

A SURVEY OF SPECIFIC ATTITUDES OF PARENTS
IN UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 240
OTTAWA COUNTY, KANSAS

by *680*

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INTRODUCTION

Background of the Problem

It was Harold C. Hand, College of Education, University of Illinois, who said:

To exclude or to ignore parents in connection with the problem of appraising what the school is now doing and how it is doing it, and planning what the school should be doing and how it should be doing it, is to make operative the certain recipe for educational stagnation.¹

The consistent reoccurrence of that line of thought in many publications of an educational nature helped the writer to conclude that much value could be derived from a planned survey of the parents' attitudes concerning some selected educational ideas and programs in Unified School District No. 240, Ottawa County, Kansas.

It was the intent of this survey to gain a knowledge of parent attitudes in regard to their elementary schools so that any necessary change and direction of change by the administration and board of education could be carried out with the needs and desires of the people in mind.

Most educators believe that the schools belong to the people and that one of the most effective ways of developing good community-school relations is to involve lay citizens in periodic evaluations of the educational program of their schools. Improvement of educational opportunities in this way was the reason this survey was initiated. The feeling was held that the parent directly concerned could best answer the questions involved in this study.

¹Harold C. Hand, What People Think About Their Schools (New York: World Book Company, 1948), pp. 84-85.

The survey also gave consideration to Federal laws such as the National Defense Education Act and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The kinds of materials and programs desired through these public laws might be more readily determined if the attitudes of the parents are understood by the administration.

Further consideration was given to the fact that the elementary schools of Unified School District No. 240, with 378 pupils, had been recently reorganized according to the Kansas Legislature's House Bill No. 377 which went into effect for the 1966-67 school term. The three public school districts of Bennington, Culver and Tescott, all with grades one through twelve, were unified into the present district. The grade school districts of Tescott and Bennington had a grade principal who was the eighth grade teacher. Culver's high school principal served as the principal of the Culver Grade School.

Unification brought about many organizational changes. At the time of this study the students of grades seven and eight of the Culver district attended the Tescott and Bennington attendance centers. Culver maintained grades K - 6. The Tescott and Culver kindergartners attended class at Culver. The Bennington area kindergartners attended class at Bennington. The Tescott elementary attendance center maintained grades 1 - 8, while Bennington had grades K - 8 at its attendance center.

The classrooms for grades K - 7 in the Unified District No. 240 were self-contained with one teacher teaching all the subjects with the exception of music. The eight grades at Tescott and Bennington were taught part-time by the grade principal and the remainder of the subjects were taught by high school teachers employed in the unified district.

The grade principal at each of these two attendance centers was the eighth grade home-room teacher.

Special programs for all three attendance centers included a band instructor; a special reading teacher who taught remedial reading classes to certain students in grades 3 - 6, and worked with all home-room teachers in an attempt to upgrade the reading abilities of the pupils; a language instructor who taught Spanish to the upper grade students who desired it; and a guidance counselor. These four special teachers were available to all three attendance centers.

A questionnaire was developed for the purpose of determining the attitudes of the parents toward their elementary schools concerning some ideas and programs that are or could be a part of the unified district's operations.

There was no evidence to indicate that any comparable survey of this extent was ever previously undertaken in the elementary schools of Unified District No. 240. The cooperation of the Administration and the Board of Education had been obtained for the successful completion of this survey.

Importance of the Study

The development of successful educational programs is dependent on an awareness of the needs in a school system. Facts and information from internal and external sources must be continuous and readily available. Educational decisions must be based on the idea of weaving together the objectives of the people, a curriculum that promises to achieve the outcomes, and the utilization of teachers, specialists and administrators, as well as the acquisition of facilities and resources by means of which the whole educational system may function.

If the local unit of government can't or doesn't develop a successful educational program, the Federal government can and probably will.¹ This is indicated by the fact that, although federal school legislation is not new, the recent emphasis as indicated in the introduction of this paper underscores the Federal government's desire for suitable schooling for all the children of all the people.

