AN ANALYSIS OF THE PUBLIC-RELATIONS PRACTICES OF
ONE HUNDRED TEXAS PUBLIC-SCHOOL SYSTEMS

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AN ANALYSIS OF THE PUBLIC-RELATIONS PRACTICES OF
ONE HUNDRED TEXAS PUBLIC-SCHOOL SYSTEMS

THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Council of the North
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For the Degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

By

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168296
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Problem

The purpose of this study has three aspects. These are, (1) to determine what constitutes sound public-relations practices as recommended by recognized authorities in this field; (2) to determine the extent to which certain public-relations practices are employed by one hundred Texas public school systems; and (3) to determine whether the public-relations programs of one hundred Texas public-school systems meet the requirements of a sound public-relations program.

There is every reason why the American people should know their schools and contribute more generously to their financial support. The United States and the world are engaged in a war of ideology. Political systems hostile to democracy as a way of life and as a method of government are attacking the United States from without and annoying her from within. This country could lose in such a contest without the appreciative understanding, intense loyalty, and strong determination of her people. It is in this field of ideologies and ideals that the schools operate. Democracy and the American way, as it is now known, cannot be saved
except through an intelligent home defense by vigorous, educated American citizens. This investigation will involve a consideration of current public-relations practices of Texas public schools to determine whether or not they are thorough enough to inspire adequate patronage, thereby developing the well-educated and far-sighted citizens needed.

Need for This Study

In stressing the need for a comprehensive public-relations program for the public schools, Horn says:

It is perhaps invidious to remind educators that the nation's annual school bill must be multiplied by three to equal the annual liquor bill and that betting on horses consumes four times the annual school bill.

The teaching profession has too long lulled itself into complacency with the nebulous notion that the American people have sublime faith in public education. Excessive timidity, senseless modesty, and downright laziness have too long characterized educators in their public relations.

Publicity is not an extra-curricular activity that teachers (and the term will be used to include both administrators and classroom teachers) can afford to overlook, or to handle in a hit-or-miss fashion. Had teachers not been so infernally slow to discover the thin ice on which they have been skating, they might not today be in the position of envying bartenders and race-track touts.  

In a democracy the citizens must ultimately determine local policy with respect to education. Important questions concerning the scope and nature of public education are being raised continually, and our citizens should be prepared

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to decide them wisely. They must, therefore, have an understandind of the purposes, the scope, and the achievements of the schools.

Yet Grinnell says:

There is no evading this issue. Complete and continuous interpretation must come. Lack of it is the crying deficiency in public-school administration of today. Lack of it is the factor most responsible for the inadequate support that has crippled so many schools during the last few years. It is the weak spot in the armor of most school officers.  

School business is big business, and present trends indicate that it will become larger. Hand says:

But it is not only the increased birth rate that is bringing "new arrivals" to the schools. The proportion of youth who attend high school has risen steadily over the past few decades. This trend can be expected to continue to operate until at least 90 per cent of all adolescents are enrolled -- a figure already equalled or exceeded by three states. On the average, this will increase the size of the present high-school population by 25 per cent. School boards, in the aggregate, will have to provide for some 9,000,000 secondary-school pupils instead of 7,000,000 as at present. This will necessarily mean the employment of at least 25 per cent more teachers, the providing of at least 25 per cent more room space and other physical facilities, and the like, in the average community.

World conditions are such that an improvement in our educational training must be accomplished through increased understanding, co-operation, and financial support of the people. Baldwin says:

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2J. Erle Grinnell, *Interpreting the Public Schools*, p. 4.

3Harold C. Hand, *What People Think about Their Schools*, p. 10.
The Twentieth-Century American is living in what Toynbee has called a "time of troubles," an age of political, economic, and moral instability, an era of conflict. Recurring crises are an inevitable part of our times. The atomic bomb, biological warfare, and long range missiles have produced a period of insecurity perhaps unparalleled in its scope in past history. 4

Private businesses have long since learned that their welfare and progress depend on the good will of the public toward their services. Moreover, private businesses have learned that stockholders desire and demand periodic information regarding the status of their investments. He would be a careless person indeed who would invest in a business without first securing authentic information about the financial condition and the prospects of the business. In many places, especially in the smaller localities, the schools are the largest business in the community. School business is big business -- a co-operative enterprise. The people challenge every other public institution or utility to prove its right to their support. Therefore the public-school system cannot thrive when it is operated by professional personnel alone; there must be co-operation between them and the community. The schools should reach further into the consciousness of the people than any other institution. Whether or not the schools' public-relations program does this is a vital issue.

Scope of the Problem

This study is limited to one hundred Texas public-school systems from different sections of the state. When data could be obtained, public-school systems representing the county seats of widely scattered sections covering the entire state of Texas are used. Otherwise, other school systems from these counties are used to show a cross-section of the state. This study is further limited to certain specific public-relations practices as shown in Chapter III and the survey-questionnaire shown in the Appendix.

Sources of Data

The data for this study were obtained from a study of literature in the field of public relations, including both books and periodicals; from unpublished theses; and from responses to survey-questionnaires received from one hundred Texas public-school systems. Books, unpublished theses, and periodicals reviewed for this study were from the North Texas State College Library.

Method of Procedure

The first step in attacking the problem was to make a study of literature pertinent to the problem. A review of this literature is presented in Chapter II, which discusses the factors involved in a sound public-relations program as set forth by recognized writers in this field. No effort is
made to present an exhaustive study of all public-relations practices. Only those materials which are most pertinent to a sound public-relations program for public schools are presented in Chapter II.

The second step was to devise a survey-questionnaire, which was submitted to the superintendents of the Texas public-school systems of the county seats of the various counties of Texas and of other towns selected from different sections of the state. A total of 418 questionnaires were sent out, and 143 were returned. Of those returned, one hundred were selected on the basis of the location of the school systems in order to obtain a cross-section of the state. Chapter III gives the information taken from these questionnaires and presents the public-relations practices employed by one hundred Texas public-school systems. A copy of this questionnaire is included in the Appendix.

Chapter IV is a summary of the treatment of the problem, including the conclusions drawn in comparing the existing public-relations programs for one hundred Texas public-school systems with the factors involved in a sound public-relations program. Recommendations are offered for improving the public-relations practices employed by Texas public-school systems.
CHAPTER II

ESSENTIAL FACTORS FOR A SOUND PUBLIC-RELATIONS PROGRAM FOR TEXAS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

A Philosophy of Interpretation

Never have the American people been so conscious of the school as a social institution. Attention to the school has been forced upon even the unobservant by the most serious crisis this institution has ever faced.

The schools were weakened by a decade of economic depression. For another ten years the funds they needed have gone largely to pay for war and reconstruction. Shifts of population and wealth brought about by the war accentuated a long-standing inequality in the financing of education. Their treasuries depleted, the schools began to lose personnel. A shortage of teachers threatened to close many schools, a tragedy averted largely by the granting of substandard certificates. At the beginning of the school year 1947-1948 more than 100,000 teachers were employed who did not meet the qualifications established by law or by the licensing authority of the states in which they were teaching.¹

¹Horn, op. cit., p. iv.
All of the factors focusing attention upon the schools are not negative in character. Provisions of the "G. I. Bill of Rights" enabled millions of young men and women to complete their education. Many of them otherwise would not have done so. The American people have acquired a wider understanding and a deeper appreciation of the significance of education in the life of the individual and in the progress of society.

The late war hastened the entrance of mankind into a new world of science which demands a high degree of technical skill and knowledge. Aid is being extended both from government and from private sources to assist youth in preparing properly for effective living in this era. As Winston Churchill said in an address to the British Parliament during the war: "The future of the world is left to highly educated races who alone can handle the scientific apparatus necessary for pre-eminence in peace or survival in war.... We must improve our schools and train our teachers."

It is a serious mistake, however, to assume that the general public understands the objectives, the scope, or the achievements of the school. It is also a mistake to assume that the public appreciates the difficulties faced by many schools in their efforts to provide an appropriate education for all the children of all the people. A well-

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2Winston Churchill, quoted, ibid., p. v.
The conceived program of public relations is therefore necessary. This was formerly discounted by many schoolmen, and by others it was considered an undignified and unprofessional notion. To some the idea seemed to mean the giving of publicity to the success of the superintendents or principals for the purpose of securing advancement in salary or position, and to others it appeared to be an attempt to focus the attention of the patrons on the more superficial aspects of the school in an effort to conceal real weaknesses in classroom work or management. There was the further objection from others that publicity for the schools represented an effort to copy the methods of the trade schools, the correspondence schools, the business institutes, or other privately controlled institutions which make an appeal to young people to take advantage of school opportunities because of a possible increase in money-earning power. Edmonson, Roemer, and Bacon make this recommendation:

3. To inform parents about the high school in order to have their support in the effort to realize these aims, as well as to bring about more cooperation and good will in handling student problems and to prepare the way for changes requiring community support.

4. To create a greater friendliness, a more intelligent understanding, and a more liberal attitude on the part of the public toward the school and its problems.
5. To increase the confidence of the teachers, pupils, parents, and public in the importance and value of the school work.
6. To guard against harm from attacks by unfriendly interests.

This statement of aims could be still further analyzed to include purposes that are purely local in character. Such analysis is extremely important in selecting the methods to be used in interpreting a school to its community.4

These same authors say that no effective public-relations program can be framed until school authorities are willing to face very frankly such issues as these:

1. What does the public already know about the schools, and what does the public want to know?
2. What training in public relations should the teacher receive, and by whom should the needed training be given?
3. How can pupils be so instructed about the school that they will aid in its interpretation to the public?
4. Is the school's program helped or hindered by the active participation of teachers, as organized groups, in state as well as local political campaigns?
5. How can the schools keep the good will of certain pressure groups without becoming the tools of these pressure groups?
6. How can the financial needs of schools be more effectively explained to citizens?
7. How can successful attack be made on the prevalent notion that a public-relations program is primarily concerned with the protection of the special interests of the teaching profession rather than with safeguarding the interests of children?5

Public Opinion and Interpretation

The public school is an integral part of society,

4Ibid., pp. 476-477.  
5Ibid., pp. 477-483.
absorbing one fifth of the total population. It is directly concerned with another fifth or more, the parents of these children, and indirectly concerned with most of the remaining population through operation and support of the school. Absorbed in his immediate task, the educator may not be sufficiently sensitive to these forces and the manner of their operation; for, perhaps like an advancing storm, they may come upon him unawares. To understand, then, the nature of these forces, to evaluate them, and to develop a constructive policy to deal with them is the problem of the educator.

