

1960

An investigation of parent-aid in Massachusetts elementary schools

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Thesis
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1960

BOSTON UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

THESIS

AN INVESTIGATION OF PARENT-AID
IN MASSACHUSETTS ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

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A. B. in Business Administration
San Jose State College
1954

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

August 1960

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This study could not have been accomplished if there had not been complete cooperation from the supervising principals of the Massachusetts elementary schools. Their interest shown by the fine return of the questionnaire sent out was most gratifying.

I am particularly indebted to Dr. W. Linwood Chase of the School of Education of Boston University. His interest in the study was always stimulating, and his guidance was invaluable.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

It is readily admitted by most educational leaders that parents are a valuable resource with regard to the elementary school program. In connection with this, there has been a great deal of disagreement on what is to be done by parents and to what extent their use is desirable. Nevertheless parents are an integral part of our educational process and should be included in the educational development of the child.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The purpose of this study was twofold:

1. To what extent were parents being utilized in the educational growth of the children of Massachusetts elementary schools?
2. In cases where parents had been used, what delegated tasks had proven most successful?

Enrollment is increasing in the elementary school while teacher supply is decreasing. To help solve this problem parents could be utilized to ease the burden of the regular classroom teacher. To determine this the following matters

were given consideration:

1. What was the status of parent-aid in Massachusetts elementary schools?
2. What were the attitudes of the supervising principals with regard to parent-aid?

IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

It is readily admitted by most that parent participation can be a valuable addition to an elementary school program. Nevertheless, there is very little indication of any such program being carried out in the State of Massachusetts.

In order for the elementary school to fulfill best its purpose as a tool in the educational growth of the child, the school must keep up to date with current trends and practices. There has been an increase in the use of parent-aid programs throughout the country. Educators and parents alike have shown interest in the possibilities that parent-aid programs present to the elementary program.

It was hoped that this study would help to increase the educational services of the elementary school by making educators aware of parent-aid. Some of the benefits of parent-aid are:

1. Coupling real experiences with the theoretical,

bringing greater understanding to the child.

2. Utilizing rich community resources.
3. Bringing school and community closer together for the solution of closely related problems.
4. Giving the parent insight to the problems and difficulties that face a modern school.
5. Developing an awareness in the child of the parent in a new role.
6. Developing in the child a better understanding of his community, his state, and his country.

PLAN AND SCOPE

The following plan of work was followed in an effort to carry out the purpose of this investigation.

1. A study was made of parent-aid in the available literature.
2. With items based on the existing literature, a questionnaire was constructed.
3. A survey of 315 supervising principals was made. The 315 principals were selected by stratified sample from a list of 851 eligible supervising principals.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Parent-aid. Parent-aid is assistance given to the school in the areas of supervision, teaching, guidance, resource, and clerical work. This aid is given on a volunteer basis by parents. This aid is given with the approval and under the supervision of the school administration. The term parent-aid does not apply to freeing teachers from routine duties unless this free time results in an improved educational program for the child.

The type and amount of parent-aid given will be determined by many variables:

1. The attitude of administration and school staff personnel concerning parent participation.
2. The amount of time parents are able to give to such a program.
3. The background, training, and intelligence of the parents involved.
4. The need in any particular situation.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Importance of the parent-aid program. Because the American school system aims to transmit democratic ideas and to develop real learning experiences, it should utilize every available means to accomplish these ends. The school has undertaken a task which cannot be done alone. Help is needed. It is up to the community and parents to fulfill this need.

Today, among all people who are responsible for the education of children, there is a firm belief that all individuals affecting the life and mental development of the growing child must work together. They must work together to develop and to coordinate the school program.

The future success of the child will, in no small part, be determined by the ability of his parents and teachers to use to his advantage the best in experience, materials, and assistance that is available in the community. "Every community is a rich storehouse of educational tools, equipment

and supplies which it would not be practical for the schools to own."^{1/}

The child spends the greater part of the day under the influence of the home, therefore, it is reasonable to say that the home is a primary force in the stimulation of child development.

Parents have the greatest opportunity as well as obligation to make that influence such as will conserve the personality of the child, promote his education for life, and surround him with the encouragement and affection that is his due.^{2/}

Parents will have an advantage in fulfilling their obligation if they are aware of the problems facing the child at school as well as at home. A parent-aid program would help to make this awareness possible.

Parents stand to gain immeasurably from participating in parent-aid programs. "Where parents have some part in the school program, they come to understand school problems and achievements. They gain insight into the complexities of teaching. They develop greater confidence in the school."^{3/}

^{1/} Ayars, Albert, and De Bernardis, Amo, "The Community Laboratory of Citizenship", The Grade Teacher, October 1953, pp. 30-31.

^{2/} Bradford, Mrs. Hugh, "Foreword", Parent Education, 2nd Yearbook, August 1931, p.v.

^{3/} Woodruff, Myra, "In the Days Ahead", National Elementary Principal, vol. 38, September 1958, p. 92.

Every teacher knows that if the parent is not on his side with regard to school matters pertaining to the child, his job of teaching the child is made extremely more difficult. Often times the parent must be convinced that the school is doing the proper thing in regard to his child. "There is no better way to show the public that the school is doing a good job of teaching, that children are doing a good job of learning, than by parent participation."4/

The individual child is a product of heredity and environment, and the school exerts tremendous influence in shaping a favorable environment. If this environment is to remain favorable, parents and teachers must cooperate to surround the child with intelligent attitudes and worthwhile experiences. "If curriculum is broadly conceived to be what is done for children under the influence of the school, parents and others can and should play an important role in its development"5/

A good parent-aid program will provide opportunities that will result in a greatly improved learning situation for the child. It is also true that by cooperating with the home

4/ E. O. Lobdell, "Want to try it? Valley Stream Did and it Works", Instructor, vol. 67, November 1957, p. 117.

5/ Mary Norris Lloyd, "Parents Are a Valuable Resource", Educational Leadership, vol. 11, March 1954, p. 354.

in matters concerning the education and health of the child, the school receives help not otherwise available.

Certain areas of the child's life, at least to date, cannot possibly be dealt with adequately by any school organization. It is equally true that no home can provide the full scope of stimulation needed by a child as he grows to maturity. Of necessity, the school and the home get together and must stay together in spirit and in fact throughout the process.^{6/}

A school cannot do its job without a continuous and organized interest on the part of its parents. Therefore, a progressive school, a school that is growing and learning, sees the need for active and widespread parent interest. The parent has much to offer, and the school should take the opportunity to invite the parent to participate in any area of the school program.

Education has been too far removed from the basic experiences of modern life. Many schools are quite deficient in opportunities for sense perception, exploration and raw experiences. They need fewer words and more activities with things, situations, conditions, and relations. For useful learning pupils require experiences with the raw materials of life.^{7/}

Involving the community in educational matters further increases the importance of the school as a positive force in

^{6/} Edith Rossback, Parent-Teacher Activities at Lincoln School, Bureau of Publications, Teacher College, Columbia University, New York, 1938, p. vii.

^{7/} William M. Gregory, "Modern Aids for Experience in Learning", Eighth Yearbook, Department of Supervisors and Director of Instruction, 1953, p. 85.

the community. Many successful ventures of educational improvement have been based on the idea that the schools belong to the people and good ideas have originated from lay participation. "The American system of public education faces a crisis, which can be met only through participation of citizens from all sections of society."^{8/}

The school must make the community aware of the need for parent participation and stimulate citizens interest in the improvement of their schools. When the citizen has become aware of the needs and problems of the school, he develops a desire to help, he wants to know what he can do.

