AN EVALUATION OF THE BIG SPRING, TEXAS,
ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

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ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

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By

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Modern educators accept the fact that the elementary schools are continually changing in many respects to help cope with the problems that face the children who are living and will continue to live in a democratic society. These changes, if they are to be in the right direction, should be carefully and systematically analyzed for all helpful or discouraging results.

Statement of Problem

The problem of study is a critical evaluation of the Big Spring, Texas, Elementary Schools using The Handbook for Self-appraisal and Improvement of Elementary Schools published in September, 1945, under the direction of Edger Ellen Wilson, Director of Elementary Education in Texas. The parts in this evaluation under consideration are the children, the teacher, and the program of school life, eliminating the other headings under which a school may be placed.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to make an evaluation of the existing practices carried on in the Big Spring Public
Schools in the hope that growth toward definite, attainable ends might be realized. This was done in the belief that it could prove useful to the classroom teachers as well as to the administrators and those citizens vitally interested in the schools.

Procedure and Treatment of Data

The Texas State Department of Education has taken representative samplings of all existing types of schools in Texas and made a standard by which schools may be critically analyzed. This standard is a handbook published in the form of levels of attainment, and a school which attained the qualifications of a particular level was to be rated as having reached that achievement. Five levels were derived with the fifth or last level supposedly the better. Using this means of measurement as a guide, an attempt was made to evaluate the Big Spring Elementary Schools in the light of the standards set up in the handbook by the State Department of Education. Using these data, recommendations were offered in the belief that they would be enlightening and helpful to all concerned -- both the classroom teachers and the administrators.

Sources of Data

Magazine articles as well as recent books were consulted to contribute a background of understanding concerning
the modern trends of education. Data and information concerning the teachers as to certification, sick leave, and teacher-pupil ratio were obtained through the office of the Director of Elementary Education. The elementary school children and teachers supplied the chief sources of data.

Plan of Organization

Chapter I sets forth an introduction to the study, in the form of the presentation of the problem, the purpose of the study, the procedure, the sources of data, the plan of organization, the limitations, and treatment of the data. In Chapter II are set forth the findings, or the comparisons, of the elementary schools with the standards contained in the evaluative handbook. Conclusions and recommendations are to be found in Chapter III. The conclusions were reached through a thorough study of the problem, and the list of recommendations was given by the writer in the light of data obtained.

Limitations

Using the Big Spring Elementary Schools only, this study was limited to an evaluation of the first three areas discussed in the handbook -- the children, the teacher, and the program of school life. However, these items were thought of in the light of the entire school plant and its relationships wherever they may exist.
CHAPTER II

AN EVALUATION OF THE BIG SPRING
ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

The Children and School Practices

A singular motive prevailed in the preparation of the handbook -- the improvement of the elementary schools. Since educational improvement was the over-all purpose of this study, each character and function of the school was analyzed in respect to other existing practices.

Census

Conceptions of the purposes and functions of census taking. -- Census taking was two-fold: first, to establish the district's eligibility for state per capita apportionment; and second, to check enrollment at the beginning of a school year.

Method of taking census. -- The school board upon recommendation of the superintendent set aside two afternoons in March to take the census. The forms prescribed by law and provided by the State Department of Education were used. The enumeration was checked against the enumeration of the previous year and the school enrollment of the current year.
The district was divided into zones and the teachers were assigned the job of census enumeration by zones. The census records consist of an alphabetical card file with a card for each child. The accuracy of the census is maintained by reports from schools on admissions, changes of address, transfers, and withdrawals.

**Relationship between census and enrollment.** -- All children whose names appear on the census rolls were in attendance in the school unless legally exempt for the following reasons: (1) enrollment in a private or parochial school, (2) physical or mental incompetency, (3) distance of more than two and one-half miles from school, or (4) satisfactory completion, by a child more than twelve years of age, of the work of the seventh grade, provided his services are needed at home.

**Regularity of attendance.** -- The average daily attendance was from ninety per cent to ninety-five per cent of the total enrollment. This excluded those who are prevented from attending school by legally justifiable causes for non-attendance.

**Continuity of attendance.** -- Every child attended school throughout the entire school term. This attendance was characterized by a policy which (1) sets 180 days per year as the minimum attendance goal for each child enrolled and (2) encourages regular attendance by every child in membership throughout a school term of nine months.
Recording of attendance. -- Daily attendance of each child was recorded by home-room teachers in their daily registers provided by the state for this purpose. In the daily register, after each child's name was placed the symbol "E" for the day of entry, "R" for the day of re-entry, "W" for the day of withdrawal, "A" for days absent, and "T" for days tardy. A monthly attendance summary was recorded by each home-room teacher in the back of the daily register, at the end of each school month. The principal made a record of each pupil absent each day and filed it away for quick and easy reference. In addition, each child's attendance record was placed on individual cumulative record cards in the office of the principal. These records contained spaces for recording the attendance of each child for every year of his school life.

Reporting of attendance. -- Each of the home-room teachers transferred at the end of the school month the monthly attendance summary record at the back of her daily register to a monthly attendance summary blank furnished by the principal. This blank, when properly filled out, was handed to the principal, who in turn, made a summary of all teachers' reports and sent it to the superintendent.

Each pupil's attendance was regularly reported to parents on the six-weeks' report card. On this card was recorded (1) the number of days present, (2) the number of
days absent, and (3) the number of times tardy. In serious cases of non-attendance, additional effort was made by school authorities to inform parents by telephone or by personal conference.