That force called public opinion as a moving power in a democracy has always been taken for granted. What each man does is based, not on direct and certain knowledges, but on "pictures" made by himself or given to him by another. All are familiar with the different observations reported by different persons who have witnessed some happening. Each has observed the event; each has reported what he has seen. None may agree in every particular as to findings, being influenced by some previously formed image or picture which now assumes definite shape in face of the event, or of subsequent events. This may be aptly illustrated in the response of parents to children's stories brought home from school, in which parental opinions are formed and attitudes assumed in response to "pictures" mentally developed out of previously molded concepts. These control parental or
pupil action and register friendly or inimical responses to
the public school. 6

Neumeyer has this to say about public opinion:

The individual opinions are derived from vari-
ous bits of information or factors at the disposal
of the people, such as, facts, news, hearsays and
rumors, legends, myths, and what not. Certain ele-
ments in the environment and those derived from per-
sonal experiences are seized upon. The opinions,
sentiments, and common sense of the masses, based
upon customs, mores, traditions, laws, dogmas, his-
torical policies of the group furnish the general
background. The discontent finds general expression.
Controversies and discussions follow. Leaders arise
to define the issue or issues, propose solutions,
and champion causes. Interest is aroused and peo-
ple begin to talk. The issue is discussed in papers,
and established social institutions, private organi-
izations, public agencies, and individuals contribute
to the discussion and exert an organizing and unify-
ing influence upon the unorganized mass of related
yet somewhat diverse opinions and sentiments. Fi-
nally public opinion becomes crystallized and ex-
presses itself through legislation or special lead-
ers or agencies capable of giving expression. 7

Education as an institution of democracy must rest
upon the secure basis of a sound and reliably informed pub-
lic opinion if it is to perform the functions intended for
it. The time has long passed when the public school as an
institution can be carried along on the momentum of the
ideals and practices of a past generation. Public opinion
regarding educational matters exists in a community whether

6 William A. Yeager, Home-School-Community Relations,
pp. 69-71.

7 Martin H. Neumeyer, "Public Opinion," American School
Board Journal, LXXI (July, 1930), 46.
the school authorities will it or not. It is far better to understand the nature of public opinion, the forces which mold it, the manner of action and reaction, and to have a hand in molding it along lines which nurture the welfare of the children. The public school exists on reliably formed and informed public opinion.

Public-school administrators should be familiar with methods that have been used to influence the "public mind." Moreover, it should be pointed out that these same methods and devices may be used to advantage by school administrators to influence the public mind and secure desired ends, in accordance with the purposes of the public school and its place in the democratic state. Of greater consideration, however, is the importance of checking the progress of those groups or individuals whose purposes are inimical to those of the public school, or who are otherwise self-centered in their activities, through a better understanding of their methods and modification of their motives. The school administrator thus influences and is influenced; he is "pressured" and he exercises pressure; he may control public opinion, or he may be controlled by it. What is best for the child in the long run is of major concern.8

A method of determining what the people think about their schools is of vital concern to the school administrator.

8Yeager, op. cit., pp. 75-76.
There can be no guess work involved. Furthermore, the administrator should realize that both pupils and patrons hesitate to criticize when asked directly for their opinion. Neither can the administrator rely upon what he hears people around the community saying; he is deluding himself if he believes that the sum of what he hears represents what the patrons as a total group are really thinking. Many other factors make it necessary to have a scientific procedure for determining what the patrons are thinking about their school. The results of this procedure should vitally influence the school system's public-relations program. This problem has been treated thoroughly in work done by Harold C. Hand.\(^9\)

Criteria Proposed by Writers in the Field of Public Relations

In setting up a policy of interpretation, it is necessary to have a list of basic principles which will serve as criteria of preparation as well as of judgment. An examination of the literature in this field has revealed that no less than thirty different criteria have been proposed by six well-recognized writers. These are presented in Table 1. All writers agree that the policy should be continuous. Four agree that it should be understandable and humanized; five, that it should reach everyone in the community; that is, it

TABLE 1
CRITERIA UNDERLYING A POLICY OF EDUCATIONAL
INTERPRETATION PROPOSED BY
SIX AUTHORITIES

Nature of Criteria

<table>
<thead>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Continuous</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Reaches everybody in the community (universal appeal)</td>
</tr>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Understandable (humanized)</td>
</tr>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Honest (truthful)</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Proper balance varied (co-ordinated)</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Interesting</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Inclusiveness (fundamental)</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Animated (dramatic)</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Broad and forward-looking</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Dignified but aggressive</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Enlists active participation of all</td>
</tr>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Proper amounts (selectivity)</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Unusual (novel)</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>Uses every facility at hand</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Vital (action)</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>Long-time plan</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>Satisfying</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>Unselfish and unbiased</td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Uses principle of conflict</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>Well planned</td>
</tr>
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<td>21</td>
<td>Other criteria (Reeder)</td>
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Number of criteria

aBelmont Farley, School Publicity, pp. 38-59.
bJ. Erle Grinnell, Interpreting the Public Schools, pp. 1-25.
cWard G. Reeder, An Introduction to Public Relations, pp. 1-16.
TABLE 1 -- Continued

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Farley(^a)</th>
<th>Grinnell(^b)</th>
<th>Reeder(^c)</th>
<th>12th Yearbook(^d)</th>
<th>15th Yearbook(^e)</th>
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should have universal appeal. Three agree that it should have proper balance, being properly co-ordinated and varied. Three agree that it should be interesting and inclusive. Other criteria proposed are that it be animated, broad and forward-looking, dignified but aggressive, satisfying, unusual, unselfish and unbiased, vital and well-planned, of the proper amounts; that it use every facility at hand; that it enlist a long-time plan, and active participation of all. Reller proposes ten additional criteria: sequence, quality, affirmation, objectivity, correlation, measurement (effectiveness), periodicity, exploitation (employ media effectively), originality, and localization.\textsuperscript{10}

Yeager proposes the following criteria to be met by the adopted policy:

1. The policy should recognize the principle of responsibility on the part of the public schools to initiate and direct such policy, and of the home and community to expect that it will be done.

2. It should be carefully planned looking forward to the future needs of the school in relation to the home and the community.

3. It should be continuous, that is, planned for and expected regularly.

4. It should be adapted to community levels of understanding and intelligence.

5. It should be truthful and honest without bias or withholding of essential information, unless such is not in the public's interest.

6. It should be satisfying to those who receive it, both in quality and in amount fulfilling proposed objectives.

7. Provision should be made for the interests and expectations of different groups such as parents.

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of elementary children. The principle of balance to apply here.

8. Provision should be made for adequate forms of simple participation of parents and interested community groups. This participation should be provided in relation to levels of interest, intelligence, needs, and capacity of citizens to participate. The number and nature of participating groups will depend upon attitudes and conditions within the community.

9. Provision should be made for means of adequate evaluation of the policy in action and desirable changes made in the light of results. 11

Yeager further suggests that the home-school-community relations should be based on these elements:

1. Recognition of Authority. Wherever it is vested, educational authority must be recognized. Reference is here made to the State, the school board, the administrative officer, the teacher, or others in whom authority may be reposed or delegated. As and when the policy or policies are developed and set forth, they should be officially adopted by the vested or delegated authority.

2. Educational Objectives. The meaning of education and the nature of the educational process are basic to policy making. Educational objectives may be both general and specific in so far as the local school and community situations are concerned. Likewise, they may be immediate or remote as to realization. The educational philosophy of the school system and community attitudes toward education will be contributing or disturbing factors in setting up educational objectives.

3. Recognition of School and Community Needs, Conditions, Attitudes, Agencies, Activities and Institutions. These should be ascertained by means of problems or a survey which may be at first partial in character, later more complete. Areas of service both within the school system as well as within the community should be selected for initial activity, within the limitations of the facts ascertained through the survey and facilities available. These may be later extended or modified.

4. Selecting the Policy Level. Initially, that

which may be more immediately attainable, as the solution of certain pressing problems, will be a determining factor as to level selected. Later, desirable changes should be made in accordance with results achieved and needs in the offing.

5. Fitting the Policy to the Program. The nature of the policy will naturally determine the nature of the program which will be developed together with its administration; both must be carefully adapted. There should be both immediate and remote ends to be anticipated and achieved.

6. Location of Responsibility. In locating responsibility, both leadership and followership should be considered. Leadership should be vested in the individual or group best fitted to secure the success of the enterprise under the control of the executive committee or other professional interests in whom the authority descends. Time for leadership is necessary. Followership involves consideration of those individuals in whom some responsibility may be vested, selected for their interest and competency or the expediencies of the moment.

7. Recognition of the Place and Function of Partakers. There is some overlapping of this principle with the previous principle as to the location of responsibility. Here we are considering, however, the fact that the selection of adequate partakers is highly essential in order that the policy and program materialize as planned. It is important to remember in this connection that some level of cooperation is always necessary wherever individuals or groups participate in any enterprise. To approach constantly higher levels is desirable.

8. Form of Community Participation. Concern should be given to the form and manner in which the community institutions and groups participate in any way in the program to be developed. The level of approach to community participation will determine largely its extent, especially as the larger aspects of the educational processes are realized. The results of the survey should reveal needs and possibilities of participation, especially some study of community leadership with a view to utilization.

9. Form and Manner of Securing Understandings. To secure proper understandings is always an essential part of any policy at any level, whether the aim be to inform, interpret, or create a co-operative situation. That which needs to be understood and the form and manner of securing understandings should be studied.
Consideration will need to be given to the use of existing media of understanding or the creation of newer and more adequate ways. Complete understanding probably never takes place, so that the process should be continuous, or at least rhythmic.

10. Financial Considerations. It is to be expected that a program of home-school-community relations adequately administered will require some financial outlay. It is recommended that some provision be made for such outlay as will promise reasonable success. Such expense should be borne by the board of education as the taxing body, supplemented by such means as are available from the funds of the participating organizations. The latter plan is suggested because those participating financially will ordinarily have a more abiding interest thereby.

11. Meeting Emergencies. Provision should be made for emergencies which are likely to arise. Examples of emergencies which might be anticipated are unexpected needs of the schools, elections which change the political complexion of the board of education, effects of economic conditions, reactions which occasionally set in through various forms of opposition, unforeseen expenses, and opposing personalities. Of course, it is not always possible to prognosticate such conditions. However, the principle of holding some reserve for any emergency might well be given some consideration.

12. Evaluating and Revamping the Policy. Throughout this discussion we have emphasized the advisability of proceeding toward higher levels of policy making. To this end the policy should be under constant scrutiny. Criticisms of its successes and failures should be welcomed, and desirable changes made from time to time. This may involve some changes in personnel, which may be painful at times. The greater welfare of childhood would appear to be a superior challenge than the investiture of a single individual or group. 12

John M. Hickey recommends the following eight objectives for public-school relations:

1. To inform the public as to the work of the schools,
2. To establish confidence in the schools,
3. To rally support for proper maintenance of the educational program,

12 Ibid., pp. 441-443.
4. To develop awareness of the importance of education in a democracy,
5. To improve the partnership concept by uniting parents and teachers in meeting the educational needs of the children,
6. To integrate the home, the school, and the community in improving the educational opportunities for all children,
7. To evaluate the offerings of the schools in meeting the needs of the children of the community, and,
8. To correct misunderstandings as to the aims and activities of the schools.\textsuperscript{13}

In view of the varied nature of each community's needs and conditions, it is not to be presumed that these criteria will fit adequately all situations to be found in every community. Adaptations should be made as needs, conditions, and personalities warrant. A policy of mutual interaction between all groups of the community is suggested as a desirable procedure.

What to Tell the Public through the Public-Relations Program

Directing the publicity of a school is not the simple business of telling everything, for that would bore the public. Another difficulty is that there is no definite borderline between facts that belong to the public and those personal facts that are the business of the teacher and the pupil alone. The question arises, too, as to whether some fact or incident can properly be given publicity apart from a total truth or a system of facts too ponderous to be

\textsuperscript{13}John M. Hickey, "Public School Relations in Cities," The Phi Delta Kappan, XXVIII (March, 1937), 299.
presented. Then there is the question of the proper time for the release of news. These problems call for both knowledge of journalism and sound judgment.