In an article written by Roald Campbell, Dean of the Graduate School of Education, University of Chicago, it was pointed out that: "As far as possible, the operation of schools should be delegated to local school districts."²

Horace Mann observed about a century ago that, "...the people will sustain no better schools and have no better education that they personally see the need of."³ The community needs to become more involved

¹A. W. Dirks, "Federal Funds and Education," The Kansas Elementary School Principal, 9:4-6, Fall, 1966.

²Roald Campbell, "Toward a Rationale for Federal-State-Local Relations in Education," Phi Delta Kappan, 67:2-7, September, 1965.

³Jefferson N. Eastmond, The Teacher and School Administration (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1959), p. 249.

in the school-life of its children. Citizens become more interested and less critical of that in which they participate.

The writer felt that much information can be used from this survey to benefit the school system. A few possible uses of the survey are listed below:

1. Dissatisfaction in various phases of the school may suggest remedial measures.
2. Information from this survey could help to point out both strengths and weaknesses of certain educational programs and also point out misunderstandings that may exist.
3. The information gathered from this survey will be useful material for the local Board of Education, Administrators, for professional meetings of the school staff and for other groups interested in the school.
4. This survey can bring a new awareness of the public toward the school. It will give the parents of the community a feeling that they have a part in the school and that their interests and opinions are important.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

It was the purpose of this study to discover the present attitudes and concerns of the parents of elementary school children residing in Unified School District No. 240, toward various phases of their schools' operation, services and facilities.

STATEMENT OF QUESTIONS

1. How did the parents evaluate the overall instruction in their elementary schools?
2. How did the parents evaluate their present school building and equipment?
3. What degree of emphasis did the parents feel should be placed on athletics in the upper grades?
4. How did the parents feel about the number of grades a teacher should have with a normal class load in a self-contained classroom?
5. How did the parents feel about the maximum miles, one-way, that a kindergarten child should have to travel in attending school?
6. How did the parents feel about the maximum miles, one-way, that a seventh or eighth grader should have to travel in attending school?
7. According to the parents, how much teaching duty should a principal have in a school with an enrollment between 125 - 200 pupils?
8. Did the parents favor a kindergarten program and what length of term did they feel was desirable?
9. Were the parents in favor of a unified district having a program to care for mentally retarded children?
10. Did the parents prefer the departmentalized or the self-contained classroom for the instruction of seventh and eighth graders?

11. Were the parents in favor of the district assuming the cost of all necessary workbooks?
12. What degree of importance did the parents place on some educational specialists being available to an elementary school?
13. What subjects did the parents feel should be available to the seventh and eighth grade students?
14. Did the parents favor or oppose elementary children riding on the same bus as high school students in attending school?
15. Did the parents favor a summer program at their elementary school facility? If so, what programs did they favor?

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Most of the terms will be defined in the context of this report. There are, however, several terms which merit definition and will be defined here for the benefit of the reader.

Administrative Unit. A geographic unit comprising all the area under a single system of school administration; generally constitutes a local taxing unit for school purposes.¹

Attendance Center. A sub-division of an administrative unit consisting of the territory from which children legally may attend a given school building or school center.

Attitude. An attitude is a relatively constant tendency to act in certain directions and in accordance with certain mental patterns.²

Departmentalized Classroom. In its most extreme form departmentalization is a plan of organization in which each subject is taught to the children by a specialist in that particular subject.³

Elementary School. For the purpose of this study, an elementary school is a graded school with no grade above the eighth grade.

Opinion. Throughout the report of the survey, the term "Opinion" shall be interpreted as the expressed attitude of an individual toward certain ideas and programs that are or could be used in Unified School District No. 240.

Public Relations. Public relations refers to the harmony of understanding that exists between the school and the public it serves.

¹Carter V. Good, Dictionary of Education (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1959), p. 12.

²William H. Burton, The Guidance of Learning Attitudes (New York: Appleton, Century, Crofts, Inc., 1962), p. 98.

³James B. Burr and others, Elementary School Administration (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1963), p. 76.

Respondent. A parent of the Unified School District No. 240 who participated in the survey by returning the completed questionnaire.