**Enforcing compulsory attendance.** -- Excuses for absence were required of all pupils. These excuses must be in writing and signed by parent or guardian. Excuses were accepted only if they contained the following justifiable reasons for absence: (1) personal sickness, (2) sickness or death in the child's family, (3) quarantine, (4) damages and dangers resulting from storms, and (5) unusual causes acceptable to school authorities. In the case of a communicable disease, a written release from the doctor was required.

**Classification and Promotion of Pupils**

**Composition of groups.** -- Except for admission to the first grade, class groups were formed almost wholly on the basis of achievement in subject matter as determined by teachers' subjective judgments, and marks on factual material in informal tests and examinations. Standardized tests were given occasionally to supplement teachers' informal judgment. On the basis of their achievement, pupils were promoted or retarded at regular intervals.

The age range for each grade was kept within definite limits; for example, in the first grade the age range was kept between six and eight years and for the sixth grade,
between ten and thirteen years. Over-age children in the upper elementary grades were promoted to the secondary school regardless of academic attainments, and the secondary school made reasonably satisfactory provisions for all of these pupils.

Teachers at all grade levels were provided with differentiated instructional materials to enable them to meet the varying needs of the pupils. Individual cases were shifted from one grade to another at any time during the year if it seemed clear that the child's best interests were served by such a change.

The philosophy of the elementary school definitely tends toward optimum development for each child in accordance with his ability during the time he spends in the elementary school, and when he reaches the age of thirteen or fourteen, to send him on so that he will have the advantage of the secondary school which will be more suited to his adolescent needs.

**Number of classes or grades per room or per teacher.** Only one class or grade was taught in the same room; no class or room had fewer than fifteen pupils, while some rooms or classes had forty-four to the room. This was true in only a few of the schools. The majority of teachers had thirty-five pupils or less; however, there was a definite crowded situation existing throughout the entire school
system. The citizens voted during March a $200,000 bond issue for repair and building of new classrooms, which should eliminate the crowded conditions to some extent. The elementary schools were also plagued with the half-day session problem which the new classrooms will help to solve.

Reports to parents. -- Pupils were regularly handed report cards every six weeks containing letters of the alphabet as estimates of achievement. These cards were taken to parents and observed and signed by them, and if necessary, school authorities held conferences with parents of children who were not well adjusted to school life. These cards also contained character traits which were checked regularly. Attempts were made to discover reasons for and ways of improving low marks, and ways of improving pupils' adjustments to school life.

Elementary school-high school relations. -- The elementary school and the high school used the same method of recording permanent records. These cumulative cards contained records of achievement, teacher estimations of character and behavior, attendance, health, and results of intelligence tests from the first through the eighth grade. Placed on file in the high school office, these cards served as a basis for classification in high school and guided the pupils throughout their high school careers. The courses in the first year of high school were partly determined by the choices, abilities, and needs of the eighth-grade pupils as
determined by the results obtained from achievement and intelligence tests, teachers' judgments, and educational and vocational interests of the pupils.

Elementary schools and high schools operated under unified or co-ordinated philosophy and purposes of education in which classification and promotion practices in both divisions were in harmony with the accepted philosophy and purposes. Courses of study and teaching procedures were planned and applied on a co-ordinated twelve-grade basis, thus reducing to a minimum the problems of articulating the elementary and the secondary schools.

Meeting Special Needs of Children

Instructional problems. -- Informal efforts were made to adjust assignments and achievement standards to the varying abilities of pupils. Some instructional materials of different levels of difficulty were available for at least some of the subjects in each grade. For certain types of activities classes were divided into sub-groups with differentiated assignments. Less capable pupils were given special help during school hours; while superior pupils were given guidance in studying more difficult phases of various topics and in exploring special interests.

Surveying the talents and achievements of children. -- Teacher observation and informal tests were supplemented with achievement and diagnostic tests of the informational
type at various times during the year. Tests of various kinds were given primarily for the purpose of guiding instruction. Readiness inventories were given entering first-grade pupils. The chief motive behind the testing program was to adapt instruction to individual differences and to guide the efforts of the teachers. The measurement program was comprehensive in scope so as to reveal all types of information necessary to serve the individual needs of each pupil and to give comprehensive, cumulative development data for each child. The emphasis in the measurement program has shifted from evaluating pupils to providing data for the guidance of instruction and for evaluating the school program and community services for children to ascertain the extent to which children's needs (broadly conceived) were being met and to ascertain the degree to which the school program was effective in guiding children's development in the direction of the accepted purposes of education.

Meeting the needs of exceptional children. -- Corrective measures were provided for children who were hard of hearing and who had low vision. The local civic clubs helped, as in other communities, by providing funds for these corrective measures when the parents of the child were unable to do so. Teachers planned activities to provide full participation of the handicapped without letting the children know this was being done. Parents of blind or deaf-mute
children were urged to send them to special schools. Gifted children were provided a great number of books to read, extra work to do in their interest, and sometimes were allowed to assist the other children with their work. Special assistance was given the dull child in helping him to find his interests and the things he could do best.

Making case studies of individuals. -- There was a great need for teachers trained in the techniques of case study. Individual records of children were conveniently available to all teachers for conferences with and study of children. Some of the teachers visited the children in their homes, while all parents and guardians were urged to visit the school for conferences with the teachers about their children's progress and to observe their children's activities in school.

