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A study of various factors effecting the monthly meeting programs of parent-teacher associations in Massachusetts

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Thesis

A STUDY OF VARIOUS FACTORS EFFECTING THE MONTHLY MEETING
PROGRAMS OF PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATIONS IN MASSACHUSETTS

Submitted by

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND ITS JUSTIFICATION

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to survey and analyze some of the factors that effect the monthly meeting programs of the Parent-Teacher Association groups in Massachusetts. In doing this, the following matters were given consideration:

1. Adherence to the program proposals as indicated in the major objectives of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers,
2. Scope of membership,
3. Attendance at monthly meetings,
4. Types of programs presented at monthly meetings,
5. Participation of men and teachers in the various groups, and
6. Cooperation of administrative bodies in the planning of programs.

Definition of Terms

Groups or units refer to the local PTA organizations.

By program proposals, reference is made to the major objectives of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers. These are available to all groups through the publications.

Attendance at meetings requires some sort of figures, estimates, or opinions on the number of members who actually attend the meetings of local units.

Types of monthly meeting programs mean the various kinds of activities and presentations at the regular meetings.

The participation of teachers and men refer to the amount of activity by them in the affairs of the local group.

An opinion was sought to indicate the amount of cooperation that is given on program planning by the local school boards, principals, and superintendents.

This study included all the Parent-Teacher Association groups in Massachusetts that were active from September 1, 1946 through June 30, 1947. All of these units received a questionnaire. Copies of programs were requested from all. In addition, conferences and interviews were held with state and local officers.

Justification of the Problem

It is readily admitted by most PTA leaders that attendance at monthly meetings is somewhat of a problem. Nevertheless, no one in the state seems to have an accurate picture of attendance. There are no attendance records apparently submitted to the state office.

There is some question of the value of certain types of meetings. There is, however, no clear information about meeting programs. No survey or study has been made of them.

Administrative officers in our schools are frequently called upon to advise and guide local PTA units. The matter of organizing a program is often delegated to them. Any study that would assist in evaluating what is being offered would be of help to these officials.

There is apparently no concrete evidence of the degree to which the local groups follow the suggestions of the national office on the matter of objectives and how to achieve them through the monthly meetings. There is a need for information on this.

Since the word "parents" denotes men and women, we should be concerned with the amount of participation by the male group. Attending a few meetings selected at random indicates that men are not good attenders. There is a need for information before a strenuous attempt can be made to make it truly a parents' organization. To a degree this also applies to teachers. Just how active are our teachers in the local associations? At present there is no definite information on this.

The state office of the Massachusetts Parent-Teacher Association felt strongly the need of such a

study, and has approved this survey and given definite assistance in making it possible. Use of it will be made by the state organization.

Assumptions

The leaders in PTA work are for the most part keenly interested in school problems and needs. They realize the value of the PTA in being an instrument for the betterment of education and know that an improvement of the organization will make goals more easily attained. It may be assumed, therefore, that the opinions given were uncolored and free from bias. No individual will be benefited or harmed by the conclusions reached and it was reasonable to believe that the answers to the questions were free from personal ambitions and prejudices.

The state office reveals that very few groups keep accurate attendance records. Information was undoubtedly based on estimates. It was necessary to depend on the genuine interest of the officers completing the questionnaires in order to give attendance figures any great value.

It was assumed that all who answered the questions and inquiries realized that good meetings are necessary to bring out membership and that only through good attendance can objectives be reached. It may be reasoned,

therefore, that the information secured was accurate, for the people giving it were concerned with knowing of weaknesses and means of securing improvement.

The fact that this was the first study of such a nature in Massachusetts Parent-Teacher Association was of importance in securing good response.

Limitations to the Study

The questionnaire was sent to all PTA units in Massachusetts. There was no sampling process. Every attempt was made to see that all geographical sections of the state were represented when tabulations were made. Every type of community was represented.

In order to check on the reliability of the answers, those completing the questionnaire were asked to sign it and a request was made to have a committee of past and present officers meet to compile the answers. In addition, conferences with state and local officers were held in an effort to eliminate inaccuracy.

No accurate attendance figures are available and much of the information on this depended on estimates and opinions.

This study was limited to the school year 1946-1947. It may be that more accurate information may have been available in other years or will be in some future year. This particular school year, however, appeared to be the first since the end of the war to

approach some degree of normalcy. It was desirable to take a single year rather than a group of two or three since it is customary for the president to serve only one year.

It must constantly be kept in mind that the leadership of the local units is entirely voluntary and that accurate records are difficult to maintain.

Restatement of the Problem

This is a study of the PTA units in Massachusetts for the year 1946-1947. It was done for the purpose of securing information on attendance, membership, programs, and participation of men and teachers; and to draw whatever conclusions and recommendations that were possible.

CHAPTER II
BACKGROUND OF RESEARCH

Previous Studies of the Parent-Teacher Association

Since its founding in 1897, much has been written about the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, more commonly called the Parent-Teacher Association. Few studies, however, have been made and we are indebted to Dr. Julian E. Butterworth¹ and Dr. Elmer S. Holbeck² for much of the real research.

Through its many publications, the national association offers much information and guidance. However, statistics on many phases of the organization are lacking. There are undoubtedly many reasons for this. Certainly the turnover in membership and leaders make for many difficulties. There is also the problem of much voluntary personnel which handicaps

¹Butterworth, Julian E., The Parent-Teacher Association and Its Work, New York, Macmillan Company, 1928.

²Holbeck, Elmer S., An Analysis of the Activities and Potentialities for Achievement of the Parent-Teacher Association with Recommendations, Teacher's College, Columbia University, New York, 1934.

the acquiring of facts and information. Perhaps, too, there has not been enough attention given to the gathering of statistics and information. The writer has not found many real studies of the PTA.

Membership in Massachusetts

Membership facts are clear up to a certain point. In the June 1947 issue of the National Parent-Teacher, Massachusetts showed over 57,000 members. There was no breakdown of this to show the number of women, men, and teachers. The state office reported there was no accurate information available on this. It would seem that this might be a possible figure to secure each year at the time of membership drives.

Number of Men and Number of Teachers in PTA

In 1945, the male membership for the entire county was estimated at 118,455¹. No mention was made of the number of teachers belonging.

Holbeck², in his study of ten groups, found that almost all teachers were members, and that about 20 per cent of the membership consisted of men. He stated that this lack of men was a real weakness of the organ-

¹National Congress of Parents and Teachers, Proceedings for 1945, Chicago, Illinois, vol.49,p.536

²Ibid, p. 61

ization. Dr. Butterworth's¹ statistics indicated this same situation. Neither appeared to have national figures on men or teachers.

Attendance at Meetings

To get the greatest value out of membership in any type of organization, it is essential that there be good attendance at meetings. Meetings are the best medium for putting across the purposes of the association and to keep enthusiasm high. Holbeck² made an attempt to secure some information on this matter. In the ten groups that he studies in detail, he found a range from 40 per cent to 70 per cent membership attendance. The average for the ten groups was 57 per cent of the members attending the meetings. The writer believes this figure would be a high one for Massachusetts. Attendance by him at fifteen meetings of five different groups would place the average at about 35 per cent. This was, however, a limited sampling and may not have held up under more observations.

Programs of the Monthly Meetings

Dr. Holbeck³ had this to say about the program at meetings:

"The program of the local Parent-Teacher

¹op cit, p. 94

²op cit, p. 95

³op cit, p. 95

Association determines the social significance of the organization, its attendance, and its membership. Since this is so, the program is deserving of more serious consideration than has been given to it in the past. That the present method of program-making is demonstrably unsatisfactory has been shown in the study of Association activity and results obtained and by the testimony of over one hundred Association presidents who experience difficulty in program-planning. The average program is formal and stereotyped, consisting of a number of unplanned and unrelated activities, whereas it should be conceived as an organization plan including the proper activities to meet the demands of the home, school, and community as well as to further the proposed functions and purposes of the organization."

It cannot be said that the national organization does nothing about assisting in planning worthwhile programs. The objectives are repeated in the many publications and there is one piece of literature published by the National Congress of Parents and Teachers entitled Program Planning. In it are contained definite guides for each group to follow in arranging meetings.

The matter of developing meetings that are worthwhile and that will produce a good percentage of membership is difficult. Perhaps there is a tendency to have too many meetings. Butterworth¹ states:

"A few meetings or activities, wisely planned and involving vital local problems, are worth far more than frequent meetings

¹op cit, p. 95

carried out in a slipshod, half-hearted manner."