Although the publicist cannot tell all, neither should he conceal facts that should belong to the public. To force upon the public what educators think it is best for the public to know is not only suicidal but presumptuous and undemocratic. The school that sets out to sell itself to the public must be one about which all pertinent truth will stand telling.\(^{14}\)

In preparing material for the public, the publicity agent should take into consideration the information in which patrons of the school are interested. An extensive study was made to determine what the public wants to know about its schools, and these conclusions were drawn:

1. Patrons of the public schools are more interested in topics relating to the instructional program as subjects of school news than to topics relating to any other phase of the schools.
2. The order of interest in topics of school news expressed by 5,067 patrons in thirteen cities is:
   - (1) Pupil progress and achievement
   - (2) Methods of instruction
   - (3) Health of pupils
   - (4) Course of study
   - (5) Value of education
   - (6) Discipline and behavior of pupils
   - (7) Teachers and school officials
   - (8) Attendance
   - (9) Buildings and building programs

\(^{14}\)Horn, op. cit., p. x.
(10) Business management and finance
(11) Board of education and administration
(12) Parent-Teacher Association
(13) Extra-curricular activities

3. Community groups, though they may differ widely in other interests, in kind of occupation, education and social status, are very much alike in their interest reaction to the thirteen topics of school news.

4. School news topics do not vary significantly in order of interest in different cities, even cities differing widely in character of population and location.

5. The grade status of children in school does not affect materially the order of interests of parents in the activities of the school.

6. There is substantial agreement among the newspapers of the study in the amount of space given to the various topics of school news.

7. Statements of editors regarding the evaluation of the topics of school news correspond to their judgment of the importance of various topics as reflected in printed news.

8. Practices of administrators in seeking publicity in news facts does not indicate sufficient recognition of the importance of informing the public regarding what is taught in the schools, how it is taught, and what results are being achieved.

9. Criticisms of education are frequently leveled at those phases of the educational program upon which patrons are offered least information through school publicity.

10. In every city of the study except one there is a negative correlation between the interests of school patrons in school news and the amounts of space allotted to the several topics in the press.\(^{15}\)

Edmonson, Roemer, and Bacon suggest that the development of a plan for publicity requires the selection of the materials to be presented to the different groups comprising the field. These facts may be classified as follows:

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\(^{15}\)Belmont M. Farley, What to Tell the People about the Public Schools, pp. 38-39 and 58-59.
1. News Items Relating to the Social Activities of the School. Such items are particularly interesting to the student because of the youthful desire for an active social life.

2. News Items Concerning the Athletic, Public Speaking, Musical, and Other Special Performances of the School. These items appeal tremendously both to students and to many parents and public-spirited citizens.

3. News Items of the Success of Graduates. Such items appeal to the ambitious student, create student confidence in the school, and make a very strong appeal to many parents.

4. Well-written, Popular Accounts of the Work That Is Done in the Different Departments of the School. The public is interested in knowing what is being done in all special courses, and in being informed about successful features of the work in the regular academic subjects.

5. Understandable Statements of the Courses Offered in the School. The usual printed list of subjects offered has little value, but a very brief explanation of the aim and possible vocational or professional value of the courses has real worth as publicity material.

6. News Items Concerning the Activities and Successes of Teachers. Such items have value if too frequent mention is not given to a few teachers. A modest amount of this type of publicity is likely to cause the public to think more favorably of the school faculty, but a large amount is certain to cause unfriendly comment.


8. Facts Concerning School Costs, School Attendance, Growth in Enrollment, Accounts of Special Studies of Vocational Interests, and Frank Statements of Needs. It is no easy task to present such facts in an interesting manner, and the counsel and advice of the publicity experts should be sought.16

In its Eighth Yearbook the Department of Classroom Teachers of the National Education Association recommends certain subdivisions for the first four general themes

16Edmonson, Roemer, and Bacon, op. cit., pp. 485-486.
adapted from Farley's data and suggests that they furnish a
great variety of possibilities for newspaper stories. These
are:

1. Pupil progress and achievement.
   (1) Examinations, promotions, and methods of
       reporting pupil progress.
   (2) Graduation, diplomas, graduates, alumni,
       and distinguished former students.
   (3) Age-grade progress.
   (4) Precocious children.
   (5) Exhibits and displays of school work.
   (6) Thoroughness in work.
   (7) Prizes and scholarships offered; honors and
       distinctions won.
   (8) Attitude of pupils toward the school and to-
       ward education.
   (9) Student participation in civic affairs and
       in other worth-while activities that are
       not strictly part of the school's program.
   (10) Comparison of the achievements of one school
       with those of another.

2. Methods of instruction.
   (1) Classification, accounting, records, class
       size, grades, and methods of promotion.
   (2) Intelligence testing; measurement of achieve-
       ment.
   (3) Guidance methods.
   (4) Methods used with special types of pupils,
       in special classes, and at various educa-
       tional levels.
   (5) Special "systems" of instruction.
   (6) Changes in teaching methods.
   (7) Classroom techniques and devices.
   (8) Instructional projects.
   (9) The work of supervisors; visiting teachers.
   (10) Use of buildings, equipment, and supplies.
   (11) Study and lesson preparation.
   (12) Co-operation between home and school on in-
       structional problems.

3. Health of pupils.
   (1) Physical examinations and inspections.
   (2) Aims, methods, and achievements of courses
       in health and safety.
   (3) Special health classes; corrective physical
       exercises.
(4) Contagious and preventable diseases; undernourishment.
(5) Cost of health education; its value.
(6) Injuries to and illnesses of pupils.
(7) Relation of health to school achievement.
(8) Effect of school work on health.
(9) Sanitation; personal cleanliness; protection from fire; safety devices; playgrounds.
(10) Lunches and cafeteria service.

4. Courses of study.
(1) Textbooks, outside readings, magazines and newspapers, and library books.
(2) Curriculum building and revision, experiment, and research.
(3) Academic subjects.
(4) The practical arts courses and vocational subjects.
(5) The fine arts.
(6) Debating, dramatics, and other "special subjects."
(7) Ethics, religious education, and character training.
(8) Unusual courses taken by students.
(9) Students' preferences among the courses offered.
(10) Educational and vocational guidance.
(11) Fundamental and practical nature of the courses given.
(12) Aims and objectives of the courses offered.17

In addition to the above, the same source says that nation-wide observances of American Education Week provide an unusual opportunity for newspaper publicity. The attention of the public is directed to the school by means of a broad and varied program -- press announcements, radio broadcasts, executive proclamations, posters, classroom projects, parent-teacher programs, and many other types of publicity. For that reason, newspapers are glad to give a liberal amount

17"Teacher and Public," Eighth Yearbook, Department of Classroom Teachers, National Education Association, February, 1934, pp. 139-140.
of space to school news in order to serve their readers' interests. Unless definite plans are developed well in advance, school people are often unable to utilize fully the facilities which the press is willing to provide. When the work is effectively planned, excellent publicity can be obtained.\textsuperscript{18}

\textbf{Media for School Interpretation}

Reeder says that the agents of the public-relations program of the school are the persons who are responsible for planning the public-relations program. Those who have the chief responsibility for the program are the official and employed personnel of the school system. These groups consist of such persons as members of the board of education, the superintendent of schools and the headquarters staff, principals, supervisors, teachers, janitors, and bus drivers. It is the obligation of these persons to take the lead in the public-relations program, to give it direction, meaning, and vitality, and to stimulate and motivate the other agents.

The official and the employed personnel, therefore, constitute the so-called active agents, whereas the remaining agents are the more or less passive ones. Among the more important of the so-called passive agents are the pupils, parent-teacher associations, alumni organizations, editors,

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\item[\textsuperscript{18}]\textit{Ibid.}, p. 140.
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reporters, and the clergy. Sometimes some of the so-called passive agents become more active than some of the so-called active agents. The public-relations functions of these various agents will be discussed later.19

The agencies of the public-relations program of the school are instruments or media which are used by the agents. Moehlman classifies the public-relations agencies of the school into four groups; namely, (1) written, (2) oral, (3) visual, and (4) social. Many of the agencies do not fall entirely into one group but into two or more groups. Included in the written agencies are student newspapers, student magazines, students' handbooks, school bulletins, letters to parents and pupils, report cards, school catalogues, and courses of study. Prominent among the visual agencies are exhibits of work of pupils, films, and the school plant. Among the oral agencies are addresses given in person before various groups or over the radio. The social agencies include especially the social contacts which the school officials and employees make from day to day. Figure 1 sets forth these agents, agencies, and audiences.20

According to Grinnell, the board of education represents the people of the community and must determine the policies

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Fig. 1. -- Agents and agencies in a complete public-relations program (from Moehlman, op. cit., p. 222).
of interpretation as it has determined the general policies of the school. It must have facts and present them, when occasion arises, free from personal prejudice or hint of personal ambition. In all fundamental matters of school policy the director of interpretation should be able to speak through the board clearly and forcefully to the community. The voice of the board is the voice of the people. It should be the most dignified voice that reaches the public from the school.

As chief executive of the schools of a community, the superintendent of the school system is responsible to the board of education for all phases of the conduct of the schools. Interpretation is the proper function of the superintendent. When he delegates this power, he does not rid himself of responsibility before the board. To all, he stands for the schools. Through his contacts, talks, and relationships with community groups and service organizations he will help to develop appreciation of the schools. One of his most valuable services will be active and inspirational leadership of the staff.

The principal is logically a key person in the development of a sound program of school interpretation. He is the responsible administrative head of a school; he is the leader of a group of teachers. Much of the program must come directly under his attention. His individual contacts with the
community and school patrons are important to the program of interpretation. The principal must be the leader and responsible agent in making the school the center of community life. Upon the principal must fall the responsibility for adjusting teaching loads and other duties to permit members of his staff to give part of their time to the work of interpretation. He is as important in the inspirational aspects of interpretation as the superintendent. The quality of his leadership will determine the quality of the program of his school.

If the principal occupies the key position in the interpretation program, the teacher is at the very heart of it. Under the incidental type of publicity almost all the parents know of the school is what their children say their teachers said or did. (Of all the public-school servants, teachers are nearest the pupils and consequently nearest the parents.) They are first to sense public disapproval and to learn specific criticisms. If they are enthusiastic about the interpretation program and endorse its aims and methods, they are potent instruments for the most direct and effective interpretation. Their sphere of influence is often broader than is realized. The whole community knows a good teacher or a bad one, a happy one or a sour one.

In any plan of complete school interpretation, non-professional employees cannot be overlooked. They are the
custodians of the plant. Upon them depends the smoothness of operation and the physical attractiveness of the school plant. If they are appointed with care and made to feel pride not only in their little niche but in the whole school system as well, they will be good interpreters. 21

Reeder emphasizes the fact that the pupil is one of the most potent public-relations agents of the school, because he forms the main link between the school and the home. Pupils have the chief qualification of effective public-relations agents in that they are well informed about the school; in fact, no group, excepting school officials and employees, knows as much about the school. Pupils know the school program, the progress of classes, the teacher's personality, the frequency of visits of the principal or superintendent, the activities of the school nurse, and the reaction of the pupils to the whole program. They see all and hear all. When the school has meaning for the child and renders him the best service, it will have the desired pupil publicity. In school affairs, as in private business, one of the best advertisements is a satisfied client or customer. If a special effort is made to inform pupils concerning the school, the resulting dividends in better public relations will be large. School officials and employees should bear in mind that the pupils of today will be the school patrons of

21 Grinnell, op. cit., pp. 53-57.
tomorrow. If the pupils have an intelligent understanding of the school program, they will be enthusiastic supporters of it.