Provisions for Health and Safety

Health practices in daily program. -- The daily program of health practices consisted of (1) morning observation of the children for good health, ill health, and communicable diseases; (2) hand-washing before eating, after going to the toilet, and at any other time needed; (3) adjusting seating arrangements for those who have weakness of sight and hearing; (4) having recess periods for recreation; (5) attending to the personal needs of the children when necessary; and (6) providing a welfare lunch fund for indigent children.
Communicable diseases. -- According to the state health law, children with contagious diseases were excluded from school and readmitted by certificate only. The communicable disease list included measles, mumps, whooping cough, German measles, chicken-pox, scabies, impetigo, and fagus.

Toilet, hand-washing, drinking, and bathing facilities. -- Each school was provided with (1) a clean, odorless indoor toilet for each sex, (2) a bubbler drinking fountain sufficient for the number of pupils, and (3) a clean lavatory for each sex equipped with running water and a continuous sufficient supply of paper towels.

Staff personnel. -- A teacher with specific training in health and physical education was placed in each building. This teacher's efforts were guided and supplemented by specialists in the various phases of health work. The efforts of the school were well co-ordinated with the official public health agency.

Pupil transportation by bus. -- Since travel to and from school was in some cases by a school-owned bus, a sign of greater proportions than six inches in height was attached to the front and rear and to each side of the bus showing the words "School Bus." Each bus was glassed in at the sides and rear to protect the children, and was at all times equipped with efficient lights and brakes. The buses used were of the best type and were given expert care and upkeep.
The driver of the bus in each instance was at least twenty-one years of age, a reputable citizen, and bonded for not less than two thousand dollars, payable to the district, and served on condition of faithful and careful discharge of duties for the protection of pupils under his charge and the faithful performance of his contract with the school board.

Traffic safety. -- There was definite supervision of all children as they got on and off the bus, and while they were awaiting the arrival of the bus, if they had to wait. Also, there was supervision of the children on the bus to and from school, and all non-compliance with the regulations was reported to the proper authorities, usually the principal.

Playground safety practices. -- A first-aid kit was provided in the principal's office for emergencies. Teachers supervised the recess and noon play periods. During the recess periods each teacher was outside with her respective group. This group was comprised of children with like needs and interests, and a teacher with similar interests was selected by the principal to be in charge. In this way all boys and girls desiring certain phases of athletics were placed together. At noon only two teachers were outside, more in the line of police duty. Very little instruction was given at this time, because so many of the children went
home for lunch and the time of their return to the campus could not be determined. Fire drills and fire-prevention lessons required by the state were followed. Co-operation between public safety officials and school practices was evidenced by junior police stationed at various traffic intersections surrounding the school ground. Junior Red Cross work was carried on under the supervision of the local Red Cross Chapter. Doctors' advice was carefully followed when given in respect to the playground instruction concerning a particular child. However, this child played an important role in the playground situation. Even though he might not be permitted to participate in strenuous activities, he was umpire or the assistant to the instructor. Children were reminded continually to exercise carefulness in regard to self, other pupils, and the use of equipment on the playgrounds. Each child was motivated so that through his efforts he would supervise his own conduct.

School improvement practices. -- There were none listed in this particular topic that fitted into the situation as it existed at the time, for the children did not help in school improvements of any kind. The schools, however, provided a means of getting community information to the parents.

Health features of the school plant. -- The building met minimum requirements of the state law. Window openings
were not lower than 3.5 feet from the floor and within six inches of the ceiling with no part of the classroom a greater distance from the window than twice the height of the top of the window above the floor. The main light came from the left of the pupils as they sat at their desks. Each room was equipped with an automatic temperature regulator and was ventilated so that thirty cubic feet per minute of fresh air was provided for each pupil with no pupil situated in a disagreeable draft. The building was fireproof with light, soft-colored walls. Over the windows were light, translucent, adjustable shades (regularly adjusted). The building was two stories high with two widely separated flights of stairs, full-width tread, with a rail on one side and with a landing not less than four feet wide. All outside doors opened outward. All interior woodwork was without unnecessary flocking or carving to catch dust. All floors had their surfaces made impervious to water and germs by a coat of boiling paraffin oil or other floor dressing having a similar effect. Since the building was two stories high, it was provided with one fire escape.

Welfare Services

Food. -- A cafeteria was operated in the school upon a commercial basis for children who could pay for their lunches. A wide variety of drinks, candy, and food was available for children to choose from. Children who brought
their lunches to school were assigned a definite place to eat with a teacher as hostess. Standards of sanitation in food handling as prescribed by the State Department of Health and those prescribed by law were met. The people who worked in the lunchroom had some experience in the preparation and serving of food to groups of children. Those who supervised and planned the menus had training and experience in providing for the nutritional needs of children. The lunchroom was used as a laboratory for teaching such topics as the practice of personal hygiene, food habits, table manners, and social graces.

**Clothing.** -- There was no provision for the investigation and distribution of clothing through the schools. However, when this situation did arise, it was transferred to the proper local authorities or organizations for consideration. The schools did help to supply the needed information concerning the child when it became desirable to know such data as the school could supply.

**Medical and dental care.** -- First-aid materials were available, and at least one teacher in every building had training in first aid. Most children were given medical and dental examinations by qualified physicians and dentists when they first entered school, and at least once every three years thereafter during their school career. In the year 1947-1948 free dental examinations were given to all
the children by a licensed dentist. The tuberculin test was also given free of charge to all children desiring it.

**Housing needs of children.** -- Most houses were well kept. Good lights were provided in most homes along with modern conveniences. A good many homes had adequate space to take care of normal gatherings. Some attention was given to the matter of providing privacy for the individual members of the family. In general, the needs of the children for adequate and wholesome playground facilities were not recognized by the community as a whole. However, some of the local civic organizations had realized this need, and gains were being made in this direction.