Butterworth¹ found that only 19 per cent of the units in his survey of 550 developed the year's program early in the year and but 1 per cent made definite use of survey material. He stated that 45 per cent prepared the program just before presentation. His research indicates that there is not sufficient time or thought given to program planning.

Douglas S. Ward² declared that most PTA groups were weak in the preparation of meeting programs. He stated that meetings were too social and that the group never settled down to getting busy about the important items. He suggested breaking into smaller units in order to secure good parent-teacher contacts and a realization of the task to be accomplished.

The authors³ of New Schools for a New Culture have clearly indicated that general programs will attract only those who have time to go to meetings of any sort. To get good PTA attendance it is necessary that meetings be planned around the needs of the

¹op cit, p. 79

²Ward, Douglas S., "What's Wrong with the PTA?", Clearing House, vol. 13, No. 5, January 1939. pp. 267-268.

³MacConnell, Charles M., Melby, Ernest O., and Arndt, Christian O., Harper Brothers, New York, 1943, p. 110. New Schools for a New Culture.

parents and students in the local situation.

In his general criticism, Dr. Holbeck¹ has said:

"Too often entertainments, social intercourse, and unrelated program activities have comprised the plan of work outlined by local association to the virtual exclusion of worthwhile educational material and activities."

The national organization clearly indicates the necessity of careful planning and thought and suggests that the program for the year be available in written form in the fall.² Miss Alice Sowers³ agrees that the program must be built around the needs of the community. Dr. Holbeck⁴ pointed out that this might be carried out through a unit of work system.

It should be noted, however, that a clear understanding of the objectives of the organization is necessary if good programming is to be achieved. It was the feeling of Holbeck⁵ that the purposes needed more defining.

In his study of the meeting, Dr. Butterworth⁶ divided the programs into "topics" and entertainment.

¹op cit, pp. 96-97

²National Congress of Parents and Teachers, The PTA Primer, Chicago, 1947, p. 21.

³National Congress of Parents and Teachers, The Parent-Teacher Organization Chicago, 1944, p. 56.

⁴op cit, p. 98

⁵op cit, p. 59

⁶op cit, pp. 17-24

Under "topics", he classified meetings that called for speakers, discussions, and lectures. They comprised the more intellectual phases of the programs. After examining 2879 programs, he found 4097 entertainment features and 5646 "topics". He declared himself surprised to find that 25.6 per cent of all types of programs was furnished by school children.

Teacher Participation in PTA Activities

The writer has found through personal experience that there are two very distinct views on teacher participation in PTA affairs. A great many teachers believe that the local PTA is an organization of parents and teachers, but that after a project or activity is decided upon it becomes the responsibility of the teachers to carry it on. The task is thrust upon them. Many lay members of the organization are of the opinion that teachers are not interested as much as they should be and shirk from taking an active part in affairs.

Holbeck¹ felt that the teachers should contribute in every way possible to assist the PTA to further its aims and objectives. Butterworth², however, declared that teachers should be active, but not serve too

¹op cit, p. 99

²op cit, pp. 103-106

frequently as officers or chairman. He felt they would be overburdened by the tasks put upon them.

The writer discussed this matter with all the teachers in two schools having PTA units and also with about seventy-five other teachers representing possibly between fifty and sixty-five schools, and it was a prevailing opinion that PTA organizations tend to place too many duties on the teacher membership.

Arthur B. Moehlman¹ suggested that teachers hold no offices or chairmanships. He believes that if they were represented on all committees they would feel freer to express opinions and would be better able to guide the activities.

The 1946 Proceedings contains a report on teacher participation². The statement is made that teachers are too busy to attend meetings that are too full of talk and in which too little is accomplished. Meetings are frequently held in the afternoons too soon after school dismissal. This report also contains the belief that teachers feel parents are unjustly critical and that the organization should show clearly how it is behind better schools.

¹Moehlman, Arthur B., Social Interpretation, New York, D. Appleton-Century Company, 1938, pp. 332-333

²National Congress of Parents and Teachers, Proceedings for 1946, vol. 50 p. 100

Cubberley¹ presents another viewpoint:

"The trouble with so many so-called troublesome PTA's is that they are not parent-teacher associations. Too often parents desire to meet and cooperate; but the teacher, feeling that they have done their fair share of school work for the day, do not remain and in consequence neglect their best opportunity to meet and know the parents of their children."

Since the relationship between parents and teachers is so vital if the PTA is to accomplish its objectives, it may be well to continue with one more opinion.

J. Erle Grinnell has written:²

"Parent-teacher meetings afford further opportunity for teachers to meet and talk with parents at school. The atmosphere is conducive to friendly discussion of school issues. At lunch afterward or while waiting for the meeting to start, teachers may chat informally with parents on school problems or plans or a teacher may seek out a father or mother to talk of the son's improvement in English or conduct. Too often such is not the case. Teachers "clique" with other teachers and parents are naturally hesitant to break into the group to single out a teacher or for general discussion. The willingness or unwillingness of the teacher to assume his proper responsibility toward parents is nowhere more apparent than in the Parent-Teacher meetings. Parents are quick enough to sense and respond to friendly cooperative teachers. On the other hand, they will not long remain interested in the organization if teachers

¹Cubberley, Ellwood F., The Principal and His School, New York, Houghton-Mifflin Company, 1923, p. 551

²Grinnell, J. Erle, Interpreting the Public Schools, New York, McGraw-Hill Company, 1937, p.252.

confine their activities mainly to an occasional report or a few remarks made during the formal part of the meeting. The writer cannot but believe that teachers who neglect PTA's or who let them die through lack of interest are not greatly interested in winning understanding and support of the school."

The Place of Men in the PTA

The national organization has long recognized the necessity of getting the men active in the various phases of PTA work. Many suggestions have been put forth¹. Observation, however, indicates that men are not very active and their attendance is small and infrequent. Special evenings seem to have some effect on getting them out, and many groups strive to build men into the organization through placing them on committees or electing them to offices. This is apparently a problem in most units and is worthy of considerable thought and planning. There is little available data on the part of men in PTA.

Cooperation from School Officials

When Cubberley² stated that the PTA could be a nuisance or a unit for great influence, he undoubtedly had in mind the reaction that some school administrators

¹National Congress of Parents and Teachers, Program Planning, Chicago, 1946, p. 28

²Cubberley, Ellwood P., An Introduction to the Study of Education, New York, Houghton-Mifflin, 1925, p. 345.

have toward PTA groups. While it is difficult to get school leaders who are known to be unfriendly to the organization to readily admit their feelings, it is, nevertheless, a fact that there are a good number in the profession who do not look upon the association favorably. Butterworth¹ sent an inquiry to 797 officials but received less than a 50 per cent return. He asked them if they thought the local unit should be discontinued. Two percent favored discontinuing and 28 per cent favored continuing if redirected in certain ways.

Holbeck² felt that in its early history the PTA was not accepted by educators and that it was looked upon with considerable suspicion. He decided as a result of his study that this had changed and that most administrators looked upon local units with the belief that they were in existence for the same purpose as the school men--better education.

The writer's experiences with administrators and Parent-Teacher Association leaders cause him to believe that there is a very friendly spirit in existence and that cooperation is the rule rather than the

¹op cit., p. 39

²op cit., p. 95

exception. It is admitted, however, that there still exists on both sides a number of dissatisfied individuals. There are undoubtedly some sad incidents behind these instances.

Purpose of This Chapter

This chapter has been confined to research and writings on the various phases of the Parent-Teacher Association under observation in this study. While it has been necessary to cover much of the history of the organization and to investigate many of the past and present problems, no attempt has been made to summarize any of that work. This chapter was confined to the problems to be investigated.

CHAPTER III

PROCEDURE

Units to be Surveyed

At the time this study was started there were 484 PTA groups in Massachusetts. It was determined to include all in the study that were in operation on September 1, 1946 through June 30, 1947.

Instrument for Securing Material

In order to contact all the groups, it was decided to develop a questionnaire to be mailed to each unit.

The building of the questionnaire covered a period of approximately ten weeks. During that time questions were sifted as advice and guidance from many sources were secured. A study of publications of the national organization and of previous research was influential in determining what should be included. Conferences with state and local officials and with educators were also of value in building the instrument.

The three page questionnaire contained twenty-eight questions, making possible sixty-three responses.

The question covered only matters concerning attendance, membership, meeting programs, teacher participation, activity of men, and cooperation of school officials. No attempt was made to cover phases of PTA not connected with the study.

