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## School Records and Reports

Lawrence W. Hanson

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SCHOOL RECORDS AND REPORTS

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of the  
University of North Dakota

by

Lawrence W. Hanson

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the

Degree of

Master of Science in Education

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CHIEF TANK BOND



This thesis, offered by Lawrence W. Hanson as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Education in the University of North Dakota, is hereby approved by the committee under whom the work was done.

A. V. Quern.

Chairman

C. W. Telford

Donald H. Nicholson

J. V. Breitwieser  
Director of the Graduate Division

Bdg. 8 Jan '36 Hertzberg 1.00



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SHELVAN BOND



CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The keeping of adequate records is a necessary part of the administration of a school system. Schools have grown very rapidly during the last fifty years. In most communities the largest portion of the tax bill is for support of the schools. Citizens have become interested in the schools and want to know what is going on in them. In many cases the school board and the superintendent must defend their policies to the public. The superintendent must defend his policies to the board of education. This defense must be built on facts. These facts must be secured by the use of adequate and meaningful statistics which are recorded in a manner that makes them available and usable.

The school has become one of the large businesses of the community. Like any other business it must be run efficiently. Since it is a public enterprise, it must justify its expenditures to the public who pays the bill. The attacks upon the public schools in the last few years have often gone unanswered because the administration of the schools has been without adequate statistics to refute the charges brought against them. Reeder<sup>1</sup> states, "No business, whether private or public, can be efficiently administered except on the basis of ample, meaningful, and accurate information which will show the functioning and the efficiency of the business 'in toto' and in each of its parts." The school system is no exception.

<sup>1</sup>W. G. Reeder, The Fundamentals of Public School Administration, (The Macmillan Co., 1930), pp. 506.



The administrator of a school system may wish to know in what condition his schools are. To him a complete system of records is necessary in order that he may conveniently get this information. Financial records for schools have been studied thoroughly and uniform practices of financial accounting have been established. But the financial problem is only one phase of the school accounting. The child is the center of the school's activities and the reason for its existence. Complete and pertinent information regarding the individual child must be kept in such manner as to be readily accessible and in such form as to be usable.

The superintendent needs to have information relative to his staff, the attendance in his schools, and the number of children in the community which his school is to serve. The teacher needs to know the needs of her pupils, what their strong and weak subjects are, their capacities, health, home conditions, and their grade placement. The pupil and the parents need to know where the pupil belongs in school, what subjects and grades he has passed. All this information must necessarily be recorded.

In the early development of the schools no records were kept. A child advanced according to his ability to read in a first, second or third reader. The new teacher tested the child's ability to read and placed him accordingly. During the early history of the schools there was no regulation or standardization except what each community required. With the growth of education and school systems there grew a demand for definite information as to the pupil's progress and school



records were inaugurated. As state and county control began to be established, each organization demanded certain information such as attendance, number enrolled, number passed, number failed, etc. Records were hurriedly devised to secure this information. As a result the record systems, in general, are a cumbersome, poorly planned lot of forms, lacking in uniformity as to size and data. One has but to examine the records used in different school systems, or those offered for sale to notice this.

The reasons why records are such a necessary part of the administration of the schools are three in number. First, records must show how well the school is meeting the legal requirements of the state, the county, and the local district. Second, records must furnish data for efficient management. Third, records must justify the existence of the school and secure adequate support for it.

#### Purpose

The purpose of this study is to examine the various records and reports used in school systems and those offered for sale in an attempt to find out what information is commonly called for in these records. The opinions of administrators, research workers and teachers as expressed in their writings in periodicals and books are considered as to what records should be kept.

The purpose of this study has five aspects, namely: (1) to examine the records used in school systems at present, (2) to examine the records published and offered for sale, (3) to survey the literature regarding school records, (4) to draw conclusions from the above



in order that criteria for the use and construction of records may be made, and (5) to plan a set of uniform records for use in a school system.

#### Statement of the Problem

The superintendent, the principal, and the teacher needs to know what is taking place in the school. Not only must they know what is taking place at present but what has transpired before. The only way they can get this information is to consult the records. Naturally, the information which each member of the administrative or teaching force can get is limited by the adequacy or inadequacy of the records kept.

The problem of this study is focused upon the selection of criteria for the construction of a system of records and reports for a modern school system and the actual construction of those record forms.

#### Sources of Data

The data for this study were taken from five sources, as follows:

- (1) school record and report forms as used by thirty-six schools,
- (2) school record and report forms as published by sixteen publishing companies,
- (3) report cards of thirty-three schools,
- (4) standards and required reports of twenty-two states, and
- (5) articles and writings of superintendents, principals, research workers, teachers, and professors of education dealing with school records and reports.

#### Delimitations

This study is limited to records and reports dealing with instruction, attendance, enrollment, pupil personnel and teacher personnel. Financial records and reports will not be considered in this study. Neither will records of supplies be considered.



### Method of Study

First, an analysis was made to determine what records are in use. A further analysis was made to determine the frequency with which certain items are called for in the various records and reports. A survey was made of the literature written about school records and reports to get the opinions and judgments of recognized authorities in the field of school administration. Those findings were grouped and classified to form the basis for setting up workable standards for judging records and as a basis for constructing a uniform system.



## CHAPTER 2

## THE USES AND NEEDS OF RECORDS AND REPORTS

During the early history of the American public schools it was not customary to keep records of any kind. A child went to school if he wished or if his parents forced him to go. There were no compulsory attendance laws. Consequently, no one was particularly interested if children did or did not attend school. There was no system of grade classification as there is now. A child was advanced according to his ability to read in the first, second, or third reader. No records were kept of his accomplishments or the work he had done. The new teachers took the word of the pupil or his parent, or else placed him according to their judgment of where he belonged. The school was small and was strictly a local community enterprise. It could be managed as the community desired. No agency demanded information relative to its various functions, teaching staff, or enrollment. The teacher usually "boarded around" with the parents of his pupils. Reports of pupils' progress or the lack of it were talked over directly with the parents. Report cards were unnecessary. Neither was a form needed to record data as to parents' occupations or the home conditions. The teacher got this information first hand by visiting the homes and meeting the parents at church and community gatherings.

As education grew in scope the state began to exercise some control and supervision over the schools. In order that the state officers might know something about the condition of individual schools, they began to demand certain information. That was the beginning of school



reports and records. At first only a few items were demanded. Thus each school had to keep records of the enrollment, attendance, and length of school term. These reports were mainly for the purpose of distributing financial aid from the state. The state of New York was the first to inaugurate a system of state school reports. Shaw states:

"The history of state school reports begins in New York. In 1795 the state appropriated \$50,000 annually for five years to be apportioned among local communities which maintained schools. To check up on the expenditure of this money, the law required town commissioners to report through the county treasurers the number of schools, the masters' names, the number of scholars taught, the number of days' instruction in the school to the Secretary of State, who, in turn, was required to lay this information before the legislature. This was the first time that a state required periodic reports from local officials on school conditions. Summaries of this information for one year appear in the legislative records.

"During the next twenty years New York was the only state which regularly issued state school reports. After 1830, state interest in schools increased, and one by one the legislatures provided for state aid and for a state school officer. By 1840, ten states, by 1850, nineteen, and 1876 all the existing states had established central school organizations. The preparation of an annual or biennial report was required of all of them."<sup>1</sup>

With the rise of free public education and the organizing of free public schools open to all by the state statutes, laws were made which required schools and school districts to make annual reports to the state department concerned with the schools. Moehlman says,

"From the time that free public schools were organized in the several states and aid rendered to them by state and local governments in one form or another, there have been required by law certain school records from which reports might be made to satisfy such laws. Prior to the civil war, educational organizations were quite simple in character and the available

<sup>1</sup>P. L. Shaw, State School Reports (Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1926), pp. 4-5.



records are in the form of reports by boards of education which tell, with rhetorical flourish, of the work of the administrative committees of such boards and contain certain general data regarding attendance and tardiness among pupils; for the per cent of attendance was regarded at that time by boards of education, superintendents, and principals, as the real index of school efficiency. Records were compiled to secure a good per cent of attendance. Standards seem to have been determined upon, and statistics then set up to attain them."<sup>2</sup>

As city school systems grew in size, the superintendent began to make reports to his board on the conditions of the schools. Reports were issued by the city school systems as early as 1818 in Philadelphia, 1834 in New York City and Detroit, and 1853 in Chicago.

Since these reports had to be made to the state and to the city boards the information had to be secured. This led to the establishment of a system of reports and records within the school system itself. As new facts were wanted they were merely added to the existing reports and records and as a result there was no organization or definite plan to the records. A survey of the various forms used in the different schools shows this to be true. There has been, and still is, a wide difference in the forms used in the many states and cities. The National Education Association recognized the problem as early as 1863 and appointed a committee at that time for the purpose of developing a uniform terminology and procedure in the preparation and collection of school statistics. This report was not satisfactory and in 1911 The Committee of the National Education Association on Uniform Records and Reports made a preliminary report in which a definite system of cumulative individual school records was recommended. According to Moehlman<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup>A. B. Moehlman, Child Accounting (Detroit: Friesema Brothers Press, 1924), p. 19.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 22.



the question of educational statistics and records was a moot one at meetings of the Department of Superintendence from 1870 to 1912.

As far as the county, the state and the federal governments are concerned, they demand certain information about conditions in the schools for the purpose of giving financial aid and supervision. Every state in the Union except the state of Ohio requires by legal enactment or by departmental ruling that a school register be kept.<sup>4</sup> The school must gather this information. To do so it must have available facts and figures necessary to make reports to these agencies.

<sup>7</sup> Most states have compulsory attendance laws. It is the duty of the superintendent, or the principal, or the teacher to report cases where a child is kept out of school illegally. A quotation from the school laws of the state of North Dakota illustrates the general type of compulsory attendance laws. Section 1345 of the General School Laws of the State of North Dakota reads as follows:

"It shall be the duty of the superintendent or principal of schools in any city, town, or village, or the teacher of any district, school, or the county superintendent of schools for children that are deaf, blind or feeble-minded, to inquire into all cases of negligence of the duty prescribed in this article and to ascertain from the person neglecting to perform such duty the reason therefor, if any, and in common school districts notify the county superintendent of schools of such neglect; the said county superintendent, upon proper presentation of facts, shall lay the complaint before the state's attorney, whose duty it will be to proceed forthwith to secure the prosecution for any offense occurring under this article. In special or independent districts the superintendent or principal of schools shall lay the complaint before the state's attorney who shall proceed as above; provided, further, that the board of education or district school board in any city or school district of over five hundred inhabitants may employ a truant officer who shall perform the duties implied in this section."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup>A. O. Heck, A Study of Child-Accounting Records (Columbus, Ohio, Ohio State University, 1925), p. 188.

<sup>5</sup>State of North Dakota, General School Laws (1931), p. 187.



From the above quotation it is evident that the superintendent, the principal, or the teacher must have an accurate record of the pupils who are of school age and those attending school, so that he can perform the state requirement as to compulsory attendance. Fred Engelhardt says,

"Two fundamental things are expected of the public schools. First, school officials are charged with the obligation to see that every child specified in law does attend school regularly during the time that schools are in session. To certify that this condition exists, accurate and complete records are necessary."<sup>6</sup>

Within the local school system the board of education may wish to know the condition of the schools, asking for such information as the number of teachers, the qualification of the teachers, the number of pupils, the size of classes, the cost of educating a pupil in the schools, and like information. The job of the superintendent is to furnish this information. He must have at his disposal the necessary records to give this information to his board. The board may wish to know how many pupils to plan for in the future in order that they may plan a building and financial program to care adequately for the school population. To do so means that this information must be available to them. Certainly the superintendent who could not furnish it would be found wanting in administrative efficiency.

If a survey is to be made of a school system to determine the efficiency of it, records are necessary. In an attempt to measure the amount of elimination from school, Thorndike found it necessary to resort to rather intricate statistical procedures in order to estimate

<sup>6</sup>Fred Engelhardt, Public School Organization and Administration (Ginn and Co., 1931), p. 362.



the amount of elimination on account of the lack of recorded data.<sup>7</sup> This led to the famous battle of criticism between Thorndike and Ayres. The dispute was due to the fact that the data which had been collected by the school systems did not enable one to follow the history of a child from his school entrance until he actually withdrew. Had such data, covering a fairly long period of years, been available, the facts regarding the amount of elimination could have been directly determined. According to Heck, a recent attempt to make a statewide survey of the holding power of the junior high school met with failure due to three outstanding difficulties.<sup>8</sup> (1) Many of the cities enrolled in the study maintained no record system by means of which individual pupils could be readily followed year by year. (2) Other cities, where individual cards were kept, did not have available a list of the children who began school on a given date, since the registers were of the individual loose leaf type. (3) In other cities the individual cards were all filed in different schools.

#### Records Used by the Superintendent

Progressive superintendents in the larger systems usually make an annual report to the board of education giving statistics relative to the operation of the school for the past year. Information for this report must be recorded during the school year and made available to the superintendent. Z. R. Clark saw the need for making superintendents'

<sup>7</sup>E. L. Thorndike, Elimination of Pupils from School (Department of Interior, Washington, D. C., 1907).

<sup>8</sup>Op. cit., p. 12.



reports of more value and wrote a thesis on the topic.<sup>9</sup> Often these annual reports to the board of education are used for information which is given to the public on the administration of the schools of that community.

The busy superintendent has use for records in other ways also. He must formulate policies backed by facts and figures made available through accurate records. He must plan for more or fewer teachers, and in growing communities he must plan for more room. His board must be informed and he must give that information. He must discover and remedy unsatisfactory conditions in the schools. He must plan to meet changing conditions. He must be ready to give information about his pupils to any agency, institution, or individual interested. In case of transfers to other schools a transcript of the credits the pupil has earned is usually required by the school he is entering. Universities and colleges often demand transcripts directly from the head of a school. Employers often wish to know the school record of applicants. The superintendent is responsible for giving this information. He may delegate that responsibility to his principal or principals, but after all it is to him these agencies look for the information.