Figures 1 and 2 tell in numerical ratings the various levels in which the following were placed: census, attendance, classification and promotion, meeting special needs, provisions for health and safety, and welfare services. The average score (the one shown on each figure) was found by first determining the level in which each practice would fall; adding these levels together (for a school may be represented according to a practice by more than one level); and dividing by the number of all the levels, which was five.

The same idea as in Figure 1 is expressed in Figure 2, only in a different form. The same averages obtained for Figure 1 were used.
Fig. 1. -- Evaluation of school practices related to the pupils enrolled at the elementary level in the Big Spring Public Schools.
Fig. 2. -- Graphic comparison of school practices related to the pupils enrolled at the elementary level in the Big Spring Public Schools.
The Teacher

Preparation

Of the eighty-seven teachers in the elementary schools, only twelve did not have Bachelor's degrees; some of these had as little as one year of college work. Two teachers had only three hours in elementary education while fourteen teachers possessed less than twelve hours in this field. Of the eighty-seven regular teachers, twenty-four held permanent elementary certificates; fourteen had first-class elementary certificates; four had first-class high school certificates; three had state permanent certificates; and one held a second-class elementary certificate.

Tenure

During the year of 1948-1949 there was no school board policy on tenure. This holds to the old idea of employing teachers on a one-year contract basis.

Professional Interest and Growth

The teachers held membership in local, state, and national education associations. They were represented one hundred per cent in the Texas State Teachers Association; over ninety per cent in the Classroom Teachers Organization; and over fifty-five per cent in the National Education Association. The principals and supervisors were registered one hundred per cent in the Texas Elementary Principals and
Supervisors Association. Each teacher spent at least three
days this past year observing a good teacher at work. The
teachers attended at least three professional meetings. One
of these meetings was the district meeting of the state or-
ganization which was attended one hundred per cent. This
meeting was held in Lubbock, Texas, with laymen taking a
part on the program. Occasional research problems were
carried on during the school year. During this past year,
1948-1949, the curriculum was studied, offering in-service
training to the teachers. The present board of trustees
formulated and printed a booklet containing the policies
and regulations of the school board in connection with the
community, administrators, and teachers. This was studied
and discussed by various school groups, as were also the
Gilmer-Aiken proposals being considered by the Texas Legisla-
ture. Professional and non-professional books and magazines
were read and discussed among the teachers. The National
Education Association Journal proved quite popular and help-
ful this year to the teachers along with the Texas edition
of The Texas Outlook. There was evidence of yearly growth
in service among the teachers. All teachers were members
of a parent-teacher association, and many held offices in
the local branches. A close tie of co-operation was evi-
denced.
Personal Attributes

In some measure the teachers possessed (1) love and enthusiasm for children and teaching, (2) good moral character, (3) emotional stability, (4) professional ethics, (5) community interest and leadership, (6) dependability, (7) acceptance of responsibility, (8) personal appearance (neat, attractive, refined), (9) well-modulated voice, (10) sound physical health, (11) democratic ideals, (12) versatility, and (13) counseling ability.

Salary

The legal salary was in accordance with the Rural Aid Law, the minimum being $2,000 a year. There were increments added as the years of tenure increased. This was in accordance with regulations set up by the legislature.

Sick Leave

The school board provided for sick leave in the spring of 1948. The policy adopted contained (1) an approved substitute teacher to be paid by the school board at the rate of eight dollars a day, and (2) five days' accumulated sick leave, not to exceed twenty days. In cases of extended illnesses, there was also provided a ten-day period at half pay. This, however, was not cumulative, but was started anew this school year.
Teacher Load and Teacher-pupil Ratio

According to the handbook, the first level states that the teacher load should not exceed thirty-five pupils per teacher. However, this was not the case in Big Spring. West Ward, in particular, had one of the larger plants, but the half-day session was prevalent and the teacher load in some cases was as high as forty-four pupils per teacher.

Figures 3 and 4 took on the same characteristics as Figures 1 and 2. The same procedure was taken in finding the averages and relating the meaning. It can be readily seen that this unit had the lowest rating.

Each topic mentioned was depicted as follows: preparation, tenure, professional interest, personal attributes, salary, sick leave, and teacher load. These were discussed in relationship to the teacher.

Figure 4 illustrates the same material as Figure 3, but it is shown in a different form. The letters of the alphabet represent the subjects taken into consideration, and the levels refer to the levels of attainment achieved by the teachers.
Fig. 3. -- Evaluation of items related to the teachers in the elementary schools of Big Spring.
Fig. 4. -- Graphic comparison of items related to the teachers in the elementary schools of Big Spring.
The Program of School Life

Scope of the School Program

General. -- The school term of the year 1948-1949 of the Big Spring Public Schools was nine months in length. The school system is organized to include grades one through twelve inclusive.

Areas of instruction. -- Instruction was in (1) the English language, (2) agriculture, (3) arithmetic, (4) civil government, (5) composition, (6) English grammar, (7) geography, (8) kindness to animals, (9) penmanship, (10) physiology and hygiene (including effects of alcoholic stimulants and narcotics), (11) protection of birds and their nests and eggs, (12) patriotism, (13) reading in English, (14) spelling, (15) Texas history, and (16) United States history.

In level two music and art were taught in all of the grades and in level three there was an organized program of science instruction. Appropriate children's programs were given to commemorate legal holidays instead of dismissing school on any or all of those days.