The first three questions covered membership and the type of PTA's involved. An attempt was made to find the total members involved and a breakdown of that membership into men, women, and teachers. Since PTA units represent a single school or a group of schools, it was necessary to make provisions to record this representation. Space was provided for the name of the community so that geographical division could be recognized and also so that the population limitations could be fixed. The first three questions and space for the name of the community therefore provided the information necessary to record representation based on membership, school population, geographical divisions, town and city population, and PTA school affiliation. Every effort was made to secure adequate representation.

In order to develop a question on types of programs, considerable reading and research was done on programs known to have been used. Twenty broad program classifications were finally devised. In addition, provision was made to write in any that did

not fit into the selected types. The question called for a check of the number of times each was used, and a ranking of attendance in two different ways.

Questions 10 through 20 carried on the research on meeting programs. These questions covered such matters as program committees, survey of program interests, use of a program theme, adherence to the objectives of the national organization and understanding of them, evaluation of the year's program, and methods of evaluation. It was felt that these questions would bring out some information on the thought and care given to program planning as well as a description of the actual programs.

Attendance information was planned to be secured in question five through ten. Question six asked for an opinion on the matter of PTA attendance. Other questions were used to determine the number of meetings held yearly, the most popular meeting night, and the recording of attendance.

Questions 21, 22, and 23 were used in an effort to secure information on male participation. The questions were built for the most part around the writer's experiences in several PTA's. The purpose of these questions was to discover methods used to

gain male attendance. It was known that many units have an annual meeting for men and considerable emphasis was placed on that method of securing participation. Room, however, was left for the record of other ways.

In order to determine teacher participation, several questions were included on activities in which there might well be an opportunity for teachers to take part. These included committee assignments on refreshments and office-holding participation. Opportunity was given to list activities in which the teachers might join with the parents.

The last question, number twenty-eight, called for estimates on cooperation received in program planning from principals, superintendents, and school boards. Without cooperation from school administration meeting programs may well work under a serious handicap. This question was included in order to determine if the necessary cooperation was in existence.

Manner of Presenting the Instrument

The first step in presenting the study was made at the state PTA convention held in Boston in October 1947. Announcement of it was made to the general assembly with an explanation of its purpose and a

plea for the cooperation of all local units. At about this same time, notice of the study was made in the PTA Bulletin which reached all groups. That also requested prompt attention to the answering of the questionnaire when it was received.

The questionnaire was mailed to all of the 484 units in Massachusetts on November 1, 1947 with an accompanying letter. The addressing of the envelopes was done by the state PTA office in order to assure an accurate mailing. All letters went out first class and the return envelope contained first class postage.

Follow-Up of Mailing

The usual method of follow-up by card or letter was not used. In the middle of December, contact with the state president was made and a report of the number of replies given. Through the state office notices were given to the council presidents throughout the state urging them to request delinquent units to fill in and forward the questionnaires. This had a definite effect, and later on it was repeated. There were, therefore, two attempts made in addition to the original request to secure replies. It was believed that these personal contacts by district leaders would be more beneficial than the post card or

letter. A twenty percent increase was secured over the response to the original mailing. It is, of course, not possible to declare if the type of follow-up used brought better results than would have been secured if the more traditional method had been used. It is the opinion of the writer that the method used was the better of the two in this particular instance. This opinion is supported to a degree by statements from the state office personnel that the response to this questionnaire far exceeded returns from much shorter inquiries sent out by that office.

Other Means for Securing Information

Each PTA unit was requested to send a copy of the 1946-1947 program with the questionnaire. It can be said that this did not meet with any success. Less than a dozen groups sent a copy of their programs. It may be that there was none available because the request came after the season was over.

Numerous visits to the state PTA office were made and conferences with state leaders on various phases of the study. These produced much information. The writer discussed all phases of the questionnaire with local leaders and with school administrators at every opportunity.

Validity and Reliability

Conferences with state officials indicated that most groups do not keep accurate records. It was decided, therefore, that the replies to a great many questions would be opinions of those answering. In order to eliminate guess work as much as possible, it was suggested in the accompanying letter that the questionnaire be filled out when several past or present officers could get together for that purpose. Space was provided for the signatures of those who completed the form.

Consultation with local officers was attempted in order to make a check on the replies. This was not too successful due primarily to the difficulty of reaching these people.

Units were selected at random from the questionnaires returned and visits to meetings planned. Winter driving conditions did not always make these possible. In a good number of instances, the people who had signed the questionnaire were not present at the meeting the writer attended. Many were no longer active in local affairs. When the individuals were contacted, the interviews did not prove to be of any great gain. The typical questionnaire was signed by

three and one third past or present officers; and, unless the check could be made in the presence of all of the people who determined the answers, the interviews had a very limited value. Monroe¹ has stated "It is seldom feasible to check the accuracy of questionnaire data." The writer's experiences cause him to agree with that statement.

In order not to contain information from units that were not in complete operation from September 1, 1946 through June 30, 1947, a check was made with the state office and those units which had replied but which were not active during the period under study were eliminated.

The many notices to the various groups had stressed the need for an accurate response and since there would be nothing to be gained in any way for giving other than the correct information, it may well be assumed that the replies are for the most part uncolored.

Breakdown of Statistics

It is readily seen that FTA groups in the cities may well function differently than those in less densely populated areas. To be of value, many of the

¹Monroe, Walter S., Encyclopedia of Educational Research, New York, Macmillian Co., 1941, p.876.

replies should be studied and compared under similar conditions and not taken as a single group with no apparent differences. The questionnaires were, therefore divided into three groups:

1. Cities
2. Towns of more than 5000 population and over
3. Towns of less than 5000 population

This is the division frequently used by the Massachusetts Department of Education when statistics are compiled.

A further breakdown was achieved by dividing the returns from the PTA's representing just one school from those representing more than one school. This division was used in only certain types of **questions**.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATIONS OF THE STUDY

Scope of the Study in PTA Units, Territory, Membership, and School Enrollment

Any study should strive for as complete a representation as is possible. In this particular work, it was desirable to secure a good representation of the total number of PTA groups in existence during the period for which the survey was conducted. There were 484 active units in Massachusetts when the questionnaire was mailed; all received an inquiry. A check with the state office, however, showed that 420 of these were active during the school year 1946-1947, the period for which the study was made. This gave a return of 39.8 per cent. This was a much greater representation of the groups than is customary to receive from inquiries sent out by the state PTA office.

Tables II and III indicate community and geographical representation. There were 182 communities in Massachusetts with PTA units in operation during the 1946-1947 school year. An even 100 of these are

represented in the returns. In other words, 54.9 per cent of these communities replied. Of the 36 cities in Massachusetts, 25 have PTA organizations and responses were secured from 24 of them. This 96 per cent was unusually high and gave a most excellent representation from cities. Towns with a population of more than 5000 sent in 61 questionnaires. There are 58 towns in Massachusetts this size with PTA groups and 36, or 63 per cent, replied to the inquiry. The smallest returns came from towns with a population of less than 5000. Ninety-nine towns of that size have units and replies came from 40 of them. This was a 40.4 per cent representation. While this is not high from that population classification, the returns were nicely scattered throughout the counties.

TABLE I: RETURNS OF QUESTIONNAIRES

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Mailed to Qualified Units	420	100
Returned Useable	167	39.8
Returned Blank	5	1.2
Total Return	172	41.0

Table III shows the excellent distribution by counties. Only two counties are not included in the survey and there was justification for their absence.

At the time the questionnaires were mailed, the state PTA office declared there were no active units in those counties. It is very apparent that geographically the state was well covered.

TABLE II: DISTRIBUTION OF RETURNS

	Cities		Towns Over 5000		Towns Under 5000		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number in State	39		91		221			
Number with PTA Units	25		58		99		182	
Number with PTA's Replying	24	96	56	63.1	40	40.4	100	54.9
Number of Units Replying	66		61		40		167	

TABLE III: NUMBER OF REPLIES BY COUNTIES

	Cities	Over 5000	Under 5000	Total
Barnstable	0	1	0	1
Berkshire	2	1	4	7
Bristol	11	7	2	20
Dukes	0	0	0	0
Essex	9	9	6	24
Franklin	0	5	8	13
Hampden	14	6	3	23
Hampshire	0	2	1	3
Middlesex	14	16	4	34
Nantucket	0	0	0	0
Norfolk	0	8	2	10
Plymouth	0	3	2	5
Suffolk	2	0	0	2
Worcester	14	3	8	25
Total Returns Useable	66	61	40	167

In Table IV, a breakdown of the membership represented in the returns is tabulated. On December 1, 1947, the PTA membership in Massachusetts as recorded in the National Parent-Teacher was 57,856. The 21,726 represented in the study is 37.6 per cent of the total. The 1553 teachers make up 7.2 per cent of the members. There are 15,758 women counted in the questionnaires and 5968 men. This gives a percentage of 72.7 women and 27.3 men. The 37.6 per cent of membership represented compares favorably with the 39.8 per cent of the total number of units replying.

