated with the low level of frustration tolerance by emotionally disturbed and mentally retarded children. They begin to perceive themselves as failures and as a result develop the idea that they cannot learn or succeed. Attitudes toward learning become negative and the learning process is impaired or arrested (11:9).

Rothney believes letter grades may be demanded by parents as a basic evaluative process. He recommends that teachers improve their marking procedures and supplement them by effective devices. Written checklists of behavior descriptions or oral reports to the parents seem to be the most promising methods of supplementing the letter grade (33:50).

Checklist Report

One of the newer methods in reporting pupil progress in special education is the checklist. Keller helped to explain the reasons for this method when he states the following:

The value of school marks is in the uses to which they are put. The fundamental use of marks is to convey information. This information is valuable to all concerned. No one mark or single kind of mark is sufficient. A sequence of records over a number of fields is necessary if one is to estimate individual growth and development, because students grow and develop over periods of time (22:73).

The checklist method is very popular because it compares the child with his abilities rather than against other pupils. A parent can see the growth and development that has taken place and also see the needs yet to be met.

Many of the newer types of progress reports for parents can be readily used by the special-class teacher without much alteration or adaptation. They call for informal descriptive comments or the use of checks or symbols to indicate the character and quality of the work done; the areas in which progress is satisfactory and those in which improvement is needed; a description of personality traits, behavior characteristics, habits and attitudes in work and play, health habits, and social attitudes; and a record of attendance.

Letters to Parents

In lower grades where it is common practice for the teacher to write letters to parents in reporting children's school success, the teacher will find the task of letter writing considerably simplified if ratings scales have been used to judge certain types of child behavior. Too often letters to parents are so general that they mean nothing to the parents. However, if the teacher uses rating scales with specific behavioral descriptions printed under each line, those specific descriptions that best describe a particular child's behavior can become phrases used in

the letter to tell what the child is like in school.

Rothney, in reporting the importance of supplementing the report card, wrote:

Free written letters to parents usually present language problems and over a period of time, are likely to degenerate into boring repetitions of cliches. On the other hand, if members of a faculty are willing to devise a behavior description form of their own that can be put in checklist form after the words in it have been defined clearly, they may develop a useful instrument (33:51).

In describing his "Friday letter," Roy Wilson stated:

'For the first time we feel we know what is really going on at school.' This feeling was often expressed to me by parents who have received a weekly letter from me on the child's progress at school (40:389).

Wilson's method entailed weekly samples of work sent home with a letter explaining the work that was covered that week. A summary was compiled during the week on specific activities and particular problems the class faced. Wilson stated this method helped the teacher to improve his ability to observe each child and in return to develop and organize programs for the individual. Problems of the individual students seldom were misunderstood because of the combined regular correspondence. Parents were able to return the slip with any questions or comments, helping to relieve personal feelings which later may have caused problems if permitted to develop (40:390).

The "Friday letter" discussed by Wilson would be of great value with certain types of special education classes, especially in group projects and where units are covered.

Next to the conference plan, the informal letter is the best means of reporting. However, it is impractical because of the large number of students and time involved to prepare it (33:54).

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Johnson favored the use of conferences. He states:

It's time to face it! Parent-teacher conferences are a means to an end and the end is the creation of better educational opportunities for the individual child so he can grow and develop to the maximum of his potential (20:48).

The general purpose of the oral parent-teacher conferences is for parents and teachers to share their knowledge about the total child and thereby gain a better understanding of the child's needs and interests. Then, if needed, adjustment can be made both at home and at school to provide better learning opportunities.

Johnson pointed out that parent-teacher conferences seem especially suited to the special education program.

In the final analysis, the problems and needs, the growth and development of the individual child will determine the specific purposes of the oral conference (20:49).

It is important that each oral conference be "tailor made" in terms of how the individual child has grown and developed academically, socially, emotionally, and physically. Parents want to know how their child is progressing, how their child is getting along, what their child is a part

of, and how their child measures up. Along with these answers the parents want to be assured that their child has the best in the way of education opportunity, a classroom teacher, and modern materials. From another viewpoint, the teacher has an important job of tactfully gathering significant data about the home environment and past history of the child. The more that the teacher learns from the parent about the child's relationship in the home, the better qualified the teacher becomes to see and understand the child's needs and problems.