Related activities. -- Special character education was emphasized. Safety instruction was frequently given and was practiced. There were special-interest clubs for pupils and an organized lunch program. The motion picture was used, but filmstrips seemed to be more practical and were used more frequently by the teachers. Open house was held in all of
the schools in the fall during National Education Week, and the teachers were asked to continue with the regular classroom routine, so the parents, if at all possible, could see the actual workings of their children's classrooms. Some of the schools had open house at night in the spring for the purpose of displaying the children's work. At times this occasion took on the form of a special program including perhaps a play and a musical program; at other times the procedure of a reception affair was followed. There was an adequate and well-functioning health and welfare service for the children. The elementary schools were organized on the home-room plan with the first through the seventh grades in a single building.

The nature of curriculum organization. -- Subjects were taught in isolation but with a definite correlation of activity units. They were also posed and correlated with other fields. This subject matter was set up in advance of a learning situation -- set up and organized by adults. However, units were based upon generalizations. Pupil cooperation was sought in setting up goals and in planning means for attaining these goals. Control was partially internal and partially external. Much emphasis was placed upon relationships within broad fields of subject matter and upon social use, while some stress was placed on functional meanings. Habits and skills were thought of as tools of learning and emphasis was placed upon them accordingly. Teaching
related to bodies of subject matter was emphasized as well as development of generalizations, and pupils were encouraged to participate in the planning within certain limits. There was uniformity of learning in regard to subject matter and individual development in the field of correlated activities. Building a creative individuality in each child was of prime importance.

**Arithmetic.** -- Arithmetic was correlated with the other areas of the curriculum. Its social and informational values were emphasized, and arithmetical facts and processes were made meaningful and practical to the child.

The teachers employed all the procedures listed in levels three and four. Children were given many opportunities to discover the facts and operations of arithmetic and to use them in practical situations. For example, third-grade children would calculate the cost of refreshments for a class party or sixth-grade pupils would compute the cost of trees and shrubs to beautify the school grounds.

Evaluation was treated as in levels three and four. Emphasis was placed upon the pupil's ability to utilize arithmetical concepts, facts, and processes in the social situations in which they were needed.

**Language arts.** -- The purpose of instruction in the language arts was to develop in the child the ability to speak, to read, and to write effectively in order that he
might engage in social communication. The teacher's guide stated such an approach to instruction. Reading, writing, spelling, and oral and written composition were correlated. Small purposeful units were utilized, such as letter writing or reporting to the group on a book which had been read and enjoyed.

Language, writing, spelling, and reading were correlated to some extent. Children were given some freedom and initiative in selecting the activities which they carried on. They could choose topics for written and oral composition. Differentiation was made in amount and type of work done by various children according to ability and interest. Language games were utilized. The building of meaningful concepts were stressed with beginning school children.

Reading and language were related in the instructional program. The importance of vocabulary building as a part of reading was recognized, particularly with beginning children. Children were encouraged to begin reading through the use of experience stories. Ability grouping was employed after tests of speed and comprehension had been administered. Some work-type and recreational reading was carried on. The school provided a few appropriate materials which were usually the beginning for room libraries. Home-room libraries were being built up in all of the rooms, for there was no space available for school libraries. The
teachers encouraged the checking out of books for recreational reading as well as informational reading. Pictures, charts, bulletin-board notices, filmstrips, picture shows, and other means of visual education were utilized as a part of instruction.

Some effort was made to parallel the literature with other subjects. Dramatization and memorization were occasionally related to material suitable for supplementary study in the other subjects.

In spelling, the plan proposed in the text was supplemented with words needed by the particular group of children and the procedure was adapted to the specific needs of the group. All papers were checked carefully for spelling errors. When games were played, the words written and included in the drills were largely the words misspelled in other subjects. Children were taught effective ways of studying spelling. In addition to other tests, paragraphs and stories were made to include the words studied.

Emphasis was placed on writing practice which meets needs in the other fields. From the beginning, useful and meaningful words and sentences were written. Needs of individual pupils, left-handed children, and others were handled so as not to present the development of unfavorable writing habits.

Social relations. -- Social studies were offered in all
of the grades. In the primary grades the subjects were fused into units dealing with home, school, and community. In the intermediate and upper grades history, geography, and civics were taught as separate subjects, but with much interrelationship secured between subjects. Within each of the subjects the work was organized into teaching units. The selection and sequence of units were based upon faculty agreements guided by local or state courses of study and such special needs as were peculiar to the local or the state courses of study and to the local community. The selection of units was not limited to topics treated in the state-adopted texts; rather, the adopted texts were used whenever their content was appropriate, but other sources were also utilized. The outline of units gave special attention to problems of inter-cultural relations, conservation of natural resources, thrift, preservation of foods, and problems of special concern in the local community. There was no awareness that school experiences other than classroom instruction had a bearing on the social-relations programs.

The more extensive curriculum planning was clearly reflected in methods of teaching. In the primary grades the units relating to home, school, and community were enriched with a variety of supplementary picture books, excursions, and construction activities. The social-studies units were
related to the instructional program in language arts and were utilized to develop interests and motivation for reading and language development. In the intermediate and upper grades the units in the separate subjects of history, geography, and civics were handled more nearly in accord with good unit techniques as evidenced by some pupil participation in determining purposes and procedures, use of the state-adopted texts as resource materials, and extensive use of supplementary books and other reference materials within the classroom and in the school library. Appropriate and timely use was made of maps, globes, slides, pictures, radio, and excursions, and a variety of pupil activities. Regular use was made of school library resources and pupils were instructed in the various library and reference work techniques. Attention was given to individual assignments, committee work, and guidance in the selection of books graded in difficulty to the level of pupils' reading ability and general development. Emphasis in teaching broadened to include careful attention to the development of concepts, understandings, and attitudes. The functional relationship between classroom instruction and self-directed, co-operative behavior in social and civic situations was only vaguely recognized.