Trends in parent participation. As the complexity of life increases, do the educational processes of a community become more involved? The school and the community have much in common and the school can no longer set itself apart as a separate entity. "You must reach out and make the community participate in your school program. You will never have a good school planning program without broad public participation."^{9/}

^{8/} Henry Toy, Jr., "Inviting Your Help", Phi Delta Kappan, Vol. 32, September 1950, p. 2.

^{9/} Carl Mauro, "Partners in Education", Educational Leadership, Vol. 15, April, 1958, pp. 402-403.

The American school and the American community have grown into integral relationship with each other. Many laymen are now engaged in fields which are closely related to education, and the line between educators and lay people is often thin and indistinguishable. "The direct participation of informal but organized lay groups in the determination of the purposes and policies of public education in the United States has been increasing rapidly in the last decade."^{10/}

This progress toward closer school-home, teacher-parent relationship is indeed thrilling. The utilization of parents in the school program has opened doors heretofore locked to teachers with limited practical experience in a particular area. Teachers, too, develop a knowledge of home influences and are better able to work with the pupils in their care. Parents, being recognized as important resources because of their knowledge and experience, have taken a different attitude towards the child, and have begun to appreciate the school.

Criticism of parent-aid program. In any program where parents are urged to participate freely there will undoubtedly be criticism of the program and in many cases of the participants themselves. Some of the pitfalls which should be avoided

^{10/} M. R. Sumption, "Don't Tell Them, Ask Them", Nations Schools, vol. 62, October 1958, p. 74.

are: "overaggressive volunteer workers, large numbers of volunteers without challenging assignments, volunteers promoting unapproved activities."^{11/} The principal and his staff must continually appraise the various activities in progress, determining which are bearing fruit of mutual understanding and real benefits to the school.

Often times teachers will readily criticize a parent-aid program, and rightly so in some cases. In many cases the teacher is overwhelmed with too many pupils, too much paper work, and parent conferences. "Is he to be asked to take on one more responsibility: that of guiding parents who participate in some classroom activities?"^{12/} If a teacher is asked to take on this one more responsibility, he must first be made to realize the value of a parent-aid program. "First, all faculties must realize that in every school there are a great many parents who are very much interested in the education of their children. These parents present a tremendous source of help that can easily be tapped for the asking."^{13/}

^{11/} E. L. Marc'Antonio, "Let the Parents Carry the Ball," High Points, Vol. 41, March, 1959. p. 53.

^{12/} V. H. Fleege, "Why Not Use Teacher's Aides?", Catholic School Journal, Vol. 54, October, 1954. p. 191.

^{13/} Myra Woodruff, "In the Days Ahead", National Elementary Principal, Vol. 38, September, 1958, p. 92.

Beside lacking in understanding of the parent-aid program, teachers have been known to comment something like, "I can teach forty children or one grandmother, but don't ask me to do both at the same time."^{14/} Many teachers do not want to be burdened further. This is a problem that faces the administrator of a parent participation program.

To avoid unnecessary criticism, the following questions should be asked: "Is the principal willing to give guidance? Are parents interested in giving help? Will help be regarded by both the parents and faculty as real help? Are any of the teachers ready to accept the help of parents?"^{15/}

A close supervision of parents is a must, and close coordination of parent and teacher, a necessity. Teachers, too, must be convinced of the worth of such assistance to the school, or such a program should not be attempted.

Parent-aid activities. Most parents are genuinely interested in their children. There may be a few who are disinterested or unconcerned about their children, but the majority of parents possess a great amount of wholesome interest in their children's progress.

^{14/} Harry W. Phillips, "Parent Leadership in School Recreation," National Elementary Principal, Vol. 37, Sept. 1957, p. 155.

^{15/} Myra Woodruff, "Important Elements in Parent Participation," National Elementary Principal, Vol. 37, Sept. 1957, p. 55.

The problem is not who, but what can the school have the parents do that will contribute to the welfare and development of the child. The typical parent wants to help. "If he can be shown how he can contribute to making life better for his child, he will be glad to cooperate."^{16/} If this is true, "What kinds of group activities fit the school and community best, and at the same time are most productive of mutual understanding between the home and the school?"^{17/} What should the parent be asked to do? Of course this question is difficult to answer. There are many variables, and although it is generally agreed that parent-aid is desirable and can be rewarding, it is not recommended unqualifiedly for every school. Parent participation in school activities has to be interpreted in the light of the unique school situation. However, there are some activities that are widely accepted.

The Coffinberry School in Fairview Park, Ohio, reports that..."One way that we work with parents in our school began during the spring term three years ago, when we decided to run a series of hobby clubs for six weeks. The program proved

^{16/} Ralph Walter, "Parent School Team," National Elementary Principal, Vol. 37, September, 1957, p. 116.

^{17/} Myra Woodruff, "In the Days Ahead," National Elementary Principal, Vol. 38, September, 1958, p. 91.

so successful that we have continued it to date."^{18/} There is a great deal of talent among parents and in too many cases this talent is being wasted. The use of parents as advisors to such club activities as poetry, stamps, writing, typing, science, gardening, cooking, sewing, and hobby clubs has proven very successful. Children's interests are plentiful, teacher time scarce. Parents can and are doing fine jobs in the club field.

Even so, there are disadvantages. "One of the problems in using parents as advisors of a club program is to be certain that they not only know their subject well, but also have the ability to help children at their own levels and not expect too much of them."^{19/}

Complaints regarding the multitude of activities teachers are required to do have increased in recent years. Often these activities are nonprofessional, but eat into the teacher's time and energy. Some of these time consuming activities are taking attendance, counting money for various purposes, transcribing records to permanent record cards, running off

^{18/} Audrey K. Breat, "Parents Enjoy Helping With Hobbies," National Elementary Principal, Vol. 37, September, 1957, p. 156.

^{19/} Ibid., p. 156.

copies of work sheets, preparing reports of various types, and other numerous activities. If these complaints are valid, it would seem that some solution to the problem should be worked out.

One solution put forth is the use of teacher aides to perform these tasks.

The use of teacher aides, as a crutch to the classroom teacher, is being tried in a growing number of communities throughout the nation. Teacher aides are high type persons with an interest in the problems of education yet lacking the professional training required of a teacher.^{20/}

A teacher aide would be invaluable. She could take care of attendance, collections, help children individually in trouble areas, guide work groups, and do a multitude of other important jobs. This would free the teacher from some non-professional tasks with the result being an improved classroom learning environment.

It would be the principal's job to help parents and staff in the development of such a program. With strong guidance, there would not be the fear of a parent going too far; instead, there would be a feeling of an improved program because of parent participation. Parents as teacher-aides has been tried successfully. From the Burgundy School in Washington, D. C., comes the following report:

^{20/} U. H. Fleege, "Why Not Use Teacher's Aides," Catholic School Journal, Vol. 54, October, 1954, p. 251.