In order to attain maximum efficiency in the school, there must be intelligent co-operation between the home and the school. Parents should know that if children go to school physically unfit, if they are irregular in attendance, if the teacher is criticized at home, or if in other ways parents do not co-operate with the teacher, the progress of the child will be hampered. On the other hand, teachers should know that if they are unfamiliar with the home environment of the child, if they do not know something of the viewpoint of the child's parents, they cannot be of greatest service to the child. The parent should know the teacher, not as a despot, but as a co-operative and helpful individual. In a like manner, the teacher should know the parent. Mutual understanding and good will on the part of these agents is the basis for securing the co-operation which is so essential in the education of the child. Lack of co-operation between teachers and parents is often, if not usually, due to ignorance concerning the work, the responsibilities, and the viewpoint of the other. Parent-teacher organizations are one of the most readily available as well as one of the most effective agencies through which a public-relations program can be directed and developed. Such
an organization may have avenues of contact which are potent and far-reaching. The parent-teacher association should not attempt to dictate to either the administrative head of the school or to the school board. Such dictation is not intended to be a function of the organization. 22

Grinnell says that editors have long recognized the importance of the school as a source of news and have sent their reporters into the schools to get what they could for the papers. They have not always met with the cordiality and assistance which should have been given. Grinnell learned in a survey of 101 editors of weekly papers and fifteen editors of dailies that editors are overwhelmingly of the belief that the local paper should be a leading agency for presenting school information and for interpreting school thought and opinion. Editors want more school news. Frequently editors are criticized for carrying so little information about the schools. The fault often lies not with them but with the schools. News avenues have been closed to them, and school men have been indifferent or blind to news possibilities. 23

Reynolds, in summarizing and presenting principles of newspaper co-operation, recommends that:


23 Grinnell, op. cit., pp. 80-82.
1. Service of public interest is paramount. Positive upbuilding of the school system should be the governing factor in giving out school news.

2. Maintain right relations with reporters and editors. Be impartial. Be frank. Respect the opinions of the paper. Be courteous. Have confidence in reporters and editors. Don't ask for suppression of unfavorable news. Advertising is not news; it should be paid for.

3. Give subordinates credit for work done. Give all departments an equal show.

4. Tell the truth always. Don't warp or twist the interpretation of statistics.

5. Develop a sense of proportion in handing out school news. Too much publicity is more injurious than none at all. Present only one worth-while matter at a time.

6. Don't try to conceal defects.

7. Never enter into a newspaper controversy.


9. Use wisdom in the selection of subject matter. Don't give publicity to intimate matters concerning pupils and teachers. Don't complain. Don't boast. Feature the everyday work of the school, not only the extra activities. Never discuss personalities.

10. Avoid sensationalism.

11. Never use a "nom-de-plume" in communications to the paper.

On the basis of the answers of 116 Michigan editors to the question, "How may school administrators improve relations between the schools and the press, looking toward better understanding, more co-operation, and improved publicity?" Adams drew up the following principles governing school-press relations:

1. Establish Continuous Contact with the Press. Do not wait until the schools need the promotion of a special project such as a building program and then

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rush to the editors for assistance. Reach the newspaper regularly by personal visitation, telephone, wire, or through their authorized representatives. Give reporters full consideration in connection with all incidents, accidents, accomplishments, and events related to the schools.

2. **Revise Educational News Standards.** Acquire the reporter's point of view as to what constitutes news. There exist certain definite press standards for news by which any interested party can readily tell whether or not this or that bit of information would be desired by the newspapers. Avoid long, dull details of a technical nature in all copy prepared for the press representatives. Consultations with newspaper-men will aid immeasurably in acquiring the ability to evaluate news.

3. **Give the Newspapers All the Facts.** Resistance of school administrators to repose the confidence in reporters which this recommendation implies will inevitably lead to a similar lack of confidence in school heads by reporters. Most newspaper reporters are keen, alert, honest, and intelligent. They will sense quickly a partial-fact policy on the part of the school official, and immediately the opportunity for the best relationships will be lost. Just as quickly they will respond with confidence and use discretion in the handling of school news if they are convinced the school head is being absolutely frank.

4. **Co-ordinate School News Service.** Whether a local school system, a university, or a state teachers' federation is under consideration, the gathering and dissemination of educational news relating to that institution should be co-ordinated under a competent individual or group, preferably trained in news reporting. Promptness, accuracy, general efficiency in getting the news to the papers can thus be promoted.

5. **Drop Attempts to Propagandise.** Some editors understand that most school administrators do not think of the news they release as promotional propaganda and that their motives are generally sincere. But sincere or not, much that passes from the schools to the press as news is promptly labeled "propaganda" and tossed into the waste-basket. Educators must make an effort to learn what constitutes unbiased news material according to press standards, and then must conform to it strictly.

6. **Acquire a New Concept of Relationships.** Regard the school as an institution responsible to the public in all of its various activities. Conceive of the job of school administration as a stewardship, one of the
important obligations of which is the continuous informing of the public on all phases of educational activity. The press then fits into the relationship of schools and public as the co-operative agent which can undoubtedly do more than any other outside institution for the gradual betterment of education. If the papers sometimes severely score the schools and education, educators should regard it as generally healthy appraisal that will eventually react to the benefit of democracy.²⁵

Reeder says the newspaper is now recognized as one of the greatest, if not the greatest, disseminators of information in the world. According to him, practically every home in America receives a daily or a weekly newspaper, and millions of homes receive both a morning and an evening daily; these are perused avidly, and usually at a specified time of each day, by all reading members of the family. In fact, with most of our population the reading of a daily newspaper has become a habit as well formed as eating three meals a day or sleeping a certain number of hours each night. As a public-school-relations agency the newspaper must be accorded a high rank. School employees and officials should make use of this important agency in keeping the people informed about the school.²⁶

According to Moehlman, the school paper is one of the most abused and exploited child activities. In many instances it has become merely a propaganda sheet for adult


²⁶Reeder, op. cit., pp. 32-38.
institutional interpretation to the detriment of the child's interest. It may be used in smaller school systems as the personal publicity program of the superintendent and principal.

The school paper is fundamentally a terminal product of learning in several formal curricular fields and represents at the same time practical training in the field of written expression. It should represent to the children what the free press does to the adult. Since it is directly concerned with the child interest, there is no reason why the school paper should become a servile imitator of daily-press form or mechanical make-up. As a means of conveying news of interest the school newspaper may be expected normally to give a balanced view of school life. There is no occasion for the allotment of twenty to sixty per cent of a four-page paper to competitive athletics.27

Grinnell contends that a good school paper is as effective a means as can be found to interpret the school to the pupils. After a time, if the counsel is sound and enthusiastic, the school newspaper will truly become the pupil's interpreter of what he sees, hears, and does in and out of the school. It will likewise be a good interpreter to the community. Pupils will take it home. Week after week parents and others will get the inside story of the school, and they

27 Arthur B. Moehlman, Social Interpretation, p. 301.
will get it with a warmth and color that only youth can give it. If the paper is widely circulated, as it should be, if it is left in clubrooms, lobbies, libraries, with school-board members, in reading rooms of lodges, churches -- wherever citizens might pick it up -- the area of interpretation will be broadened.

Today the school magazine rarely exists as the major periodic publication of a senior high school. The newspaper has that position. If the school is large enough and enterprising enough, a magazine may spring up and enjoy a thriving career. It may maintain high standards and offer real inducement for the few gifted writers of the school. Unless it does follow a high level of artistry in composition and illustration, it cannot survive. It must fill a want other than that filled by the school newspaper. 28

According to Grinnell, it is in the junior high school that the magazine is likely to enjoy its greatest popularity, especially if it combines literary and journalistic aims.

The annual, or yearbook, once played a more important part in school life than it now does. Rich in sentimental values as the annual is to students, it is doubtful that it has often had much value as an interpreter to the community of the life and program of the schools. In general it may be said that the annual can represent only a fair test of

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the effectiveness of the school's interpretation program. If the memories, impressions, loyalties, and attitudes reflected therein are in harmony with what the school aspires to do, the annual is probably achieving its objectives.

In recent years the practice has sprung up, particularly among larger secondary schools, of publishing a booklet for students containing essential information and instruction about the activities of the school. The booklet is distributed at the opening of the school year. It is especially valuable to new pupils, enabling them to assimilate quickly the traditions and rules of the school and enabling them to adjust themselves to the curricular and extracurricular programs. It affords a ready reference for all students. Among high-school publications the handbook is secondary only to the newspaper as an avenue of approach to the home. It helps to acquaint parents as well as pupils with the objectives and methods of the school.

One of the most fascinating and instructive developments of modern public-school interpretation has been the use of leaflets, bulletins, booklets, blotters, and a dozen other forms of printed matter to make direct and vigorous appeal to the public. These also include letters to the parents about various school and pupil problems and relationships.

One of the most forward steps in education and in school
interpretation is the practice of reporting pupil progress in terms of school objectives rather than by the use of a few letter or percentage grades in "reading, writing, and arithmetic." The new type of report card is more prevalent in the lower grades but is being extended upward as educators become convinced of its merits.  

Grinnell says that the policy of interpreting the school to the public by placing on exhibit the work of the pupils is employed by many school executives. The effectiveness of exhibits makes it imperative that school executives undertake detailed study of their use. Exhibits may be of many sorts and on several scales and are often presented in the school for the benefit of both pupils and patrons. Many of the most effective ones are shown outside the school. The display window is one of the most popular out-of-school exhibit places, but others are often used. Not frequently used but of undeniable value in a school interpretation program are portable exhibits of several kinds. A few parents in every community visit the schools occasionally. In order to reach greater numbers of patrons and to increase the number who visit the schools, school executives have devised entertainments depicting the activities of classroom or gymnasium or library and special demonstrations, in and out of the school, in which attention is focused on a particular

\[29\] Ibid., pp. 184-236.
activity. In recent years schools have come to realize the interpretative possibilities in what is called "Open House."

In every community the school buildings themselves are expressions of educational ideals and programs. In their physical aspects they may be taken to represent the attitude of a community toward education. Architecture of school buildings and landscaping of school grounds should be the embodiment of a community's educational achievements. The grounds and buildings should be well cared for. The interior of the school plant should demonstrate to everyone the best principles of sanitation, heating, lighting, and ventilation.

Another rapidly growing means for demonstrating school activity is the amateur moving picture. Although moving pictures represent with some fidelity most types of school activity, they may be used most effectively in showing what the schools are doing in health, the practical arts, library service, cafeteria and lunchrooms, and project teaching in elementary grades. Sports of all kinds and any phase of school work involving gross body movement, manipulation of objects, gestures or change of expression, or striking positions, can be presented interestingly.