Reorganized District. A school district formed by the abolition of two or more districts and the combining of their territory into a single district. Attendance Centers may or may not be changed.¹

Self-contained Classroom. The self-contained classroom, at the elementary school level, is a plan of organization in which one teacher works throughout the day with a given group of children. She may or may not be assisted from time to time by special teachers in such areas as art, music, physical education, science and reading.²

Sub-district. A subdivision of the administrative unit consisting of the territory in which the parents of an attendance center live.

¹Good, op. cit., p. 3.

²Burr, op. cit., p. 71.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Assessment of American education is today a matter of great public concern. Debate on educational issues is not new in America. The current debate is animated by a new spirit of urgency due to a foreboding about the future and an awareness of human potential for progress. Public concern is based upon the quality of education and the future of America. In short, the public feels that education is a cure-all for the uncertainties in which the public finds itself. Effective home--school relations can bridge the chasm between the uneasiness of parents about their children's education and can guarantee that today's knowledge will be used for the children's well-being.¹

Ray L. Sweigert, Jr., of the California State Department of Education had this to say:

The success of a local educational agency is in part a function of its ability to put out feelers to sense the nature of the community environment. Most local agencies are dependent upon largely intuitive preceptions of the information and attitudes about the local schools held by the community as a whole, based upon rather fragmentary evidence.²

Since the time when our ancestors clearly saw the importance of public education, our social structure has undergone great change. Life in most communities has become so highly specialized and the population so large that any one person can meet and interact with only a very small proportion of the whole population of his community. Those whom he does

¹National Educational Association, An Essay in Quality in Public Education, a Report Prepared by the Educational Policies Commission (Washington, D. C.: National Education Association, 1959), p. 1.

²Ray L. Sweigert, Jr., "Polling Community Opinion on Educational Matters," Journal of Secondary Education, 42:195, May, 1967.

meet on a given day tend to be persons of quite similar social characteristics. Thus, school administrators cannot maintain direct communication with the whole population, but are normally in contact with a limited and specialized segment of that population. However, the duties and responsibilities of school officials are to the board and heterogeneous population if the intention of democratic education is to be fulfilled. Moehlman and Van Zwoll recommend the school community survey as a source of data useful in decision making. They said:

The development of a curriculum closely adapted to community requirements requires specific information about the community and its needs. The purposes of the community survey are to discover the areas and character of the services to be performed through the school, to provide a basis for appraisal of the school program from the point of view of its fulfillment of community needs, and to furnish the medium for informing the people of the community about the program and methods of the schools.¹

Better home--school relations may be obtained through interpretation of the school to the public. Community study is an indispensable means of collecting information about which the community is apprehensive. Through the information gained by community study, corrective measures may be instituted to correct misunderstandings that may have come about through inadequate communication.

Community study is one means of obtaining important facts and ideas so that the school and its personnel can provide better service. Each community contains its own unique problems such as traditions, morals, racial stocks, social stratification, institutions, businesses and industries. Each has its own level of public understanding and

¹Arthur Moehlman and James Van Zwoll, School Public Relations (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1957), p. 179.

expectations of schools. Knowing a great deal about the community allows teachers to focus their instruction so that it is related to the life of the community and thus becomes more meaningful to students. In addition, the teacher can do a more effective job of counseling with the students and is better equipped to utilize the local resources in the instructional program.¹

Another major purpose for conducting community study is related to the school's public relations. The information gathered from the study of the community should form the basis for the public relations program of the school. One of the important steps in building a good community is the development of a common set of purposes in accord with which the people can operate or work. This means that, if the school district is located in an area which does not constitute a community, one of the jobs of the school may be to bring the groups together on common projects to help them assume at least some of the characteristics of a community.²

Ascertaining public attitudes and understanding is an essential part of community study. These may be obtained by conducting a scientific sampling of public opinion. In recent years the poll has come to be regarded as a fundamental tool in public relations because of its manifold uses.³ Some of its major uses are:

1. Obtaining undistorted opinions and attitudes of the community on educational matters

¹Eastmond, op. cit., p. 249.

²Ralph L. Pounds and Robert L. Garretson, Principles of Modern Education (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1962), p. 100.

³A. Helen Anderson, "Answering With the Facts," Nation's Schools, 53:47-49, June, 1954.