Under the supervision of teachers and administrators perform those subprofessional duties for which they are best qualified.....the parents taking care of such house-keeping duties as bulletin displays, preparation and display of special materials, blackboard care and room house-keeping; with the parents relieving the teacher of such clerical duties as checking attendance, making out reports, handling funds, and collecting papers, and by assisting the teachers in the reading of stories..."21/

The listing of jobs parents could do adequately could go on and on. Some of the assignments are routine, but others are less cut-and-dried. Such jobs as conducting classes in special subjects, acting as resource persons, supervising play areas, and accompanying children on fieldtrips are adequately handled by parents.

Some comments from parents regarding their role as a teacher aide are: "This activity has given me insight into the personalities, interests, and abilities of thirty other children my son's age."22/ "Each child has something to give in his own special way, and the parent-helper program is providing opportunities for more children to give."23/ Some other parents in a different situation were heard to react,

21/ Urban H. Fleege, "Why Not Use Teacher's Aides, Catholic School Journal, Vol. 54, October, 1954, p. 251.

22/ W. A. Yauch, "Parents Pitch in at School," National Parent Teacher, Vol. 49, December, 1954, p. 33.

23/ Ibid., p. 33.

"What fun! I enjoyed every minute of it." My, that teacher really earns her wages!" "I never realized before how many things go on in a school day."^{24/}

"Parent-helpers and school personnel alike are unanimous in their praise of the program. Not only has it fulfilled the main objectives--to bring into a closer relation the home and the school--but it has had many specific values."^{25/}

Children, too, enjoy parents coming into the classroom to help the teacher. Children find that there are many interesting people in their community and they profit from and enjoy this realization. Children become more aware of the need for everyday learning when they see it practiced by the adults of their community.

What other activities are available or lend themselves readily to parent participation? To determine availability of parents, a questionnaire could be distributed, asking parents to specify their special talents, experiences, hobbies, indicating the activities they would be willing to help with at school. Of course, these activities must be worked out with the cooperation of the parents, teachers, and pupils.

^{24/} M. Christine, "Parents Lighten the Load at Ohlone's School." National Parent Teacher, Vol. 51, May, 1951, p. 33.

^{25/} W. A. Yauch, "Parents Pitch in at School," National Parent Teacher, Vol. 49, December, 1954, p. 33.

Some appropriate areas of participation might be:^{26/}

1. Assist the teacher on children's field trips.
2. Discussing a vocation or profession in the classroom.
3. Serving as a resource in a specific class discussion.
4. Demonstrating a skill in the classroom or school assembly.
5. Assisting with the lunch hour.
6. Helping on the playground.
7. Assisting in the school library.
8. Assisting in the principal's office.
9. Serving on a curriculum committee of teachers and parents.

Parent participation in school activities is not a new idea. Parents have assisted in various ways since the beginning of the public school program. In one situation, "teachers are receiving lay assistance during the noon lunch program in one school, and at another school, a central library has been aided to a high level of operation by a group of volunteer lay helpers."^{27/}

Parents are used in the coordination of certain classroom activities and to meet the classroom's individual needs. One school utilizes "teacher aides to supervise in the cafeteria."^{28/} These parents are there because of an interest in

^{26/} Myra Woodruff, "Important Elements in Parent Participation." National Elementary Principal, Vol. 37, Sept. 1957, p. 55.

^{27/} V.H. Fleege, "Why Not Use Teacher's Aides?" Catholic School Journal, Vol. 54, October, 1954, p. 34.

^{28/} E. J. McCleary, "Point Five Lunch Program." School Executive, Vol. 79, October, 1959, p. 119.

children and are capable of doing an excellent job of supervision. Important, too, is the time it frees for the busy teacher. Teachers need a lunch period where they can relax and thus be able to do a much better job in the afternoon.

Still other schools have committees of parents and pupils that change the lunchroom pictures periodically and supply flowers for the tables. Parents are eager to help. "When a parent feels thru service that he is a part of the school staff, his interest in improving the school becomes a vital matter of self-interest."^{29/} When parents help they gain a clearer picture of the school program; they gain an insight that is not open to them in any other way.

One of the most called upon use of parents is in the area of field trips. "Parents can usually be depended upon to cooperate in helping to supervise field trips, thereby reducing possibilities of accidents and also encouraging interest in and understanding of the school program."^{30/}

A successful recreation program for elementary school children has been the result of close parent-school cooperation.

^{29/} H. H. Long, "What Price Parent Participation," National Elementary Principal, Vol. 37, September, 1957, p. 132.

^{30/} Spain, Drummond, and Goodlad, Educational Leadership and the Elementary School, Rinehart & Co., New York, 1956, p. 59.

A planned recreation program exerts a tremendous influence on the youth of the community. Schools cannot, often times, provide the necessary leadership for such a program. Therefore, parents must be called upon in the promotion of a good school recreational program.

Parents are being used as resource persons, "Just as the field trip is an additional learning experience which enhances the value of classroom activities, so the resource person coming into the classroom provides related experiences which would otherwise be unobtainable."^{31/} The idea of using resources outside the four walls of the school is not a new one. Material available is countless, ranging from the policeman on the corner to every facet of our economy. The use of the human resource for curriculum enrichment has been overlooked by many communities.

Education has been too far removed from the basic experiences of modern life. Many schools are quite deficient in opportunities for sense perception, exploration and raw experiences. They need fewer words and more activities with things, situations, conditions and relations. For useful learning pupils require experiences with the raw materials of life. A garden, a shop, a live animal collection, a trip to a farm, a mill, a store, a fire station, a post office, a park, a museum, etc., all have a place in the modern school.

^{31/} Lawrence O. Lobbell, "Want to Try It? Valley Stream Did And It Works," Instructor, Vol. 67., November, 1957, p. 117.

Many of these raw materials and elementary experiences are so common to the adult that their importance to the child is apt to be overlooked."^{32/}

Forward looking schools have capitalized upon the many natural resources which are available in every community. It would not be practical for the school to own all of the educational tools, supplies and equipment that are in the community. Teachers are increasingly enlisting the cooperation of the local citizens to help in the development of a certain concept or experience.

"Good teachers everywhere are alert to the need for real experience to supplement book learning for pupils. They are aware of the necessity for young people to do things rather than just talk about them, if they are to be properly equipped to assume their responsibilities as workers, parents, community members, and voters. They know it is important for pupils to observe how classroom principles are given practical application beyond the school's four walls."^{33/}

People who can be called upon to talk or to demonstrate special accomplishments or interests to children are extremely valuable. Children receive experiences not otherwise available to them.

^{32/} William M. Gregory, "Modern Aids for Experiences in Learning," Eighth Yearbook, Dept. of Supervisors and Division of Instruction, 1953, pp. 85-86.

^{33/} Albert L. Ayars, "The New Look in School Help," The Clearing House, November, 1954, p. 135.

Summary: Throughout the literature the importance of lay participation was stressed. Parent and teacher are involved in a cooperative enterprise and lay participation is an effective way to create good public relations. Every community, it was pointed out, is a stockpile of human talent. "Citizens should be recognized for the several skills they bring to education from their various trades, businesses, and professions."^{34/}

Many schools have recognized the need parents can fulfill and have capitalized on the human reservoir available in their communities. However, there are considerations to be taken into account.

"First, an understanding of basic principles has to be developed. Second, some organizational and administrative machinery is usually established. Third, in due course, attention is given to action-active participation."^{35/} Some further suggestions would be:

1. Let them in on the ground floor; do not hand them a completed task.
2. Respect their judgment and opinions or else do not ask for their help.

^{34/} Abel A. Hanson, "Citizens Role in Instruction," School Executive, Vol. 73, November, 1953, p. 20.