Celebrations of special occasions and parades are being used to interpret the school. Any school celebration must have as its chief theme the advancement of the school and its program.
When used with dignity, several devices such as posters, signboards, and displays are effective. They are especially effective in preparing the public for American Education Week or for special demonstrations or celebrations.\textsuperscript{30}

Grinnell contends that there is a need for teachers who realize that their duties extend beyond teaching and should include a deliberate attempt to interpret the school to the community. They must realize that such educational interpretation is not the work of any one individual, but the result of the combined efforts of the superintendent, teachers, and all other employees. No two teachers have exactly the same contacts with the public. As a group they should reach into substantially every civic, religious, social, or other group in the community and should be able to do much toward keeping the public informed on significant school issues. Participation in the work of service clubs, lodges, and other groups in the community is coming to be regarded as an obligation of teachers. Certainly teachers will be called upon frequently to expound their views on education at meetings of luncheon clubs, professional groups, women's organizations, veterans' organizations, fraternal societies, improvement associations, cultural groups, and others. Spontaneous interest in the promotion of Boy Scout, Girl Scout, and kindred character-building activities among the youth of the community will go

\textsuperscript{30}Ibid., pp. 293-322.
far toward strengthening the teachers' position in popular affections. Their willingness to share their talent for leadership or public speaking or organization with civic groups and other community groups will increase their value in the community. The administrators of the school are responsible for occasional speeches, short radio talks, and effective interpretation through their association with service organizations and other civic groups.\textsuperscript{31}

In its Eighth Yearbook the Department of Classroom Teachers of the National Education Association says that the radio offers an opportunity to reach the public that has been grasped but slowly and hesitantly by educators. It reaches a large and potent audience. It enables the teacher and school administrator to talk directly to the parent, to point out important problems, to explain modern classroom methods, and to solicit co-operation from the home in attaining the school's objectives. Well-planned publicity through the newspapers should accompany any series of talks over the air in order to insure an interested audience. Pictures of the speakers will heighten interest. In every case a copy of the talk should be furnished to the papers. The topic and facts about the principal performers on the program should be given advance publicity.\textsuperscript{32}

\textsuperscript{31}Ibid., pp. 243-264.

\textsuperscript{32}"Teacher and Public," Eighth Yearbook, pp. 146-159.
Moehlmen suggests that the strongest possible policy of popular education is one by which an interested opinion is secured through the direct education of one or more concerned lay groups which in turn will act as agencies for convincing others. In this way the forming of a specific opinion concerning the needs of the schools in the parent-teacher association, the women's organizations, and other groups will result in the gradual extension of the range of favorable opinion. The community educational advisory commission may include from nine to twenty lay members, depending on the size and diversity of interests. Labor and capital (banking), industry and commerce, agriculture, the learned professions, and parents will comprise the major representations. Although public education must remain completely non-sectarian in function, a community advisory group may well include representatives of institutionalized religion. However, if one religious point of view is included, all major sects should be represented. In selection of the lay committee, it is desirable to secure a spread of opinion so that the group may be balanced instead of swinging either to the left or to the right. The needs of the schools are presented to the community leaders who are members of this group. This presentation may be considered as institutional interpretation. The commission members study, discuss, and argue about these problems, translating
them progressively into their own background and understand-
ing and suggesting either contractions or enlargements.
Their reactions and points of view brought back to the or-
organization through this discussion may be considered as
community interpretation for the organizational group.
During the process of consideration both aspects of the in-
terpretative activity are thus brought together, and a
group opinion is progressively built up. These commissions
are and should remain strictly advisory. 33

Grinnell suggests that school buildings can be made
real community centers. They can be used by adults for
gymnasium classes, recreational clubs, study groups, philan-
thropic organizations, civic improvement leagues, discussion
groups, and social gatherings. Adult classes of all sorts
might be developed. Leisure leagues should be fostered by
the school. The school should promote pre-school study
groups for mothers, it should provide playground service
under supervision during summer months, and it should spon-
sor an open forum for the study of local, social, and eco-
nomic problems. The cafeteria, the gymnasium, and the audi-
torium should be almost as familiar to patrons as to school
children. When citizens use the school buildings and come
to know them intimately, it is not likely that they will
fail to be interested in what their children do there. Nor

33 Moehlman, Social Interpretation, pp. 280-350.
is it likely that they will oppose reasonable expense for needed improvements or additions. 34

Organization for the Public-relations Program

The administrator should exercise just as much care in planning an organization for public relations in the school as for the program of instructions or any other important phase of the school program. The rather numerous and diversified activities administered as public relations should be unified into a continuous program for collecting and disseminating factual information which will strengthen the services of the school. Of course, the administrator must plan wisely to insure the right proportion of his time, neglecting neither his public-relations program nor his instructional program. Although much of the success of the instructional program of the school is dependent upon the understanding that the community has of the school and the school has of the community, it is possible to over-emphasize public-relations activities. On the other hand, the administrator who overlooks entirely the necessity for adjustment to the community does not measure up to his full responsibility.

There are several groups to be reached in the program of public relations. These groups are the school-board members, school employees, pupils, parents, and the general

public. Often certain information will be prepared for only one group. It is the responsibility of the administrator to see that appropriate information reaches the members of all of these groups.

A precaution suggested by Grinnell for the public-relations program is to see that each part of the school program receives its proper share of attention. No department or activity should receive too much publicity to the neglect of other departments or activities.\textsuperscript{35}

No matter how skillfully devised a program of school interpretation may be, it cannot be sound and effective unless it reaches all the people in all strata of society. Reeder suggests that in order to carry out a well-organized program it would be well to have a publicity committee under the direction of a faculty member with students as assistants. It is the responsibility of the schools to show the public that they are doing a worth-while job and are attempting to meet the needs of their respective communities. Reeder further divides the publicity organization into the central organization and the representative organization. He places the central organization as a division of school administration under the direction of the superintendent of schools. In the proposed administrative plan the public-relations organization is directed by a committee of school officials and members of the non-professional staff.\textsuperscript{36}

\textsuperscript{35}Ibid., pp. 51-52. \hspace{1cm} \textsuperscript{36}Reeder, op. cit., pp. 17-19.
Reynolds suggests four definite ways that the central organization may be administered:

1. By a news or publicity director whose duties consist of the preparation, manufacturing, and distribution of all printed material used by the school systems. School news service in the press would be one of his duties.

2. By the superintendent of the school, and he will direct this activity as one of his administrative duties.

3. By some other administrative officer -- such as the assistant superintendent.

4. By some principal, special instructor or teacher whose duties are so arranged as to allow time for the direction of school-news service.37

Reeder says that the director of the school news service should have an advisory board or cabinet, representative of the administration and of the teaching staff. It is possible that the children, patrons, and other groups closely allied to the school system should be represented in this advisory body.

In the representative plan the public-relations organization is directed by a committee of school officials and employees. This committee should represent the various schools of the system. It should represent the administrative department, the teaching staff, the student body, and patrons of the school. This committee should give representation to the board of education. It should give representation to the non-professional staff. Because it may become

37Reynolds, op. cit., p. 97.
unwieldy otherwise, this larger committee should have as a steering committee a small co-ordinating council under the direction of the superintendent. This committee should hold regular meetings to outline the program. This committee should focus its attention on definite needs and problems of the school.38

Out-of-school Agencies

Among community organizations, the one universally considered the most valuable ally of the school is the Parent-Teacher Association, according to Grinnell. Its avowed object is to bring school and community closer together that the interests of the child may better be served.39 In not all groups are the activities the same, but in general such a program as that formulated by Moore covers the range of their purposes:

1. To understand more fully the plans and aims of education and how to realize these plans and aims.
2. To know the local school, its needs, its plans, and its programs of procedure; and to be a real factor in helping to meet its needs, execute its plans, and realize its programs.
3. To link the school and the community together.
4. To take an intelligent interest in school elections, whether the voting be in relation to bonds, current taxes, or for members of the school board.
5. To bring the community and the teacher into a more harmonious relationship by helping the teacher to get acquainted and properly established in the community.

38 Reeder, op. cit., pp. 17-19.
39 Grinnell, op. cit., p. 327.
6. To support the teacher when she is right, instead of permitting her and her school to be a choice subject of conversation for neighborhood tattlers or the anvil on which the community "knockers" sing all the charges from morning to night.

7. To supplement the efforts of the school board in making the surroundings of the school or schools approach the ideal as nearly as the resources of the association will permit.40

Whether purely local or organized on a national or international basis, service clubs provide fruitful opportunities for school men to win the good will of prominent citizens and to keep them in touch with the progress and needs of the school. At the same time the school men will keep abreast of trends in attitudes and thought of laymen.

Lovejoy, a school man and an officer of Rotary International, has this to say about service clubs:

Service clubs exist to be of helpful influence in their community. In the past they have listened attentively to school men while they outlined the problems confronting the town's educational system. They will continue to do so. Their members are active in business. They are the taxpayers. They want to know about their schools. They realize that the future of this country will be determined largely by the type of educational system that is maintained. They know that the schools are molding the habits, ideals, and aspirations of present-day youth. They know that the future of business depends on the educational facilities that are provided today. They know also that today's children must get their education today. For these reasons, as well as for many others, the program committees in the service clubs have frequently asked school executives to present three or four programs discussing some of the outstanding problems of the schools.41

40M. E. Moore, Parent, Teacher, School, pp. 64-65.

According to Grinnell, women frequently are better supporters of school causes than are men. When organized in a women's club and affiliated with the General Federation of Women's Clubs, women can exert much influence for the advancement of whatever cause they endorse.

The church is the first and most basic contact in many communities. If school people can avoid being involved in sectarian conflict, they can develop among church leaders enthusiastic support of the school's efforts at developing character and moral sensitivity in children.

The American Legion and other patriotic and veterans' organizations co-operate with the schools in the teaching of citizenship, in providing for playground facilities, in organizing and encouraging recreational activities, and in promoting good schools in general.

Among the community groups most closely related by age and purpose to the schools are the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and similar organizations. All such groups can be of frequent and valuable service to schools by carrying educational ideals into the community and by exemplifying these ideals. Their chief value, perhaps, is the indirect one of developing the type of citizens who in a few years will be staunch supporters of the schools.\(^{42}\)

\(^{42}\)Grinnell, op. cit., pp. 324-348.
CHAPTER III

PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

As has been noted in Chapter I, the present study includes a survey of certain public-relations practices employed by one hundred Texas public-school systems. This study was undertaken in an effort to determine what public-relations practices are being employed by these school systems and how these practices compare with those recommended by recognized educational writers in this field.

The literature on the subject was first consulted to determine what criteria have been established by which the public-relations program of any given school might be evaluated. Thus it was possible to formulate a questionnaire which would include most of the more widely recognized practices included in a sound public-relations program. Because of the difficulty of securing a response to any questionnaire of undue length, this questionnaire was necessarily limited to the broad, general practices shown in the following tables.

Copies of the questionnaire were sent to the superintendents of 418 public-school systems of Texas, including those of each county seat and certain other school systems.
necessary to obtain a cross-section of the school systems of the state. A total of 143 questionnaires were returned; eighty-eight of the returned questionnaires were from county seats, and these, with twelve others from widely scattered sections of the state, were selected to comprise the one hundred school systems considered in this study.

The questionnaire included:

First, questions as to whether or not the practices employed help the students of the schools to become effective interpreters of the school; whether or not student publications suitable for home use are published; whether or not parents and patrons are invited to special events and observances involving students; whether or not pupils are instructed sufficiently with reference to the purposes, the scope, and the achievements of the school system; whether or not use is made in the classroom of the Children's Charter (National Education Association); and whether or not use is made of student activities as entertainment for community groups.

Second, questions were asked to determine the content and scope of the newspaper publicity.