2. Locating areas of ignorance and misinformation within the community
3. Determining the readiness of the public to accept certain changes in educational practice or public desire for particular kinds of services
4. Suggesting certain changes in the educational program
5. Evaluating the effects of various media and techniques, thus affording a basis for modifying carefully planned public relations programs¹

Polling the public with respect to what the schools are doing is only a beginning in establishing good school-community relations. The community study is the basis on which the public relations program of the school should be formed. It is a basic essential if the people are to be kept aware of their privileges and responsibilities in improving schools.

Schools must keep pupils well-informed about policies, develop courses which satisfy their needs and challenge their abilities, provide individual attention insofar as possible, and build the kind of atmosphere which engenders the pride of pupils and parents in their schools. Proud, satisfied parents form a strong foundation for continued financial support of schools.²

¹Eastmond, op. cit., p. 264.

²For an excellent "how to" booklet on financial campaigns, see Workbook to Win Votes in School Campaigns. Washington, D. C.: National Educational Association, 1963.

Community study may be done in a variety of ways such as questionnaires and interviews. Each method should be carefully analyzed in order to find the best way to secure an accurate study.¹

From literature on the various ways a community study may be conducted, each author has his own best way to gather information concerning his own particular study. A study was made in Pincinning, Michigan, by Per A. Wickerstrom and Eugene N. Spencer.² They decided to conduct an attitude and opinion survey to determine how the people of the area assessed their schools in terms of programs, services, and goals. With the assistance of the University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research the following was decided upon: (1) use of random sampling when a large population is involved, (2) use of questionnaires checked for meaning, direction and clarity, (3) conducting of a pilot study, (4) as the questionnaire was filled out in the presence of the person conducting the interview, the interviewers would need previous training.

In corroboration, Harold C. Hand expresses a similar opinion on conducting a survey as did Wickerstrom and Spencer. Hand recommended mailed questionnaires whereas Wickerstrom and Spencer preferred the questionnaire to be filled out in the presence of an interviewer. Hand also gave samples of questionnaires to be filled out by parents, by teachers and by pupils.³

¹National Education Association, Feel Their Pulse, a Report Prepared by the Educational Policies Commission (Washington, D. C.: National Education Association, 1959), p. 6.

²Per A. Wickerstrom and Eugene N. Spencer, "Why Community Surveys Fail and What Steps to Follow to Make Them Successful," Nation's Schools, 71:63-64, February, 1963.

³Hand, op. cit., pp. 153-169.

The National Education Association in its booklet, "Feel Their Pulse,"¹ stated that the local press could be very helpful in its coverage of the survey. This booklet recommended the use of the community organizations to aid in the survey. Attention was also directed to the advisability of a follow-up with additional surveys to ascertain what changes, if any, had taken place in attitudes if the results of the original survey had caused changes.

Educators have repeatedly said, "The community should be organized so that citizen control of its public school policies is respected in principle and facilitated in practice." One of the surest ways to facilitate citizen control is through periodic surveys of community opinion. The Denver Public Schools have, since 1959, made such surveys at three-year intervals with profitable results. This project, which was discussed in the booklet, "Denver Looks at Its Schools," was conducted by Research Services, Inc., of Denver, in consultation with the National Opinion Research Center of the University of Illinois. The survey was made because the administration felt that it was essential to know the opinions of large numbers of citizens if it was to develop properly a vital public education program. This survey has been repeated every three years since it was instituted in 1950. The results of the successive surveys are directly comparable to the opinion survey carried out three years previously. New areas are added as the need or the interest arises. For example the 1965 survey contained two new areas,

¹Feel Their Pulse, op. cit., p. 17.

one having to do with alcohol, tobacco, and narcotics and the other was concerned with racial problems.¹

The Denver Superintendent of Schools and Board of Education in a letter to the citizens of Denver, published in the above mentioned booklet, said this:

The earlier surveys, of which there were five, provided the Board of Education, the Superintendent, and the professional staff with much information which served as one important basis in formulating district policies and making decisions about the school program. In these times, it is apparent that people in Denver and throughout the nation are giving a great deal of serious thought to public education and its place in American life. It is urgent that information on existing issues and citizens' views on those issues be kept current.