^{35/} Ibid., p. 21.

3. Publicize their achievements and accomplishments; we all profit from praise.
4. Make sure the parent can see and understand what their job is."36/

In closing, Brown points out: ".....and remember when you invite a guest to your classroom you are not only giving your students a profitable experience, but also if you treat your guest properly and give him a stimulating experience, you've made a friend for your school."37/

36/ Joseph P. Robitaille, "Establishing a School Library," National Elementary Principal, Vol. 37, September, 1957, p. 145.

37/ Richard C. Brown, "The Classroom Guest," Social Education, December, 1953, p. 368.

CHAPTER III

PROCEDURE

In order to bring about changes for the better in child development, the administrator must keep up to date with educational philosophy and new ideas. A modern trend in education has been the increasing importance of parent participation in the elementary schools, with parents cooperating with the school and staff in solving many important problems. Educational literature reveals the fact that many schools throughout the nation are utilizing, to good advantage, parent-aid programs.

Statement of the problem. This study of parent-aid programs in Massachusetts Elementary Schools aims to reveal:

1. The status of the parent-aid program.
2. The jobs that parents are being asked to do.
3. The feelings of supervising principals toward a parent-aid program.

Procedure. In order to solve the stated problems of this investigation, the following steps were taken:

1. The term "parent-aid" was defined.
2. A review of literature was made.
3. A questionnaire was constructed.
4. The questionnaire was reviewed by the seminar.

5. A stratified sample of supervising principals of Massachusetts elementary schools was taken.
6. Returns were tabulated.
7. Data were interpreted.

Parent-aid. Many schools throughout the country have used parents to carry out specific tasks in the elementary program. Parent-aid applies to parent's voluntary participation in school activities. It does not necessarily apply to freeing teachers from routine duties unless this lessening of the teacher's work load means improved educational service to the child.

Review of literature. First, and most important to this investigation, was the great support for parent participation found in the educational literature available. Parents have participated with great success in numerous and varied positions. It had to be determined, however, what area of responsibility belonged to the professional, what area belonged to the parent, and what area was an overlapping of responsibility of both home and school. The backgrounds and experiences of the available parents determines the area in which parents will participate. These factors vary according to the community and local situation.

It was further found that participation of informal, but organized lay groups in the development of educations was

increasing rapidly in the United States. Parents want to work and cooperate with the school staff, and when they do have some part in the school program parents develop insight and confidence in the school.

Principals to be surveyed. An effective parent-aid program requires a great deal of administration by the school principal. In situations where the principal teaches as well as administers, it was felt that there probably would not be a parent-aid program because of the lack of time to guide it. Therefore, the survey included only a sample of the 924 supervising principals of Massachusetts.

Instrument for Securing Information: In the construction of an instrument, the following factors had to be kept in mind:

1. The questionnaire had to reveal the status of the parent-aid program in Massachusetts schools.
2. The opinions of the principals towards a parent aid program had to be evaluated.
3. What specific items should be included?
4. Because principals are busy, the questionnaire had to be readable, easy to answer, and short enough so that principals would answer the questionnaire.

A review of the literature was influential in determining what was to be included in the questionnaire. It was found that certain jobs were being done by parents more often than were other jobs. Eighteen tasks were found that had

considerable frequency of use. If these jobs are done by parents in many schools outside of Massachusetts, they could also be performed by parents in Massachusetts schools. Therefore, the first page of the instrument is made up of eighteen items concerning jobs done by parents.

These jobs were in connection with: bus duties, audio-visual, hot lunch, library, recreation, lecture-resource persons, demonstrations, classroom parties, extracurricular activities, playground supervision, field trips and excursions, athletic program, traffic patrol, safety and health, school newspaper, clerical work, classroom teaching, and school clubs. By the use of a check mark, the respondent could answer each item one of five ways. The principal would check:

- A. If parent-aid was being used at the present time.
- B. If parent-aid was used, but its use was found unsuccessful.
- C. If parent-aid was not being used, but its use would be desirable.
- D. If parent-aid would not be practical.
- E. If undecided.

Also included in this part of the instrument was a nineteenth item labeled "others." This was done to permit principals to indicate any area left out of the questionnaire but practiced in his school.

Part II of the instrument was developed for the purpose of determining the opinions, policies, and attitudes of the

supervising principals involved.

Item one, part II, was included in an effort to determine the greatest disadvantage of a parent-aid program. The information resulting from this item could lend assistance to the principal and give direction to future parent participation programs.

To try and determine the area where help is most needed, the principals were asked, in item two, what was the job above all others that they would ask parents to do in connection with the school program. The response to this inquiry points out that help is needed in many areas, whether it be parent-aid or something else.

Item three was included so that information on policy could be secured. Item three asked the principal to indicate what the policy was in his school district, if any, regarding a parent-aid program. An existing policy could indicate a more formal type of program.

Item four, part II, asked the principal if he was happy with the parent-aid program in his school. The results to this item indicate the general feeling towards programs involving parents.

Because the questionnaire was not sent to all of the principals in Massachusetts, some of the schools left out of

the survey could be carrying out parent-aid programs. In an effort to insure adequate return of the information needed for this study, item five was included in part II of the instrument. Item five asked the principal to list the name and/or place, if they knew of any, had a parent-aid program in operation.

The list compiled from this item could be used as a follow-up to secure additional information. This list was not used in this respect, however, because it was felt that sufficient information had been obtained from the initial survey.

Item six on part II of the questionnaire was left open. It was felt that the principal should have an opportunity to express himself if he desired. The principal could make any comment he thought necessary on any aspect of the program.

The complete questionnaire was then dittoed and presented to the members of the Administration Seminar for advice and constructive criticism. From the discussions that followed in the Seminar, changes were made in the wording of several items, and a covering letter composed to accompany the instrument.

Presenting the Instrument. The first step in presenting the instrument was made when it was decided that the instrument would be sent to supervising principals only. From a list that contained all of the principals of Massachusetts

elementary schools, it was determined that there were 924 supervising principals. For reasons not explained in this thesis, the list was trimmed to 851 supervising principals. From this total, a stratified sample was taken.

A stratified sampling is taken by selecting every principal who happens to face in a previously determined numerical order. For this investigation, an adequate sample was thought to be 300 to 315 supervising principals. The first time through the list, every third principal was chosen for a total of 283. With 283 selected, another 30 were needed. From the remaining 568 principals every 17th was chosen. The mailing list then totaled 315.

Tabulation of Information. The response to the questionnaire was gratifying. 216 questionnaires were returned for a per cent of 68.6.

After the returns were in, a frequency distribution was made for all items. It was difficult to tabulate answers to the open items in the instrument; however, the replies were condensed into general headings. The general headings were then expressed as a per cent of the total.

The results were tabulated and recorded in various tables:

1. The average response to all items.
2. The response to each item.
3. What parent-aid was being used.
4. What aid was used, but was found unsuccessful.
5. What parent-aid was not being used, but its use would be desirable.
6. The use of parent-aid would not be practical.
7. Number of undecided.
8. Various activities practiced at that time, but not included in the instrument.
9. The greatest disadvantages of parent-aid programs.
10. The one task above all others requested of parents.
11. The established policy, if any.
12. Further comments relating to a parent-aid program.