TABLE IV: MEMBERSHIP REPRESENTED

	<u>Cities</u>	<u>Over 5000</u>	<u>Under 5000</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Per Cent</u>
Women	6667	6324	2767	15758	72.7
Men	2268	2909	791	5968	27.3
Total	<u>8935</u>	<u>9233</u>	<u>3558</u>	<u>21726</u>	<u>100.0</u>
Teachers	599	623	331	1553	7.2

The figures for teachers are part of 21,726 and are not in addition to it.

The study made no attempt to draw conclusions based on school enrollments. As noted in Tables V and VI, there are 42,651 students represented by the PTA's in the survey. Roughly 80 per cent came from the cities and towns over 5000. Slightly less than 60 per cent

of these students were enrolled in schools sponsoring a PTA unit solely for the particular school. No special significance was attached to the student enrollment represented in the survey. The smallest school sponsoring a PTA had but seven students. The largest number of schools uniting to sponsor a PTA organization was nine. The greatest enrollment represented was 1600 students.

TABLE V: SCHOOL ENROLLMENT IN SINGLE PTA'S

	Replies	Enrollment Range	No. Enrolled	Average Enrollment
Cities	51	24-640	12,625	245
Over 5000	43	76-600	8,858	206
Under 5000	29	7-295	3,934	135
Totals	124		25,417	

Two failed to answer this question

TABLE VI: SCHOOL ENROLLMENT IN PTA'S REPRESENTING
MORE THAN ONE SCHOOL

	Replies	School Range	Enrollment Range	No. Enrolled	Average Enrollment
Cities	9	2-5	125-1053	3,646	405
Over 5000	11	2-9	79-1600	9,293	849
Under 5000	16	2-6	60-496	4,295	269
Totals	36			17,234	

Five failed to answer this question

Many Types of Meeting Programs Are Used and Attendance Varies with Popularity

The results of question number 4 are recorded in Table VII. It is apparent that a good many people had difficulty interpreting this question and as a result it has been necessary to carefully scrutinize each return. There were nineteen blanks and there were 24 replies that were analysed as being too extreme to be of value to the study. Table VII is, therefore, based on 124 returns. A great number of those replying to this question gave incomplete answers. The column headed "Ranking for Year" indicates the number of times the various programs brought out the best attendance for the year, second best, and the third. For instance, Panel on Education Topics was judged by two units as having brought out the greatest attendance in those two groups during the year.

When the inquiry was constructed, great thought was given to this question in an effort to gain a clear picture of four elements:

1. The types of programs used,
2. The attendance rating for each type,
3. The frequency of use, and
4. The ranking in regard to attendance appeal

It was apparent that PTA groups as a whole used a wide variety of programs, and that none had any greater appeal to the population groups. In other words, the town under 5000 did not appear to use demonstration programs by elementary school children any more or less than this type of program was used in the cities. The popularity or use of programs appeared to be quite uniform.

The most frequently used monthly meeting program was one calling for an outside speaker on an educational subject. This type was used 179 times by the groups reporting. In only fourteen instances was attendance considered poor. Since no opportunity was given to consider weather or other uncontrollable factors, this figure may be considered very low. In 109 cases, attendance was considered good. In spite of the fact, however, that it was the most frequently used and ranked high in attendance value, it was placed third among all the others for bringing out the best attendance for the year. Sixteen units stated that programs calling for a speaker on educational subjects brought out the top yearly attendance.

Second in frequency of use were two types of meeting programs--entertainment and speakers on miscellane-

ous subjects. Both of these were used 107 times during the year. Only one group declared an entertainment program brought out poor attendance. This is either remarkable or failure to give that part of the question greater thought. Eleven stated poor attendance was noted when speakers on miscellaneous subjects appeared. Programs of entertainment rated second to speakers on educational subjects in the number of votes cast for good attendance; seventy-seven units so indicated. Only seven groups stated that speakers on miscellaneous subjects brought out the best attendance of the year.

Fathers' Night programs ranked third in the number of times used. A total of 105 of such meetings were held during the year by the replying groups. It rated fourth in bringing out the best attendance of the year, and 49 groups declared attendance was good. Two reported poor attendance, and 52, fair. Table XVII show that just about 50 per cent of those answering the questions conduct a special evening for fathers. Attendance at these meetings can be rated only fair and this may well be the reason that only half of the groups feel it desirable to hold such meetings.

There were 87 meetings held for the purpose of

raising money and this ranked first in producing the best attendance of the year; seventeen groups so indicated. Only one unit holding this kind of meeting declared it poorly attended. This may well have been for reasons other than the type of program. Sixty-eight of the 87 reported good attendance. It seems unnecessary to record that this sort of program is about the best for getting attendance out.

School programs, by elementary pupils, extra-curricula programs by elementary pupils, and demonstrations by elementary pupils were used 134 times and in only one instance was attendance considered poor, and 20 units stated these brought out the best attendance of the year. One hundred and seven declared the attendance was good. There seems to be no question of the popularity of this type of program involving the elementary children.

In contrast to the elementary programs, only 72 groups reported any sort of meeting involving pupils from the junior or senior high schools. However, 57 of them stated attendance was good. This is a good result for the number of attempts.

There were 75 panels conducted; fifty-seven of these were on educational subjects and 37 of that

number brought out good attendance. Seven stated poor attendance and this may be considered quite high out of the number 57. Again it must be noted that no provision was made to indicate reasons for poor attendance.

Only 28 groups used educational forums for meeting programs. Nineteen indicated attendance was good and only one noted poor attendance.

Twenty programs classifications were tested by the writer. A number of the returns added other; but except for those noted on Table VII the descriptions of the others warranted their inclusion in the writer's classifications.

Of the 842 meeting programs conducted, 340 involved students, teachers, or students and teachers. This indicates a good degree of cooperation between schools and PTA's, and most certainly is presenting an opportunity for parents to come in closer direct contact with the schools.

The 107 programs of entertainment only does not give a high percentage of the total meeting programs. It suggests, at least, that the various units are thinking along lines of education rather than social activity or recreation.

TABLE VII: MEETING PROGRAMS

Replies Used	124
Replies Rejected	24
Blanks	<u>19</u>
Total	167

Types of Meeting Programs

Panel on Educational Topics
 Panel on Current Topics
 Forum on Educational Topics
 School Program by Elementary Pupils
 School Program by Junior High Pupils
 School Programs by Senior High Pupils
 Extra-Curricula Program by Elementary Pupils
 Extra-Curricula Program by Junior High Pupils
 Extra-Curricula Program by Senior High Pupils
 Program by Elementary Teachers Only
 Program by Junior High Teachers Only
 Program by Senior High Teachers Only
 Demonstrations by Pupils and Teachers of the
 Elementary School
 Demonstration by Pupils and Teachers of the
 Junior High School
 Demonstration by Pupils and Teachers of the
 Senior High School
 Program of Entertainment Only
 Money-Raising Program
 Father's Night
 Outside Speaker on Educational Subject
 Outside Speaker on Miscellaneous Subject
 Special Suppers and Luncheons
 Receptions-Founders' Day
 Vocational School Programs
 Special Nights

o. of Times Scheduled	Attendance Rating			Ranking for the Year		
	Good	Fair	Poor	1	2	3
57	37	13	7	2	4	5
18	13	4	1	1	2	0
28	19	8	1	0	2	1
76	63	12	1	15	6	4
21	14	6	1	2	2	1
15	12	3	0	2	1	0
23	20	3	0	3	3	3
4	4	0	0	3	1	0
11	9	1	1	0	0	0
9	7	1	1	0	1	1
5	4	0	1	0	2	1
7	4	1	2	0	0	0
35	24	11	0	2	1	3
12	11	1	0	0	0	0
9	7	1	1	0	0	1
107	77	29	1	14	6	4
87	68	18	1	17	9	0
103	49	52	2	12	11	4
179	109	56	14	16	6	7
107	63	33	11	7	8	4
9	6	3	0	1	2	1
8	4	4	0	0	1	2
1	1	0	0	1	0	0
6	4	2	0	1	1	1

Fifty-two Per Cent of Members in Attendance

In Tables VIII and IX are found attendance figures for the monthly meetings. The average meeting in all types of groups brought out 76 members. The highest average appeared in towns of more than 5000 population where PTA units represented more than one school. The average is 155. The smallest attendance appears in towns under 5000 population in units representing a single school. The average is 37. Of the total membership represented in the study, 52 per cent are present at meetings. In cities where PTA is for a single school, forty-nine per cent of the members attend. In towns under 5000 where PTA represents a single school, 36 per cent of the members come to the meetings. Considering the many obstacles to being present, 52 per cent may be judged to be very good. Since the answers to Question 10 indicate that accurate attendance records are not kept by most groups, the figures in Tables VIII and IX may be subject to some questioning. Table X clearly shows that a good majority of the units do not keep attendance records. Only 56 out of 149, stated accurate records were kept. It is, therefore, admitted that any conclusions or implications on attendance are based on estimates or opinions, and, consequently,

consequently, there may be considerable error.