Third, certain broad questions were asked to give a general picture of the use made of effective agents of school interpretation.

Fourth, questions were asked to determine the use made
of the school plants in the program of interpretation.

Fifth, questions were asked to attempt to gain an evaluation of the school system's program of public relations as compared with recognized practices.

Sixth, questions were asked to determine the rank of the different departments of the school from the point of view of their public-relations value to the school.

Seventh, questions were asked to determine the type and extent of organization employed within the school system to meet the problem of efficient school interpretation.

Table 2 presents the student publications having information suitable for home use in the public-relations program. The table is divided into two columns showing the student publication and the number of schools indicating its use. Since one hundred school systems were used, this figure will also represent the per cent of the schools using these publications in their public-relations programs.

In a critical analysis of these practices to determine how well they meet the requirements set out in Chapter II, one notes that school newspapers having information suitable for home use in the public-relations program are employed by eighty-nine per cent of the schools. School annuals having information suitable for home reading in the public-relations program are used in ninety-two per cent of the schools. This table shows that wide use is made of these two recommended
TABLE 2

STUDENT PUBLICATIONS HAVING INFORMATION SUITABLE FOR HOME USE IN THE PUBLIC-RELATIONS PROGRAM AS EMPLOYED BY ONE HUNDRED TEXAS PUBLIC-SCHOOL SYSTEMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Publication</th>
<th>Number of Schools Indicating Its Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School newspapers</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School magazines</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School annuals or yearbooks</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others listed by those answering:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulletins and folders</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handbooks</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Form letters and news letters</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

publications. That school magazines are being published by only nine per cent of the schools shows that the school newspaper is far more popular. The use of bulletins and folders by eleven per cent of the schools, handbooks by six per cent, and form letters and news letters by three per cent indicates too little emphasis placed upon these types of publications, which are shown to be recognized means of interpretation by the criteria presented in Chapter II.

Table 3 shows the extent to which special events and observances of the schools are used in the schools' interpretation program.
TABLE 3
SPECIAL EVENTS AND OBSERVANCES TO WHICH PARENTS AND PATRONS ARE INVITED IN THE PUBLIC-RELATIONS PROGRAM AS USED BY ONE HUNDRED TEXAS PUBLIC-SCHOOL SYSTEMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Special Event or Observance</th>
<th>Number of Schools Indicating Its Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exhibits of classwork</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open-house programs</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vitalize commencement programs</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assembly programs</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others listed by those answering:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special programs in the evening</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Back-to-school for parents</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fathers' night</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The value of special events and observances in the public-relations program would depend upon the number of parents and patrons who attend these affairs. In this study no effort was made to determine the number in attendance.

An analysis of the above table indicates that seventy-eight per cent of the school systems surveyed are using exhibits of classwork; seventy-five per cent are using open-house programs; eighty-one per cent are using vitalized commencement programs; and ninety-seven per cent are using assembly programs in their interpretation of the school to the community. According to the criteria set up in Chapter II,
this table indicates that a large percentage of the schools studied are making use of the public-relations practices involving special events and observances to which parents and patrons are invited, as recommended by educational writers in the field of public relations. Special programs in the evening are used by three per cent; back-to-school for parents, one per cent; and fathers' night, by one per cent of the schools. This indicates that very little use is made of these practices.

Table 4 shows the methods used in instructing the pupils of the school systems with reference to the purposes, the scope, and the achievements of the school. This table also shows who does the instructing and how much use is made of this practice by the school systems surveyed in this study.

The criteria from Chapter II show that the pupils of the school are one of the most effective agencies of interpretation to their homes and community. Their interpretation will accomplish the desired results only if they are acquainted with the information about the school system that needs interpreting.

A critical analysis of this table reveals that several methods for instructing the pupils with reference to the purposes, the scope, and the achievements of the school are used by these school systems. Instruction through assemblies is used by ninety per cent of the schools; home rooms, by
TABLE 4

INSTRUCTION OF PUPILS WITH REFERENCE TO THE PURPOSES, THE SCOPE, AND THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE SCHOOL AS USED BY ONE HUNDRED TEXAS PUBLIC-SCHOOL SYSTEMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method Used for Instruction of Pupils with Reference to the Purposes, Scope and Achievements of the School System</th>
<th>Number of Schools Indicating Its Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Through assemblies</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Through the use of home rooms</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Through classroom work</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Instruction given by:

Superintendent                                                                                      | 49                                  |
Principals                                                                                           | 50                                  |
Teachers                                                                                             | 38                                  |

Others listed by those answering:

Guidance groups                                                                                      | 3                                   |
Orientation activities                                                                               | 1                                   |
Regular teaching methods                                                                             | 1                                   |
Questionnaires to students                                                                           | 1                                   |

seventy-one per cent; and classroom work, by eighty-two per cent. The superintendent gives the instruction in forty-nine per cent of the systems; the principals, in fifty per cent; and the teachers, in thirty-eight per cent. In several cases the instruction is given by more than one agency. This table indicates that most of the schools studied are informing the pupils of the school so that they may give helpful interpretation to their homes and community. Other
methods set forth in the criteria in Chapter II which receive very little use are, guidance groups being used by three per cent; orientation activities, one per cent; regular teaching methods, one per cent; and questionnaires, one per cent.

Table 5 shows the use made of the Children's Charter (National Education Association) in the public-relations program as a means of emphasizing the needs of the child and of the school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discussion Group and Those Conducting the Discussion</th>
<th>Number of Schools Using Procedure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>With parents</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With children</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussions conducted by:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principals</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An analysis of this table indicates that practically no schools employ the Children's Charter (National Education Association) as a device for interpreting the needs of the child and of the school. Holding discussions of this type with the parents is used by only seven per cent of the schools
in this study. Only six per cent of the schools in this study conduct this type of discussion with the children. The criteria derived from the studies of educational writers in the field of public relations as presented in Chapter II include this practice as one helpful device for informing the public of the needs of children and of the school.

Table 6 shows the use of student activities for community entertainment as a means of interpreting the program of the school to the community.

**TABLE 6**

**USE MADE OF STUDENT PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES AS A MEANS OF ENTERTAINMENT AND INTERPRETATION BY ONE HUNDRED TEXAS PUBLIC-SCHOOL SYSTEMS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Activity</th>
<th>Number of Schools Using Procedure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Club program presentations</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debates on vital school problems</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musical organizations</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others listed by those answering:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plays</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer recreation program</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Declamations</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fun and frolic night for students and parents</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assemblies</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A critical analysis of Table 6 shows that seventy-nine per cent of the schools use club program presentations as a means of entertaining and informing the public. Musical organizations are used for this purpose by ninety-one per cent; debates on vital school problems, by seventeen per cent; and plays by thirteen per cent. This table shows widespread use of club program presentations and musical organizations for entertaining and informing the public. Very little use has been made of plays or of debates by students on vital school questions. These practices are recommended by the criteria in Chapter II. Other devices being given very little use are summer recreation programs, declamations, fun and frolic night for students and parents, and assemblies.

Table 7 presents an over-all picture of the type of newspaper publicity given the schools considered in this study. An analysis of this table shows that news publicity on athletic events is listed by ninety-eight per cent of the schools; use of articles on school life, by ninety per cent; and special events and celebrations, by eighty-two per cent. The provisions for the general welfare of the children furnished publicity for seventy-eight per cent of the schools. Student contests other than athletics accounted for publicity for sixty-eight per cent.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items Featured in the Publicity</th>
<th>Number of Schools Using This Type of Publicity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School life</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The conditions under which instruction is taking place</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provisions for the general welfare of the children</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athletic events</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student contests other than athletics</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special events and celebrations</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The human-interest side of student relationships</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Successes of the graduates of the school</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional teaching practices and successes of the teachers</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality and biographical sketches of the teachers</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Others listed by those answering:
- Building programs: 1
- Pictures in papers: 1
- Hobbies: 1
- Special newspaper editions: 1
- Annual homecoming: 1
- School opening and closing: 1
This table further indicates that in fifty-nine per cent of the schools the successes of the graduates of the schools are given publicity. The conditions under which instruction is taking place furnishes publicity for fifty-four per cent, while personality and biographical sketches of the teachers are given publicity by forty-one per cent of the schools. The human-interest side of student relationships is publicized by forty-three per cent of the schools. In thirty-eight per cent the professional teaching practices and successes of the teachers account for publicity. Other items indicated as furnishing occasional publicity are building programs, pictures in papers, hobbies, special newspaper editions of happenings in the schools, annual homecoming events, and school opening and closing.

It appears from these data that too little publicity is given the professional teaching practices and successes of teachers, personality and biographical sketches of the teachers, the human-interest side of student relationships, the conditions under which instruction is taking place, the successes of the graduates of the schools, and student contests other than athletics. Publicity on these factors is recommended by educational writers in the public-relations field. Widespread publicity is given to athletics, school life, special events and celebrations, and the provisions for the general welfare of the children.
Table 8 is a continuation of the publicity program of the schools considered in this study. It shows in particular the type and number of articles prepared by the administrator for the newspapers.

**Table 8**

**Types of Articles Prepared by the Administrator for the Newspapers as Reported by One Hundred Texas Public-School Systems**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items Featured in the Publicity</th>
<th>Number of Schools Using This Type of Publicity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Annual reports</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simplified budgetary statements</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information on school costs expressed in simple terms that emphasize the values that accrue to the child</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factual information in order to guard the school against misrepresentation</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational philosophy of the school</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others listed by those answering:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pictorial representation of how money is spent</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Articles on current projects</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open meetings of the board</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special reports on special funds</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memberships in professional organizations</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A critical analysis of Table 8 reveals that seventy per cent of the schools provide factual information to guard the school against misrepresentation, sixty-three per cent prepare simplified budgetary statements, fifty-five per cent provide information on school costs expressed in simple terms and emphasizing the values that accrue to the child, fifty-three per cent prepare articles on annual reports, and fifty-one per cent prepare articles on the educational philosophy of the schools. In comparison with the criteria presented in Chapter II, this table shows that too little use is made of annual reports and simplified budgetary statements. Information on school costs expressed in simple terms and emphasizing the values that accrue to the child does not receive sufficient publicity, nor does the educational philosophy of the schools. Publicity on these items is, according to the criteria, a valuable part of the public-relations program. Publicity on factual information in order to guard the schools against misrepresentation receives considerable use among the schools included in this study. A pictorial representation of how money is spent is given publicity by one school; articles on current projects, by one; open meetings of the board, by one; special reports on special funds, by one; and memberships in professional organizations, by one.

Table 9 shows certain general practices involved in formulating a sound program of public relations. An analysis
of this table according to the recommended practices from Chapter II shows that in most school systems the school personnel is widely represented in community organizations, with eighty-six per cent of the schools indicating this practice.