Evaluation still consisted entirely of the giving of tests, but tests served the dual purpose of evaluating pupil
progress and as a teaching device. For example, through the use of pre-tests and end-tests on the material of the units, the teacher received guidance on which phases of a unit needed special emphasis and which pupils needed special help. Standardized objectives were evidenced in the growth of the individual pupils.

Science and health education. -- Health instruction was considered an integral part of the science program. The science program was planned in terms of units selected by the teacher.

Pupils participated in planning the problems to be solved and in suggesting means for solving these problems, such as reading from various sources, interviewing, experimenting, and so on. Slides and films were shown in the classroom when needed to supplement other types of learning activities.

Definite educational use was made of such school experiences as the lunch hour by having some of the health instruction consist of the solution of the problems pertaining to the school lunch, such as the selection of food and the importance of pleasant environment at meal time. Children who ate in the school lunchroom had an opportunity to put into practice the knowledge gained from the solution of the problems.

During the past year programs were presented in the
cafeteria to help celebrate particular holidays. During Western Week a string band participated; at Christmas-time the more famous Christmas carols were sung; and at Easter and at the end of the school year other musical programs were rendered. Not only were faculty members and pupils interested in these programs, but many of the parents were numbered among the visitors. The parents were always welcome to eat in the cafeteria with the children, and a great many of them availed themselves of this opportunity.

Definite use was made of school health services as a part of the health program. For example, teachers attempted to develop in their pupils wholesome attitudes toward the physical and dental examinations by acquainting them with the purposes of such examinations and with knowledge concerning what to expect.

Music. -- There were definite periods on the schedule that provided for music instruction. Some teachers had music for a short time every day; on the other hand, others limited the periods to less frequent intervals. The teacher attempted to teach a logically organized series of music lessons. These lessons were planned with the help of the music supervisor for the group as a whole, and some teachers gave little attention to the needs and interests of individuals. The success of this program of work, like any other, depended a great deal upon the teacher's understanding and interest in the program itself. Since music had not
been taught with the aid of a supervisor in several years, great strides were made in spite of this handicap. The major emphasis was placed upon the development of singing skills, so most of the time was devoted to group singing, although some listening experiences were included.

The radio station in Big Spring gave, free of charge, radio time to the Parent-teacher Association Council for the purpose of acquainting the town with the schools. These programs were divided among the various schools with the type of program to be presented left to the discretion and initiative of the teacher in charge. This constituted a definite learning situation, for the elements of radio programs had to be considered. These radio programs were the natural outgrowths of the pupils' music work.

Rather than impose upon the child adult standards of what children should enjoy, the likes and dislikes of the pupils were recognized, and an attempt was made to help the individual child grow at his own rate to continuously higher levels of appreciation. Opportunity was thus given the child to exercise his own judgment and develop his own standards of excellence.

Art. -- Practically all art work grew out of units. Art was used as a means of expressing graphically the ideas received from a study of some unit of work. For example, after a visit to a farm in connection with a study of farm
life, children reproduced graphically what they say, each child being encouraged to express himself in his own way. In addition to this type of art experience, other means of expression were used. For example, models were made of some scene, such as the farm scene, by means of cardboard, wooden, or clay materials. Much of this type of work was done in groups, which encouraged the sharing of ideas and of skills. Other types of group work were included such as the making of a frieze or mural. Materials of the school environment were planned or used to bring about concepts of good arrangements, balance, and harmony. For example, pupils helped to plan the improvement of their classroom in accordance with the principles of good art. Materials included drawing books, manila paper, pencils, crayolas, and colored paper.

Appreciation of masterpieces of art was encouraged. Stories were written about a picture; the artist's life was studied; and contests which tested memory were held to motivate the learning of the names of pictures.

Physical education. -- There was a daily period for physical education in which play was supervised by the teacher who had planned the games for the group as a whole. Since playground space was vitally important, various games were suggested by the teacher, and a choice could be made. The boys were mostly interested in the game of the season,
and for this reason different arrangements were made in the fall for football and in the spring for baseball.

Special attention was given to provide for the development of social abilities as well as physical development. The teacher endeavored to provide activities that gave opportunity for the development of social values resulting from pupils' learning to play with each other, to give and take, and to choose and respect leaders.

Dramatics and auditorium activities. -- Opportunities for dramatic experiences were very limited, consisting in some of the pupils taking part in occasional radio programs. These programs usually consisted, to a large degree, of pupils giving memorized speeches or reading scripts which had no relationship to their class work. Since these programs were held infrequently and only a few pupils took part each time, not many pupils had the opportunity to take an active role in dramatic work of any kind.

Home and vocational arts. -- In addition to the use of selections found in the adopted texts, teaching units were organized around such topics as home and family life and community helpers. These units were accompanied by an occasional excursion to related shops or service centers in the community. Sometimes miniature reproductions of these shops or community centers were made in the classroom, using blocks, plastic materials, or paper.
Safety instruction and practices. -- Safety was taught through the use of units in the various subject fields. Some of these units were based on actual needs of the pupils in the local school. In addition to pictures and posters, movies, slides, and other aids were used as teaching helps. The schools joined with the community in such campaigns and drives as Fire Prevention Week and Clean-up Drive.