TABLE VIII: MEETING ATTENDANCE IN SINGLE SCHOOL PTA'S

	<u>Replies</u>	<u>Attendance Range</u>	<u>Average Attendance</u>	<u>Per Cent of Membership</u>
Cities	50	10-330	74	51
Over 5000	42	15-250	67	49
Under 5000	28	10-75	37	56
Totals	<u>120</u>			

Six failed to answer this question

TABLE IX: MEETING ATTENDANCE IN PTA'S REPRESENTING
MORE THAN ONE SCHOOL

	<u>Replies</u>	<u>Attendance Range</u>	<u>Average Attendance</u>	<u>Per cent of Membership</u>
Cities	9	35-100	67	49
Over 5000	11	34-440	155	52
Under 5000	16	12-180	56	53
Totals	<u>36</u>			

Five failed to answer this question

PTA Attendance is Considered To Be A Problem

There were 154 replies to the question on attendance as a PTA problem. Table XI indicates that about 21 per cent of those replying considered it a big problem and a slightly better per cent, 25, declared it no problem. However, the remaining 64 per cent felt it was somewhat of a problem, and it is safe to state

that a good majority are concerned about attendance at PTA meetings. It is a matter that should be given considerable attention.

TABLE X: DO YOU KEEP AN ACCURATE RECORD OF ATTENDING MEETINGS?

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Replies</u>	<u>Blanks</u>
Cities	21	39	60	6
Over 5000	20	31	51	10
Under 5000	15	23	38	2
Totals	56	93	149	18

TABLE XI: DO YOU FEEL THAT PTA ATTENDANCE IS:

- A. A big problem
- B. Somewhat of a problem
- C. No problem

	<u>A</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>Replies</u>	<u>Blanks</u>
Cities	10	37	18	65	1
Over 5000	10	29	11	50	11
Under 5000	11	18	10	39	1
Totals	31	84	39	154	13

Most Units Hold Eight Meetings A Year; Tuesday

Most Popular Night As Determined By Surveys

Securing the proper evening is important to attendance. The inquiry revealed that Tuesday night outnumbered all others in popularity. This is shown in Table XII. Only two of the 151 that replied selected Friday. Mondays and Wednesdays were about even as

second choice. Almost all units have realized the necessity of selecting a reliable evening for 82 out of 144 made a community survey to discover the least conflicting evening. Towns under 5000 were more conscientious in making this survey. This, no doubt, was based on the knowledge that there are many activities in the small towns but fewer people to support them. A few replies stated that afternoon meetings were the rule. There were not enough of these to influence the study.

TABLE XII: MEETING NIGHTS

	<u>Mon.</u>	<u>Tues.</u>	<u>Wed.</u>	<u>Thurs.</u>	<u>Fri.</u>	<u>Replies</u>	<u>Blanks</u>
Cities	21	20	10	9	0	60	6
Over 5000	12	15	14	10	0	51	10
Under 5000	6	15	10	7	2	40	0
Totals	<u>39</u>	<u>50</u>	<u>34</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>151</u>	<u>16</u>

The number of meetings held yearly may be an attendance factor although this survey does not indicate it. More than one third of the units met eight times during the year, and another third met seven or nine times. Table XIII records this information. It was an opinion of the writer that fewer meetings might induce greater attendance, but a check of the eighteen units

Meeting four or five times a year showed the attendance to be just about the same as the average of 52 per cent. The range of meeting was from two to thirteen.

TABLE XIII: NO. OF MEETINGS HELD DURING YEAR

	Replies 150												
	Blanks 17												
	Total 167												
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Cities	0	1	1	8	6	4	7	20	8	4	0	0	0
Over 5000	0	0	1	2	2	4	17	17	5	2	0	0	1
Under 5000	0	1	1	0	0	4	5	17	8	4	0	0	0
Totals	0	2	3	10	8	12	27	54	21	10	0	0	1

Range two to thirteen

Table XIV shows that a good majority of the units attempt to find out the least conflicting evening of meetings. This is particularly true in the towns under 5000 population. Almost seventy-five per cent of the replies from the towns in that population classification stated that a survey had been made. The necessity of receiving a free night is undoubtedly more apparent in the smaller towns. Towns over 5000 were equally divided on the question of this meeting night survey and in the cities the same situation exists.

TABLE XIV HAS A SURVEY BEEN MADE IN YOUR COMMUNITY
TO DETERMINE THE LEAST CONFLICTING MEETING
NIGHT?

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Replies</u>	<u>Blanks</u>
Cities	29	30	59	7
Over 5000	23	23	46	15
Under 5000	29	10	39	1
Totals	82	66	144	23

Most Units Have Programs Committees; Membership
Varies

There is no question but that PTA units see the necessity of having a program committee. Out of 153 replies, 141 stated a program committee was in existence. Table XV records these figures. Those that did not have a committee indicated that the executive committee usually was responsible for the programs.

Question 12 attempted to determine the membership of this committee, but the replies indicated a confusion in answering and a tabulation seemed inadvisable. Committees appear to range from one person to as many as twelve. A rough average indicated five women and two men on each committee, and one of these would be a teacher.

 TABLE XV: DO YOU HAVE A PROGRAM COMMITTEE?

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Replies</u>	<u>Blanks</u>
Cities	54	6	60	6
Over 5000	49	5	54	7
Under 5000	38	1	39	1
Totals	<u>141</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>153</u>	<u>14</u>

 TABLE XVI: DO YOU HAVE A PROGRAM THEME FOR THE YEAR?

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Replies</u>	<u>Blanks</u>
Cities	35	26	61	5
Over 5000	25	27	52	9
Under 5000	15	21	36	4
Totals	<u>75</u>	<u>74</u>	<u>149</u>	<u>18</u>

About One Half the Group Have A Yearly Program

Theme But Towns Under 5000 Are Weak in this Respect

In reply to Question 14, Table XVI shows that just about one half of the 149 groups replying have a program theme for the year. Only 15, however, of the 36 replies from towns under 5000 stated a theme was used. Apparently the rural communities do not feel a yearly program goal is necessary.

Little Attention Given to Learning Program Interests of Members

Table XVII indicates that there is little attention given to learning the program interests of the group, and the cities do not seem any more concerned about this

than the smaller communities. There were 146 replies to Question 15 and 100 stated no survey had recently been made to determine the program interests of the members. This would appear to be a very glaring FTA weakness.

Major Objectives of the National Organization
Given Consideration in Program Planning, and
Used Frequently as Meeting Themes, But Better
Understanding of Objectives Needed

Slightly over seventy per cent of the 143 replies to Question 16 stated that consideration was given to the objectives of the national organization when the year's program was planned. Even in the small towns, this percentage held. Table XVIII shows this.

TABLE XVII: HAS A SURVEY BEEN MADE RECENTLY TO DE-
TERMINE THE PROGRAM INTERESTS OF THE
GROUP

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Replies</u>	<u>Blanks</u>
Cities	19	41	60	6
Over 5000	13	36	49	12
Under 5000	14	23	37	3
Totals	46	100	146	21

TABLE XVIII: WERE THE MAJOR OBJECTIVES OF THE NATIONAL ORGANIZATION CONSIDERED WHEN THE YEAR'S PROGRAM WAS DETERMINED?

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Replies</u>	<u>Blanks</u>
Cities	45	13	58	8
Over 5000	29	18	47	14
Under 5000	27	11	38	2
Totals	101	42	143	24

In Table XIX, it is noted that 43 units, or about one third of the 141 responses, declared the national objectives were poorly understood by the members. This may account for the information contained in Table XVIII that about one third of those replying did not consider the national objectives when planning the year's program. Only 15 of the 141 replying, declared that the program objective of the national organization were clearly understood by the members. It is evident that the national organization needs to do some strenuous educational work on this matter.