From the foregoing discussion it seems that records and reports are a necessary part of any school system, whether it be large or small. Since the responsibility of administering the school rests squarely upon the superintendent it is his duty to see that such records are kept. It is impossible for him to keep those records personally but he is responsible for delegating that responsibility to his principals, teachers, and

<sup>9</sup>Z. R. Clark, The Recognition of Merit in Superintendents' Reports to the Public (Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1931).



clerks. He must plan the necessary records to give him the needed information. In commenting on the necessity for record keeping, Reeder states,

"Ample, accurate, and meaningful statistics make or unmake an administration. Opinions, guesses, and vague estimates carry little weight in discussions with clear-thinking individuals. The most serviceable implement and weapon of the school administrator in the hurly-burly of his work are good statistics which are always available at a moment's notice. Proper statistics are the foundation and the framework for an efficient administration of a school system; without such data the superstructure of the system is not well buttressed and anchored. The administration of a school system involves the performance of three functions: (1) the making of policies; (2) executing the policies; and (3) inspecting to see how well the policies are working. None of these functions can be properly performed unless there be ample information. The choosing of policies which have not grown out of complete information is likely to result in the foisting of vicious policies upon the school system; attempting to execute policies without having any statistics to serve as a guide is like unto attempting to steer a ship across the pathless waste of the ocean without chart and compass; and not to collect information which is calculated to show the efficiency of each school employee, each pupil, each material, and each process is to permit things to 'run themselves'—that would never do."<sup>10</sup>

The Committee on Uniform Records and Reports of the National Education Association, in its preliminary report in 1911, has the following to say regarding the necessity for statistics in school administration:

"When the school was small, consisting of one or two teachers, or at most of one or two buildings, definite knowledge with reference to school needs and the work done was easily acquired. With the development of school systems involving the expenditures of millions of dollars, comprising thousands of teachers and hundreds of thousands of pupils, direct knowledge of what should be done and of what is being done is rendered more or less impossible; yet the necessity of positive knowledge of actual school needs and conditions is imperative.

"Not only in the work of administration are our larger policies a reflection, to a greater or less extent, of personal bias, but

<sup>10</sup>W. G. Reeder, The Fundamentals of Public School Administration (The Macmillan Co., 1930), pp. 506-507.



even in the smaller matters, if they may be so called, the personal point of view dominates to a considerable extent. We arbitrarily assume that our children profit by the study of Latin, by the study of science; we arbitrarily assume that the high school is doing all that it should for its pupils; we arbitrarily assume that pupils are efficient in reading; that this style and type of writing is preferable. Seldom indeed in the past have school men measured by any definite criteria, or proved by systematic investigation, any of the above assumptions.

"If the administration of the public school is to be elevated above the plane of personal opinion, if our theories are to be given foundation, in fact, if our assumptions with reference to lines of work, methods of instruction, mastery of subject matter, and skill in manipulation are to be displaced by positive knowledge, data must be collected with reference to actual social conditions, with reference to the effect upon children of certain lines of instruction, and with reference to the effectiveness of given methods of teaching. In a word, if school administration is to be rescued from the dominion of tradition and personal bias, systematic and scientific study must be made of school methods and results. For only as facts take the place of opinion, assumption gives way to definite knowledge, mere personal point of view yields to established principles, will the administration of our schools be placed upon a firm footing, and education be made scientific and professional."<sup>11</sup>

To summarize, the need of records for use by the superintendent of a school system is as follows:

1. To make reports to his Board of Education on the needs of the school.
2. To make reports to the public.
3. To make reports to county, state, and national agencies.
4. To make reports to crediting agencies.
5. To formulate policies for the school system based on facts.
6. To determine the efficiency of instruction and policies already in force.
7. To give information to interested parties, agencies, and

<sup>11</sup>Payson Smith, Preliminary Report of the Committee on Uniform Records and Reports, Addresses and Proceedings of the National Education Association (Washington, D. C., 1911), pp. 281-282.



institutions relative to the pupils who are in attendance, or who have left the school or who have graduated.

8. To check the efficiency of the teaching force.
9. To enforce attendance laws.

In order that the superintendent may be able to give the information suggested in the preceding list, he must have on file in his office, or have access to these records:

- ✓ 1. Attendance records. The records of the individual pupil are usually kept by the teacher and reported to the superintendent at the end of each semester or year.
- ✓ 2. Census records. These records are usually kept on file in the superintendent's office in order that he may anticipate enrollments and check on the attendance of pupils who are within the compulsory school age.
- ✓ 3. Records of the qualifications, positions, and classes taught by the teachers of the system. These records are often neglected by the superintendent but are a necessary part of the records in order that he may make promotions and shifts of the teachers in teaching, and make reports regarding them to the state superintendent's office and accrediting agencies.
- ✓ 4. Pupil program cards. This information is usually kept on file in the principal's office, if the principal has a separate office. In the smaller schools it is kept in the superintendent's office. These records make it possible to locate a pupil quickly in an emergency or for any reason.
- ✓ 5. Cumulative record of pupil progress. This record should show the pupil's scholastic record throughout his school life, giving such information as grades in the various subjects, subjects passed, and subjects failed.
- ✓ 6. Intelligence test records. This may be recorded on the cumulative record.
- ✓ 7. Achievement test records. This may also be included on the cumulative record. This information is essential to check the efficiency of instruction.
- ✓ 8. Health records. This information will be filed in the superintendent's office in smaller schools. In larger schools employing a nurse or doctor it will be filed with them. However,



the superintendent should have access to these records in order to formulate a health policy for the system.

- ✓ 9. Teachers' reports on failing students. This report gives the superintendent an opportunity to check on the work of the teacher and discover possible deficiencies in teaching.
- ✓ 10. Report on the number of pupils in various classes, number of classes taught by the teacher. This information makes it possible for the superintendent to equalize teaching loads, plan for more teachers, or eliminate classes which do not have enrollments large enough to warrant the teaching of the class.
- ✓ 11. Pupil's enrollment card. This is the key to checking attendance.
- ✓ 12. Record of non-resident pupils.

It will be seen that the foregoing list of records for which the superintendent is responsible covers practically the entire field of pupil accounting and teacher personnel records. In the small system these records must be kept by the superintendent and filed in his office, since he is the one directly in charge of all record keeping. In the larger systems where principals and special supervisors as well as nurses and attendance officers are employed, some of these records will be filed with them. However, the superintendent must plan the records for them to keep in order that he may get all the necessary information for the effective administration of his school.



### Records Needed by the Principal

The principal of a school is the first assistant to the superintendent. In the smaller school systems the principal is merely a figurehead with a full teaching load and no time for supervision or administration. In the larger school systems he is a real administrator. When the principal has time for administrative duties the work of record keeping is delegated to him. A large part of his work is the keeping of records concerning the work of his department or school and giving to the superintendent such information as he may require. Reavis and Woellner make this statement: "Much of the time devoted to office administration by the secondary school principal is spent in the preparation and use of records and reports. Records of pupils, teachers, supplies, properties, and funds must be kept, and reports must be made to the superintendent, the board of education, standardizing agencies, accrediting associations, and the state department of instruction. Furthermore, the principal should constantly study the conditions in his school as revealed through records and reports in order that policies may be developed, modified, or justified in the light of facts."<sup>12</sup>

Draper and Roberts give the following list of administrative duties of the principal:<sup>13</sup>

1. The enforcement of the rules and regulations of the board and superintendent.
2. Planning the observance of city and state laws.
3. Checking on absences and tardiness, and securing and checking excuses.

<sup>12</sup>W. C. Reavis and R. Woellner, "Office Records and Reports in Secondary Schools," School Review, Vol. 37 (September, 1929), pp. 496-509.

<sup>13</sup>E. M. Draper and A. C. Roberts, Principles of American Secondary Education (The Century Co., 1932), pp. 334-335.



4. Protecting property of the schools, buildings, grounds, and equipment of all kinds.
5. Keeping records: attendance, registration, vital statistics required, scholastic attainments, and changes of programs.
6. Care of pupils doing unsatisfactory work.
7. Making reports to superintendent: attendance, graduates, drop-outs, needed repairs, and many others.
8. Requisitioning, purchasing, checking in, caring for, and distribution of equipment, books, and supplies.
9. Conducting a carefully planned campaign of publicity.
10. Enrollment by grades, curricula, subjects, etc.
11. Recording elimination statistics during school year and summer vacations, with reasons.
12. Making records of faculty training and experience.
13. Providing substitutes for absent teachers.
14. Recording intelligence examinations.
15. Planning the protection of the time of the teachers and himself.
16. Making statistical studies of the cost of instruction in various subjects by years, etc.
17. Accounting for all funds of every source.

They also list the following supervisory activities:

1. The recommendation of teachers for appointments, promotions, salary adjustments, and dismissals.
2. Constructive supervision of instruction by visiting classes, follow-up conferences, etc.
3. Improving teachers in service by professional faculty meetings, and leadership in professional reading.
4. Maintaining a healthful school environment by attention to the hygienic conditions of air, light, heat, cleanliness, and comfort of pupils and teachers.



5. Taking the lead in planning new curricula and setting up the program of studies with teacher and pupil schedules.
6. Preparing teacher ratings.
7. Making studies of teachers' marks and grades with distributions by subjects and years.
8. Setting up the rules relating to examinations, grading, promotion, etc.
9. Planning the use of intelligence-examination scores, with educational and vocational guidance programs for the high and low I. Q.'s.
10. Guiding experimentation and research in all matters involving instructional results.

From the preceding lists it can be seen that if the principal is going to fulfill the duties prescribed therein he must have on file records. From the list of administrative duties, the principal would necessarily need records to discharge duties listed under numbers three, five, six, seven, ten, eleven, twelve, fourteen, and sixteen. Records would be necessary to fulfill supervisory duties as listed in numbers six, seven, nine, and ten.

McAllister and Otis give these reasons for a child accounting system:

"The need for an efficient child accounting system can best be appreciated when one realizes that our teachers are not teaching classes--that they are teaching pupils; that the education of the children of the community is the education not of groups, but of individuals within the groups. And in order that the parents, board of education, superintendent, principal, and the teacher herself may know exactly how well the school is contributing to the education of each individual child, and how fully such child is realizing his opportunity, it is necessary to know the following in regard to each individual:

- "1. The child's mental capacity to profit by instruction;



- "2. His placement in the school system in accordance with his capacity;
- "3. The state of his health;
- "4. The portion of each year that he attends school;
- "5. His punctuality in attendance;
- "6. His degree of success in the accomplishment of his tasks set before him as measured by
  - a. The periodic judgment of his scholarship by his teacher;
  - b. Standard achievement tests;
  - c. His rate of progress from grade to grade;
- "7. The development of his character, which should result from proper training."<sup>14</sup>

The department of public instruction of the state of North Dakota, in the Administrative Manual and Course of Study for North Dakota High Schools, makes this statement: "The Department of Public Instruction is recommending the following forms for pupil accounting. While all the forms listed are helpful, forms 1, 2, 9, 14, 15, 16, and 18, are also most indispensable."<sup>15</sup>

1. School Attendance Register. This provides a means for registering school attendance from day to day and recording the scholarship of the child.

2. The Pupil's Cumulative Record. This provides a complete history of the student concerning his personal traits, physical record, alumni record, and all other comprehensive data which should be shown.

<sup>14</sup> A. J. McAllister and A. S. Otis, Child Accounting Practice (World Book Co., 1927), pp. 271-272

<sup>15</sup> Department of Public Instruction, Administrative Manual and Course of Study for North Dakota High Schools (1931), pp. 22-24.



3. School Census Card. This provides for furnishing and keeping a complete list of the children of school age in the district.

4. High School Daily Attendance Record. This is used in reporting to the principal the pupils who were tardy or absent from their classes or study rooms.

5. Notice of Transfer Card. This is used for pupils who transfer to another school district.

6. Request for and Notice of Withdrawal. This is a form to be used by a principal in stating reasons why a pupil should or should not be exempt from further school attendance.

7. Notice of Unsatisfactory Progress. This is to notify parents or guardians of unsatisfactory work done by pupils and to ask for cooperation in improving the work. Also a form for reporting exceptionally good work.

8. High School Teacher's Report of Pupil's Marks. This is used by teachers in reporting pupils' marks to the principal's offices at the end of each month or each period.

9. Parent's Notice of Tardiness or Absence. This is used to notify parents or guardians of tardiness or absence on the part of their children. The use of this form will stimulate more regular attendance and greater punctuality.

10. High School Excuse Blank for Absence or Tardiness. On these blanks the pupils state their reason or excuses for absence or tardiness. The principal may require the parent's signature to the blank.



11. Honor Scholarship Certificate. This is awarded at the end of each semester to those pupils who have done superior work in one or more subjects. It is an excellent practice to have a special program each semester at which time pupils who have done superior work are recognized by and rewarded before the whole student body.

12. Honor Attendance Certificates. These may be used to give to those pupils who have been neither absent or tardy during a semester or period.

13. Pupil's Permission Blank. This is used by teachers in giving permission to pupils to leave the room to go to the library, to the principal's office, or to some other room or place.

14. Teacher's Cumulative Report on Pupil Attendance for the Elementary Grades or home rooms in High School. This report is the foundation of all attendance reports. It should be made at the end of each month or period.

15. High School Teachers' Report on Failures. This report makes possible more accurate check upon the extent of failure, and causes the teachers to give definite consideration to the reasons for the failure of a pupil.

16. Pupil's Report Card. This shows the scholastic achievement and attendance of the pupil for the perusal of the parents or guardians, and furnishes information for the Cumulative Record Card.

17. Form for Advance Selection of Subjects. With the data on this form the principal can schedule the classes before the opening of the new semester and the school can be organized and ready for work on the first day of school. This might well include an entire outline of the pupil's contemplated course.



18. High School Enrollment and High School Program Card. This provides ready reference and data on pupils and gives program of studies. Grade School Enrollment Card furnishes data on children who for the first time enter a particular school.

19. Transcript of High School Credits. This is used in furnishing to another high school or to a college a transcript of the credits of high school students.

20. Change Cards. To be presented to teachers whose class lists are affected by a change of the pupil's program. This would include admittance and drop cards.

21. Eligibility form. A form used to check up on the scholarship of pupils participating in extra-curricular activities.

22. Reading Report Filing Card. Form for keeping permanent record of pupil's home reading and book reports.

H. H. Foster concludes from the study made by the Committee on Standard Blanks as appointed by the National Association of Secondary School Principals, that these records are necessary:<sup>16</sup> (a) permanent pupil record; (b) forms used primarily in gathering mark record; (c) forms primarily for recording and gathering attendance data; (d) reports to parents; (e) forms for enrollment and program making; (f) excuses, permits, disciplinary and office call forms; (g) staff records; (h) curriculum and instruction; (i) equipment; (j) student control; and (k) school journal.