Once these responsibilities are recognized, their successful discharge is contingent upon the securing of dependable opinion data which can be accomplished only through systematic appraisal. Equality of opportunity for an education and the quality of that education for the youth of the community can result if all available resources are utilized. The opinion poll in a community--school survey ranks high as an aid to the administration of a successful school system.

¹Denver Looks at Its Schools, Highlights from the 1965 Opinion Survey of the Denver Public Schools as Reported by Research Services, Inc., Denver, Colorado, 1965.

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The following data were used to formulate the questionnaire and carry out the survey:

1. Information relative to state and national legislation and the intent and purpose of such legislation in the area of elementary education.
2. Names and addresses of all parents who have children in grades one through eight in the study area.
3. The attitude of the parents toward certain elementary educational programs, special services, and certain types of administrative and instructional organizations that are or could be involved in the operation of their schools.
4. The evaluation by the parents of the buildings, equipment and instruction.
5. The attitude of the parents toward the maximum miles, one-way, that a kindergarten or seventh and eighth grader should travel in attending school.

The sources for the data were:

1. Parents of the study area
2. Textbooks and periodicals in the Kansas State University and the University's library services
3. Bulletins from the Kansas State Department of Education, Kansas State Teachers Association and the National Education Association
4. Administrators of Unified District No. 240

5. Records of the Ottawa County Superintendent of Schools

The number of families having children in grades one through eight in the surveyed area totaled 193. Questionnaires used in the study were sent to all 193 families since it was felt that this number of questionnaires could be handled with facility and would potentially involve every family in the Unified District No. 240.

The questionnaires returned totaled 74 per cent of the 193 questionnaires sent out. Table I below shows the number of questionnaires sent and the number returned by the parents of each attendance center.

Limitations of the study:

The study was limited to the area served by Unified School District No. 240, Ottawa County, Kansas. The results of this survey were also limited to information gathered through a questionnaire.

TABLE I

TOTAL NUMBER OF FAMILIES SURVEYED AND THE PERCENTAGE
OF RETURNS FROM EACH ATTENDANCE CENTER IN
THE STUDY AREA, MARCH, 1968

Attendance Center	Total Families	Percent of Return
Bennington	94	79
Tescott	72	63
Culver	27	81
TOTAL	193	74

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The return of 74 per cent of the 193 questionnaires sent to the parents of Unified District No. 240 resulted in the following findings which are, for the most part, presented in tabular form. The percentages found in the tables have been rounded off to the nearest whole per cent and are based on the 74 per cent of the parents who returned the questionnaires sent out in March, 1968. The description of the findings will be arranged according to the Statement of Questions found on pages 7 and 8 of this report.

How did the respondents evaluate the overall instruction in their elementary schools? Table II, page 21 shows the results. Ninety per cent of the responding Bennington parents rated the overall instruction as either excellent or good. The figure was seventy-five per cent by the Tescott respondents and sixty-nine per cent by the Culver respondents with no Culver parents rating the overall instruction as excellent. The evaluation for all respondents was: excellent-15 per cent, good-69 per cent, fair-13 per cent, and poor-2 per cent. Only one parent from each of the three attendance centers rated the overall instructional program as poor.

How did the respondents evaluate the present school buildings and equipment? Table III, page 21 shows the following evaluations by all parents: excellent-26 per cent, good-57 per cent, fair-15 per cent and poor-2 per cent. The parents of the Bennington and Tescott attendance centers evaluated their buildings and equipment much higher than did the parents of the Culver attendance center. The Bennington and Tescott elementary school buildings were less than ten years old at the time of

the study. Culver's building was more than fifty years old. These facts probably account for the evaluation by the Culver parents as compared to the evaluation by the other two centers.