In 1946, the National Congress of Parents and Teachers issued a four point program and publicized these points widely. Question 18 attempted to find out how frequently these were used as meeting themes. School Education as indicated in Table XX, was used 260 times and Parent and Family Education 192 times. Health held

third place and was used 141 times. World Understanding was a poor fourth with only 79 appearances as a program theme. It is apparent that consideration to these programs was given in the monthly meetings. Whether or not such consideration was planned is not certain. It may have been that in answering Question 18, the programs could have been fitted into these groupings.

TABLE XIX: CHECK YOUR OPINION OF THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE PROGRAM OBJECTIVES OF THE NATIONAL ORGANIZATION

A. Clearly Understood by the Members	15
B. Fairly Well Understood by the Members	83
C. Poorly Understood by the Members	43
Total	<u>141</u>
Blank	26

TABLE XX: FREQUENCY OF USE OF FOUR-POINT PROGRAM AS MEETING THEME

School Education	260
Health	141
World Understanding	79
Parent and Family Education	<u>192</u>
Total	<u>672</u>

Slightly More Than Half of the Groups Evaluated
the Yearly Program, But the Evaluation Was Vague

In 69 of the 136 replies, a yearly evaluation of the meeting programs was made. Table XXI shows that in towns under 5000 21 out of 34 declared no evaluation was made. In the other groupings, a majority of the units make an attempt to judge the year's programs. The swing toward evaluation would be more definite if the towns under 5000 gave more consideration to it.

TABLE XXI: IS THE YEARLY PROGRAM EVALUATED AT THE END
OF THE YEAR AND THE EVALUATION USED AS A
GUIDE IN PLANNING THE NEXT YEAR'S PROGRAM?

	Yes	No	Replies	Blanks
Cities	31	24	55	11
Over 5000	25	22	47	14
Under 5000	<u>13</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>34</u>	<u>6</u>
Totals	<u>69</u>	<u>67</u>	<u>136</u>	<u>31</u>

Question 20 attempted to develop number 19 by asking for a description of the methods used to evaluate. No table or tabulation was possible from the replies. They were too vague and without sufficient detail. The evaluation appeared to consist primarily of discussion at executive committee meetings. A few presented questionnaires to the membership in an attempt to secure opinions of the monthly meeting programs, and a number arrived at an evaluation through attendance observations.

It may be said that there was little evidence of a planned scheme of evaluation and that there is not a great deal being done on this in Massachusetts PTA groups.

There is Still Insufficient Participation of Men and Special Nights for Men Are Not the Solution

Table VII shows that 103 Fathers' Nights were held during the year. In reply to Question 21, however, only 76 groups stated a special evening for men had been held. This is just half of the number that replied to the question; see Table XXII. It is the belief of the writer that the figure on Table XXII is more nearly accurate. It may be said that to hold special evenings for the men is not a standard policy and not as prevalent as might have been supposed. Towns under 5000 reported only 14 out of 38 holding such meetings. Some of the comments by those giving a negative reply to Question 21 are worthy of note:

- "We do not have Men's Night--ours is a parents' organization."
- "We consider every night Fathers' Night."
- "The men are expected and do come to the regular meetings."
- "Male attendance is no problem."

The replies to Question 22, Table XXIII, were not as numerous as to other questions. It seems clear that to have men serve the refreshments and take perhaps a

small part in the program are the two main methods of getting their participation. A program of special interest to men is usually presented. It is the writer's experience that the above is quite typical of Mens' Night.

TABLE XXII: DO YOU HAVE A SPECIAL MEETING FOR MEN DURING THE YEAR?

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Replies</u>	<u>Blanks</u>
Cities	<u>35</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>61</u>	<u>5</u>
Over 5000	<u>27</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>51</u>	<u>10</u>
Under 5000	<u>14</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>38</u>	<u>2</u>
Totals	<u>76</u>	<u>74</u>	<u>150</u>	<u>17</u>

The response to the question concerning methods of securing male attendance in the event a special meeting was not held for men were more numerous. The four suggested ways of securing that attendance were very closely scored. It is obvious that greater thought must be given to the attaining of better attendance by the men.

TABLE XXIII: IF AN ANNUAL MEETING FOR MEN IS HELD CHECK THE FOLLOWING:

	<u>Number of Replies</u>
1. Participation of Men	
a. Men Plan the Meeting	<u>30</u>
b. Men in charge of Refreshments	<u>42</u>
c. Men Conduct the Meeting	<u>34</u>
d. Men have a Part in Program	<u>42</u>
2. Type of Men's Program Presented	
a. Entertainment Only	<u>36</u>
b. Speaker of Primary Interest to Men	<u>44</u>

In the instances where there are no annual meetings held especially for men Table XXIV shows that the four usually used methods for securing male attendance are used without much partiality. Every unit applying to this question apparently used the standard methods of securing male interest and attendance. Greater thought should be given to developing attendance and participation from men.

Teacher Participation Is Not Great and the Opportunity to Mingle Informally with Parents Is Overlooked

The name, Parent-Teacher Association, indicates the membership makeup of the organization. There is ample evidence to prove that teacher membership is more than satisfactory. The question of teacher participation or activity is, however, open to discussion. A few questions were inserted into the inquiry in an effort to determine the extent of participation. The questions were based on activities which would naturally call for teacher participation.

In reply to the question concerning the serving of refreshments, Table XXV clearly shows that just about every unit makes it a regular part of the meeting. Only twelve out of 158 said refreshments were not a per-

manent part of the meeting programs.

However, in this activity in which teachers would take a part and mingle informally with the parents, only 21 out of the 148 groups replying to the question of teacher participation on refreshment committees stated teachers served on the committees regularly. There were 53 units that reported teachers served occasionally.

Sixty declared they rarely served and fourteen that teachers were never used on the refreshment committees. It may be rather definitely said that teachers take little part on probably the most active committee in every PTA unit, and certainly lose out on a grand opportunity for very personal contact with the parents. Table XXVI contains this information.

TABLE XXIV: IF THERE IS NO ANNUAL MEETING HELD ESPECIALLY FOR MEN, INDICATE THE METHODS USED TO SECURE MALE ATTENDANCE

	<u>Number of Replies</u>
A. Men Officers	51
B. Men on Standing Committee	51
C. Men Active on Projects	50
D. Programs with Male Appeal	54

Question 26 requested each group to list the activities in which parents and teachers cooperate. The replies to this opportunity to express opinions were not satis-

factory. Thirty-four PTA's merely said, "everything" or some similar comment. Money-raising projects and parties were prominent in the tabulation. How much cooperation there may be on school parties or on the educational projects is questionable in the writer's mind. Certainly teachers do cooperate in these matters, but there is an element of obligation involved.

TABLE XXV: POLICY OF SERVING REFRESHMENTS AT MEETINGS

	<u>Number of Replies</u>
Are Refreshments served at Every Meeting	135
Are Refreshments Served at Almost Every Meeting	11
Are Refreshments Served Occasionally	5
Are Refreshments Rarely Served	4
Refreshments are Never Served	3
(This was not in the questionnaire but written in by these groups)	

Perhaps there was a weakness in the wording of the question, but the activities listed in Table XXVII do not indicate too much voluntary cooperation. Twelve replies bluntly stated that there was no cooperation. This is of interest in view of the fact that the answers to this question had to be worded by those

replying.

TABLE XXVI: TEACHERS SERVE ON THE REFRESHMENT COMMITTEE

	A	B	C	D	Replies	Blanks
Cities	7	25	20	8	60	6
Over 5000	7	12	27	4	50	11
Under 5000	7	16	13	2	38	2
Totals	21	53	60	14	148	19

TABLE XXVII: A LISTING OF THE ACTIVITIES IN WHICH PARENTS AND TEACHERS COOPERATE AND THE NUMBER OF SUCH INSTANCES

Type of Activity	Units Reporting
Any and All School Projects	34
Money Raising Projects	26
Christmas Party	21
Lunch Program	18
Membership Drives	16
Education Week and Open House	13
Halloween Party	11
Clinics	8
Musicals	8
Miscellaneous Parties	7
PTA Program Planning	6
Paper Drives	4
Scholarship Funds	4

(Twelve replies stated there was no cooperation between parents and teachers)

A little less than forty per cent of the 146 responses stated that there was a policy in electing

Teachers as officers of the organization. Of the number, 66, seventeen took the trouble to indicate that the policy was not to elect teachers as officers. Figures on Table XXVIII point out that the policy in about half of the units was to have one of the officers a teacher. In only nine cases were the teachers elected to half the offices. A sufficient number of replies warrant the conclusion that the positions of vice-president, secretary, or treasurer are usually held by teachers. Secretary is the most popular.