<sup>16</sup>H. H. Foster, High School Administration (New York, The Century Co., 1928), pp. 490-492.



The consensus of opinion seems to be that record keeping is an important part of the work of the principal. The number of records kept will vary with the type of school and the amount of time which the principal has for keeping the records or the amount of clerical assistance he has. The larger the school the more records are necessary as the principal and the office workers do not know the individual pupils. Consequently, all information regarding the pupil must be recorded. In the smaller schools the principal often knows all the pupils, their home conditions, their accomplishments, their weaknesses, their strong points, their vocational choice and all other information. Much of this information he does not need to record although it would be well if he did. However, his time is usually taken up with other duties and he sees no particular need for recording what is evident to him. When he leaves the job for another position and the new principal takes over his duties, the new principal has to learn first hand about his pupils. The efficiency of a school would be materially increased if complete and adequate records were kept for each pupil regardless of the size of the system.

One phase of record keeping which has not been emphasized to any great extent is the vocational guidance record. Guidance programs are being stressed, particularly in the high schools. Without a complete record of the pupil's school progress, his weak and strong subjects, his interests, and his personality traits, a guidance program is ineffective. Cook states,

"The reason why we receive so few inquiries about high school boys and girls from their prospective employers is because the school is unable to give full and trustworthy information.



Whether or not its entire faculty changes every year, the school from which a student is graduating should be able to tell about him nearly everything that is worth knowing. Until it can do this, it will never render the service the community is entitled to receive."<sup>17</sup>

Hughes criticizes present practices in this manner:

"In either the temporary or the permanent records of the high school there is usually little to indicate the individual capacities, attitudes, and interests of the students. Every teacher in each successive year must learn almost independently the students coming under his tuition. In the absence of specific, classified data relative to dynamic attitudes and interests, the principal himself never has anything like a workable understanding of his students and, finally must rely chiefly on mere scholarship marks in his recommendatory letters for graduates."<sup>18</sup>

The modern high school principal in discharging his duty to the pupils in his school and the community which he serves must keep enough information regarding his pupils to advise them and guide them in their vocational choice. These records should be of value, not only to the instructor in charge of the guidance or the principal, but also to the student. According to Robertson,<sup>19</sup> any record is primarily for the guidance of the individual student in understanding himself--his aptitudes, abilities, and interests--so that he may develop them in a way to make him effective and happy in his world. Any record should be useful also to those responsible for counselling the student in school or college.

<sup>17</sup>W. A. Cook, High School Administration (Baltimore, Md., Warwick and York, Inc., 1926), pp. 190-191.

<sup>18</sup>W. H. Hughes, "Meaningful High School Records," American School Board Journal, Vol. 64 (January, 1922), p. 98.

<sup>19</sup>D. A. Robertson, "School Reports," Educational Record, Vol. 14 (January, 1933), p. 87.



### Records Needed by the Teacher

The teacher in the school system is the chief data-gatherer for records and is the one who usually furnishes most of the facts which are recorded. Since the teacher has the greatest amount of contact with the pupil she usually collects the information directly from him. Grades in the subjects which she is teaching and the attendance are the two items which she must report. In schools where character and personality traits are marked, it is the teacher who gives these grades because she is most able to do so on account of her close relationship with the pupil. Reports to the parents as to the work the pupil is doing is another task which the teacher performs. One of the important duties of the teacher is gathering and reporting facts about her pupils to the superintendent, the principal, and the parents.

Record-keeping by the teacher has three purposes: (1) to supply information for administrative purposes, (2) to supply information to the parents about the pupil, and (3) to supply information about the pupils for the teacher's own use. The first purpose has been discussed under the headings, "Records Needed by the Superintendent," and "Records Needed by the Principal." The second will be discussed later in the chapter entitled "Report Cards."

The records which the teacher needs for her own information should include (1) daily attendance register, (2) class record book, (3) cumulative record of the pupil's past performance, (4) health record, (5) intelligence and achievement test scores, (6) diagnostic and error records, (7) personal history of the child, (8) vocational



data, and (9) character and personality trait record. Most of these records are ones which are also needed by the superintendent and the principal. They also furnish the information for making reports to the parents. The use which the teacher makes of these records will depend upon her industry and her interest in the welfare and advancement of her pupils. To teachers above the first grade the information is of the greatest value. From the records of previous years she can learn to know her pupils better, to know their abilities and weaknesses, and their home conditions. <sup>omit</sup> This presupposes the fact that the records are cumulative and available to the teacher. The farther advanced the pupil is in the school, the more information is available to the teacher. <sup>omit</sup> From the Report of Committees on Uniform Records and Reports the following quotation lists the value of teacher records:

"Through pupil records a higher degree of efficiency in the work of instruction, guidance, and health follow-up is made possible:

- "a. The teacher can learn to know her pupils more quickly.
- "b. Teachers are provided with facts about their pupils, rather than gossip.
- "c. Because of (a) and (b) above, the teacher is better able to quickly adjust her class work to the known preparation, mental and physical ability, and interest of pupils.
- "d. The number and variety of facts about each pupil which are available to the teacher are greatly increased.
- "e. The teacher can better understand why a particular child does poorly or misbehaves.
- "f. It becomes possible for a teacher who has learned significant facts explaining the conduct of certain children to forward such information to succeeding teachers.



"g. The teacher is enabled to spend more time studying her children and needs to spend less time in collecting facts, since much information has been collected already by all the teachers under whom her pupils previously have worked."<sup>20</sup>

The teacher who knows something about her pupils at the opening of school has a great advantage in adapting her instruction to the needs and abilities of her pupils. Instead of floundering around for several weeks until she gets this information directly, or depending upon what information she can get from other teachers who have had the pupil in previous years, the teacher can find out by consulting the records as to what her pupils have done and can do. She can be prepared to meet the situation at once and start the year's work at the opening of school. Schorling states:

"The teacher must be taught to base a program of educational guidance on the record in an objective way. To a curious extent, teachers hold the belief that each semester or each year the pupil should "start over" lest the teacher be prejudiced by low marks, low test scores, low intelligence quotient, or black marks of behavior episodes. We need to remember that a teacher who cannot deal without prejudice with all the facts obtainable before him is not likely to deal intelligently without them. One must plan the school experiences of a pupil on the basis of individual record, observations of behavior, test results, and so on, much as a physician plans for his patient on the basis of clinical records."<sup>21</sup>

Van Wagenen suggests that a complete record card of the pupil's achievement, his most difficult subjects, and his character and personality traits should be made out by each teacher at the close of the school year and be made available to the teacher at the beginning of the next year. In defense of this practice he says,

<sup>20</sup>E. M. Foster, Report of Committees on Uniform Records and Reports, Department of the Interior, Bureau of Education, Bulletin No. 24 (Washington, D. C., 1928), pp. 23-25.

<sup>21</sup>Raleigh Schorling, "The Need for More Adequate Records," School of Education Bulletin (Ann Arbor, Michigan, University of Michigan, December, 1934), pp. 33-34.



"Such a card made out by the teacher at the end of the year would give her an insight into the educational condition of her pupils as nothing else could. Were the teacher of a new class to make out such a card for each subject from the records of a previous achievement survey, she would have a better acquaintance with the achievement, needs, and characteristics of the pupils as a group than could be obtained by several weeks of ordinary classroom contact."<sup>22</sup>

Hughes says,

"In either the temporary or the permanent records of the high school there is usually little to indicate the individual capacities, attitudes, and interests of the students. Every teacher in each successive year must learn almost independently the students coming under his tuition."<sup>23</sup>

#### Guidance Records

For guidance purposes the teacher must know the abilities and the interests of her pupils. A cumulative record is valuable for serving this purpose. Worth-while guidance cannot be given early in the school year unless the teacher can find out data relative to the pupil's abilities and interests. Without records, guidance would have to be withheld until she could learn to know the pupil by classroom contacts. From a study of two hundred forty-nine schools, Johnson found that one of the five uses of records was, "to assist in the guidance of pupils, including classification and placement."<sup>24</sup>

Mildred Fisher states,

"In general, the cumulative record plays an important part in child guidance by helping the school personnel:

- "a. To understand better the physical, social, and mental characteristics of each child.

<sup>22</sup>M. J. Van Wagenen, "A Method of Making Comparable Surveys of School Achievement," School and Society, Vol. 19 (June 14, 1929), pp. 707-712.

<sup>23</sup>Op. cit., p. 98.

<sup>24</sup>B. L. Johnson, "The Permanent Record Form in the Secondary School," School Review, Vol. 41 (February, 1933), pp. 114-122.



- "b. To understand better how a child has developed or failed to develop in reacting to school experiences over a period of years, and through that understanding to help him direct his growth.
- "c. To adjust more effectively school activities, school departments, and school schedules to the needs, interests, and capacities of children.
- "d. To help pupils adjust more quickly in the changes from elementary school to junior high school, junior high school to senior high school, and senior high school to advanced schools.
- "e. To make possible a more intelligent choice on the part of the pupil through more intelligent advice on the part of the school in the selection of vocational or advanced educational opportunities.
- "f. To provide a tool for use in follow-up of pupil progress in advanced educational institutions or vocations."<sup>25</sup>

The Department of Superintendence in the Twelfth Yearbook presented the case for guidance which may be summarized briefly as follows:<sup>26</sup>

- a. It includes five different phases: health, educational, social, ethical, and vocational.
- b. It is best accomplished through the case method, i. e., the study of each individual pupil—his accomplishments, physical condition, mental capacity, home and community environment, previous interests, and ambitions. Cumulative case records are the scientific basis of counseling.
- c. Guidance does not begin and end in the junior or the senior high school. It should start with the early years of childhood and, through a system of follow-up, should extend to the youth who leaves school and enters upon productive occupation.

<sup>25</sup> Mildred Fisher, "The Cumulative Record as a Factor in Guidance," Journal of Educational Sociology, Vol. 5 (February, 1932), pp. 344-358.

<sup>26</sup> Critical Problems in School Administration, Twelfth Yearbook of the National Education Association (Washington, D. C., 1934), Department of Superintendence, pp. 173.



- d. Whether the high school is of the technical or the cosmopolitan type, try-out training and adjustments should be utilized by the counselors.
- e. Counseling in a particular school or system requires the cooperation of counselors, teachers, and administrators. It should permeate the entire program and activities of the school.

The foregoing discussion seems to justify the need to the teacher for adequate records for counseling and guiding the pupil. The analysis of the records made in this study shows that this phase is, in general, neglected.

Information relative to the home conditions, environment, and interests, and abilities of a pupil will be helpful in solving discipline cases. The teacher who knows her pupils well can often avoid disciplinary difficulties by planning the work and the conduct of the classroom activities in such manner as to avoid these troubles.

Since the teacher is responsible for the keeping of many records, the record forms should be planned to make the work as easy as possible so that she has more time for planning her work and teaching. An efficient record system should be planned in such manner that the clerical work of the teacher is reduced to a minimum. Data of little or doubtful value should be omitted from the records. Records should be devised which will reduce such things as duplication of data, and writings of pupils' names more than once.

#### Records Needed by Supervisors

There is no standard practice in schools relative to supervision. As a result, records and reports of supervisors vary with the system. The records for a supervisor would depend upon the philosophy



of the supervisory program of the school. However, there are certain records which fit in with the supervisory program of nearly every school. These records would include rating scales for teachers, scores on standard tests, age-grade graphs, and the marks of the pupils in the classroom subjects.

From these records the supervisor, whether he is the superintendent, the principal, or a special supervisor, can rate the teacher, and give help to those who are in particular need of it. He can assist the teacher in planning the work according to the abilities of the class. In the larger schools, all information secured from standardized tests such as achievement tests, and intelligence tests should be made available to the supervisor in order to plan remedial programs. Test results will also give an objective measure for rating the teacher's ability to get results.

#### Records Needed by the Attendance Officers

The duties of the attendance officer are to see that all pupils of school age are in school and if they are not to discover the reason, and to investigate cases of truancy. For his purpose he must have available a complete census record which will give the name of the pupil, his address, parents' names, date of birth, age, and the name of the school he is attending, if he is in school. A daily report of the pupils absent at a school is necessary in order that he can check up on these pupils to find out the reason for their absence. The latter report would have to be made out by the teacher or the principal and sent to the attendance officer.



Attendance officers are employed only in the larger systems. In the smaller school systems the work of checking on the attendance is done by the superintendent or the principal. In many schools the work is done by the teacher. Unless a special attendance officer is employed no new records are needed as the school census is filed in the superintendent's office and the report of daily absence is made by the teacher each day in the register. Where the superintendent or the principal does the work of the attendance officer the necessary records are already available to them.

The administration of checking attendance is comparatively simple. At the opening of school the enrollment should be checked against the census records to see if all pupils of school age are enrolled. Those who are not enrolled should be checked up on at once. When school is in session the teacher should report each day, or period, the names of the pupils absent from the room or class. In this manner the person in charge of attendance will know every day what pupils are absent and he can investigate the cause of the absence.

#### Records Needed by the Health Officer

The character of the health records needed by a school system will depend upon the health program of that system. Where there is no definite health program there is little need for health records. In systems where a doctor or nurse is employed to make examinations of the physical condition of pupils a record is necessary to record the facts discovered in the examination. Provision should be made for recording the correction of defects found.



Some schools include health records on the permanent record card of the pupil. This practice is good, especially where there is no separate health officer. Such items as height and weight, vaccination record, and defects in vision and hearing are of value and can be secured without the aid of a special health officer.



CHAPTER 5  
ANALYSIS OF RECORDS

In order to gain an idea of present practices in record keeping as practiced in the school systems, the record forms of thirty-six schools and sixteen publishing companies were analyzed. A wide variation in record forms was found, showing that there is little uniformity in record keeping. This conclusion agrees with other studies of a similar nature. Heck found 1515 different items recorded on the various forms which he studied.<sup>1</sup> In a limited study of fifteen comparable secondary schools, Gray found that the number of forms in use ranged from twenty-six to ninety-seven, the mean being between forty-five and forty-six.<sup>2</sup> Six hundred eighty-eight forms were used by the fifteen schools.

In the analysis made in this study, the permanent records were considered first. The analysis showed a variation in the size of the forms used. While most of the forms used were of standard size, such as three by five inches, four by six inches five by eight inches, and eight and one-half by eleven inches, there were some forms which did not conform to standard business size. They would be difficult to file. When standard size record forms are used, filing cabinets can be purchased to fit them. This makes the task of filing easier and more

<sup>1</sup> I. O. Heck, A Study of Child Accounting Records (Columbus, Ohio, Ohio State University, 1925), p. 115.