TABLE II

PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS IN UNIFIED DISTRICT NO. 240
WHO EVALUATED THEIR PRESENT OVERALL INSTRUCTION
AS EXCELLENT, GOOD, FAIR AND POOR

School	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	No Opinion
Bennington	20	70	5	1	3
Tescott	13	62	22	2	0
Culver	0	69	18	4	0
All respondents	15	69	13	2	1

TABLE III

PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS IN UNIFIED DISTRICT NO. 240 WHO
EVALUATED THEIR PRESENT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL BUILDING
AND EQUIPMENT EXCELLENT, GOOD, FAIR AND POOR

School	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	No Opinion
Bennington	41	54	5	0	0
Tescott	13	62	18	4	2
Culver	0	54	40	4	0
All respondents	26	57	15	2	1

What degree of emphasis did the respondents feel should be placed on athletics in the upper grades? Table IV shows the results of the survey. About 20 per cent of the parents of both Bennington and Tescott indicated a desire for less emphasis on athletics for boys while less than 2 per cent thought more emphasis was desirable. As to desire for more or less emphasis on girls' athletics by respondents of Bennington and Tescott, the table shows very little difference between the percentages for more emphasis and less emphasis. However, the Culver respondents expressed a desire for more emphasis for both boys' and girls' athletics. The percentages for more emphasis for boys was 9 per cent and the percentage for less emphasis was 4 per cent. Much more pronounced was the difference between percentages for more emphasis for girls' athletics and the percentage for less emphasis. The Culver respondents were 23 per cent for more emphasis and 4 per cent for less emphasis.

TABLE IV

PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS IN UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 240 WHO
FELT THAT THERE SHOULD BE MORE EMPHASIS, LESS EMPHASIS,
OR THAT PRESENT EMPHASIS WAS SATISFACTORY ON
ATHLETICS IN THE UPPER GRADES

School	Present Emphasis							
	Satisfactory		More Emphasis		Less Emphasis		No Opinion	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Bennington	67	58	1	16	22	13	9	9
Tescott	80	64	2	18	18	15	0	2
Culver	77	54	9	23	4	4	9	9
All respondents	73	60	3	18	18	13	6	7

The organizational structure of the Culver school probably accounted for the feeling of the parents toward athletics. The fact that Culver had only grades K - 6 did not permit the sixth grade boys and girls to participate in interschool athletics as was true of the sixth graders of Bennington and Tescott. Bennington had the sixth grade teacher as the physical education instructor and coach for the sixth, seventh and eighth grade boys. The seventh grade teacher was the physical education instructor and coach for the sixth, seventh, and eighth grade girls. This type of organization was also true of the Tescott Elementary School. Although the sixth grade boys at both Bennington and Tescott were not permitted to play competitively in interschool contests against seventh and eighth graders, they did get to participate in practice and learn fundamentals of flag football, basketball, soccer and track and occasionally scrimmage against sixth grade boys of other schools following the interschool seventh and eighth grade flag football games. The Bennington and Tescott sixth grade girls occasionally played against another school's sixth grade girls following the regular seventh and eighth grade volleyball games in interschool contests. In the flag football scrimmages and volleyball activity of the sixth graders with other schools no score was kept and in some instances teams were formed for play with sixth graders of both schools performing on the same team. The sixth grade girls were members of the pep club for their attendance center at Bennington and Tescott. As compared with Bennington and Tescott, the Culver sixth grade boys and girls had neither of those opportunities for interschool interaction nor a comparable opportunity to learn the fundamentals of individual and team play in football, soccer, basketball and track.

How did the respondents feel about the number of grades an elementary teacher should have with a normal class load in a self-contained classroom? Table V below shows the responses of the parents. Of the returned questionnaires, 76 per cent indicated one grade, 18 per cent indicated two grades and 2 per cent indicated three or more grades. No opinion was expressed by 4 per cent of the parents. At the time of the study Tescott and Bennington had one grade per teacher. Culver had two grades per teacher. The opinion for one grade per teacher was expressed by 86 per cent of the Bennington respondents and 71 per cent of the Tescott respondents, while Culver, the attendance center with more than one grade per teacher, expressed a desire for one grade per teacher by 50 per cent of the parents.

TABLE V

PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS IN UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 240
WHO FELT AN ELEMENTARY TEACHER WITH A NORMAL CLASS LOAD
IN A SELF-CONTAINED CLASSROOM SHOULD HAVE ONE
GRADE, TWO GRADES OR THREE OR MORE GRADES

School	One Grade	Two Grades	Three or More	No Opinion
Bennington	86	9	1	3
Tescott	71	17	4	7
Culver	50	50	0	0
All respondents	76	18	2	4

How did the respondents feel about the maximum miles, one-way, that a kindergarten child should have to travel in attending school?