Along the same line, Hoppock discussed the importance of conferences:

Reporting should be a two-way process; teachers and parents should help one another to evaluate the children's progress. It seems to me we ought to ask as well as tell parents. We aren't the only educators; actually we're only helping the parents teach the children. If we want the youngsters to develop wholesomely, the home and school must get together on sound purposes and methods. They can help us; we can help them. Let's talk about reporting to one another instead of reporting to parents (19:3).

Frasure mentioned five ways a teacher can help the parent to do a more effective job of teaching their child:

1. Preparing better parent-teacher conferences with a background of personality adjustment, normative growth and behavior expectation, and mental hygiene.
2. Making adequate plans for satisfactory home visitations.
3. Making more frequent contacts with parents.

4. Developing new approaches to parent-teacher relations through exchange of ideas and planning.
5. Showing genuine interest in the total development of boys and girls in such areas as mastery of content, building of personality, and structuring of character as well as pupil health and adjustment (12:406).

A study of reporting pupil progress by the parent-teacher conference was conducted by Arlington County Public Schools in 1952. The following opinions represent 6,000 parents who attended parent-teacher conferences that year:

5753 gained a clear picture of the child's progress
 201 felt they did not get a clear picture of progress
 89 were doubtful
 5174 believed the child was aware of his progress
 382 did not think the child was aware of his progress
 241 were doubtful
 5869 felt an adequate conference time was provided

Of those respondents who volunteered comments:

77.3% favored the conference method
 9.7% wanted both conference and report cards
 2.7% did not care for conferences
 1.0% wanted additional conferences (32:12).

The dangers of the teacher's becoming too involved with parents in a counseling situation are numerous. For example, the parents may identify with the teacher and continue to ~~seek~~ her counsel while postponing professional counseling services. She is vulnerable in that the parents soon begin to pose questions in areas beyond her competence and/or jurisdiction. The teacher may feel compelled to venture an answer or to express an opinion which is later interpreted as fact. There is always the possibility that a conflict

may develop. When this happens, the teacher's relationship with her pupils is endangered by parental attitudes.

The Parent-Teacher conference plan is an excellent reporting plan because the likelihood of misunderstanding is reduced in face-to-face conversation. Getting parents and teachers together, of course, is a good practice entirely apart from reporting. A teacher can work effectively with a youngster if he knows the youngster's home background, his parents, what he does outside of school, and other problems that face a student. In turn, the parent can help the school if he knows that it is trying to do and what successes and difficulties it is having. Besides the conference, grades must still be recorded. The conference plan is workable only in situations in which one teacher, the one who is having the conference with the students' parents, works with the students all of the day or most of it (42:53).

Informal Reporting

An informal method of reporting which many teachers overlook is the students' informal report to his parents daily. Mary Austin thinks undoubtedly the most effective type of report to parents is the informal one given each day by the youngster himself. A common question in many households is "What did you do in school today?" Too frequently the reply is "Nothing," but this need not be the

case if teachers will take time to discuss and evaluate each day's activities with their pupils. Children can then give positive answers, accompanied by appropriate details. When they share enthusiastically with their families what they are doing and learning, parents know that their children are finding that learning can be a very satisfying experience (1:661).

The most serious objection to the conference plan is that it demands a heavy time investment. In large schools conferences would almost be prohibitive because of the large class loads and different instructors.

Telephone Reporting

The writer has observed that recently it has become a practice of some special education teachers to telephone parents to inform them of something special their child did that day. This not only strengthens the home-school relationship, but also the parent-child relationship. In the past, parents were aware that phone calls from the school meant trouble and this is another way to provide better home-school relations.

Instead of formal grading, successful teachers have had children develop charts and graphs to record their own work. These are then used to indicate to the child his own achievement and, in a sense, to compete with himself instead of with the other children in the class.