<sup>2</sup> M. R. Gray, The Office Practices of High School Principals, Unpublished Master's Thesis (University of Chicago Library), quoted by W. C. Reavis and R. C. Woellner, Office Practices in Secondary Schools (Laidlaw Brothers, 1930), pp. 117-118.



satisfactory. The size which was found to be used most frequently was the five by eight inch card or folder. Fifty-three per cent of the permanent record forms studied were five inches by eight inches while 70.7 per cent were standard in size. Table 1 shows the sizes of the different record forms and their frequency of occurrence.

Table 1  
Sizes of Permanent Record Forms

Size of Form	Frequency	Percentage of Total Frequency
4 by 6	5	8.0%
5 by 8	33	53.2
6 by $8\frac{1}{2}$	1	1.6
$6\frac{3}{4}$ by 8	1	1.6
6 by $10\frac{1}{2}$	1	1.6
$7\frac{1}{4}$ by $9\frac{1}{2}$	1	1.6
$7\frac{1}{2}$ by 10	1	1.6
$7\frac{3}{4}$ by $10\frac{1}{2}$	4	6.5
$8\frac{1}{2}$ by 11	6	9.7
$8\frac{3}{4}$ by 14	2	3.2
$9\frac{1}{2}$ by $11\frac{3}{4}$	2	3.2
9 by 12	2	3.2
9 by 14	1	1.7
$10\frac{1}{2}$ by $16\frac{1}{2}$	2	3.3
Total		100.0

From the analysis made it was found that most schools use a different form for recording information about high school pupils than about elementary school pupils. Since the subjects are different in the two schools there must be some difference in the information to be recorded. It does not follow, however, that the size and form of the record must be different. Four schools used four different forms as permanent records for the elementary school, five used three different forms, and ten used two different forms. The rest used one form. All



schools used only one permanent record form for recording information about high school students.

The various permanent record forms were analyzed to discover the items which are recorded. In this there was great variation. Table 2 shows the items recorded in the permanent record forms for the thirty-six schools while Table 3 shows the items for the record forms published by publishing companies.

Table 2

## Items Found on Record Forms of Thirty-Six Schools

Item	Frequency
Name of pupil	36
Final average of grades	34
Date of birth	33
Address	33
Date entered	32
Name of father or guardian	30
Residence of father or guardian	30
Attendance	29
Withdrawal	27
Date of discharge	25
From what school entered	25
Occupation of parent	24
Classification: 6A, 2B, etc.	24
Year	24
Intelligence Quotient	23
Place of birth	22
Grades in subjects	22
Units earned (credits)	20
Graduated in class of _____	18
Scores on standardized tests	17
Extra-curricular activities	16
Conduct	15
Telephone number	15
Nationality of parents	14
Instructor's signature to mark	13
Final examination mark	11
Age when entered	11
Rank in class	11
Pass or fail	10



Table 2 (Continued)

Item	Frequency
Cooperation	10
Entered higher institution	10
General health	9
Reliability	9
Initiative	9
Reasons for non-attendance	9
Vocational choice of pupil	8
Scholarship average	8
Industry	8
Number in the class	8
Resident of district	7
Vaccinated	7
Height and weight	7
Grades by six week periods	6
Courtesy	6
Student honor awards	6
Complete physical record	6
Alumni record	6
Address of firm at which parent works	5
Personal habits	5
Personal appearance	5
Social attitude	5
Supervised reading in English	5
Effort	4
Physical defects	4
Leadership	4
Punctuality	4
Special ability	4
Language in the home	4
Tuition paid	3
Home conditions	3
Left school to remain at home	3
Permanent illness	3
To work at salary	3
Transfer to _____	3
Photograph	2
Thrift	2
Accuracy	2
Perseverance	2
Respect for authority	2
Ability to learn	2
Easiest subjects	2
Commitment to _____ institution	2
Vocational choice (by parent)	1
Deficient in _____ subjects	1
Clear thinking	1
Courage	1
Most difficult subjects	1
Census	1
Family church	1



Table 3  
 Frequency of Items on Report Forms as Published by Sixteen  
 Publishing Companies

Item	Frequency
Names	24
Residence	22
Birth, date of	21
Name of parent	20
Attendance	19
Final average of grades in subject	19
Occupation of parent	16
Age of pupil	14
Graduation, record of	14
Graduation, date of	12
Entrance to system	12
Achievement test record	11
Reason for withdrawal	11
Intelligence test record	11
Conduct (Department)	11
Extra-curricular activities	10
Date of leaving school	10
Credits (units)	10
Date of discharge	9
Date of entering	9
Vaccination	8
Telephone	8
Numerical rank in class	8
Total number of credits	8
Number in class	7
Grades in elementary subjects	7
Mark showing promotion	7
Nationality	6
Medical examination	6
School district	6
Institution entered	6
Effort	6
Height and weight	5
Summary of grades at end of year	5
Credits accepted from _____	5
Kind of course	5
Teachers signature to mark	5
School last attended	5
Report on outside reading	4
Completed elementary school (date)	4
Name of school attended	4



Table 3 (Continued)

Item	Frequency
Ability record	4
Health record	4
Leadership	4
State examination mark	4
Home conditions	3
Special talents	3
General ability	3
Reason for irregular attendance	3
Class (sophomore, senior)	3
Text used	3
Employment record	3
Residence before entering system	3
Transfer to _____	3
Remarks	3
Grades skipped or repeated	2
Resident of district	2
Tuition certificate	2
Personal appearance	2
Recommended admission to _____	2
Pay own expenses	1
Expect to go to college	1
Church	1
Non-resident	1
Mechanical ability	1

A study of Tables 2 and 3 shows the lack of uniformity as to what data are considered worth recording. A total of seventy-nine different items was found in the analysis of the records used by the thirty-six schools. Sixty-five items were found in the analysis of the forms published by the sixteen publishing companies.

The items, together with their frequency of mention, have been grouped into five classes. These are: (1) entrance and withdrawal information, (2) information concerning scholarship, (3) information concerning ability and character traits, (4) information concerning health, and (5) information concerning vocational choice and future educational plans.



A further classification was made of the facts concerning entrance and withdrawal, which were recorded on the record forms used by the thirty-six schools and the record cards of the sixteen publishing companies (Table 4). These facts were subdivided into the following groups: (1) information about the pupil and the home, (2) entrance information, (3) residence information, and (4) withdrawal information. All the forms studied provide for the pupil's name. The reason is obvious. Date of birth, residence of the pupil, name of the parent or guardian, and the occupation of the parent are considered important enough to be included in more than one-half of the forms. Items such as home conditions, address of parent, language in the home, family church, photograph and whether or not the pupil pays his own expenses are not considered valuable by the designers of most of the forms. Although less than one-half of the forms provide for recording the age of the pupil, the telephone number, the place of birth, the place of birth and the nationality, space is provided on more than one-third of them. When the date of birth is recorded the age can be calculated from this. It is convenient to know the pupil's age each year, however, without figuring it from the date of birth. The telephone number, while not essential, is convenient in the case of an emergency, or in using the telephone to check up on absence or other matters. The teacher, principal, or superintendent may wish to call parents for items of information needed. Nationality will perhaps be considered less important in the future due to the rapid Americanization of the homes. In schools where negroes and those of other races attend, space should



be provided for recording race. Some state reports ask for this information.

Two items seem to be considered fairly important regarding entrance. They are the date entered and from what school the pupil entered. Only five records, or eight per cent consider it worth while to record the credits accepted from another school. In high school this would seem necessary to determine what courses the pupil had passed satisfactorily in order that the school at which the pupil enrolls might know when he has fulfilled the requirements for graduation.

Reason for withdrawal, date of discharge, and graduation record are considered important on more than one-half of the forms. Records should show the final disposition of the pupil.

Few record forms provide space for recording information as to whether or not the pupil is a resident of the school district which he is attending. This information is necessary where non-resident pupils are charged tuition.

Table 4

## Entrance and Withdrawal Information

Item	Frequency		Total
	School Records	Publishing Company Records	
Information about pupil and home			
Name	56	24	60
Date of birth	53	21	54
Residence	30	22	52
Name of parent or guardian	30	20	50
Occupation of parent	24	16	40
Age	11	14	25
Telephone number	15	8	23



Table 4 (Continued)

Item	Frequency		Total
	School Records	Publishing Company Records	
Place of birth	22		22
Nationality	14	6	20
Home conditions	3	3	6
Address of firm of parent	5		5
Language in home	4		4
Family church	1	1	2
Photograph		2	2
Pay own expenses			1
Entrance information			
Date entered	32	12	44
From what school entered	25	5	30
Credits accepted from _____		5	5
Residence before entering		3	3
Residence information			
Resident of district	7	2	9
Name of school district		6	6
Tuition paid	3		3
Tuition certificate		2	2
Withdrawal information			
Reason for withdrawal	26	11	37
Date of discharge	25	10	35
Graduated in class of _____	18	12	30
Entered higher institution	10	6	16
Transfer to _____	2	3	5
Left school to remain at home	3		3
Permanent illness	3		3
To work at salary	3		3
Recommended admission to _____		3	3
Employment record		3	3
Commitment to	2		2

Table 5 shows the frequency of items concerning scholarship. Space for recording the final average of the grades was provided for in ninety per cent of the forms. Attendance was next. Since most states require the schools to report the attendance, this accounts for its



high frequency. "Units or credits earned" applies only to the high school but there it is an absolute necessity that this be recorded on the permanent record card. Classification by grade applied chiefly to the elementary school, where it would be necessary for placement of the pupil. Only ten per cent of the forms provide space for recording the grades in the subjects by six-week periods. When the final average is recorded this seems to be all that is necessary.

Table 5  
Information Concerning Scholarship

Item	Frequency		Total
	School Records	Publishing Company Records	
Final average of grades	34	19	53
Attendance	29	19	48
Units earned (credits)	20	10	30
Classification by grade	24		24
Year	11	8	19
Instructor's signature to mark	13	5	18
Pass or fail	10	7	17
Final examination mark	11	4	15
Scholarship average	8	7	15
Number in class	8	7	15
Grades in elementary subjects		6	6
Grades in six-week periods	6		6
Date elementary school was completed		4	4
Text used		3	3
Grades skipped or repeated		2	2
Easiest subjects	2		2
Most difficult subjects	1		1
Deficient in subjects	1		1

Some rather interesting tendencies are noted in Table 6. Fifty-six per cent of the forms provide space for recording the intelligence quotient. Forty-six per cent provide space for recording the scores on achievement tests. This would indicate that attempts are made by about one-half of the schools to grade the pupils according to ability



or to provide for individual difference. Extra-curricular activities are provided for on most of the high school record forms.

In regard to character traits, space for a mark in conduct is provided for most often. Provision for recording other character and personality traits is lacking on most records which would indicate that most schools do not consider this rating of value. From a survey of current literature it was noted that among many administrators there is a growing conviction that more attention should be given to the rating of these traits. Records in the future will probably include this rating.

Table 6  
Information Concerning Ability and Character Traits

Item	Frequency		Total
	School Records	Publishing Company Records	
<b>Ability</b>			
Intelligence quotient	25	11	34
Scores on achievement tests	17	11	28
Extra-curricular activities	16	10	26
Student honor awards	6		6
Special ability	4	3	7
Ability to learn	2	4	6
General ability		3	3
Mechanical ability		13	13
<b>Character traits</b>			
Conduct	15	11	26
Cooperation	10		10
Effort	4	6	10
Reliability	9		9
Initiative	9		9
Industry	8		8
Leadership	4	4	8
Personal appearance	5	2	7
Courtesy	6		6
Personal habits	5		5



Table 6 (Continued)

Item	Frequency		Total
	School Records	Publishing Company Records	
Social attitude	5		5
Punctuality	4		4
Thrift	2		2
Accuracy	2		2
Perseverance	2		2
Respect for authority	2		2
Clear thinking	1		1
Courage	1		1

Most record forms do not provide space for recording information concerning the health of the pupil. In spite of this it would seem that defects, particularly defects of sight and hearing, should be recorded when discovered, in order that the teacher will know what pupils have defects. If she knows this she can by proper seating aid the pupils in overcoming handicaps of poor eyesight and hearing.

Table 7

## Information Concerning Health

Item	Frequency		Total
	School Records	Publishing Company Reports	
General health	9	6	15
Vaccination	7	8	15
Height and weight	7	5	12
Complete physical record	6	6	12
Reasons for non-attendance	9		9
Physical defects	4		4

## Analysis of Attendance Records

Twelve attendance record forms were studied. All the forms provided for making the attendance day by day. All forms provided space for a summary at the end of each six-weeks period for the number



of days present and the number of times tardy. Nine of the forms provided for the number of days absent. Eight of them combined the record of absence with the scholarship report for the year on a separate sheet for each pupil. One form provided for separate attendance for boys and girls.

In the manner of recording the information as to absence or tardiness, there was a wide variation. Two forms did not give any explanation as to the method which was to be used for recording absence or tardiness. Ten forms gave an explanation and code for recording. There was no agreement as to the method of recording. Different codes were suggested by each form. One form suggested an elaborate coding system to be used. The following items were suggested to be recorded for each pupil either absent or tardy: absent in A. M.--sickness, absent in A. M.--other legal reasons, absent in A. M.--truancy, absent in A. M.--parental neglect, absent in A. M.--illegal employment, tardy, accident, tardy (with time) child's fault, tardy (with time) parent's fault.

The facts about attendance records were summarized (Table 8). There was no uniformity as to size and method of recording the data regarding absence or tardiness.



Table 8  
Analysis of Twelve Attendance Records

Item	Frequency
Size	
4 by 6 (loose-leaf)	1
8½ by 11 (loose-leaf)	4
8 by 10½ (loose-leaf)	3
9 by 11 (loose-leaf)	1
8½ by 11 (book form)	1
11 by 12 (loose-leaf)	1
11 by 14 (loose-leaf)	1
10 by 16 (book form)	1
Combined with grades in subjects	8
Summary at end of each period	12
Yearly summary	12
Coding system	110

Heck presents a list of seventy-six items which he selected after an intensive study of the records used in representative cities. He says, "In devising a record system this list should be seriously considered. Only for the very best of reasons should an item be rejected."<sup>5</sup> This list, as recommended by Heck, follows (Table 9).