TABLE XXVIII: IS THERE A POLICY IN ELECTING TEACHERS AS OFFICERS

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Replies</u>	<u>Blank</u>
Cities	27	52	59	7
Over 5000	23	29	52	9
Under 5000	16	19	35	5
Totals	66	80	146	21

An attempt was made to determine what policy was used in electing teachers as officers. Table XXIX indicates that of the 90 replies almost half stated only one of the officers was a teacher. Eleven PTAs declared their policy was not to have any teacher as an officer. It should be noted that this was not a part of the original questionnaire but added by 11 groups.

Only 10 per cent of the replies indicated that one half of the officers were teachers.

A further survey shows that the position of secretary is the most frequently held by teachers. The fact that teachers do not hold a high percentage of the offices is not alarming since a small percentage of the membership in most units consists of teachers.

TABLE XXIX: THE FOLLOWING POLICIES WERE STATED:

	Replies
50% of Officers are Teachers	9
33 1/3% of Officers are Teachers	27
One Officer is a Teacher	43
No Officers are Teachers	11

Cooperation from Administration on Monthly Meeting Programs Good

Tables XXX,XXXI, and XXXII record the replies to the questions concerning cooperation of school officers and administration units on the matter of planning meeting programs. About 20 per cent of the replies expressed poor or no cooperation from School Boards and most of these came from cities. Apparently principals are very cooperative;only nine replies out of 149 expressed dissatisfaction and declared excellent cooperation. Superintendents gave excellent cooperation in

78 instances and good in 37. Only 23 gave a rating of fair or worse. This would appear to show that the old feeling between superintendents and PTA groups has been broken down, and that both realize they are interested in the same objectives. Very little comment is needed on Question 28. It is apparent that good cooperation is very much the rule.

TABLE XXX: INDICATE THE DEGREE OF COOPERATION ON MEETING PROGRAMS FROM THE SCHOOL BOARD

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	None	Replies	Blanks
Cities Over 5000	18	10	7	2	10	47	19
Under 5000	20	7	3	1	8	39	22
Totals	<u>16</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>37</u>	<u>3</u>
	<u>54</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>123</u>	<u>44</u>

TABLE XXXI: INDICATE THE DEGREE OF COOPERATION ON MEETING PROGRAMS FROM THE PRINCIPAL

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	None	Replies	Blank
Cities	47	7	3	2	1	60	6
Over 5000	40	7	2	1	1	51	10
Under 5000	$\frac{24}{111}$	$\frac{6}{20}$	$\frac{4}{9}$	$\frac{4}{7}$	$\frac{0}{2}$	$\frac{38}{149}$	$\frac{2}{18}$
Totals							

TABLE XXXII: INDICATE THE DEGREE OF COOPERATION ON MEETING PROGRAMS FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	None	Replies	Blank
Cities	24	20	3	2	5	54	12
Over 5000	35	8	1	1	0	45	16
Under 5000	$\frac{18}{77}$	$\frac{9}{37}$	$\frac{4}{8}$	$\frac{2}{5}$	$\frac{5}{10}$	$\frac{38}{137}$	$\frac{2}{30}$
Totals							

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

Conclusions

The replies to certain questions make possible the following conclusions:

The membership in the Massachusetts Parent-Teacher Association is made up of about seventy per cent women and thirty per cent men.

A majority of the PTA groups represent one school only.

There is a wide range in the types of monthly meeting programs. The most frequently used type of program is the one having an outside speaker on an educational problem, and second in choice is the entertainment program.

School programs involving elementary pupils rank very high and bring out the best attendance.

There are comparatively few programs involving senior high school students or teachers. When such programs are conducted, the attendance in the majority of cases is good.

Money-raising programs are popular and are ranked high in bringing out the members.

There are many programs in which an outside speaker discusses a subject other than an educational matter. In almost fifty per cent of the cases, the attendance is no better than fair.

Fathers'Night programs appear frequently throughout the state. In almost sixty per cent of these programs, the attendance is no better than fair.

PTA groups do not keep accurate attendance records, but the typical unit has fifty-two per cent of its members present at meeting. This percentage does not vary with the size of the unit or with its geographical location.

Most organizations consider attendance a problem. About one quarter believe it is not a problem.

Tuesday evening is the most popular meeting night. Friday night is not used enough to record.

The number of meetings held each year by a group ranges from two to thirteen, but eight meetings a year is the most popular with seven and nine following in that order.

Towns under 5000 population make a survey to pick the best meeting night in their communities, but in the larger towns and cities slightly more than one half of them do not believe this to be necessary.

Almost every PTA organization has a Program Committee. In the few instances where there is no committee, the Executive Committee plans the meeting programs.

Less than one third of the units consider it necessary to make a survey to determine the program interests of the members. This is true regardless of the size or location of the group.

A good majority of the PTA's give consideration to the major objectives of the national organization before planning the year's program.

About one third of the groups admit that the program objectives of the national organization are poorly understood by the members. Slightly more than ten per cent feel that these objectives are clear to the members.

School Education is the most popular of the suggested four program themes. World Understanding rates a very poor fourth.

Half of the units evaluate the year's program at the end of the year and use the evaluation in planning the next year's program. The groups located in towns under 5000 tend to do no evaluating.

The groups are divided equally in holding special nights for men. Only one third of the PTA's in the smaller towns have a special meeting for men.

Almost every unit serves refreshments after meeting, but a majority do not ask teachers to serve on the Refreshment Committee.

A majority of the PTA's do not have a policy in electing teachers as officers. In some instances, the policy is not to have teachers serve. The tendency is to have one of the officers a teacher.

Teachers and parents cooperate in almost everything that the PTA does, but there exists a feeling by a minority that there is little or no parent-teacher cooperation.

The cooperation received from school administrative officers is good throughout the state. There are comparatively few instances of poor cooperation.

Recommendations

The conclusions and implications formed bring forth a certain number of recommendations. These that follow are offered as suggestions for the improving of PTA work:

1. That a strenuous effort be made to develop and maintain accurate records on membership, attendance, and meeting programs. It is difficult if not impossible to judge

the progress of any organization if there are no correct figures on which to base observation.

2. That the objectives of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers be more clearly presented to the membership. At present these objectives are prominent in print, but other means need to be found to acquaint the members with the meaning of the organization. Educational committees in each district might devise methods for informing the members in concise manner of the true meaning of PTA.

3. That all units be trained in careful program planning. More attention needs to be given to preparing the year's programs around a theme or objective. There is too much indefinite arranging. The needs of the community should be carefully considered before the program course is set.

4. That greater thought be given to teacher participation. More use of teachers on committees is suggested. Less placing of complete responsibility for meeting programs on teachers is urged. Consideration must be given to installing in the teachers the belief that they are truly a part of PTA and that their membership is not merely token.

5. That real study be given to the participation of men. Perhaps night for fathers makes them too conscious of the fact they are not active in the organization and so drives them further from it. Subtle means need to be developed to build them into the association. They should be sold on membership and participation. There is a big challenge to be met here.

6. That consideration be given to fewer meetings of the entire group and more meetings of sub-groups or smaller units. It may be that too many general meetings are being held. Four or five meetings of the entire membership a year should suffice. Any number of meetings could be held of the membership broken into smaller groups, to work on PTA activities of interest to these

units. This should make for greater participation and eventually a broader understanding of the principles of the Parent-Teacher Association.

CHAPTER VI

LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Limitations of the Study

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

One of the obvious drawbacks of this study was the length of the instrument. It is true that 100 of the 182 communities that have PTA units are represented in the replies to the questionnaire, but this result is due to the efforts of the state and district PTA leaders rather than to the appeal of the instrument or accompanying letter. A shorter inquiry might have secured better results. The size of the form was reported to be frightening. It did not go to a group accustomed to receiving long questionnaires and consideration of this fact should have been made.

Question 4 was apparently badly presented. There were too many replies that had to be rejected. Apparently the explanation given to assist in replying to that question was not clear. There should have been a close relationship between the column headed "Scheduled" and Question 7. It was obvious that there

was no relationship on a number of the returns. Many of the replies to this question made no attempt to rank the meetings on attendance. The bulkiness of the question may have been a factor in the confusion that was apparent.

While the types of meetings in Question 4 appeared to be clear to the writer and to those that checked it before the final draft, there is evidence to indicate that there was some confusion. There should have been more provision for defining the types. This, however, would have made the inquiry more bulky and perhaps discouraged replying.

Better results might have been obtained by a sampling process instead of by a mailing of the questionnaire to all eligible units. Conferences with district leaders would have indicated groups in which accurate records were available and the element of opinion or estimate would have been reduced.