**TABLE 9**

GENERAL, STATED PROCEDURES IN DEVELOPING PUBLIC-RELATIONS PROGRAMS EMPLOYED BY ONE HUNDRED TEXAS PUBLIC-SCHOOL SYSTEMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Procedure</th>
<th>Number of Schools Using This Procedure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The presenting of radio broadcasts directly as well as having transcriptions available for use at any time for bringing school news before community groups</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The forming of speakers' bureaus with the names of students and faculty members and the subjects of their talks being distributed to social and civic groups</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The showing of motion pictures of the school in action or of some special phase of the educational program</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The school's personnel being widely represented in community organizations and groups that are connected with the improvement of social living</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The inviting of committees from civic organizations to become acquainted with the practices and achievements of the school and to offer constructive criticisms</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Schools Using This Procedure</td>
<td>Procedure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>The cooperating with civic organizations in the annual official program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>arranged for American Education Week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>The organizing of listeners' groups of patrons for educational radio talks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>sponsored by the National Education Association and other educational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>The providing of attractive posters and window displays in public places</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>depicting the activities of the school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>The providing of information on every phase of the school work for the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>members of the school board and furnishing them copies of professional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>magazines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>The organizing of lay advisory committees that work with school officials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>in the development of the educational program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77</td>
<td>The giving of consistent support to the work of the parent-teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>associations and similar groups promoting co-operation between the home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and the school, being sure that some of their meetings are designed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>primarily for the interpreting of instructional policies and procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77</td>
<td>The cultivating of the interest of parents by providing a quality of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>instruction that will merit their respect and by following policies that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>will develop the good will of the public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>The developing of a new type of report card designed to give more helpful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>information to the child and parent by interpreting the educative program</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 9 -- Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Procedure</th>
<th>Number of Schools Using This Procedure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Others listed by those answering:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panel discussions with parents</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talks at church meetings</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A further analysis of this table reveals that in seventy-seven per cent of the schools consistent support is given the parent-teacher organization, and in seventy-seven per cent, the superintendents have indicated that the quality of instruction being offered merits the respect of the patrons of the school. The use of these practices compares favorably with the recommendations of educational writers as presented in Chapter II.

Insufficient use is made of organized listeners' groups of patrons for educational radio talks sponsored by the National Education Association and other educational groups, with only thirteen per cent of the schools reporting the use of this activity. The forming of speakers' bureaus with the names of students and faculty members and the subjects of their talks being distributed to social and civic groups is used by only sixteen per cent of the schools responding. The organizing of lay advisory committees that work with school officials on the development of the educational program
is used by only twenty-eight per cent, and the showing of
motion pictures of the schools in action or of some special
phase of the educational program is used by only forty-three
per cent. The presenting of radio broadcasts directly as
well as having transcriptions available for use at any time
for bringing school news before community groups is reported
by only forty-nine per cent of the schools of this study; and
the developing of a new type of report card designed to give
more helpful information to the child and parent by inter-
preting the educative program, by only forty per cent. Pro-
viding information on every phase of the school work for the
members of the school board and furnishing them copies of
professional school magazines is practiced by only fifty-
two per cent. In sixty per cent of the schools civic or-
ganizations co-operate in the annual official program ar-
ranged for the observance of American Education Week; in
sixty per cent, attractive posters and window displays de-
picting the activities of the school are shown in public
places; and in sixty-six per cent, committees from civic
organizations are invited to become acquainted with the
practices and achievements of the school and to offer con-
structive criticisms. Panel discussions with parents and
talks by school personnel at church meetings are used by
only one school each. These practices are highly recommended
by educational writers in the field of public relations, but
the figures given show that too little use is made of these
practices among the schools included in this study.

Table 10 shows the use made of the school buildings in the public-relations programs of the schools considered in this study.

**TABLE 10**

**USE MADE OF THE SCHOOL BUILDINGS IN THE PUBLIC-RELATIONS PROGRAMS AS REPORTED BY ONE HUNDRED TEXAS PUBLIC-SCHOOL SYSTEMS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Procedure in the Use of School Buildings</th>
<th>Number of Schools Indicating Its Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The making of a community center of the school buildings by using them for the various adult meetings, social and recreational gatherings</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The providing of a well-rounded program of adult education through special classes in various fields of interest in the community</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The selecting of the janitors and other non-professional personnel from the point of view of their public-relations value and keeping them informed on school affairs and policies</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others listed by those answering:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. I. veterans' classes</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lunchroom provided for banquets of civic groups</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An analysis of Table 10 shows that widespread use is made of the school buildings for various adult meetings, social and recreational gatherings, with eighty-nine per cent
of the schools involved in this study reporting these activities. Very little use is made of adult-education classes as a means of school interpretation, with only twenty-seven per cent of the school systems studied making use of this practice. Only thirty-eight per cent of the school systems reported that janitors and other non-professional personnel are selected for their public-relations value. According to the criteria set forth in Chapter II, these factors are valuable additions to any school's public-relations program.

Table II presents an evaluation of the school systems' public-relations programs as evaluated by the superintendents of the systems. Their evaluation may be highly subjective, but because of the length of the questionnaire this method of obtaining the necessary information was used. A study of Table II reveals the greatest disagreement between the public-relations programs and the criteria set forth in Chapter II. Only twenty-nine per cent of the schools involved have reported that their public-relations program reaches everyone in the community; thirty-two per cent, that it uses every facility at hand; thirty-five per cent, that it has the proper amount of publicity with wide selectivity between the different methods of informing the public; sixteen per cent, that it is dramatic and forceful; twenty-five per cent, that it is inclusive; fourteen per cent, that it is unusual and vivid; forty-three per cent, that it is broad,
TABLE 11
AN EVALUATION OF THE PUBLIC-RELATIONS PROGRAM AS GIVEN BY THE SUPERINTENDENTS OF ONE HUNDRED TEXAS PUBLIC-SCHOOL SYSTEMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items Evaluated</th>
<th>Number of School Systems Indicating a Favorable Evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is continuous</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It reaches everyone in the community</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is understandable</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It has proper balance between all phases of school life</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is truthful and honest</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is interesting</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is dramatic and forceful</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is inclusive</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is broad, aggressive, and forward-looking</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is dignified but aggressive and full of life</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is unusual and vivid</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It enlists the active participation of all members of faculty, community, and administration</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It has the proper amount of publicity with wide selectivity between the different methods of informing the public</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It uses every facility at hand</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
aggressive, and full of life; forty-two per cent, that it has proper balance between all phases of school life; forty-eight per cent, that it enlists the active participation of all members of the faculty; and fifty-three per cent, that it is interesting.

A further analysis of this table shows that the practices employed compare favorably with the criteria on three points; namely, eighty-eight per cent report that their program is truthful and honest; seventy-nine per cent, that it is continuous; and seventy-one per cent, that it is understandable.

Table 12 indicates the ranking of the public-relations value of different departments of the school as rated by the superintendents of the responding schools. A complete response was not obtained, since only fifty-seven superintendents ranked their departments. Each department was counted every time it appeared in the questionnaires.

Table 12 shows that for the elementary school the five departments having the highest public-relations value are music, athletics, assemblies, art, and health. The five departments having the highest public-relations value in the junior high school are music, athletics, social studies, and speech or dramatics. The five departments having the highest public-relations value for the senior high school are athletics, music, vocational agriculture, home economics, and speech.
Table 12 shows the type of organization employed in their public-relations programs by the surveyed school systems. Some schools have a combination of more than one type of organization. This table shows the relative frequency of each type.

An analysis of Table 13 reveals that the majority of the school systems considered in this study place the responsibility of directing the public-relations program on the superintendent. In some cases the superintendent shares this responsibility with some other person or with a committee.
TABLE 13

TYPE OF ORGANIZATION FOR THE PUBLIC-RELATIONS PROGRAM
EMPLOYED BY THE SCHOOL SYSTEMS AS DERIVED FROM
ANSWERS GIVEN BY ONE HUNDRED TEXAS
PUBLIC-SCHOOL SYSTEMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Organization Employed</th>
<th>Number of Schools Employing This Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A news or publicity director who prepares and distributes all printed materials used by the school in its public-relations program</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The superintendent of schools who directs the public-relations program as one of his administrative duties</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some other person who is assigned the direction of the school-news service in addition to some other duties</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This service performed by:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant superintendent</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerk of the school board</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A committee of school officials and employees that handles the public-relations program</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characteristics of this committee:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This committee represents the various schools of the system</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This committee represents the administrative department, teaching staff, student body, and patrons</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This committee gives representation to the board of education</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 13 -- Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Organization Employed</th>
<th>Number of Schools Employing This Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This committee gives representation to the non-professional staff</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This committee focuses its attention on some definite need or problem of the school</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This committee has a steering committee or a small co-ordinating council under the direction of the superintendent</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This committee has regular meetings to give suggestions to the program</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

of school employees, but in seventy-four schools he is directly responsible for the public-relations program. Only eight systems employ a type of organization for public relations that makes use of a publicity director. In twenty-four of the systems some other person is assigned the responsibility for the public-relations program; in most cases this person works directly with the superintendent. In thirteen schools this person is a teacher; in five schools, the clerk of the school board; in four schools, the principal; and in two schools, an assistant superintendent.

Table 13 also shows that in twenty schools a type of organization is employed which makes use of a committee of school officials. In most cases it was indicated that this
committee is directly responsible for the public-relations program; in a few cases the committee works with the superintendent, who is directly responsible for the program. This committee represents the various schools of the system in seventeen school systems; the administrative department, teaching staff, student body, and patrons in fourteen; the board of education in ten; and the non-professional staff in eight. In thirteen of the schools studied this committee focuses its attention on some definite school need or problem. This larger committee has as a steering committee a small co-ordinating council under the direction of the superintendent in ten schools. In nine schools this committee has regular meetings to give suggestions to the program. Table 13 reveals that little use is made of the type of organization for public relations that employs a committee of school officials and employees, which is, according to the recommended criteria, the most democratic and most effective method of interpreting the school to the community.
CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

On the basis of the data presented in this study, the following summarizations are presented regarding the public-relations programs of the one hundred Texas public-school systems studied:

1. Widespread use is made of school newspapers and annuals having information suitable for home use, while bulletins, folders, handbooks, form letters, and news letters are overlooked, comparatively speaking, as a means of fostering public relations.

2. In their school-community interpretation more than three-fourths of the schools are making use of exhibits of classwork, open-house programs, vitalized commencement programs, and assembly programs to which parents and patrons are invited.

3. The instruction of the pupils of the school with reference to the purposes, the scope, and the achievements of the school system through assemblies, home rooms, and classrooms is used widely in the interpretation program.

4. Almost no use is made of the Children's Charter
(National Education Association) as a device for interpreting the needs of childhood and the school.

5. Good use is made of school assemblies and musical organizations for entertaining the public and indirectly interpreting the school program. Little use is made of student debates on vital school problems.

6. Newspaper publicity is used widely for athletics, the presentation of a picture of school life, special events and celebrations, and the provisions for the general welfare of the child. Little publicity is given student contests other than athletics, successes of the graduates of the schools, conditions under which instruction is taking place, personality and biographical sketches of the teachers, the human-interest side of student relationships, and professional teaching practices and successes of the teachers.

7. Administrative articles providing factual information to guard the school against misrepresentation receive fair use. Too little use is made of articles on simplified budgetary statements, annual reports, educational philosophy of the school, and school costs expressed in simple terms and emphasizing the values that accrue to the child.

8. Insufficient use is made of:

   a. Organized listeners' groups of patrons for educational talks sponsored by the National Education Association and other educational groups.
b. Speakers' bureaus with the names of students and faculty members and the subjects of their talks being distributed to social and civic groups.

c. Lay advisory committees that work with school officials on the development of the educational program.

d. Motion pictures of the schools in action or of some special phase of the educational program.

e. Direct radio broadcasts as well as transcriptions available for use at any time for bringing school news before community groups.

f. A new type of report card designed to give more helpful information to the child and parent by interpreting the educative program.

g. The provision of information on every phase of school work and copies of professional magazines for members of the board of education.