Table 9  
Universal List of Items to be Included in Records

Item	Total Frequency
A. Personal History	
1. Pupil	
a. Name	5,416
b. Sex	2,014
c. Race	765
2. Birth of pupil	
a. Date	693
b. Place	406
3. Age of pupil	
a. Age without definition	929
b. Age as of September 1	194

<sup>5</sup>Op. cit., pp. 183-186.



Table 9 (Continued)

Item	Total Frequency
4. Address of pupil	
a. Present address	601
b. Telephone number at present	136
B. Personal Family History and Home Life	
1. Parents or guardian	
a. Name	763
b. Residence	242
c. Telephone	110
d. Occupation	409
C. School History	
1. Admission	
a. First entered school where	12
b. Date entered as beginner	60
2. School previously attended	
a. Name	366
b. Grade	79
3. Left school	
a. Date	646
b. Cause	453
c. Destination	341
4. Transfers	80
a. Date	80
b. To what school	56
5. Progress	
a. Show grade year by year	146
D. School Data	
1. School attending	
a. Name of school	722
b. Date of entering	576
c. Grade child is in	2,921
d. Name of teacher	438
e. Date of school term	288
f. Subject taken	230
g. Name of course	186
2. Length of term	
a. Number of days	556
b. Actual number of days taught	98
3. Administrative	
a. Date record made out	194
E. School Accomplishments	
1. Ratings	
a. Scholarship	1,043
b. Conduct or deportment	345
c. Effort	108
d. Health	213
2. Credit received or not received	
a. Received during year or semester	72
b. Total received for high school	37



Table 9 (Continued)

Items	Total Frequency
3. Graduation or promotion	
a. Date of graduation or promotion	376
b. Name of school	10
4. Standardized tests	
a. Name of test	84
b. Test scores	125
c. Class score	28
d. Standard score	33
e. Date given	68
f. I. Q.	77
g. M. A.	67
F. Medical History	
1. Diseases child has had	
a. Diphtheria	67
b. Scarlet fever	64
c. Small pox	50
d. Tuberculosis	19
G. Medical Examination	
1. General considerations	
a. Date of examination	150
b. Signature of examiner	84
c. Physical defects	83
d. Date of vaccination	316
2. Items considered in examination	
a. Adenoids	56
b. Ears	168
c. Eyes	187
d. Heart	81
e. Lungs	64
f. Nervous condition	80
g. Teeth	63
h. Tonsils	101
i. Tuberculosis	17
3. Measurements taken	
a. Height	82
b. Weight	95
H. Attendance Record	
1. Absence	
a. Number times	488
b. Cause	84
c. Number of tardinesses	311
d. Absence unexcused	195
2. Attendance	
a. Daily record of attendance	400
b. Days present	1,463
3. Enrollments	
a. Total number in grade	44
b. Total enrollment	244
4. General questions	
a. List of children according to census	281



An analysis of the writings of twenty writers in the field of school administration was made to get their recommendations regarding what records should be kept and what items should be included in the records. Their recommendations are given in Tables 10 and 11.

Table 10

## Records Suggested by Educational Experts

Item	Frequency
Pupil's cumulative record	14
Pupil's health record	10
Census	9
Teacher's register	7
Records concerning teachers	7
Report cards	6
Principal's office record card	4
Teacher's cumulative attendance report	3
Enrollment card	3
Age-grade charts	2
Records of graduates	2
High school program card	2
Teacher's report on failures	2
Excuse blank for absence or tardiness	2
Teacher's report of marks to principal	2
Teacher's class book	2
Pupil's psychological clinic card	2
Transfer card	1
Notice of withdrawal	1
Notice of unsatisfactory progress to parents	1
Honor scholarship certificate	1
Honor attendance certificate	1
Pupil's permission blank	1
Advance selection of subjects	1
Transcript of high school credits	1
Change cards	1
Eligibility form	1
Reading report form	1
Supervisory records	1
Schedule of classes	1



From the above table it is evident that the majority of the writers think that the pupil's cumulative record card is the most important record. An analysis was made of their recommendations as to what should be included in this card. Table 11 gives a summary of their recommendations.

Table 11

Items Suggested by Educational Experts to be Included in the  
Permanent Cumulative Pupil Record

Item	Frequency
Achievement and I. Q. scores	8
Number of credits earned	7
Subjects and grades passed	7
Character traits	6
Guidance information	5
Subjects and grades failed	5
Attendance	5
Extra-curricular activities	6
Name	5
Date of birth	5
Entrance	5
Occupation of parent	5
High school record of scholarship	4
Subjects repeated	4
Nationality	4
Withdrawal	3
School from which entered	3
Residence	3
Parents' names	3
Interests and talents	2
Age	2
Date of graduation	2
Residence	2
Home conditions	2
Telephone	2
Sex	1



### Conclusions

From the analysis made of the records and report forms used by the thirty-six schools and those printed by sixteen publishing companies the following conclusions are drawn:

1. There is little uniformity in the different record systems both as to size of the forms and the data which are to be recorded.
2. Many of the record forms do not provide space for recording data such as rating of character traits, guidance, material, ability record, health record, and withdrawal data, items which are considered by many administrators to be necessary.
3. Grouping of data under separate headings is not common.
4. Methods of filing are not uniform.
5. Many of the records are not cumulative.
6. Some record forms call for much data which are not essential on permanent forms.



## CHAPTER 4

## REPORT CARDS

Report cards, or reports to the parents, are very common in practically all school systems. The problem of reporting to parents the progress which their children are making in school is one which is occupying the attention of educators, administrators and teachers. Report cards have been attacked by some writers who advocate their abolition or radical change. Before an investigation is made into the methods of reporting pupil progress to the parents, it is well to attempt to determine if this reporting is necessary. If it is not, then report cards need not be considered as a part of the records of a school system. If reporting is considered necessary, then an investigation of report cards is of value. There are some educators who do not favor report cards, but the majority of them think they are an essential part of the school program. From a survey of the literature regarding reports it can be seen that there are arguments for and against the use of them. This chapter will deal with those arguments and if the evidence seems to indicate that report cards are necessary, an attempt will be made to establish some principles of report card construction.

Many writers who criticize report cards severely do not advocate their abolition but rather their improvement. Others state that reports do more harm than good and since they do, they should not be used. The arguments against reports to parents can be grouped as



follows: (1) harmful effect on the child, (2) difficulty of marking honestly and accurately, and (3) harmful effect on the school and teacher due to misinterpretation and lack of understanding on the part of the parents. These arguments against the use of report cards will be considered in the above order.

What is the effect of marks on the child? This question is difficult to answer. Can this be determined? So far the harmful effect of marks on the child is merely a matter of opinion, with no definite objective data to substantiate it. These opinions are of value in that they may lead to means of determining the effect of marks on the child.

Critics state that the competitive marks now used tend to develop a feeling of superiority when marks are consistently high, and a feeling of inferiority when the marks are low. The child who gets high marks and is not working to full capacity may develop habits of slovenly work and not doing his best because he achieves the highest goal set by the school without exerting himself. The child who works as hard as he is able and still gets low or failing grades is very likely to become discouraged and resentful because he cannot reach the goal set by the school even though he is doing his best, yet he sees his classmate who is loafing getting the highest honors. A feeling that the school or the teacher is unfair may arise and spoil the disposition and attitude of the child. J. T. Worlton, Assistant Superintendent of Schools at Salt Lake City says,



"We may well consider the positive and negative influence on character of (1) marks which are consistently high, (2) marks which are low and failing, (3) marks which represent excellence when the pupil knows he has not done his best, (4) marks which show failure when the pupil knows he has done his best, and (5) marks which the pupil believes to be unfair."<sup>1</sup>

Parents often condemn the child when he comes home with poor grades, rather than finding out why he has poor grades. A quotation from John Lund brings out this point. He says, "Medals are awarded, spankings administered, suppers withheld, holidays brightened or saddened, indigestion fostered or prevented, all on account of marks."<sup>2</sup> What will be the effect of a spanking administered because a child has failed in arithmetic even when he has been working up to capacity? Will it increase his effort or will it develop a hatred for arithmetic, or a hatred for school, or arouse a resentment against his parents or his teacher? What will be the effect of a reward given for superior ratings when the child knows he has not worked up to capacity?

Are marks honest and reliable? Dr. Daniel Starch answered the question in his well-known experiment with the grading of a geometry paper in which he found that even an objective paper like a geometry paper was graded differently by several teachers. Further experiments along this same line have been performed showing that teachers marks are not always reliable. There are different standards among different teachers. Even in the same school there is a wide difference in the

<sup>1</sup>J. T. Worlton, "Shall We Eliminate the Comparative Marking System from Report Cards?" Elementary School Journal, Vol. 33 (November, 1932), pp. 176-184.

<sup>2</sup>J. Lund, "More Truth about Report Cards," Journal of Education, Vol. 109 (June 3, 1929), pp. 609-610.



standards by which teachers rate the same pupil. Often the teacher in one grade will give higher or lower grades than the teacher in another grade. It is puzzling to the parent, as well as the child, to find that one year he is ranked as superior and the next year he is ranked as a failure or near failure. Worlton says, "Teachers know marks are not as accurate as the report implies."<sup>3</sup>

Do report cards have a harmful effect upon the school and the teacher due to misinterpretation and lack of understanding on the part of the parents? Some writers believe this to be true. The opinions expressed by some writers follow:

"Parents and pupils alike are often mystified by these periodic marks. Report cards have been an instrument of deception so long that teachers are afraid to tell the truth. If teachers disregard the political use of marks, they are soon eliminated, or they may be given an opportunity to resign. In order to make marks tell the truth, parents must be willing to hear the truth, politics must be eliminated, the type of examination must be changed, and the professional standard of teachers must be raised materially."<sup>4</sup>

"The school cannot afford to have its purposes and its methods misrepresented regularly and consistently through the medium of a report which arbitrarily condemns or praises with no suggestion as to reason or purpose, and which ignores the major educational considerations."<sup>5</sup>

"The report card as used in the average school does not tell very much of a story. It may inform the parent that his child is doing well, for example in arithmetic, poorly in spelling, fair in geography, excellent in reading, and absolutely nothing in psychology. To make the report card mean more to the parent many schools are adding marks which tell something of a child's

<sup>3</sup>J. T. Worlton, op. cit., p. 178.

<sup>4</sup>V. H. Culp, "The Truth About Marks," Journal of Education, Vol. 109 (April 1, 1929), pp. 364-365.

<sup>5</sup>J. Lund, op. cit., p. 110.



responsibility, courtesy, thrift, cooperation, industry, and ~~obedience~~ obedience. Even with these additions the card is a Greek puzzle."<sup>6</sup>

The teacher is often condemned on account of the grades she gives. Yet her problem is a difficult one. She must give the grade and cannot justify it unless the parent comes to the school to talk the matter over with her. Even then it may be difficult to tell definitely if the work done by the child is so poor that he deserves to fail. Perhaps the child would receive a fair grade in some other school where the standards were lower. Knute Broady<sup>7</sup> sums up the matter in these words:

"The teacher has another concern that may never trouble those outside the school. She realizes the practical difficulty of expressing by number or letter the results of the work of a month or more in a subject. There is much she should tell about how nearly children work up to capacity, how much they achieve, in each type of activity called for by the subject, how extensive are their related interests and abilities. The teacher usually must condense what might be a voluminous message into a concise report that ranks each boy or girl somewhere between failure or promotion in terms of what children of similar age and general ability should accomplish."

Teachers and administrators know from experience that they are often accused by irate parents of a child who has failed, as well as by the child, that they are unfair, or that they have a grudge against the child, or that they have favorites. Enemies are made by the teachers among the school patrons on account of marks. However, it is well to ask here, "What per cent of the parents whose children fail take this attitude?" No answer is forthcoming because no objective data is available.

<sup>6</sup> A. Dean, "When Report Cards Come Home," Journal of Education, Vol. 11 2, (November 3, 1930), p. 345.

<sup>7</sup> K. O. Broady, "How Parents Can Use Report Cards," Child Welfare, Vol. 25 (November, 1930), p. 150.



The case against report cards can be summarized by an excerpt from Frederick Rand Rogers. He lists the following indictments against the use of report cards:

- "1. As now used, marks are unscientific.
- "2. Marks are misleading.
- "3. Traditional marks and report card systems promote spurious, superficial, and insincere scholarship.
- "4. Marks are a temptation to slipshod and downright poor teaching.
- "5. Marks stand as an almost insurmountable barrier between teachers and pupils.
- "6. Marks and report cards have become so completely the motivation to study that pupils lean on them and perform as nearly as possible according to the instructions of the teachers.
- "7. The publication of marks by means of report cards, honors, prizes, etc., tend to develop anti-social feelings of inferiority and superiority in pupils.
- "8. Marks promote competitive attitudes in pupils.
- "9. Marks and other prizes develop the acquisitive spirit.
- "10. Eliminating the harmful consequences of marks listed in the first nine points almost automatically promotes their opposites."<sup>8</sup>

The other side of the question, namely, are report cards necessary in spite of all the objections to them and the criticisms against them, will be considered. The majority of educators and writers about report cards think that they are. No school was found in this investigation which did not send out reports to the parents of some kind. This in itself shows that the administrators of these schools think that reports

<sup>8</sup>F. R. Rogers, "Education versus the Marking System," Education, Vol. 54 (December, 1933), pp. 234-239.



are necessary. The arguments for the use of report cards can be grouped as follows: (1) desire of the parents to know what the child is doing at school compared to what other pupils are doing, (2) desire of the teacher to inform the parent what the child is doing, (3) the need for a basis for promotion or failure, (4) the motivation effect of marks, and (5) the necessity of a link of cooperation between the home and the school for the best interests of the child.

The need for report cards will be considered from the standpoint of (1) need to the school, (2) need to the parent, and (3) need to the child. They will be considered in that order.

All the schools studied in this investigation used a report of some kind. This in itself showed that the schools recognize the need for them. The report cards used vary in form and in the items recorded showing that educators and administrators are not agreed in the items which should be reported to the parents, but that they do agree that something should be reported. What should be reported will be discussed later. To show what educators think of the problem, a representative group of quotations from prominent educators is given.