Summary. The purpose of this study was to reveal the status of parent-aid in Massachusetts elementary schools and to determine the opinions of the elementary supervising principals toward such a program. An effort was made to:

1. Reveal what was being done in Massachusetts elementary schools.
2. Evaluate parent-aid programs as they existed.
3. Determine the major problems confronting the parent-aid program.
4. Make an analysis of activities that were successful.
5. Reveal the attitudes of school personnel toward parent participation.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATIONS OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to determine to what extent the elementary schools of Massachusetts were using parents to aid in the educational growth of their children. Also, what tasks had parents proven that they could handle successfully. In the solution of this problem, the following matters were given consideration:

1. What were the types of activities parents were participating in?
2. What was the opinions of the supervising principals in regard to a parent-aid program?

The instrument consisted of two parts. The first part of the questionnaire consisted of 19 items relating to a parent-aid program. This part of the instrument gave the principal an opportunity to indicate the status of parent-aid in his or her situation. The second part of the instrument gave the principal a chance to express his or her opinion regarding parent-aid programs.

In a stratified sample, a name is selected because of predetermined ordinal position. From a list of 851 supervising principals, 315 were selected for the survey.

TABLE I
PER CENT OF 216 PRINCIPALS THAT RESPONDED
TO EIGHTEEN ITEMS RELATED TO PARENT-AID

Item	Number of Responses	Percentage Responding
1. Bus duties	176*	81.5
2. Audio-visual	193	89.4
3. Hot-lunch program	172	79.6
4. Library	188	87.0
5. Recreation	188	87.0
6. Lectures-resource	193	89.4
7. Demonstrations	183	84.7
8. Classroom parties	201	93.1
9. Extra-curricular, i.e., dances	195	90.3
10. Playground supervision	197	91.2
11. Field trips	210	97.2
12. Sports program	186	86.1
13. Traffic patrol	191	88.4
14. Safety and health	191	88.4
15. School newspaper	173	80.1
16. Clerical work	195	90.3
17. Classroom teaching	192	88.9
18. Clubs, i.e., science	73	33.8

*Any number less than 216 indicates item omitted by respondent, e.g., 40 principals did not check item 1.

The returns were excellent. 315 questionnaires were sent out and 216 were answered and returned. This was a per cent of 68.6.

By the use of a check mark, the principal could answer each item one of five ways:*

- A. Parent-aid was being used at the present time.
- B. Parent-aid was used, but its use was found unsuccessful.
- C. Parent-aid was not being used, but its use would be desirable.
- D. Parent-aid would not be practical.
- E. Undecided.

Table I shows the per cent of 216 principals that responded to eighteen items related to parent-aid. Less than 100% reveals that the general response to all of the items was good. However, some items were not marked. There were items that showed higher response and some that showed a lower response. A 97.2 per cent responded in some way, to field trips. This indicated the high degree of experience that schools have had with using parents for field trips. Other items that had better than 90 per cent response were classroom parties, playground supervision, extra-curricular activities, and clerical work.

The majority of the items had a response per cent of 80 to 90. Replies to the items regarding the hot lunch program, 80 per cent, and the clubs, 40 per cent, can be con-

TABLE II
 PER CENT OF 216 PRINCIPALS REPORTING
 ON VARIOUS ASPECTS OF PARENT-AID

Item	A	B	C	D	E
1. Bus duties	4.5	0.6	15.9	70.5	8.5
2. Audio-visual	3.7	1.0	7.5	75.7	13.0
3. Hot lunch program	12.8	7.0	20.9	48.8	10.5
4. Library	17.0	2.7	20.2	53.2	6.9
5. Recreation	9.1	.5	22.3	56.4	11.7
6. Lecture-resource	44.0	2.6	34.2	14.0	5.2
7. Demonstrations	29.5	1.6	38.3	20.8	9.8
8. Classroom parties	53.2	5.5	7.4	26.9	7.0
9. Extra-curricular, i.e., dances	45.2	2.1	9.7	30.3	7.7
10. Playground super- vision	3.0	3.0	17.8	63.5	12.7
11. Field trips	72.7	2.3	13.2	10.4	1.3
12. Sports program	14.0	.5	16.7	53.7	15.1
13. Traffic patrol	14.0	1.0	21.4	55.8	7.8
14. Safety and health	13.6	.5	19.4	48.7	17.8
15. School newspaper	8.6	1.2	11.0	63.0	16.2
16. Clerical work	11.9	1.5	17.4	56.4	12.8
17. Classroom teaching	.5	.5	2.1	74.0	22.9
18. Clubs	5.5	...	16.4	54.8	23.3
Average 1-18	21.3	2.0	17.4	48.1	11.2

sidered low in comparison with the other items. Many schools do not have a lunch program, and activity in the club area is also limited because of time, space, bus problems, and various other problems. Perhaps this explains the low per cent of response to these two items.

An indication of the supervising principals feeling towards various aspects of parent-aid, is shown in Table II.

Table II shows all of the possible responses to the 18 items. Parents are helping out with field trip supervision and doing satisfactorily in this respect. This fact was pointed out by over 70 per cent of the supervising principals of Massachusetts. Although this was the highest indication of successful use of parents, the table also points out several items that had close to 50 per cent successful usage. These items were classroom parties, extra-curricular activities, and lecture-resource persons. In contrast was the high per cent, over 70 per cent, stating that parent-aid was not practical in such areas as bus duties, audio-visual program, and classroom teaching.

Noting generally, about half of the principals that replied felt that parent-aid would not be practical, another 11.2 per cent were undecided, and 16.4 per cent were not

using parent-aid, but thought its use would be desirable.

Combined, these three responses account for over 80 per cent of the total. This could mean that about four out of five schools do not have, to any extent, a parent-aid program.

An insignificant number have found parent-aid unsuccessful after trying it, leaving an incidence of one school in five that is using parent-aid at the present time.

TABLE III
 USE OF PARENT-AID AT THE PRESENT TIME

Item	Principals Using	Total Number Reporting	% Using
1. Field trips	153	210	72.6
2. Classroom parties	107	201	53.2
3. Extra-curricular, i.e., dances	88	195	45.1
4. Lecture-resource	85	193	44.0
5. Demonstrations	54	183	29.5
6. Library	32	188	17.0
7. Traffic patrol	27	191	14.1
8. Sports program	26	186	14.0
9. Safety and health	26	191	13.6
10. Hot Lunch Program	22	172	12.8
11. Clerical work	23	195	11.8
12. Recreation	17	188	9.0
13. School newspaper	15	173	8.7
14. Bus duties	15	176	8.5
15. Clubs, i.e., Science	4	73	5.4
16. Audio-visual	7	193	3.6
17. Playground supervision	6	197	3.0
18. Classroom teaching	1	192	0.5

What were the areas in which parents were being used at the present time? Table III lists the 18 items from highest to lowest frequency of present use of parents. Except for a small number of items, it was found that parent use was low, with the majority of items less than 30 per cent. Such items as recreation, school newspaper, bus duties, clubs, audio-visual, playground supervision, and classroom teaching received less than 10 per cent of the total indicating very little use at the present time.

There were some jobs parents were doing successfully and, not surprisingly, field trips heading the list. Over 70 per cent of the schools used parents in this area.

In over half of the schools, parents were used as chaperones and to aid the school staff with classroom parties. Also placing high on the list was using parents as lecture-resource persons.