II. TYPES OF DIPLOMAS AWARDED

A 1968 survey conducted by the Washington State Education Office indicated that a special education student who completes high school:

	Number	Per Cent
--would receive the regular diploma	39	50
--would receive a diploma by mail	0	0
--would receive a certificate	17	22
--other arrangements	3	4
--no present policy	9	12
--now considering a new policy	9	12
Totals	<u>77</u>	<u>100</u>

Standard Diploma

Grayum pointed out that diplomas are not documents that can be carried around and presented to prospective employees or college entrance offices. These persons long ago refused to place any credence in papers or testimonials carried on the person. No self-respecting employer would think of hiring a graduate on the basis of the possession of a diploma. Employers should contact school for information on the student. Grayum believed confidential records of graduated students should be kept in the office of the high school principal. Trying to give diplomas showing school achievements would surely serve few good purposes (16:44).

The standard diplomas should be kept as the heart of the ceremonial commencement. Graduation is an occasion which all pupils, parents, and relatives can enjoy. This

ceremony merely marks the end of the student's high school years and the "commencement" of a different kind of life. Many people confuse the diploma, a ceremonial document, with a letter of recommendation. Roy C. Bryan states the following regarding high school diplomas:

The high school diploma should not be confused with even that one part of the cumulative record which contains information on the courses taken and the marks received. The diploma is a poor instrument through which to give recognition for scholastic honors and accomplishment. This can better be done through honors assemblies and honor rolls, held or issued from time to time as the student progresses through high school. For those who desire it, there is no reason why the commencement programs should not contain the names of those who ranked in the top of the class scholastically (5:341).

Rothstein recommended that special education students be classified in the usual way, e.g. freshman, sophomore, junior, senior. He believed a standard diploma should be issued to special students after they have accumulated credits on the recommendation of their teacher (34:296).

Bryan discusses the problem with giving the same diploma to all students when he states the following:

Giving all graduates the same diploma, and therefore equal recognition, is indefensible. A plan that permits such deception, and to that extent encourages it, is doing injury to those students because it is teaching the wrong ideas of life. It encourages the continued effort to "put it over" on their future associates and employers (5:341).

Multiple Diplomas

Shibler explained that American public schools must open their doors to all who apply for admission but that this

does not mean that all students desire, or should pursue, the same program of studies. Abilities, aptitudes and interests of students vary widely. Therefore, high school programs should be varied, and consequently diplomas given for the completion of a specific program, should be different (35:116).

Indianapolis schools have four different programs of study and a separate diploma for each: academic, fine and practical arts, vocational, and general. Each program was devised to prod students to apply themselves to the full extent of their abilities within the framework of their particular interests, abilities and ultimate objectives.

Hickox, in his article "A Three Diploma System," said that the main objects of a multiple diploma system are providing students with equal opportunity for enriching their personalities and preparing the individual for an individual future. Hickox recommends the three types as follows:

1. College Preparatory - extra math and science.
2. Regular - State Regulations
3. Special - General courses for those unable to complete state requirements (17:20).

Without exact definition and careful description of qualities and accomplishments which the diploma is supposed to recognize, there can be nothing but confusion and misrepresentation (5:342).

The following is a method of four diplomas mentioned by Bryan:

1. Class A diplomas for the excellent student
2. Class B diplomas for the good student
3. Class C diplomas for the average student
4. Class D diplomas for the poor student (5:342).

Wright, in his study on multiple diplomas felt requirements for graduation were too difficult for some high school students. Several multiple diploma plans were studied in his nation-wide questionnaire. A study of the evaluation sheets filled out by these systems, points up the following advantages of some types of multiple diploma systems.

1. It pleases administration, teachers, students and parents.
2. It provides for necessary counseling.
3. It challenges the academically inclined student.
4. It increases the holding power of the school.
5. It facilitates grouping.
6. It can be administered without a stigma attached to any one type of diploma.
7. It stands the test of time.
8. It provides a way for all students to achieve according to their ability (41:527).