Worlton says, "The necessity for a means of official communication between the home and the school has long been recognized in American education, and, as a consequence, the common practice in school systems is to use some form of report card as a means of conveying to parents and guardians information relative to the progress being made by pupils in schools."<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>J. T. Worlton, op. cit., p. 174.



Dean states, "The report card is something to take seriously. It is the only record a parent has of what the school thinks of his child."<sup>10</sup>

Quoting J. T. Palmer, "Next to individual conferences, the next best method of reportin conditions to the home is through written letters or reports."<sup>11</sup>

Broady makes this statement: "The report to parents is one of the most important links of cooperation between the home and the school."<sup>12</sup>

Goldstein enumerates five fundamental reasons why ratings of pupils are indispensible: "(1) children have the right to know how they are progressing, (2) parents desire the same information regarding their children, (3) promotions are made by school officials on the basis of marks, (4) ratings constitute the basis of placement when the pupils are transferred from one school to another, and (5) ratings are used by teachers and school officials to justify non-promotions."<sup>13</sup>

From the evidence presented above it seems that the schools need reports of some kind to the parents. The need to the parents cannot be separated clearly from the need to the school. If reports are to be of any great value there must be close cooperation between the home and the school. However, parents desire to know how their children

<sup>10</sup>J. T. Worlton, op. cit., p. 345.

<sup>11</sup>J. T. Palmer, "Rating of Pupils and Report Cards," Elementary School Journal, Vol. 29 (January, 1929), p. 373.

<sup>12</sup>K. O. Broady, op. cit., p. 149.

<sup>13</sup>H. M. Goldstein, "Pupil Rating and Report Cards," Journal of Educational Method, Vol. 26 (December, 1927), p. 168.



are progressing and it is their right to know. Since one of the purposes of the report card is to inform the parent, the report should do that in such an understandable way that the parent will find out what he wishes to know and not be mystified by a lot of unintelligible symbols.

There is need of the report card to the parent, to inform him what the school is teaching and attempting to do. Here again, the need is equally great to the school. Lund says, "To the parent the report card should be so devised as to reveal the broadening curriculum in the intellectual phases of education and also the increasing emphasis on the moral, social, and physical aspects."<sup>14</sup>

Modern education believes in a "child-centered" school. In other words the school exists for the child; the teachers and the parents are the guiding influences in the child's life. Even though it has been shown that report cards are of value to the school and the parents, why are they of value to them? They are valuable because through the information given about the child the home and the school can cooperate to aid the child. Therefore, the most valuable purpose the report card can serve is in furnishing information about the child so that he may see for himself the progress he is making, his parents can aid him and the school can aid him. Very few parents are not interested in the child's report and will not honestly try to aid him when he is failing or doing poor work. There are few schools who are not equally interested.

<sup>14</sup> J. Lund, op. cit., p. 609.



The child is interested in seeing how he compares with the rest of the class. Worlton says, "It is to the educational advantage of the elementary school child that he and his parents be informed periodically of his scholastic rank in comparison with the ranks of other children in his grade or class."<sup>15</sup> Teachers know that marks are a powerful motivating device. Children will work hard to get a high grade. Critics condemn this but would the child strive to do his best if he received no recognition? Most children are justly proud of a high grade and ashamed of a poor grade. There are exceptions, but any teacher who has had classroom experience will bear out the above statement. Any worker, whether a child or an adult, likes to know how well he is doing. The report card gives the child this information.

The report card sets the standards which the school is demanding that the child attain. The child can see how well he is attaining them. He can analyze himself, particularly in the intermediate grades and the upper grades, to see where he is lacking and take steps to remedy his difficulties.

From the preceding discussion, both for and against report cards, these conclusions have been drawn:

1. Report cards, although possessing many faults, are considered to be necessary and must be sent home at periodic intervals to the parents.
2. Report cards need improvement, particularly in marking.
3. Report cards should contain more information than the grades in academic subjects.

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<sup>15</sup>J. T. Worlton, op. cit., p. 177.



4. Report cards are the link between the home and the school, and are valuable in informing the parents what the school is trying to do.

#### Analysis of Report Cards

In order to determine what are the present practices in reporting pupil progress to the parents and childre, the report cards now in use were analyzed. The report cards of thirty-three representative school systems were examined. In addition, a survey was made of the literature written about report cards.

In this analysis it was found that there was a great variation in the items reported. This agrees with other investigations of a similar nature. Table 12 shows the items found on the thirty-three report cards studied with their frequency of mention.

Table 12

#### Items Reported to Parents in Thirty-Three Report Cards

Item	Frequency
Marks in subjects	33
Signature of parents or guardian	30
Explanation of marking system	29
Message to parents	29
Times tardy	28
Days absent	26
Letter system of marking	20
Cooperation	12
Effort	11
Deportment (conduct, citizenship)	11
Courtesy	10
Days present	10
Care of property	9
Height and weight	7
Industry	7
Initiative	7
Reliability	6
Personal habits	6



Table 12 (Continued)

Item	Frequency
Promptness	6
Self-control	6
Neatness	6
Dependability	5
Uses time to good advantage	5
Social attitudes	4
Obedience	4
Careless	4
Fairness	3
Recognizes rights of others	3
Progress graph	3
Health habits	3
Inattentive	3
Is improving	3
Shows interest	3
Number system of marking	3
Days taught	2
Discourteous	2
Inactive	2
Wastes time	2
Annoys others	2
Could do better	2
May not be promoted	2
Satisfactory	2
Inclined to mischief	2
Work too difficult	2
Leadership	2
See the teacher	2
Minutes lost from school	1
Conscientious	1
Hinders others	1
Absent too often	1
Lessons poorly prepared	1
Needs too much help	1
Highly satisfactory	1
Attitude	1
Preparation	1
Work of grade too easy	1
Honor points	1
Attention	1
Finishes work	1
Show an interest in personal health	1
Needs encouragement	1
Difficult to manage	1
Should do more home work	1
Perseverance	1
Clear thinking	1
Truancy	1



From Table 12 certain facts are evident:

1. All schools whose reports were studied believe that marks in academic subjects are the most important item to report to the parents.
2. Thirty schools or ninety per cent require the parent's signature which may or may not be an indication that he has examined the card.
3. Twenty-nine schools or eighty-eight per cent explain the marking system to the parents and the same number have a message to the parents printed on the report.
4. Twenty-eight schools or eighty-six per cent report the number of times tardy.
5. Twenty-six schools or seventy-nine per cent report the number of days or half-days absent.
6. Twenty schools or sixty-seven per cent use the letter system of marking.
7. Marks in subjects, explanation of the marking system, attendance, are the items which are considered most important by sixty-seven per cent of the schools.
8. The character traits such as deportment, conduct, courtesy, industry, initiative, reliability, self-control, dependability, obedience, leadership, and perseverance, are not marked on most cards.
9. Reasons for failing work were given on very few reports, ranging from twelve per cent to three per cent.
10. There was a wide variation and little general agreement in reporting any items other than marks in subjects and attendance.



A more detailed analysis was made of some of the cards revealing these facts:

1. Two schools used a supplementary report to the parent to indicate reasons for unsatisfactory work. One school used a diagnostic report as a supplement to the regular report card to show how the student compares with the class so that the parents can assist the child in overcoming his deficiencies.

2. Of the twelve cards which listed character traits, seven used only words such as cooperation, initiative, reliability, and self-control. Four used complete sentences to make clear what is being rated, and one used a list of factors which make up each trait.

3. One school used a personality record which listed the qualities of a successful student.

4. Three schools used progress graphs to show whether the child is improving or doing poorer work. One of these schools used the progress graph only and did not use marks or letters.

5. Five schools which rated character traits gave a mark in the traits listed, seven only checked the traits which need improvement or those which were well developed.

6. One card listed the qualities of a student at various levels of achievement.

7. Seventeen schools send the report cards home every six weeks. Four send the cards home twice a semester; one sends them home every five weeks, and eleven send them home every four weeks.



3. One school has the parent report back to the school certain items about the child's home life such as books read, money earned, and hours worked.

The results of this analysis are, in general, the same as the results found by Rowna Hansen of the United States Office of Education in an analysis of 628 report cards. She found the following regarding the rating of pupil behavior:

"One-fifth of the cards issued for general use throughout the elementary grades report attitudes and behavior reactions by using the term "conduct" or "deportment". One-sixth use conduct or deportment supplemented by one of the following terms: application, interest, punctuality, habits of study, diligence, effort, or industry. One-fourth of these cards report school behaviors by listing many negative qualities to be checked with a few positive qualities. To illustrate this, the following list of qualities is quoted from a card which is in extensive use: wastes time, careless work, copies too much, gives up too easily, improving, inattentive, promotion in danger, capable of doing better, work falling off, grade too difficult, needs home study, work satisfactory, takes interest, inclined to mischief, nervous, whispers too much, irregular attendance, conduct good, too much tardiness, eyes weak, hearing defective."<sup>16</sup>

Homer found in his study of 224 report cards that there were listed nearly 600 habits and attitudes.<sup>17</sup> He combined these into 163 items as many of the ones listed duplicated in meaning. However, the large number even after combining them shows that there is a wide variation in what schools think is of value in reporting to parents.

<sup>16</sup> Rowna Hansen, Report Cards for Kindergarten and Elementary Grades, Department of the Interior, Bureau of Education, Leaflet 41 (Washington, D. C., 1931), p. 9.

<sup>17</sup> F. E. Homer, A Survey of Elementary School Pupil Report Forms, Eighth Yearbook of the Department of Elementary School Principals of National Education Association (Washington, D. C.), pp. 218-234.



### Some Principles of Report Card Construction

The preceding discussion has given the reasons why report cards are necessary in a school system and has presented some of the current practices in reporting pupil progress to the parents. The following discussion will attempt to set up some principles of report card construction. Since many educators criticize the report cards now in use, there must be some elements which make the present report cards undesirable. On the other hand, with the wide-spread use of the report card there must be some elements which are necessary in reporting to parents.

With the growth of public education and the changing philosophy regarding the aims and functions of the school, it seems reasonable to infer that the traditional report card is outmoded. Certainly, a school which has for one of its aims the building of character and personality, and does not report to the parents what progress the child is making in the development of these valuable traits, is not taking advantage of the potential help which the parents can give. Neither is that school giving the parents the information as to what it is attempting to do. It is the parents' right to know. Rowna Hansen says,

"Little information regarding changing educational practices taking place in the school programs is being systematically given to parents of children in the elementary grades. With the current wide-spread interest in parent education and the enthusiasm of parents for child study programs, it would seem reasonable to expect the school to use these interests to present innovations in school procedures for which parent cooperation is needed. One of these innovations might be the construction of a new report card and experimentation with its use. Such a report card could become the cooperative home and school record of each child's development."<sup>18</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Rowna Hansen, op. cit., p. 1.



In his article, "How Parents Can Use Report Cards," Broady states, "The curriculum of the school is built more than ever to develop the highest type of citizenship. Naturally, the school should report to the home regarding the success it has had in the attainment of this goal."<sup>19</sup>

Since one of the aims of education at present is to build character, the items which go to make up character should be rated. The education of the child is a cooperative effort of the school and the home. These traits are learned in the home as well as the school and it is to the advantage of the school and the child that the parents be informed as to what the school is attempting to do. Then the parents can supplement the work of the school in promoting the learning of the traits which the school is seeking to develop. Parents, in most instances, are not aware of the educational aims of the schools and they cannot be blamed for lack of cooperation if the school does not inform them of the aims. The report card is an effective means of showing the parent what the school is attempting to do. Some critics attack the use of the report card saying that it places the emphasis on marks. No doubt the present report cards do because all the information is marks in academic subjects. No wonder, then, that the parents place an undue emphasis on marks. It is all they have to rate the pupil on and it seems that is all the school is trying to accomplish.

Another valuable purpose which most report cards fail to use is to inform the parent why the pupil is failing. The teacher is an expert

<sup>19</sup> K. O. Broady, op. cit., p. 150.



in school work and should be able to tell why the child fails. In most cases the parent will attempt to remedy conditions which are the cause of failing work if he is informed what these causes are. Some schools do this with a statement like this:

"Your child's success in school is being injured by:

1. Irregular attendance. How can we make attendance more regular?
2. Frequent tardiness. Please help us to correct his tendency.
3. Outside activities. Let us confer about this very soon.
4. Weakened physical condition. Remedial steps should be taken.
5. Insufficient effort."

Another type of report to the parent as to contributing causes for failing work is:

"The possible contributing causes for the unsatisfactory work are: (a) health, (b) irregular attendance, (c) grade too difficult, (d) deportment, (e) laziness."

For best result, the different traits which are rated should be explained thoroughly to the parent, either by complete sentences or by simple words which will make the meaning clear to the parent. A rating in cooperation or initiative means little if the parent does not understand what it means. A card that explains the meaning of the traits rated is of value to the parent because he can understand what is being rated. Then he can assist the school in developing the traits in the child. A card in use in the Bakersfield, California schools illustrates this:

Initiative

- Sees the thing to be done and does it.
- Does more than the minimum amount of work.
- Brings in illustrative work.



**Dependableness**

- Depends upon self.
- Assums his share of responsibility.
- Meets obligations promptly.

**Cooperation**

- Respects rights of others.
- Is helpful in group work.
- Works with others for good of the school.

**Self-control**

- Obeys promptly.
- Respects majority decisions.
- Avoids needless confusion.

**Fair play**

- Does not seek special favors.
- Is a modest winner and a good loser.

**Accuracy**

- Accomplishes exact work.
- Expresses ideas precisely.

**Courtesy**

- Is polite to teachers and classmates.

**Industry**

- Works without wasting time.

**Thrift**

- Uses time to good advantage .
- Avoids wasting materials.
- Appreciates the value of time and money.
- Respects and cares for property.

**Cleanliness of person, face, hands, teeth, clothes.****Neatness**

- Does school work neatly.
- Keeps desks and materials orderly.

Another example illustrated the use of explanatory terms:

**Self control** (Prompt obedience, respect for majority decisions, sportsmanship, avoidance of needless confusion).

**Responsibility** (Performance of tasks, neatness of desk, locker, care of tools and material, acceptance of share of work).

**Courtesy** (Use of courteous tones in speaking, attention to speaker, mannerly conduct).

**Work habits** (Thoroughness, promptness, application, voluntary participation in group discussion).

**Self reliance** (Ability to work independently, leadership, ability to make use of past experiences, initiative).



In the creation of a report card the parents should be first informed of the value of the report, of what use it should be to them and to the pupil, and what is being graded and why it is being graded. In other words, to create an effective report card and to get the maximum results from it the parents should be educated in the use of them and taken in as a partner of the school for the benefit of the child.