According to literature written in the field, there is a trend indicating growth of parent participation programs. In comparison with this study, future research may find parent participation increased.

To aid principals in future parent-aid programs, it was thought that knowledge of jobs done unsuccessfully by

TABLE IV
PARENT-AID USED BUT FOUND UNSUCCESSFUL

Item	Total No. Reporting	No. Reporting Unsuccessful	% Using
1. Hot lunch program	172	12	7.0
2. Classroom parties	201	11	5.5
3. Playground supervision	197	6	3.0
4. Library	188	5	2.7
5. Lecture-resource	193	5	2.6
6. Field trips	210	5	2.4
7. Extra-curricular, i. e., dances	195	4	2.1
8. Demonstrations	183	3	1.6
9. Clerical work	195	3	1.5
10. School newspaper	173	2	1.2
11. Audio-visual	193	2	1.1
12. Traffic patrol	191	2	1.1
13. Bus duties	176	1	0.6
14. Recreation	188	1	0.5
15. Sports program	186	1	0.5
16. Safety and health	191	1	0.5
17. Classroom teaching	192	1	0.5
18. Clubs, i.e., science	73	...	...

TABLE V
 PARENT-AID IS NOT BEING USED
 BUT ITS USE WOULD BE DESIRABLE

ITEM	Number Reporting use-desirable	Total No. Reporting	% Rpt.
1. Demonstration	70	183	38.3
2. Lecture-resource	66	193	34.2
3. Recreation	42	188	22.3
4. Traffic patrol	41	191	21.5
5. Hot lunch program	36	172	20.9
6. Library	38	188	20.2
7. Safety and health	37	191	19.4
8. Playground supervision	35	197	17.8
9. Clerical work	34	195	17.4
10. Sports program	31	186	16.7
11. Clubs, i.e., science	12	73	16.4
12. Bus duties	28	176	15.9
13. Field trips	28	210	13.3
14. School newspaper	19	173	11.0
15. Extra-curricular, i.e., dances	19	195	9.7
16. Audio-visual	14	193	7.5
17. Classroom parties	15	201	7.4
18. Classroom teaching	4	192	2.1

parents would be valuable to the principal in setting up a program. The replies to this question were insignificant, however.

Whether or not principals just do not like to admit errors in judgment or else the degree of failure when parents are used is very low and cannot be determined by this survey. It can be stated, however, if these results are valid, the failure of parents in certain tasks is not a factor in the high percentage of schools that have not set up a parent participation program.

The highest degree of unsuccessful participation was found in the area of the hot lunch program. This rate was found to be about 7 per cent. Following closely was the unsuccessful incidence, 5 per cent, in the area of classroom parties. The remainder of the items were found to be less than 3 per cent.

Even though principals were not, at the present time, using parent-aid, what jobs did they feel could be handled adequately by parents? Table V shows the response to this question. Almost 40 per cent of the principals felt that the use of parents doing demonstrations, lectures, and as resource persons would be valuable. The high response to

TABLE VI
 PARENT-AID WOULD NOT BE PRACTICAL
 IN YOUR SPECIFIC SITUATION

Items	Total No. Reporting	No. Principals Rpt. Unpractical	% Rpt.
1. Audio-visual	193	146	75.7
2. Classroom teaching	192	142	74.0
3. Bus duties	176	124	70.5
4. Playground supervision	197	125	63.5
5. School newspaper	173	109	63.0
6. Library	188	106	56.4
7. Clerical work	195	110	56.4
8. Traffic patrol	191	107	55.8
9. Clubs, i.e., science	73	40	54.8
10. Sports program	186	100	53.7
11. Recreation	188	100	53.2
12. Hot lunch program	172	84	48.8
13. Safety and health	191	93	48.7
14. Extra-curricular, i.e., dances	195	59	30.3
15. Classroom parties	201	54	26.9
16. Demonstrations	183	38	20.8
17. Lecture-resource	193	27	14.0
18. Field trips	210	22	10.4

TABLE VII
UNDECIDED REGARDING PARENT-AID

Item	Total No. Responding	Number Undecided	% Rpt.
1. Clubs, i.e., Science	73	17	23.3
2. Classroom teaching	192	44	22.9
3. Safety and health	191	34	17.8
4. School newspaper	173	28	16.2
5. Sports program	186	28	15.1
6. Audio-visual	193	25	13.0
7. Clerical work	195	25	12.8
8. Playground supervision	197	25	12.7
9. Recreation	188	22	11.7
10. Hot lunch program	172	18	10.5
11. Demonstrations	183	18	9.8
12. Bus duties	176	15	8.5
13. Traffic patrol	191	15	7.8
14. Extra-curricular, i.e., dances	195	17	7.7
15. Classroom parties	201	14	7.0
16. Library	188	13	6.9
17. Lecture-resource	193	10	5.2
18. Field trips	210	3	1.3

these items could indicate that educators are realizing that information stemming from real experiences must be added to the curriculum, and that when a teacher's experiences are limited, parent-aid could be the answer. The remaining items were below 20 per cent.

The greatest percentage of principals felt that parent-aid was not practical in their situation. Table VI shows the per cent of principals that responded in this manner to each item. Audio-visual, classroom teaching, and bus duties were tasks that were singled out by over 70 per cent of the principals as not practical. These three headed the list, but there were other tasks that had a majority of principals replying that the tasks were not practical. Such jobs as playground supervisor, running the school newspaper, working with the school library, doing clerical work, setting up the traffic patrol, working with club groups, and participating in the sports program were included in this group.

Table VII reveals the per cent of principals that were undecided about various items relating to parent-aid. Almost 1 out of 4 principals were undecided in regard to the use of parents in school clubs, and for classroom teaching.

TABLE VIII

FREQUENCY OF THE USE OF PARENT-AID
IN CLUBS AND OTHER ACTIVITIES

Item	Frequency
School clubs: Science	17
Drama	4
Crafts	4
Ceramics	1
Aviation	1
Reading	1
Baton twirling	1
Social Studies	1
Garden	1
4H	1
Sailing	1
Photography	1
Scout groups	17
Banking, saving stamps	6
Music: Glee Club	4
Orchestra	1
School assemblies	4
Room mothers	4
Raising funds	2
Health clinic	2
Student council advisors	2
French class	2
Sewing class	2
Religious training	1
Readers for blind students	1

These are areas where help is needed, but parents as the answer was debatable. This may account for the high per cent of indecision in these two areas. Ten to twenty per cent of the principals indicated undecidedness in the areas of safety and health, school newspapers, sports program, and the audio-visual program. Only 5.5 per cent replied that they were using parents to work and aid in the school club program. However, besides the 5.5 per cent response, there were many write-ins concerning jobs that parents were doing that were not included in the list of eighteen items.

Table VIII reveals the frequency that parents were used for various clubs and other school related tasks. In many cases, parents were used in some capacity in the school science club. The science club proved to be the most popular. This was due, perhaps, because of the emphasis placed on the subject due to the modern space age.

Less frequent were such clubs as drama, crafts, ceramics, and aviation. Photography, garden, and even a sailing club were reported by some schools. Other schools replied that they used parents to collect bank and savings stamp money. Such jobs as advisor to the student council, teaching French, storytelling, and readers for the blind

TABLE IX

COMMENTS OF 211 PRINCIPALS IN RESPONSE TO THE
QUESTION: WHAT IS THE GREATEST DISADVANTAGE OF
A PARENT-AID PROGRAM IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL?