Wright proposed a "two diploma school:"

1. General diploma. 4 credits English, 2 credits social studies (one must be American history), 1 credit math, 1 credit science (general science, biology, chemistry, or physics), 1 credit P.E., and 8 electives. Total, 17 credits.

2. Academic diploma. 4 credits English, 2 credits math, 2 credits science, 2 credits social studies, 1 credit P.E., 2 additional credits in math or foreign language, and 5 electives. Total, 18 credits.

After using this plan for some time two great advantages developed:

1. The teachers have given much more consideration to the needs of their students after studying the problems and making recommendations for the different types of diplomas.
2. There has been more interest in academic subjects as shown by the registration of the ninth grade students.

CHAPTER III

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I. SUMMARY

When selecting a method of reporting, care must be exercised in weighing the advantages and disadvantages of each method for the special class. The method should tell what the child has achieved in terms of his own capabilities in different areas of the special class program (11:24).

Regarding the characteristics of a good report, Crosby states:

If a report helps a child, his parents, and his teachers learn more about what he is capable of, where he is reaching his potential, what is being done to foster his learning and perhaps most significant of all, if it provides that something to grow on, it is a good report (6:165).

To report this type of information, it is essential that the teacher keep accurate and up-to-date records, which include the child's work, teacher-prepared checklists, and outline of skill development, anecdotal records, and achievement test results, both standardized and teacher prepared.

The result of the Washington State Survey indicated that 76 per cent of the reporting school districts made special provisions for non-competitive gradings. Only 5 per cent expected handicapped children to compete with regular students on a grading curve.

The particular method of evaluation is probably not as important as the need to encourage rather than discourage the child in the learning process.

When special children are placed in the class, serious attention must be directed toward helping them perceive themselves and the classroom situation with positive attitudes (11:9).

Hoppock felt very strongly against rating scales and comparing students when she states the following:

If we believe in providing for the individual differences in the background and rates of growth, it is inconsistent to compare children with another or with a set of standards. We have to help each child set standards that are realistic for him. Rating scales defeat our purposes, and if we are promoting not only skill and subject matter learnings but total development, we must let the parents know all the important gains a child is making, the problem he's up against, and how we are trying to help him (19:3).

Traditional report cards would be of very little value because of the varying rates of learning in proportion to differing physical and mental abilities (31:24). These feelings and attributes observed must be considered in program planning. Attempting to teach skills or content material without first understanding the children being taught will result in wasted time and effort on the part of the teacher.

A conference should be held with the parent before enrolling the student to obtain information about the student.

Rothney believed the checklist and oral reports to parents are most promising methods of reporting (33:33).

The parent-teacher conference is one of the best reporting methods available when used with the individualistic approach to learning. Only when both parent and child understand the causes behind unsatisfactory progress can they take constructive steps to bring about improvement. This can be accomplished by good parent-teacher conferences (29:350).

Parent-teacher conferences are necessary in the primary grades as well as the upper grades because often the child fails to express himself adequately and accurately to the teacher and other school personnel. More truthful and useful information can be obtained directly from parents. The parent-teacher conference is a way public relations can be improved by showing the parents the facilities and discussing the special education program. Conferences would have the purpose of guiding the child rather than judging him. Parents like the conference that is a detailed and specific discussion of the child's home and social program (38:44). Report forms used in conjunction with parent-teacher conferences are generally designated as "progress reports to parents and children," thus emphasizing the growth of the individual child rather than making a comparison with other students.

Of the Washington schools participating in a recent survey, 50 per cent reported that the special education

students who complete their individualized high school course requirements could be issued the regular diploma. (In most cases, transcripts were identified as "special education" or the non-competitive grades were identified through a marking code.) Seventeen districts (22 per cent) reported that students receive some type of certificate of completion. Nine districts (12 per cent) reported that they were considering new policies for issuing diplomas and certificates. Six of the nine stated that they were planning to establish the policy of issuing regular diplomas to all graduation students (43:8).

Multiple diplomas help challenge the academically and vocationally inclined students by providing a way for all students to achieve according to their abilities (41:527).