The creation of an effective report card should be a cooperative task of the home and the school. The present report cards are in nearly all cases the creation of the teacher, the principal, or the superintendent. Before a report card is adopted for use it would be better to try it out and get the reactions of the parents as to what they would like to know about their child. So far this has not been done except in a few cases. In Madison, Wisconsin a plan was adopted whereby the school decided upon seven desirable character traits that seemed best adapted to grades one including six, as follows: health habits, self-control, initiative, social attitudes, thrift and judgment.<sup>20</sup> The parents were asked to cooperate in rating the pupils. A copy of the letter which was sent home follows:

"For some time we have been stressing character development in the Lapham School. We now have an organized program that will give an opportunity to mark the pupil in all attitudes and not in academic subjects. We are asking your cooperation in establishing this system of marking. We need your help in making it a success. We shall have to depend upon you to withhold all criticisms or blame if your child comes home with a low mark in some character trait. Please help him find a way to develop correct standards and habits. You will receive notice if your child is failing in academic subjects. We invite you to come to school and talk over the plan with the principal or the teachers."

<sup>20</sup> Beulah Charmley, "An Effectual Program for Character Building," Education, Vol. 53 (December, 1932), pp. 240-243.



In the Friends School in Germantown, Pennsylvania a plan was tried out in which the teacher used a goal sheet with the pupils' achievement in attaining these goals and conferred with the parents regarding the child's progress.<sup>21</sup> The report card may also be used for the same purpose and more easily as it is usually difficult to get the parents to come to interview the teachers.

In Fresno, California a plan was tried out in which the report card was discarded and the teacher wrote letters to the parents of each child, telling of the achievements and difficulties of each child.<sup>22</sup> A questionnaire was sent to the parents after the plan was used for a year and it was found that twenty-seven per cent of the parents very decidedly approved of the plan, fifty-four per cent approved, eight per cent were doubtful, six per cent disapproved, and five per cent very decidedly disapproved.

Another principle of report card construction is that the amount of clerical work in making out the card should be reduced to a minimum. Some reports which mark character traits mark only those traits which need improvement of those which are exceptionally well-developed.

Olive Williams, Director of Elementary Schools, Pottsville, Pennsylvania, has listed eight principles of report card construction, as follows:<sup>23</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Marjoire Hardy, Much Ado About Report Cards, Addresses and Proceedings of the National Education Association (1933), pp. 429-432.

<sup>22</sup> R. B. Abbott, An Experiment with Reports to Parents, Tenth Yearbook of the Department of Elementary Principals (1931), pp. 350-358.

<sup>23</sup> Olive Williams, The Pupil Report and Supervision, Tenth Yearbook of the Department of Elementary School Principals (1931), pp. 361-362.



1. The report should be broad, flexible, humanitarian system, measuring the progress and achievement in which the development of the child's welfare is of main importance. Items should be pertinent and should be given in specific terms. It should be formalized enough to render it useful as contrasted with traditional administrative forms.

2. The aim of education should be considered and used as a guide in making a pupil report to the parent. It has been suggested that reports should be based upon the "Seven Cardinal Principles of Education." However, such plan might lead to a cumbersome report. It is necessary to choose only certain items that seem most important.

3. The report should be constructed in such a way that it will develop an understanding of the whole personality of the child. It should include health, the work, the social development, and the character development of the child. Special abilities should be stressed. The report should, however, avoid attempting to show too much as it would include too many items and be confusing. It should be a general index of growth and strive to give a complete picture. It should be a general summary of data and opinions. If details are wanted, these should be incorporated into a separate report that may be attached to the regular form. It should be a general summary of activities that are integrated.

4. The report should be in terms that are understood by both the pupil and the parent. It should lead the parents to a better understanding of the pupil. It should lead the parent to a cooperative understanding of what the school is attempting to do. It should



definitely state whether the marks are based on the average of the group, the ability of the child, or the standard average for the grade. It should also be noted whether or not the report is a report of progress for the month or is the present standing of the child. Specific technics acquired by the child that are of special interest to the parent should be included. Also specific technics or procedures used by the teachers that are effective should be included. The report should show progress in terms of the pupil's ability. Character traits should be noted by a descriptive sentence. Special abilities and aptitudes should be noted by a descriptive sentence. Any trait needing improvement should be noted.

5. The report should aid the pupil in self-understanding and should stimulate him to a steady and continuous growth, utilizing his various abilities. It should provide opportunity for the pupil to express views concerning his progress and growth.

6. The report should describe that which it purports to describe.

7. The report should be limited to that which can be reliably described.

8. Remedial work or any special adjustment is an important phase of school work but reports concerning this type of work should be on a separate form and not be a part of the regular report. It should, however, be of such nature that it can be attached or fastened to the regular report.

#### Summary and Conclusions

From this study of report cards there are certain conclusions which seem to be justified:



1. Report cards are considered necessary by a large majority of school administrators.
2. There is no general agreement as to what should be rated on the report card.
3. Few schools rate character and personality traits.
4. The report card should state the educational aim of the school and should inform the parents what the school is attempting to do.
5. The report card should be made in such a way that the parents and the child can understand it.
6. The report card should aim to help the child as much as possible.
7. The report card should inform the parents and the child of exceptional work as well as poor work.
8. The report card should tell as much as possible and yet be so constructed that there will be a minimum amount of clerical work.
9. If details are wanted as to the causes of failing work it can best be handled by means of a supplementary report.
10. The opinions of parents should be considered in the making out of a new type of report.



## CHAPTER 5

## RECORDS REQUIRED BY STANDARDIZING AGENCIES

One of the important jobs of the superintendent of schools is to submit reports to the standardizing agencies. There are two such agencies, the state department of education, and the high school accrediting associations. In order to make these reports and to meet the standards set up by these agencies the superintendent must have available the information which they require. An adequate system of school records should give him the data. Therefore, in planning a system of records, account must be taken of the requirements of these agencies in order that these items may be incorporated into the records.

The purpose of this chapter will be to present in so far as it was possible to secure the data which the accrediting agencies demand from the schools. To secure this information, letters were sent to the state department of education of each of the forty-eight states. Replies were received from twenty-two states.

Three items of information were asked for. They were (1) the state requirement, either by law or departmental ruling, regarding the records which must be kept by the schools of the state, (2) the list of standards by which the schools of the state are rated, and (3) the records or reports which are required to be filed by the school in the state superintendent's office (Table 13).



Table 13  
Summary of State Requirements

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Number of states having requirements regarding records which the schools must keep	11
Number of states having a list of standards for rating schools	12
Number of states requiring schools to file an annual report with the state superintendent	22

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From Table 13 it is evident that all states covered by this study require the schools to file an annual report to the state department of education. There was a great difference in the report forms required by each state. In general, certain information was common to all reports. Table 14 shows the items asked for in the report of fifteen states who submitted copies of their annual report forms.



Table 14

Items Called for in Fifteen State Department of Education Annual  
Report Blanks

Item	New Mexico	West Virginia	Pennsylvania	Oklahoma	Indiana	Massachusetts	Montana	Idaho	Vermont	Virginia	North Carolina	Wisconsin	Nebraska	North Dakota	Utah	Total
<b>Enrollment</b>																
-Gross Enrollment	x	x	x	x		x				x				x	x	8
-High School Enrollment	x	x				x				x				x	x	6
-Junior High School Enrollment	x	x				x				x				x	x	6
-Elementary Enrollment	x	x				x				x				x	x	6
-Number Failed	x													x		2
- Number Passed	x													x		2
-Number Withdrawn	x															1
-None-resident Pupils			x		x			x		x				x		5
-Number children 6-20 years		x				x				x						3
<b>Teachers</b>																
-Number	x	x				x		x		x	x			x	x	8
-Salary	x					x		x		x	x			x	x	7
-Kind of Certificate	x	x		x		x			x	x	x			x		8
-Years of Experience	x	x						x	x	x	x			x		7



Table 14 (Continued)

Item	-Years of experience	-Degrees of teachers	-Latest school at- tendance	-Membership: N. E. A. (state)	-Teacher load
New Mexico	X	X			
West Virginia	X	X		X	
Pennsylvania					X
Oklahoma					X
Indiana					
Massachusetts		X			
Montana			X		X
Idaho	X	X			
Vermont	X	X		X	
Virginia	X	X			
North Carolina	X	X			X
Wisconsin					
Nebraska					
North Dakota	X	X			X
Utah					
Total	7	5	2	2	5



The attendance, enrollment, and information about the teachers are the items most frequently required by state reports. Since forty-seven of the states require that a school register be kept, attendance is considered to be important.

The state requirements regarding the keeping of school records are very general. In all cases, no system is recommended but eleven states designate that schools must keep records. The Oklahoma regulations state,

"Complete and accurate records of attendance and scholarship shall be kept for all high school students in such form as to be used easily and preserved safely. Two types of permanent records shall be kept, (1) the cumulative record, and (2) the annual record or teacher's register sheet."<sup>1</sup>

Among the standards for Ohio schools is found this statement:

"Whatever form of records is adopted, ease of access and assured permanence are demanded. The department recommends a card record system for both elementary and high school pupil's individual records. The so-called permanent card record system is economical in both cost and effort to maintain."<sup>2</sup>

The Pennsylvania State Department of Public Instruction has this standard:

"Accurate and complete records of attendance, scholarship, and school organization should be kept in such form as to be conveniently used and safely preserved. A careful system of records and reports which furnishes cumulative information for pupil guidance, the improvement of instruction, and the modification of administrative procedure should be installed in every secondary school. The number and character of blanks

<sup>1</sup>State of Oklahoma, Handbook for County and City Superintendents of Schools, Department of Education, Bulletin No. 134, p. 78.

<sup>2</sup>Ohio High School Standards, p. 61.



needed in connection with the report system will necessarily vary with the type of school. The following information should be available in every secondary school: attendance, reports to parents, cumulative records, employment, personnel, guidance, standardized tests, equipment and supply, work accomplished, teacher records, yearly organization, letter file, reports to superintendent, library, student activities, financial report, program of studies, time schedule, and annual secondary school report. All records should be kept in such condition that they can be easily referred to. Satisfactory filing cabinets are essential school equipment. Important school matters should be kept in a fire-proof safe or vault. The various records and reports listed above are invaluable in determining administrative procedure, classroom method, and in the administration of the personnel program. Only such records should be kept as will contribute definitely to the efficiency and usefulness of the school."

From the study of the state requirements regarding records, it is evident that there is not enough general agreement to justify the recommendation of one record system to the exclusion of others. However, this recommendation is made. The superintendent should secure copies of the records required by the state department of education of his state, the school law, if any, regarding the records to be kept, and the standards by which the schools of his state are rated. With this information he can check his record system to see if (1) his record system meets the legal requirements, (2) his system gives the necessary information to make out the state reports, and (3) his school meets the standards for classification.

#### Records Required by the North Central Association

The North Central Association was selected as the typical accrediting association since it is the largest and best known. The standards which this association sets up regarding records to be kept by

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<sup>3</sup>Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Standards for the Classification of Secondary Schools, Department of Public Instruction, Bulletin No. 59, pp. 82-83.



member schools was studied to determine the records needed. The North Central Association does not require any particular form of records but has a statement relative to them. The following statements show the policy of this agency:

Regulation 1. "No school can be considered unless the regular annual blank furnished for the purpose shall have been properly and completely filled out and placed on file with the inspector, on or before November first. Schools in good standing will make a complete report on teachers once in five years; but full data relative to changes must be presented annually."<sup>4</sup>

Standard 3. "Records. Accurate and complete records of attendance and scholarship must be kept in such form as to be conveniently used and safely preserved."<sup>5</sup>

Recommendation 2. "Accurate and complete records of attendance should be kept in such form as to be conveniently used and safely preserved. For the purpose of adequate guidance in the broadest sense of that term, these records should be continuous, comparative, and cumulative, showing as graphically as possible the complete secondary school record of each pupil as revealed by teacher's marks, by comprehensive standardized tests of aptitudes, and scholastic achievement, and by personality data."<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup>H. G. Hertz, "Proceedings of the Commission on Secondary Schools," The North Central Association Quarterly, Vol. 10 (July, 1934), p. 97.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 97.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 100.



The above stated regulation, standard, and recommendation of the North Central Association of Secondary Schools must be observed by its members if they wish to continue as accredited schools. Failure to meet these standards results in the offending school being dropped from the accredited list. "Thirteen midwestern high schools were dropped from the accredited list of the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools at the association's annual meeting. The schools were dropped for failure to meet one or more of the standards set by the association. The schools dropped, and the reasons given for the action, included: Loretto high school, Caledonia, Minnesota, for failure to keep accurate and complete records of scholarship. De La Salle high school of Minneapolis for failure to keep accurate and complete scholarship records. Bethel Institute of St. Paul for failure to keep accurate and complete records of scholarship. Donnybrook high school of Donnybrook, North Dakota, for failure to keep accurate and complete scholarship records."<sup>7</sup>

The superintendent or principal of a school must score his record system to see if it complies with the standards of his accrediting association, if he wishes his school to remain a member.

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<sup>7</sup>Grand Forks Herald (April 13, 1935).



## CHAPTER 6

## CRITERIA FOR JUDGING RECORDS

The scope of this chapter will be to establish criteria for evaluating a system of records. The need for records has been established, the lack of uniformity has been shown and the legal requirements of the various accrediting agencies have been presented. The school administrator should have a set of standards by which he can judge his system of records. He should rate the records now in use to improve them if they are unsatisfactory, or in case he finds the need to inaugurate a new system there should be a standard which he can apply to them.

From a study of the writings of educational experts in the field of school administration, together with a study of the record examined in this study, certain criteria may be applied in the rating of any record system. These criteria will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

The first criterion is this: Records Should Be Simple and Clear. This means that they may be filled in quickly, found easily and the date recorded so that it can be understood. This would imply that a minimum number of forms should be used, the items recorded as few times as possible, and that much of the information can be checked instead of being written. It would also imply that the records should not duplicate information, that they should not contain too much, some of which might be useless and unnecessary. Records which meet this criterion would be time-saving, easy to consult, easy to keep, and easy to interpret and verify.