Comment	Per Cent
Pertaining to administration:	48.5
1. Selection is difficult	
2. Inadequate training	
3. Difficult to get rid of	
4. Responsibility not clear	
5. Parents overstep themselves	
6. Difficult to find substitutes	
7. Poor communication	
8. Poor organization	
9. Too many interruptions	
Pertaining to teachers:	11.5
1. Morale is problem	
2. Resentment	
3. Personality conflicts	
4. Division of authority	
5. Poor control-discipline	
6. Lose contact with children	
7. Lack dependability	
Pertaining to parents:	40.0
1. Clash among themselves	
2. Lack dependability	
3. Criticize school	
4. Assume too much	
5. Personalize problems	
6. Leave when child leaves	
7. Do not possess adequate skills	
8. Cannot control large groups	
9. Poor judgment	
10. Vocabulary level poor	
11. Gossip	
12. Feeling by parents that schools should do the job	

were reported. Notable, too, were those that stated that parents were used to run the scout groups. It should be mentioned that in some schools, parents were used in the music program. This could be a solution to schools that do not have a full time music supervisor available.

Table IX reveals the opinions of the 211 principals that responded to the item calling for the greatest disadvantage, in their opinion, of a parent-aid program in the elementary school. It was found that the many comments of the principals could be categorized into three general headings.

These headings were: disadvantages found in the general area of administrators, disadvantages found among the teachers, and disadvantages with regard to parents themselves.

The administration of a parent-aid program was revealed as the most serious disadvantage of a program. Almost 50 per cent of the principals stated that such administrative duties as selection, training, chain of command, substitution, and communication would be difficult. If an error in selection was made, it was felt that the parent would be difficult to get rid of.

Parents themselves would be a big problem as indicated by the 40 per cent response in this general area. According to the supervising principals, parents argue among themselves and criticize readily. Some principals felt that parents do not have the proper skills that are needed to control large groups, do not talk at the child's vocabulary level, and are not able to act fairly in all cases.

The question arises in many parent's minds of who is legally responsible for these children? Some parents feel, too, that schools cost enough, and therefore, extra help is not required.

Some principals expressed concern that the dependability of parents is not exceptional. Confidential information, for example, might not remain confidential for long if parents were given access to it.

The third area of disadvantage was the teachers themselves. Many teachers resent parents in their classrooms and bitter personality clashes often ensue. If the teacher resents the parent, a real morale problem is the result. It was feared, too, that a division of authority could develop and discipline problems would arise. Principals felt that the teacher could lose contact with the child causing

TABLE X

COMMENTS OF 199 PRINCIPALS IN RESPONSE TO THE QUESTION: IF THERE WAS JUST ONE TASK YOU COULD ASK A PARENT TO DO IN CONNECTION WITH THE PARENT-AID PROGRAM, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

Task	Per Cent
Lunch program: supervision and collection of money	20.0
Clerical duties	19.0
Field trips-excursions	10.5
Lecture-resource persons	10.5
Playground-recreation supervision	9.0
Better home cooperation	7.5
Library program	7.0
Parties, dances, special events	6.0
Bus supervision	4.0
Club advisors	2.0
School paper	0.5
Teacher aides	0.5

199 respondees contributed 226 comments, with 17 supervising principals committing the item.

serious problems.

Table X is a compilation of what 199 principals stated in reply to the question, concerning the one task the principal would ask the parent to do in connection with a parent-aid program, if only one was possible. There were 226 tasks reported; these tasks were condensed into twelve general jobs principals would like parents to do. At the top of the list was the high per cent of principals, 20 per cent, that stated that the one task they would have parents do would be to work during the lunch hour. Teachers need a break as do most workers, and the principal would like to provide that break.

Also high on the list, would be jobs to free the teacher from nonprofessional tasks. For example, almost 20 per cent of those that replied stated that the one job they would have parents do would be clerical duties of some kind.

Each of the following had about a ten per cent response. These were the utilization of parents to work as resource persons, field trip helpers, and playground supervisors.

TABLE XI

REPORT OF 216 PRINCIPALS IN RESPONSE TO THE QUESTION: WHAT IS THE ESTABLISHED POLICY, IF ANY, IN YOUR SCHOOL DISTRICT CONCERNING PARENT-AID PROGRAMS?

Policy	Per Cent
Established by central office	26
Established by principal	11
No policy	59
No reply	4

TABLE XII

REACTIONS OF 211 PRINCIPALS, AS PER CENTS, TO THE QUESTION: IF YOU HAVE A PARENT-AID PROGRAM AT THE PRESENT TIME, ARE YOU HAPPY WITH IT?

Reply	Per Cent
Yes	20
Happy, with limited program	22
No	6
Does not apply--no program	52

There were 211 replies to this question. 5 did not answer this item.

Getting very little attention were workers for the school newspaper, and help in the form of teaching aides.

Noteworthy was the almost ten per cent that stated that wanted to see the parent do more in improving the school-home relationship, and to see to it that their children get to school clean, and on time.

Table XI was the report of 216 supervising principals regarding the policy that is established in their school district. The replies to this question indicate that there was no policy of any kind in 59 per cent of the schools. In another 10 per cent of the schools, the principal sets the policy, leaving little more than a fourth of the schools where policy is set by the central office. This indicates that policy, at best, is probably very general.

If a parent-aid program was in operation, was the principal happy with it? Table XII reveals the reactions of 211 principals to this question. For those using parent-aid in some respect, the result was overwhelming.

Eighty-eight per cent indicated that they were happy with the program. Only 12 per cent stated that they were unhappy with the program.

TABLE XIII

FURTHER COMMENTS OF 95 PRINCIPALS
REGARDING THE PARENT-AID PROGRAM

Comment	Per Cent
The school and staff is benefited by a good parent-aid program	17.9
Selection of parents make the program difficult. Parents are difficult to control, gossip about children, and are not adequately prepared.	14.5
In a successful parent-aid program, rigid control and screening of parents is a must.	10.9
Parent-aid is not practical.	17.0
Parents must understand their role in the parent-aid program.	14.1
Have teachers do the extras, but pay them more.	8.6
A good program is good public relations.	4.9
Parents should exert more effort in doing worthwhile community projects, less in the schools.	4.0
Teachers do not want parents in the classroom.	3.4
Parents can do a good job in the academic areas.	3.2
Parent-aid is usually of poor quality and tends to cheapen education.	1.5

Table XIII notes the further comments made by any principal that desired to add to the questionnaire. A total of 95 principals felt that further comments were necessary.

Almost 20 per cent of those responding, felt that a school is greatly benefited by a parent-aid program. On the other hand, an almost like number felt that any such program was not practical, and that parent-aid is usually of cheap quality and lowers educational standards.

The greatest disadvantage, many felt, was in the selection of proper parents. This was the key to the program and if handled properly, good results could be obtained. A good parent-aid program is good public relations; it broadens the child's outlook and gives the teacher time to revitalize his approach.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study was to determine to what extent the elementary schools of Massachusetts were using parents to aid in the educational growth of the children in the school. And if aid had been given, what had proven most successful?

An instrument was constructed that collected data on:

1. Attitudes of supervising principals with regard to parent-aid.
2. Current practice with regard to eighteen items related to a parent-aid program.