Wright brought out that multiple diploma schools have increased their holding power of students. They also bring other students in who have dropped out of the traditional schools. Grouping students by interests and abilities helps develop a better program in each field.

II. CONCLUSIONS

Grade Reporting Systems

The writer after reviewing the literature for this study contends that the traditional report card has little place in any school which bases its programs on individual

needs and interests. Marking systems tend to direct the attention of pupils, parents, and teachers away from the real purposes of education and focuses it instead on symbols which are designed to represent success or the lack of it but which do not emphasize its elements or meanings. When working with students in small special education classes with varied rates of speed and abilities it would be impossible to grade students against each other.

A number of recent articles shows that use of the checklist form would be of great value in our programs based on individual needs. Appendix I contains a checklist form the writer developed using valuable sections from various programs. The form should meet the needs of students, parents, and teachers because it covers all aspects of the child's development.

Parents and teachers can only accomplish so much individually in the development of the child. By working together, however, a greater accomplishment can be attained. Used in connection with a checklist, the parent-teacher conference brings together not only the environment, home and educational aspects in the growth and development of the child, but also the social, emotional, and potential development of the child. Most all the writers agreed that only through parent-teacher conferences can adequate report between school and home be developed. For special education, where the class loads are smaller and the need is paramount

to get to know the child, and his environment, the conference is necessary.

If letters to parents instead of parent-teacher conferences are used they can be better understood if behavioral descriptions are used instead of generalization. All the aspects of child development are difficult to cover in a short letter. A "Friday Letter" would be very difficult to organize because of the individual programs of each child.

The methods employed to report grades should include not only regular written reports, but also provide ample opportunities for the teacher to meet in favorable circumstances with the parent so that a complete understanding of the child may be obtained by the parent. When this is accomplished, it is certain that the exceptional child will then grow and achieve more nearly to his maximum potential than when parents are not well informed about the progress their child is making in school.

Diplomas

Because diplomas say nothing of the degree of success, the quality of work done, or type of program pursued, it is logical to assume that they are really a ceremonial document. For these reasons when a special education student has completed twelve years of academic and vocational training and prepared himself for a place in society, he should be awarded the regular diploma. When one diploma is

used, it should be used as a ceremonial document presented during commencement. The diploma should not be confused with a letter of recommendation or the cumulative record which contains information concerning the student course of study.

The multiple diploma school, consisting of general and academic diplomas, has great potential to be used by special education programs if the diplomas can be administered without a stigma attached to any one type of diploma. The four diploma schools, consisting of programs in academics, fine and practical arts, vocational, and general, would certainly be feasible for special education students.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

Because of the need for improvement in the area of grade reporting and diplomas for special education at Pateros, this study was pursued and developed into rewarding and useful information. The writer, after reviewing the resource materials and doing considerable research in the area of grade reporting and diplomas for special education, makes the following recommendations:

1. Every possible effort should be made to arrange for three parent-teacher conferences per year.
2. Individual checklists of achievement and problems be presented to the parents at the conference.

3. The checklist form, prepared by the writer, for evaluation of special education students should be adopted.
4. Teachers should distribute student evaluation forms to students when regular students receive their cards.
5. The regular diploma should be awarded to special education students when they have completed a prescribed course of study; or
6. A vocational diploma rather than a Certificate of Attendance should be awarded upon completion of requirements.

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APPENDIX

SPECIAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
PATEROS SCHOOLS

Date _____ Student _____

Rate Below	Excellent	Good	Fair	Not Sat.
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Ability to follow directions				
Ability to take correction				
Accepts extra work				
Ability to get along with peers				
Recognizes things to be done				
Interest in subjects				
Assignments finished on time				
Conduct				
Attitude				
Willingness to work steadily				
Ability to work unsupervised				
Cooperates with teacher				
Personal appearance				
Neatness of work				
Care of school equipment				
Reading improvement				
Understands what he reads				
Oral communications				
Spelling				
Penmanship				
Physical Education				
Craft Achievement				
Everyday arithmetic				

TEACHER'S COMMENTS:

PARENTS' COMMENTS:

Teacher _____