Utilizing community resources. -- The Parent-teacher Association and similar organizations were used by the school primarily to raise money for school purposes and to foster a pleasant attitude toward the school administration. Occasional excursions to various places in the community were made. The school took an active part in certain community enterprises such as the Christmas parade and engaged in such projects as releasing children from school for a day in order that they may pick cotton on surrounding farms. These activities, however, were chosen for their spectacular effect rather than for their contribution to the learning experiences of the children and their value to the community. The school building was available to certain community organizations as a meeting place after school hours.

Pupil participation in school and classroom management. -- Each room had a civic or citizenship type of organization. Practice was given in democratic living through the election of officers and the discussion of means of living together
more happily and efficiently. The elections were often held as the other elections in the community, featuring campaign posters and speeches and the secret ballot, while other committees were appointed to attend to the details of the various factors involved in group living. The teacher gave help only when needed, and the children did the actual planning and carrying out of their plans.

Pupils participated in school management through such activities as school messenger service and committees on safety, lunchroom, fire drills, lavatory, and others. These committees were appointed by the principal or the teachers with the principal designating the duties for each committee to perform.

Pupil-pupil relationship and related factors. -- Children were noticeably happy at school and were courteous and helpful to each other. A "we" attitude prevailed and was evidenced by co-operative activities, sharing, and "taking turns" without coercion, for the children were eager to attend school. Minor conflicts among children were settled by the pupils themselves. Personality, integrity, and sincerity of purpose of individuals were respected.

Grouping, promotion, marking, and awards. -- The class groups were formed on the basis of the teachers' marks in the various subjects, using a letter of the alphabet as the marking system; but when promotions were made, factors
other than achievements in school subjects were considered. Children competed with each other in striving for good marks, but they found many other motivations in school work. Awards and honors were seldom used and special efforts were made to avoid these awards and competitions which put individual pupils "on the spot" because of the economic or social status of their family. Dishonesty, discourtesy, and other anti-social behavior were unusual occurrences. Reports to parents were issued every six weeks. For special cases these cards were supplemented by a letter from the teacher which explained the reasons for the markings.

**Teacher-pupil relationships.** -- The teacher maintained her controlling role in the classroom and was never completely absorbed into the group as one of its participating members though she worked frequently with groups in different parts of the room. The children were fond of the teacher and maintained good behavior largely because the rules or the ideals of the teacher indicated that such behavior was proper. The children had no part in evolving appropriate modes of conduct, and they were free to move about the room quietly. The class at all times was orderly. The room routine was well worked out by the teacher and understood and followed by the children, while class schedules were planned without special concern for the continuity of contact between pupil and teacher.
Children's attitude toward school work and procedures in evaluation. -- The children did show an active interest in school activities but were satisfied only with meeting requirements. They worked to some extent without teacher direction but needed frequent guidance. The standards were formulated by the teacher, but the pupils had some understanding of the long-term goals and some appreciation of their values.

The teacher criticized the work, pointed out the merits and the weaknesses, and sought opinion of the child or of his group. However, the pupils were beginning to apply self-criticism to their work.

Pupil work habits were good but lagged frequently. The evaluation included social values, attitudes, conduct, independence, responsibility, and creativity, as well as academic and physical growth.

Planning and procedures in classroom activities oriented to character and citizenship outcomes. -- There was much "give and take" between teacher and pupils regarding the work to be carried forward. Since longer term goals were clearer to pupils, there was some opportunity for pupils to exercise judgment and to make suggestions of procedure to attain these goals. The work was organized into larger units which relieved much of the tension regarding schedule and course of study requirements. There was some evidence
of activity but the room was primarily a place where study and recitation were the order of the day. A growing awareness of the corporate nature of the group was shared by the pupils toward the responsibility for classroom routines. The teacher realized that character and good citizenship evolve out of pupils' frank facing and solving of problems and issues, but as yet no ways had been found within the school schedule for a fundamental method of dealing with the problem.

Use and care of school facilities and other teaching resources. -- The noticeable enrichment of teaching resources was evidenced by the many materials brought in by pupils and teachers. These materials were carefully arranged for accessibility and gave a laboratory or workshop appearance to the room. The personalized interest of pupils in the instructional resources made for genuine pupil concern for the care, protection, and conservation of materials and equipment. These attitudes and habits were strengthened through discussions relating to conservation of materials and property and by school improvement projects undertaken by the pupils. The democratic practices in the classroom gave pupils considerable poise in meeting guests and skill in inducting the guests into the ongoing activities of the class.
Using the same procedures, Figure 5 explains the range of attainment concerned with the program of school life. Figure 6 states the same material in another form.