Question 20 was not presented in good form. There were too many groups that failed to answer that part. Inquiries that request explanations are not inclined to secure good results. It is too much of an effort for most individuals to write out explanations. Some sort of limited response should have been offered in that question. To a lesser degree, this was true of

Question 26.

A better interpretation of the monthly meeting program would have been possible if copies of the programs could have been secured. A request for these was made, but a negligible return was secured. This was undoubtedly due to the request coming months after the program had ended.

The inquiry form was examined a number of times before arranged in its final form by state PTA officers, educators, and a few PTA members. This, however, now does not appear to have been sufficient. A better questionnaire might have resulted if the form had been presented to various representatives units for criticisms and suggestions before the final draft was made. A finer choice of questions and wording would have been possible.

A study covering a particular school year would secure more accurate and complete results if the inquiries were sent out before the actual end of the program season. This questionnaire was mailed almost six months after the end of the program year. This meant that if no accurate records were available, much of the response depended on recall. PTA membership shows a high turn-over and too long a wait means that

key officers are likely to be no longer active in the association. These factors are detrimental to accuracy and good evaluation. The questionnaire would have secured more accurate information if mailed closer to the end of the year being studied.

A greater amount of personal contact with the groups would have been beneficial. Here, again, the large number of groups involved made this a difficult matter. Some means of selecting units to be visited would be needed to make these personal contacts. Time to do the traveling would be an obstacle if many groups were to be visited. However, more visitations and conferences would have made possible greater clarification of the returns.

Suggestions for Further Study

There has been little or no research in Massachusetts on the Parent-Teacher Association. Almost any phase of its activities would be worthy of investigation and study. The following suggestions, however, are made as a result of the present work:

1. Use the same purposes of this study as a basis for case studies of representative groups. The representation could be determined geographically, numerically, according to schools, and by a number of other methods.
2. A study might be undertaken for the

purpose of developing ways of evaluating the various meeting programs.

3. There is some need for a study to determine the reasons for non-attendance and non-participation of men in the PTA units.
4. The major objective of the national organization could be a field for research. The degree of understanding of them and the application of them to the monthly meeting programs would provide opportunity for further study.
5. A survey of the leadership in the local groups and its relationship to the phases covered in this study would be of value.
6. This study made no attempt or effort to investigate study groups, workshops, political activity, etc. in the PTA units. There is much to be learned about these activities.
7. Teacher participation is not as great as it could be. Some further study of this might be considered. A survey into the attitudes of teachers toward the Parent-Teacher Association would bring forth much information that would be of value in securing a closer union between teachers and parents in the association.
8. Record-keeping in the local units is not good. Any survey that would bring out the difficulties and offer suggestions for the improvement of record-keeping would be of great value.
9. A study could be conducted at this time to determine methods used by Parent-Teacher Association groups to gain favorable action on legislation concerning the schools, and the effectiveness of these methods.

AN INQUIRY INTO THE MONTHLY MEETING PROGRAMS OF THE VARIOUS PTA UNITS
IN MASSACHUSETTS DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR 1946-1947

APPROVED BY THE MASSACHUSETTS PTA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
Compiled by John Blackhall Smith
Superintendent of Schools, Stockbridge

City or Town making the report _____

In answering the following questions, keep in mind that they apply to the period from September 1, 1946 to June 30, 1947. All answers will be kept in confidence.

1. Membership of the group. Women ___ Men ___ How many of this number are teachers? ___
2. Is your PTA for a single school? Yes ___ No ___ If Yes, what is the enrollment of the school? ___
3. If your PTA represents more than one school, how many? ___ What is the enrollment represented? ___
4. Below are two columns, Attendance and Scheduled. In the Attendance column, you are asked to place a check mark in the space on the line with the various types of meetings to indicate Good, Fair, or Poor attendance when that kind of program was used. By Good, we mean that 50% or better of the membership was present. Fair should mean 35% to 50% came, and Poor indicates that less than 35% of the members turned out. In addition, place a 1 opposite the type that brought out the biggest attendance during the year, 2 after the second best, and 3 after the third highest. Example: If Fathers' Night brought out 75% of your members and that was the best turnout for the year, you would place a checkmark opposite that title and under the Good column; you would also place a 1 in front of the word Fathers'.
In the Scheduled column, place a checkmark in the proper column to show the number of times each type of program was used during the year.

Attendance			Types of Meeting Programs	Scheduled						
Good	Fair	Poor		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
			*Panel on educational topics							
			Panel on current topics							
			*Forum on educational topics							
			School program by elementary pupils							
			School program by junior high pupils							
			School program by senior high pupils							
			Extra-curricula program by elementary pupils							
			Extra-curricula program by junior high pupils							
			Extra-curricula program by senior high pupils							
			Program by elementary teachers only							
			Program by junior high teachers only							
			Program by senior high teachers only							
			Demonstrations by pupils and teachers of the elementary school							
			Demonstrations by pupils and teachers of the junior high school							
			Demonstrations by pupils and teachers of the senior high school							
			Program of Entertainment only							
			Money-raising program							
			Fathers' Night							
			Outside speaker on educational subject							
			Outside speaker on miscellaneous subject							
			Others							

5. What is the average attendance at your meetings? Give your best estimate if accurate figures are not available. _____

6. Do you feel that PTA attendance is:
A big problem _____
Somewhat of a problem _____
No problem _____

7. Circle the number of meetings held in 1946-1947.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

8. Check your regular meeting night.
Monday _____
Tuesday _____
Wednesday _____
Thursday _____
Friday _____

9. Has a survey ever been made in your community to determine the least conflicting meeting night? Yes _____ No _____

10. Do you keep an accurate record of attendance at meetings? Yes _____ No _____

11. Do you have a program committee? Yes _____ No _____

12. If the answer to 11 is Yes, how many are on the program committee? Women _____ Men _____ How many of these are teachers? _____

13. If the answer to 11 is No, how are meetings planned or arranged?

14. Do you have a program theme for the year? Yes _____ No _____

15. Has a survey been made recently to determine the program interests of the group? Yes _____ No _____

16. Were the major objectives of the National Organization considered when the year's program was determined? Yes _____ No _____

17. Check your opinion of the understanding of the program objectives of the National Organization.
Clearly understood by the members _____
Fairly well understood by the members _____
Poorly understood by the members _____

18. Check the proper column to show the number of times the following program themes have been used during the year 1946-1947:

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

School Education										
Health										
World Understanding										
Parent & Family Education										

19. Is the yearly program evaluated at the end of the year and the evaluation used as a guide in planning the next year's program? Yes _____ No _____

20. If there is an evaluation made, describe the methods. Use the other side of this paper if necessary.

21. Do you have a special meeting for men during the year?
Yes ___ No ___

22. If the answer to 21 is Yes, check the following:

1. Participation of men

Men plan the program ___
Men in charge of refreshments ___
Men conduct the meeting ___
Men have a part in the program ___

2. Type of men's program usually presented

Entertainment only ___
Speaker of primary interest to men ___
List others

23. If the answer to 21 is No but attempts are made to secure male attendance at meetings, check the methods used.

Men officers ___
Men on standing committees ___
Men active on projects ___
Programs with male appeal ___
List other methods

24. Check the following:

Refreshments are served at every meeting ___
Refreshments are served at almost every meeting ___
Refreshments are served occasionally ___
Refreshments are rarely served ___

25. Teachers serve on the refreshments committees

Regularly ___
Occasionally ___
Rarely ___

26. List the activities in which there is cooperation between Parents and Teachers.

27. Is there a policy in electing teachers as officers? Yes ___ No ___
If the answer is Yes, what is the policy?

28. Indicate the degree of cooperation on meeting programs from the following: Excellent Good Fair Poor None

School Board					
Principal					
Superintendent					

The persons making out this report are asked to indicate their titles and sign below.

Signature

Title

Stockbridge, Massachusetts

November 1, 1947

Dear PTA President:

The enclosed questionnaire is part of a study being made of the PTA monthly meeting programs in Massachusetts. Since your State Executive Committee has officially approved this survey, you may be acquainted with it and realize what is being attempted.

The purpose is to gather facts about the programs and then to interpret them. It is hoped that as a result of the study information will be secured that will be of value in improving our meetings and programs.

You are asked to answer this questionnaire as fully and as completely as possible. It is suggested that three or four officers, past and present, might meet and in reasonable time complete the task. The present president, immediate past president, secretary, and program chairman would make a good group; but any combination of past and present officers should be able to furnish the information quickly.

The cooperation you give will do much to secure the success of this study, and its success may bring out information that will be of service to your group. Will you not, therefore, make an effort to furnish the answers requested and use the enclosed envelope for a return sometime before the 26th of November.

Very truly yours,

John Blackhall Smith

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