The second criterion is this: Records Should Be Uniform. This would imply that they should conform to the same specifications from year to year, and when practicable should be the same as those used in other schools. It would also imply that the records should be standard in size, and more especially in the terms used so that comparisons can be made between schools, cities, counties, and states. Records should also be uniform in size for ease of filing and handling. This criterion is fulfilled by very few of the record systems now in use.

The third criterion is this: Records Should Be Useful. No content should go into the records for which no real use is reasonably likely to arise. Data should not be recorded merely for the sake of recording, or because a space is provided for it on the form now in use. In the adoption and subsequent use of a record form for his school system, the administrator should determine very carefully what information he wants and then have only that information recorded. This information should be necessary for efficient management of the school. It should also be valuable to the teacher and principal for good teaching and effective counselling. Unless a record meets this criterion it should not be kept.

The fourth criterion is this: Records Should Be Adequate. The records should give all the information which is essential for efficient administration, but they should not contain information for which there is no specific need. Many of the records studied do not give necessary information but provide space for recording much that is doubtfully of value. On the other hand, some records go to the



other extreme and record much worthless information which will never be used. By recording too much the record becomes cumbersome and difficult to use. A record which is difficult to use will not be used and usefulness is one of the reasons for keeping records.

The fifth criterion is this: Records Should Be Accurate. Only facts which have been well-established should go into the records. Opinions and guesses have no place in the records. Only in so far as a fact is known will it have a place on the record.

The sixth criterion is this: Records Should Be Cumulative. The record of the pupil's progress in school should begin with his entrance into the system and should follow him throughout his school life. Much of the information about the pupil needs to be recorded once and for all. Data which tells of the pupil's abilities, interests, aptitudes, physical handicaps and social conditions is of value in proper placement and effective guidance of his educational destiny. There should be one permanent cumulative report for each pupil which should follow him through his school years and from school to school. This report should be in constant use for reference concerning the pupil. The permanent cumulative record is the most useful record in dealing with the pupil. Temporary reports as to test results, special activities, attendance, and scholarship marks should be recorded only once a semester or once a year after the card is started. The value of the cumulative record is shown by the general agreement of experts in recommending that major records of the pupil should be cumulative.

The seventh criterion is this: Records Should Be Durable. The paper on which records are kept should be of such quality as to make



it stand the wear of frequent handling. To justify its keeping a record must be used and consulted frequently, and if it is to be cumulative it must last for many years. Consequently, the records must be kept on paper which will stand up under this usage for the time the pupil is in school. Temporary records will not need to be printed on such durable paper as they will not have the hard use which permanent records will have.

The eighth criterion is this: Records Should Meet the Legal Requirements. It is evident that the records kept must meet the legal requirements of the state wherein the school is located. Unless they do, the school will either lose its classification or be forced to change to another system of records which does meet the legal requirements. The records must also meet the standards set up by standardizing agencies.

The ninth criterion is this: Records Should Be As Cheap As Possible. Expense is an item to be considered. Other things being equal, the record which meets all the other criteria and is cheaper than other records would be preferred. Some systems depend upon mechanical devices as a selling point. An adequate and efficient record system can be filed in regular filing cabinets of standard size and construction, making them cheaper and as satisfactory as any others. In considering the initial cost it is well to consider the cost of upkeep. A record may have a higher initial cost but may be so easy to keep that less clerical help may be necessary to keep it.



The tenth criterion is this: Records Should Be Easily Filed.

This would imply several conditions. First, the records should be uniform in size and of standard size such as 3 inches by 5 inches, 4 inches by 6 inches, 5 inches by 8 inches, or  $8\frac{1}{2}$  inches by 11 inches.

Second, the name of the pupil should be placed where it can be seen easily in the file. Third, the record should be as compact as possible so that it can be handled easily. To the extent that records can be filed easily will depend their utility and their ease of keeping and consulting.

Table 15 gives a summary of the literature written about the criteria for judging and selecting records and reports. This table formed the basis for the ten criteria presented in the foregoing discussion. Since some of the terms duplicated in meaning they were combined into the ten criteria.



Table 15  
 Criteria for Judging and Selecting Records  
 (selected from 16 sources)

Criterion	Frequency
Cumulative	11
Uniform	7
Adequacy-completeness	6
Utility	5
Not contain too much	5
Simple and clear	4
Easy to keep	4
Not duplicate information	4
Durable	4
Easy to consult	3
Accurate	3
Permanent	3
Time-saving	3
Standard in size and terms	3
Meet legal requirements	2
Easy to interpret and verify	2
Inexpensive	1

A score card for applying these criteria to any record system is presented. An administrator can use this score card for rating the record system now in use to see how well it measures up to the standards set. If his system is lacking in some respects he can plan changes to remedy them. If he is contemplating the purchase and installation of a new system he can rate various systems to determine which system meets the criteria.



## Score Card for Evaluating Record Systems

Criterion	Yes	No	Rating*
<b>Simplicity and Clearness</b>			
a. Is each item clear in meaning?			
b. Are items duplicated?			
c. Can most items be recorded by checking?			
d. Does record ask for unnecessary information?			
e. Are spaces large enough to record data neatly?			
<b>Uniformity</b>			
a. Are records uniform in size?			
b. Are records uniform in data recorded?			
<b>Usefulness</b>			
a. Are records easy to consult?			
b. Do records provide for necessary and helpful information?			
<b>Adequacy</b>			
a. Does record provide for all information needed?			
<b>Accuracy</b>			
a. Does record call for accurate information?			
<b>Permanency</b>			
a. Is pupil's record of permanent nature?			
b. Does it provide for recording data during the pupil's entire school history?			
c. Are temporary records designed to furnish summary data for the permanent record?			
<b>Cumulative</b>			
a. Does the record provide space for data for each year of pupil's school history?			
<b>Durable</b>			
a. Are records made of strong, durable paper?			
<b>Inexpensive</b>			
a. Are records relatively inexpensive?			
<b>Meet Legal Requirements</b>			
a. Does record meet legal requirements of state?			
b. Does record meet legal requirements of accrediting agencies?			



## Score Card for Evaluating Record Systems (continued)

Criterion	Yes	No	Rating*
<b>Ease of Filing</b>			
a. Can records be filed easily?			
b. Can records be found easily?			
c. Can records be filed as to be easily accessible to those needing them?			

\*Rate the records as follows: 2--meets the criterion perfectly, 1--partially meets the criterions, 0--does not meet criterion



## CHAPTER 7

## CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Records are of two kinds, namely permanent and temporary. Permanent records are ones which are kept from year to year. Data must have a definite use for reference and guidance to be included on any permanent record. Temporary records are ones which give information which serves a definite need for a short time, such as daily absence, six-week or monthly marks, probable failures, daily grades, or other information relative to items called for in the superintendent's reports or the state reports. Temporary records may be destroyed after they have served the purpose for which they were intended. Moehlman says, "Desirable school records may be divided into two groups, working or current, and permanent. Working records may be classified as those for daily use in the classroom and consist of memoranda on health, emotional reactions, achievements on standard tests, and other lines of endeavor. Working records in each case, while furnishing the same data found on permanent records, are much more detailed in character."<sup>1</sup>

From this study of records it has been concluded that there are three kinds of permanent records which every school should keep. They are (1) a cumulative pupil record card, (2) a census record card, and (3) a cumulative teacher record. Each card will be discussed separately.

## The Cumulative Pupil Record

The cumulative pupil record is the chief record in the school system. Some indication as to its need is shown in that fourteen out of

<sup>1</sup>A. B. Moehlman, Child Accounting (Detroit: Friesema Brothers Press, 1924).



twenty writers on school reports mentioned the permanent cumulative pupil record as a necessary record and that all the schools studied in this investigation used it in some form. It should be carefully designed to meet all the criteria given in chapter six. It should be the most widely used record in the school as it is the main record form for recording necessary information about the pupil. This record should be made out when the pupil enters school and should be filled in each year until he leaves school. Then it should be filed in a "dead" file and kept there for reference. Often inquiries about the pupil are sent to the school after he has left from prospective employers, and institutions of higher learning or correction. Even though the superintendent or principal does not know the pupil he can get the information by consulting the "dead" file. The "dead" file is of particular value for a new superintendent or principal or in larger systems where they do not know each pupil personally.

During the pupil's school life the cumulative record should be in constant use for guidance purposes and for gaining a better understanding of the capacities, interests, character, and health of the pupil. At the beginning of the school year it is of great value in giving the teacher necessary information about her pupils so that she can plan her work more effectively. A well-designed and properly filled-out cumulative record will enable the teacher to know her class in a short while, whereas the teacher who does not have this information must grope along until she discovers for herself the traits of each pupil. A good cumulative pupil record encourages efficiency of instruction.



Since the permanent cumulative record is so important, great care must be exercised in planning and constructing it. The universal list as recommended by Heck,<sup>2</sup> the analysis of records made in this study,<sup>3</sup> and the items as suggested by twenty writers in school administration<sup>4</sup> should be used as a basis for the record form. Table 16 gives the items which were mentioned by two or all of these sources.

Table 16

## Recommended Items for Permanent Cumulative Pupil Record

Item	Universal Analysis		
	List (Heck)	of Records	Writers
Name of pupil	X	X	X
Date of birth	X	X	X
Residence	X	X	X
Name of parent	X	X	X
Occupation of parent	X	X	X
Age of pupil	X	X	X
Telephone number	X	X	X
Place of birth	X	X	
Nationality	X	X	X
Sex	X		X
Home conditions		X	X
Date entered	X	X	X
From what school	X	X	X
Credits accepted from _____		X	X
Reason for withdrawal	X	X	X
Date of discharge	X	X	
Date of graduation	X	X	X
Final average of grades	X	X	X
Attendance	X	X	X
Units earned (credits)	X	X	X
Classification by grade	X	X	X
Year		X	X
Rank in class		X	X
Number in class		X	X

<sup>2</sup>See Table 9

<sup>3</sup>See Table 2

<sup>4</sup>See Table 10



Table 16

Item	Universal Analysis		
	List (Heck)	of Records	Writers
Grades passed or failed		x	x
Ability	x	x	x
Intelligence quotient	x	x	x
Scores on achievement tests	x	x	x
Extra-curricular activities	x	x	x
Character traits	x	x	x
Health record	x	x	x

#### The Census Record

A separate census card should be kept for each pupil. There are several advantages of the separate card. First, it is cumulative and can be used each time the census is taken. Second, it shows whether or not each child of school age is in school and if not the reason for his non-attendance. Third, the card can be placed in a "dead" file when the pupil leaves the system, and in case he returns it can be placed back in the "live" file.

The following census card is recommended.







### The Permanent Cumulative Pupil Record

This record is the most important record in the school system as far as the instruction is concerned. Before adopting this record form great care should be exercised in planning the use which is to be made of it and what data is wanted. The combined list of items (Table 16) should be consulted in planning this record card.

From the results of this study, the following permanent cumulative pupil record card is suggested.





STAIN BOND







### The Cumulative Teacher's Record Card

There is a definite need for a cumulative record card giving information about the teachers. This card should give information to the superintendent for his state report. It should be the basis for recommendation to his board of education for the re-employment or dismissal of teachers

The following cumulative teacher's record card is suggested.



Name \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_  
 Last First Middle  
 Home address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 Teaching address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 Certificate: Number \_\_\_\_\_ Kind \_\_\_\_\_ Date issued \_\_\_\_\_  
 Number \_\_\_\_\_ Kind \_\_\_\_\_ Date issued \_\_\_\_\_

School or College	Dates attended	TRAINING		
		Course pursued	Degrees or diplomas	Professional credits

EXPERIENCE				
Year	Kind of school	Location of school	Nature of position	Yearly salary

RATING		
Skill in teaching _____	Professional growth _____	Scholarship _____
Discipline _____	Social qualities _____	Religious qualities _____
Cooperation _____	Moral qualities _____	Health _____

\*Rate: A-Superior, B-Above average, C-Average, D-below average, E-poor.



### The Report Card

The report card has been attacked often as has been shown in chapter four. Much will depend upon the superintendent's philosophy of report cards as to what type of report card he will use. The suggested report card presented here is based on the analysis made in this study and includes the newer ideas of report card construction.



SCHOLARSHIP REPORT

Subjects	Periods									
	1	2	3	Ex.	Ave.	4	5	6	Ex.	Ave.
Reading										
Language										
Spelling										
Writing										
Arithmetic										
Geography										
History										
Literature										
Music										
Drawing										
Manual Arts										
Nature Study										
Health Ed.										

ATTENDANCE REPORT

Days present \_\_\_\_\_  
 Days absent \_\_\_\_\_  
 Times tardy \_\_\_\_\_

Regular attendance is necessary for good school work

The following marking system is used:

- A--this means superior work
- B--this means work above the average
- C--this means average work
- D--this means below average work
- F--this means failing work

DESIRABLE CITIZENSHIP IDEALS

Ideals	Periods					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
INITIATIVE						
Sees the thing to be done and does it.						
Does more than the minimum amount of work.						
DEPENDABILITY						
Depends upon self.						
Assumes his share of responsibility.						
Meets obligations promptly.						
COOPERATION						
Respects rights of others.						
Is helpful in group work.						
Works with others for good of school.						
SELF-CONTROL						
Obeys promptly.						
Respects majority decisions.						
Avoids needless confusion.						
FAIR PLAY						
Does not seek special favors.						
Is a modest winner and a good loser.						
COURTESY						
Is polite to teacher and pupils.						
INDUSTRY						
Work without wasting time.						
EFFORT						
Tries to do his best.						
CLEANLINESS						
Of person, hands, face, and clothes.						
NEATNESS						
Does school work neatly.						
Keeps desk and materials orderly.						



### Temporary Records and Reports

Under the classification of temporary record and reports come such records and reports which are used for a short time or for a year but are destroyed at the end of that time. These records should furnish information for the permanent records and for the administration of the school from day to day or from year to year. The number and kind of these records will depend largely upon the size of the system. The construction of these records is not as important as that of the permanent records as their use is limited. However, they should be constructed on the criteria presented in chapter six.

A list of these records is presented here as a guide in selecting those which the administrator may wish to use.

1. Attendance records.
2. Pupil program cards.
3. Enrollment cards.
4. Teachers' reports on failing students.
5. Record of non-resident students.
6. Transfer cards.
7. Report of teachers' marks.
8. Excuse blanks for absence or tardiness.
9. Form for advance selection of subjects.
10. Teachers' programs.
11. Eligibility forms.



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