With the handbook came a tool for evaluation in the form of a graph. This graph takes into consideration the entire picture of the evaluation. Figure 7 is a reproduction of only those sections used in the present evaluation. This figure states in more detail the exact location of a given rating. Each level is divided into tenths for precise rank, and a place is provided for an average level rating.
Fig. 5. -- Evaluation of items related to the program of school life in the elementary schools of Big Spring.
Fig. 5. -- Continued.
Fig. 6. — Graphic comparison of items related to the program of school life in the elementary schools of Big Spring.
FIGURE 7
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION SCORE SHEET

City or town ____________________________ School Dist. No. __________
County __________ Name of school ______________

No. of full-time teachers __________ Grades taught in this building __________ Date on which this report was made __________

DIRECTIONS: If a district operates more than one elementary school, a separate score sheet should be made out for each school. After the school has been appraised with the use of the Handbook and "X's" placed in appropriate places in the Handbook as directed, an "average level rating" is determined for each section labeled with a capital letter. Indicate this "average level rating" on the score sheet by placing an "X" in the appropriate place in one of the columns below and by placing the numerical value of the "average level rating" in the column marked "Numerical value of average level rating." This method of recording an appraisal gives a graphic picture of the appraisal (if all the "X's" on the score sheet are connected with a line) and a numerical value. For example, if appraisal of census practices results in the placement of "X's" at Levels I, II, and IV in the Handbook, the "average level rating" on Census would be $7 + 3 = 2.3$. Then on the score sheet an "X" would be placed in Level II at the 2.3 point (the dots along the line indicate tenths) and the numerical value of 2.3 would be written in the right-hand column. When all ratings have been recorded in the right-hand column, the column is added and the total is divided by the total number as indicated, thus giving a general average rating for the school as a whole.
FIGURE 7 -- Continued

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<td>B. Attendance</td>
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<td>C. Classification and promotion of pupils</td>
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<td>G. Teacher load and teacher-pupil ratio</td>
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CHAPTER III

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study undertook to put in a more convenient form the evaluation of the elementary schools as stated and to make useful and practical the conclusions and recommendations of the existing situations. If they are seen to be feasible after due consideration, it is desired that these conclusions and recommendations be regarded as future policies of the schools.

Conclusions

As a result of this evaluation the following conclusions have been formulated:

1. Including all the aspects of the designated handbook, the schools rated average or in the range of level three.

2. The apparent weaknesses, such as the deficiency in dramatics (level one) and the burden of the teacher load (level 0), are in the main problems which necessitate the full co-operation of all the prevailing influences of the community.

3. A definite policy of tenure should be formulated by the school board and the administration.
4. The desire for further college training needs to be stimulated in all teachers. Perhaps recent legislation will help urge the teachers to do this.

5. The growth of teachers in their work should be characterized by a variety of experiences and not by the mere repetition of a knowledge attained.

6. A workable knowledge by all teachers of the use of various forms of visual aids should be encouraged.

7. Equipment for the teaching of elementary science should be provided for each school or else a substitute arrangement should be made.

8. An organized system for utilizing community resources should be thoroughly investigated and this information passed on to the individual classroom teachers. If this knowledge was within easy access to the teacher, field-trip experiences could play a more important role as a teaching aid.

9. In-service training of teachers must continue; with the program based on the needs and interests of the teachers, as is the case in the profitable teaching of children.

10. A conception of the democratic way of life should be evidenced in all school activities.

11. A need is prevalent for the pupils, the teachers, and the administration to "sell" the schools to the community; however, the three groups involved must first become "customers."
12. A worth-while guidance program in accordance with the one in the high school needs to be carried out with the teacher as the central figure.

13. This handbook can be used as a means of establishing goals for the teacher to work toward as well as a tool of evaluation.

Recommendations

In the light of this evaluation the following recommendations seem to be in order:

1. Some provisions should be made for the children who are legally exempt from school. This program may be based on the district rather than on the individual school.

2. A visiting teacher or case worker specially trained in that field should be placed at the principals' disposal to help check on absences and the cause of such.

3. A greater amount of consideration should be placed on the data obtained from intelligence tests, personality tests, achievement tests, and other sources when class grouping and promotion are necessary. The teacher's subjective judgment has a most important part to play.

4. The teacher-pupil ratio should be approximately twenty-five.

5. Teachers arrange conferences with every parent during the year in which definite anecdotal records are discussed. The information gained from the parent should be
added to the record for future reference whenever needed.

6. A "get-acquainted" assembly at the end of school should be given by the high school for the children coming from the elementary grades. This may also include a tour through the various departments of instruction.

7. Provisions should be made for a place in which pupils may have a rest period when necessary.

8. An accurate, detailed record should be made on all accidents occurring at school.

9. Information concerning the need of clothing for children should be turned over to the proper authorities. This authority may be vested in the local parent-teacher associations.

10. An important recommendation is to fill all available positions in the elementary schools with college majors in the field of elementary education.

11. A greater interest on the part of the teachers in their professional organizations should be stimulated. Administrative co-operation and understanding are a valuable asset.

12. The teachers' salaries should be kept at least within the demands of legislative acts.

13. The teacher should realize her obligations more fully and accept and carry out graciously the criticism offered for her betterment.
14. The curriculum should tend to grow toward an experience program instead of emphasizing subjects taught in isolation.

15. There needs to be a clearer and more definite understanding between the schools and the community concerning projects which need the attention of both.

16. In each elementary school a self-governing student council under the guidance of the principal should be set up. A qualified teacher in whom the children have a great amount of confidence and respect may act as sponsor.

17. The language arts should be more closely correlated instead of being taught in isolated form or by textbooks alone. If and whenever and wherever the need arises with the child for some instruction along these lines, that need should be taken into consideration and the teaching arranged accordingly.

18. Since language, or a means of communicating one's thoughts, is essential, emphasis should be placed upon the use of it in social situations.

19. Handwriting and spelling should be taught as tools for expressing ideas more effectively instead of as subjects within themselves.

20. Reading should permeate the entire school program. Scheduled reading classes are taught until the reading mechanics have been mastered; then much of the reading is
done for the purpose of obtaining information needed to solve problems.

21. The teachers and administrators need to stay abreast of modern trends in education, so the continual changes may be met with courage and boldness.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