9. Moderate use is made of:

   a. Civic organizations co-operating in the annual official program arranged for American Education Week.
b. Attractive window displays depicting the activities of the school.

c. Committees from civic organizations invited to become acquainted with the practices and achievements of the school and to offer constructive criticisms.

10. Widespread use is made of:
   a. School personnel being widely represented in community organizations.
   b. Consistent support being given the parent-teacher organization.
   c. A quality of instruction being offered that merits the respect of the patrons of the school.

11. Widespread use is made of the school buildings for various adult meetings, social and recreational gatherings. Practically no use is made of adult-education classes as a means of school interpretation; neither are the non-professional personnel selected for their public-relations value.

12. Some of the greatest weaknesses of the public-relations programs as revealed by this study are:
   a. Do not reach everyone in the community.
   b. Do not use every facility at hand.
   c. Do not use wide selectivity among the different methods of informing the public.
   d. Are not dramatic and forceful.
e. Are not inclusive.

f. Are not unusual and vivid.

g. Are not broad, aggressive, and full of life.

h. Do not have proper balance among all phases of school life.

i. Do not enlist the active participation of all members of the faculty.

j. Are not interesting.

13. Some of the strongest points of the public-relations programs as revealed by this study are:

   a. Are truthful and honest.

   b. Are continuous.

   c. Are understandable.

14. In a large majority of the schools the superintendent is responsible for directing the public-relations program. Practically no use is made of a type of organization that employs a public-relations director. Little use is made of a type of organization centering around a committee of school officials and employees to handle the public-relations program.

Conclusions

In so far as these one hundred schools included in this study are representative, the following conclusions concerning the public-relations programs of the Texas public-school systems may be drawn:
1. Without exception, every school system studied employs some type of public-relations program.

2. The superintendents have evaluated their own public-relations programs for this study. It is evident that they recognize their own limitations and weaknesses.

3. A comparison of the public-relations practices that are in substantial agreement with the criteria of a sound program and those that are not would indicate that, although there are many points of agreement, there are more points which do not agree.

4. On the whole, the public-relations programs of the one hundred schools studied are ineffective.

5. The superintendents of schools direct the public-relations programs as one of their administrative duties in the majority of the school systems studied.

6. Very few schools employ a representative committee of professional and non-professional school employees, students, and patrons to direct the public-relations programs.

Recommendations

On the basis of the data presented and the conclusions drawn from them, the following recommendations are made:

1. It is recommended that bulletins, folders, handbooks, form letters, and news letters containing suitable information about the school be used more extensively as one part of the public-relations program.
2. It is recommended that the Children's Charter of the National Education Association be used more extensively in the classroom and that discussions be held with the students and parents on the items of this charter as one means of interpreting the needs of the school and of childhood.

3. It is recommended that student debates on vital school problems be considered as one means of interpreting these problems to the parents and patrons of the school.

4. It is recommended that more attention be given to general news coverage on features of the school system, such as:
   a. Student contests other than athletics.
   b. Successes of graduates of the school.
   c. Conditions under which instruction is taking place.
   d. Personality and biographical sketches of the teachers.
   e. The human-interest side of student relationships.
   f. The professional teaching practices and successes of the teachers.

5. It is recommended that more use be made of administrative articles prepared for the newspapers, in particular:
   a. Articles on the educational philosophy of the schools.
b. Interesting articles, pictorial or otherwise, based on the annual report of the superintendent.

c. Similar articles on simplified budgetary statements.

d. Informational articles on school costs expressed in simple terms and emphasizing the values that accrue to the child.

6. It is recommended that greater effort be made to make more use of certain general public-relations practices, such as:

   a. The organizing of listeners' groups of patrons for educational talks sponsored by the National Education Association and other educational groups.

   b. The forming of speakers' bureaus with the names of students and faculty members and the subjects of their talks being distributed to social and civic groups.

   c. The organizing of lay advisory committees that work with school officials on the development of the educational program.

   d. The showing of motion pictures of the schools in action or of some special phase of the educational program.
e. The presenting of radio broadcasts directly as well as having transcriptions available for use at any time for bringing school news before community groups.

f. The developing of a new type of report card designed to give more helpful information to the child and parent by interpreting the educational program.

g. The practice of providing information on every phase of the school work for the members of the board of education and providing them with copies of professional magazines.

h. The practice of having civic organizations co-operating in the annual official program arranged for American Education Week.

i. The providing of attractive window displays depicting the activities of the school.

j. The inviting of committees from civic organizations to become acquainted with the practices and achievements of the school and to offer constructive criticisms.

7. It is recommended that a well-rounded program of adult education through special classes in various fields of interest in the community be considered by the school system as one phase of its public-relations program.
8. It is recommended that the janitors and other non-professional personnel be selected from the point of view of their public-relations value and that they be informed on school affairs and policies. They often reach a segment of the community not contacted by other means.

9. It is recommended that more effort be expanded to create a public-relations program that will:
   a. Reach everyone in the community.
   b. Use every facility at hand.
   c. Use wide selectivity among the different methods of informing the public.
   d. Be dramatic and forceful.
   e. Be inclusive.
   f. Be unusual and vivid.
   g. Be broad, aggressive, and full of life.
   h. Have proper balance among all phases of school life.
   i. Be interesting.

10. It is recommended that the public-relations program be directed by a committee of school officials and employees rather than by the superintendent. The problem of public relations is too large to be handled entirely by one individual, as was the case in seventy-four per cent of the school systems considered in this study.
APPENDIX

A SURVEY OF PUBLIC-RELATIONS PRACTICES FOLLOWED IN
TEXAS SCHOOLS

QUESTIONNAIRE

I.

Describe your school system's public-relations program by placing a check mark in the blanks indicated to the left of those practices being employed by your school system:

1. The publishing of student publications having information suitable for home use, such as:
   _____ a. School newspapers.
   _____ b. School magazines.
   _____ c. School annuals or yearbooks.
   _____ d. List others: __________________________

2. The offering of special events and observances to which parents and patrons are invited, such as:
   _____ a. Exhibits of classwork.
   _____ b. Open-house programs.
   _____ c. Vitalized commencement programs.
   _____ d. Assembly programs.
   _____ e. List others: __________________________
3. The instructing of pupils with reference to the purposes, the scope, and the achievements of the school system:

   a. Through assemblies.
   b. Through the use of home rooms.
   c. Through classroom work.
   d. By the superintendent, principals, teachers. (Underline correct title.)

4. The placing in each classroom of a copy of the Children's Charter (N. E. A.) and emphasizing the items in the charter through discussions:

   a. With parents.
   b. With students.
   c. By teachers, principals. (Underline correct title.)

5. The providing of entertainment for community groups through student activities, such as:

   a. Club program presentations.
   b. Debates on vital school problems.
   c. Musical organizations.
   d. List others: __________________________

II.

Check the following public-relations practices employed by your school system:

1. Newspaper publicity, including straight news coverage and feature stories which give a balanced picture of:

   a. School life.
   b. The conditions under which instruction is taking place.
c. The provisions for the general welfare of the children.

d. Athletic events.

e. Student contests other than athletics.

f. Special events and celebrations.

g. The human-interest side of student relationships.

h. The successes of the graduates of the school.

i. The professional teaching practices and successes of the teachers.

j. Personality or biographical sketches of the teachers.

k. List other publicity of this nature:

2. Administrative articles are prepared for the newspapers in the form of:

a. Annual reports.

b. Simplified budgetary statements.

c. Information on school costs expressed in simple terms that emphasize the values that accrue to the child.

d. Factual information in order to guard the school against misrepresentation and unfair attacks by hostile critics.

e. Educational philosophy of the schools.

f. List others:
Further describe your school system's public-relations program by placing a check mark in the blanks to the left of these practices being employed by the school:

1. The presenting of radio broadcasts directly as well as having transcriptions available for use at any time for bringing school news before community groups.

2. The forming of speakers' bureaus with the names of students and faculty members and the subjects of their talks being distributed to social and civic groups.

3. The showing of motion pictures of the school in action or of some special phase of the educational program.

4. The school personnel being represented widely in community organizations and groups that are connected with the improvement of social living.

5. The inviting of committees from civic organizations to become acquainted with the practices and achievements of the school and to offer constructive criticisms.

6. The cooperating with civic organizations in the annual official program arranged for American Education Week.

7. The organizing of listeners' groups of patrons for educational radio talks sponsored by N. E. A. and other educational groups.

8. The providing of attractive posters and window displays in public places depicting the activities of the school.

9. The providing of information on every phase of the school work for the school board and furnishing them copies of professional school magazines.
10. The organizing of lay advisory committees that work with school officials on the development of the educational program.

11. The giving of consistent support to the work of the parent-teacher associations and similar groups promoting co-operation between the home and the school, being sure that some of their meetings are designed primarily for the interpreting of instructional policies and procedures.

12. The cultivating of the interest of parents by providing a quality of instruction that will merit their respect and by following policies that will develop the good will of the public.

13. The developing of a new type of report card designed to give more helpful information to the child and parent by interpreting the educative program.

14. List other practices of this type being used by your school: ______________________________________

IV.

Place a check mark by the following practices being employed by your school:

1. The making of the school buildings the community center by using them for the various adult meetings, social and recreational gatherings.

2. The providing of well-rounded program of adult education through special classes in various fields of interest in the community.

3. The selecting of the janitors and other non-professional personnel from the point of view of their public-relations value and keeping them informed on school affairs and policies.
4. List other uses of the school plant in your public-relations program:

V.

Evaluate your public-relations program by checking the descriptive terms which describe your school system's program of public relations:

1. It is continuous.
2. It reaches everyone in the community.
3. It is understandable.
4. It has proper balance among all phases of school life.
5. It is truthful and honest.
6. It is interesting.
7. It is inclusive.
8. It is broad, aggressive, and forward-looking.
9. It is dramatic and forceful.
10. It is dignified but aggressive and full of life.
11. It is unusual and vivid.
12. It enlists the active participation of all members of the faculty, community, and administration.
13. It has the proper amount of publicity with wide selectivity among the different methods of informing the public.
14. It uses every facility at hand.
VI.

List below under the proper headings the five highest departments in each of your schools in their order of public-relations value:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elementary Schools</th>
<th>Junior High Schools</th>
<th>Senior High Schools</th>
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VIII.

Check the type of organization which most closely describes the organization of your public-relations program:

___ 1. A news or publicity director whose duties consist of the preparation and distribution of all printed material used by the school in its public-relations program.

___ 2. The superintendent of schools directs the public-relations program as one of his administrative duties.

___ 3. Some other person is assigned the direction of the school-news service in addition to other duties. If so, underline the title of this person: assistant superintendent, supervisor, clerk of the school board, principal, teacher.

___ 4. A committee of school officials and employees handles the public-relations program. If so, check the items which are true of this committee:

___ a. This committee represents the various schools of the system.
b. This committee represents the administrative department, teaching staff, student body, and patrons of the school. (Mark out the ones that do not apply.)

c. This committee gives representation to the board of education.

d. This committee gives representation to the non-professional staff.

e. This committee focuses its attention on some definite need or problem of the school.

f. This committee has as a steering committee a small co-ordinating council under the direction of the superintendent.

g. This committee has regular meetings to give suggestions to the program.
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