CONCLUSIONS

The replies to items in the questionnaire make possible the following conclusions:

1. About half of the elementary supervising principals feel that parent-aid would not be practical.
2. Using parents in connection with field trips and excursions is, as might be expected, very popular in Massachusetts elementary schools.
3. Approximately half of those principals using parent-aid, at the present time, use parents for classroom parties and extra-curricular activities.

4. The incidence of failure with regard to parent-aid program has been very small.
5. Although not used to any great extent, at the present time, principals feel that more should be done with the use of parents as lecture-resource persons and to give demonstrations.
6. Strong feeling against the use of parents as classroom aides was made clear.
7. There are few situations that use parents in the audio-visual area with the majority of principals strongly against use of parents in this respect.
8. There are a wide range of club activities easily adapted to parent leadership.
9. Wider use of parents for club leadership posts was indicated as desirable.
10. Most principals are unaware of the need and opportunities for parent-aid programs.
11. Principals feel that the disadvantages to parent participation would be great, especially in the area of administration. Difficulties would arise with such administrative tasks as selection, training, communication, defining areas of responsibility, and finding substitutes.
12. The parents, themselves, could create many serious problems. In the opinion of the supervising principals, parents tend to criticize each other, the teachers, and the school administration. It was felt that often times parents are not dependable, lack proper background, use poor judgment, and do not practice the ethics of good education.
13. It was felt by many principals that teachers and parents do not always cooperate to the extent that is necessary. Because of personality differ-

ences, parents assuming too much responsibility, discipline problems, and others, teachers resent parent interference. Teacher attitude toward parent-aid would be a determining factor in any parent-aid program.

14. A majority of principals felt that if there was just one job that they could ask a parent to do, it would be for the purpose of relieving the classroom teacher, giving the teacher a sorely needed break during the school day.
15. Some of the tasks asked of parents in connection with a parent-aid program would be, the collection of money, taking attendance, clerical duties, normally associated with the classroom teacher, and noon and recess supervision.
16. In most elementary schools and their school districts, there is no policy with regard to parent-aid. Principals are given a free hand in determining the extent of parent participation in their own situation.
17. Almost all of the principals that have parent-aid programs of some kind expressed the feeling that parent-aid is good and does benefit the school and staff.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The conclusions formed bring forth a number of recommendations. These that follow are offered as suggestions for improving or developing a parent-aid program.

1. That an effort be made to develop and maintain data on parent's talent available to the school staff.
2. An interest finder, a questionnaire of sorts, developed to find out what, who, when, and where

this reservoir of community resource is.

3. That the objectives of a parent-aid program be made clear to parents and teachers. A method should be devised of informing parents the real purposes of elementary education.
4. That principals should be trained in the organization and maintenance of a parent-aid program. There is too much indefinite arranging of parent-aid. The needs of the school should be carefully considered before a program is set.
5. Every elementary school principal should give serious consideration to the development of a parent-aid program in his school.
6. Where parent participation is now in practice, steps should be taken to increase the program.
7. The principal has to assume the position of leadership. A program of education and training of parents for the improvement of the elementary program should take place.
8. Teachers should be made to see the value of parent assistance.
9. Parents should be made aware of the valuable contributions that they could make to the school.
10. P.T.A. cooperation should be solicited.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

After a study has been completed, a certain number of weaknesses become evident and methods of improvement become apparent.

One of the obvious drawbacks of the study was that

the instrument did not allow the principal to indicate the extent of parent-aid. The instrument asked the principal to indicate whether or not he or she had had experience with parent-aid and did not ask how much experience. For example, the supervising principal who indicated experiences with the use of parent-aid in the area of resource persons could not reveal how much aid was given.

The principal was given the opportunity to check undecided to eighteen items relating to a parent-aid program. A high response to this item was not expected. Perhaps many principals used this response as an escape against committing themselves with regard to parent-aid.

The term, "parent-aid", was not defined. This turned out to be a disadvantage because many of the principals became confused. They did not know whether or not these parent helpers were to be paid or not. This misunderstanding, no doubt, influenced many of the responses to the items.

Part two of the questionnaire consisted of several open-ended questions. The response to these items might have been better if they had been multiple choice items.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

There has been little or no research in Massachusetts on parent-aid programs. Almost any phase of the program and its activities would be worthy of investigation and study.

The following suggestions are made:

1. Study a particular situation where parent-aid has been successful in comparison with a situation where parent-aid has failed.
2. A study made to evaluate a certain parent-aid program. The reasons behind success or failure as the case may be.
3. A study of the leadership qualities needed to administer a successful program.
4. A study of the effectiveness of parent-aid.
5. A survey of teacher's attitudes with regard to parent-aid.
6. A study of parent's attitudes with regard to parent-aid.
7. A follow-up survey, using the same instrument, to determine the trend of parent participation in Massachusetts elementary schools.
8. An analysis of the training, intelligence, and background needed for a parent to be successful in connection with parent-aid.
9. A study of the superintendent's and school board's attitudes with regard to parent-aid.

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APPENDIX

There is much discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of the utilization of a parent-aid program in the elementary schools. Some administrators advocate such a program, some have not tried it, and others are very much against it. What is your feeling, as an administrator, on this problem? Your cooperation in filling out this questionnaire will help determine attitudes of principals and actual practices toward parent-aid programs in Massachusetts.

1. In your opinion, what is the greatest disadvantage of a parent-aid program in the elementary school?

2. If there was just one task you could ask parents to do in connection with the parent-aid program, what would it be?

3. What is the established policy, if any, in your school district concerning parent-aid programs?

4. If you have a parent-aid program at the present time, are you happy with it?

5. Since this questionnaire is being sent to a random sample of all Massachusetts principals, there are many it will not reach. Can you give us the names of any principals and schools where you know parent-aid is being used?

6. Any further comments you want to make?

A PARENT-AID PROGRAM IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Please check the following items in relation to your own school:

- A: Parent-aid is being used at the present time.
- B: Parent-aid was used, but was found unsuccessful.
- C: Parent-aid is not being used, but its use would be desirable.
- D: Parent-aid would not be practical in your specific situation.
- E: You are undecided.

The use of parents in connection with:

	A	B	C	D	E
1. Bus duties	(1) ...	...	....	...	...
2. Audio-visual	(2) ...	...	...	...	...
3. Hot lunch program	(3) ...	...	...	...	...
4. Library	(4) ...	...	...	...	...
5. Recreation	(5) ...	...	...	...	...
6. Lectures-resource persons	(6) ...	...	...	...	...
7. Demonstrations	(7) ...	...	...	...	...
8. Classroom parties	(8) ...	...	...	...	...
9. Extracurricular, i.e. dances	(9) ...	...	...	...	...
10. Playground supervision	(10) ...	...	...	...	...
11. Field trips and excursions	(11) ...	...	...	...	...
12. Sports program	(12) ...	...	...	...	...
13. Traffic patrol	(13) ...	...	...	...	...
14. Safety and health	(14) ...	...	...	...	...
15. School newspaper	(15) ...	...	...	...	...
16. Clerical work	(16) ...	...	...	...	...
17. Classroom teaching	(17) ...	...	...	...	...
18. Clubs, i.e. Aviation, Science (list below)	(18)				
a.	(a) ...	...	...	...	...
b.	(b) ...	...	...	...	...
c.	(c) ...	...	...	...	...
19. Others (list below)	(19)				
a.	(a) ...	...	...	...	...
b.	(b) ...	...	...	...	...