Table VI below shows the findings. The parents of all three attendance centers felt that the maximum distance should be between 8 - 12 miles.

TABLE VI

THE AVERAGE MAXIMUM DISTANCE THAT THE RESPONDENTS
OF UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 240 FELT THAT A
KINDERGARDNER STUDENT SHOULD HAVE TO TRAVEL,
ONE-WAY, IN ATTENDING SCHOOL

School	Distance (In miles)
Bennington	8 - 12
Tescott	8 - 12
Culver	8 - 12
All respondents	8 - 12

How did the respondents feel about the maximum miles, one-way, that a seventh and eighth grader should have to travel in attending school? Table VII, page 26 gives the results. Here, again, all three attendance centers agreed as to the maximum distance. In this case it was 15 miles.

According to the respondents, how much teaching duty should a principal have in a school with an enrollment between 125-200 students? Table VIII, page 26 shows how they felt about this. The percentages were as follows: Those favoring a principal having full-time teaching duty--9 per cent, part-time teaching duty--63 per cent, and no-teaching duty--25 per cent. The percentage expressing no opinion was 4 per cent. At the time of the study Bennington and Tescott elementary schools had part-time

TABLE VII

THE AVERAGE MAXIMUM DISTANCE THAT THE RESPONDENTS OF
UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 240 FELT THAT A
SEVENTH OR EIGHTH GRADER SHOULD HAVE TO
TRAVEL, ONE-WAY, TO ATTEND SCHOOL

School	Distance (In miles)
Bennington	15
Tescott	15
Culver	15
All respondents	15

teaching principals while Culver had no principal other than the Superintendent of Schools, who, with the help of the fifth and sixth grade teacher at Culver, performed the necessary functions of a principal.

TABLE VIII

PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS IN UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 240
WHO FAVORED A FULL-TIME, PART-TIME OR NO TEACHING
PRINCIPAL IN AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL WITH AN
ENROLLMENT BETWEEN 125-200 PUPILS

School	Full-Time	Part-Time	No-Teaching	No Opinion
Bennington	4	60	31	4
Tescott	15	67	15	2
Culver	13	64	22	0
All respondents	9	63	25	4

Did the respondents favor a kindergarten program and what length of term did they feel was desirable? The results of the survey are shown on Table IX, Part A, page 28. For all respondents 88 per cent were in favor, 10 per cent opposed and on 2 per cent of the returns this question was unmarked. Part B of Table IX shows that 58 per cent of the respondents desired a term of one-half day for two semesters for kindergarten. At the time of the study the kindergartners were attending school one-half day for one semester for the school term 1967-68.

Were the respondents in the Unified District in favor of a program for the mentally retarded children. The percentage in favor of such a program was 62 as shown in Table X, page 29. No type of special program for the mentally retarded was in operation within the district at the time of the survey.

Did the respondents prefer the departmentalized or the self-contained classroom for the instruction of the seventh and eighth graders? Table XI on page 29 indicates that 72 per cent preferred the departmentalized classroom over the self-contained classroom while 3 per cent expressed no opinion. At the time of the study the attendance centers at Bennington and Tescott, where the Culver seventh and eighth graders attended, were departmentalized to the extent that the eighth graders were taught mathematics, science, music and physical education by teachers other than the home-room teacher. The elementary principal taught the remainder of the subjects to the eighth graders. The seventh grade students were taught in self-contained classrooms.

Were the respondents in favor of the district assuming the cost of all necessary workbooks? Table XII on page 30 shows that 66 per cent did not favor this.

TABLE IX

(A) THE PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS IN UNIFIED
SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 240 WHO FAVORED
OR OPPOSED A KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM

	Favored	Opposed
Bennington	92	8
Tescott	80	15
Culver	90	4
All respondents	88	10

(B) THE RESPONDENTS IN UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 240
WHO FAVORED A KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM EXPRESSED THE
DESIRE FOR THE FOLLOWING LENGTH OF TERM
(PERCENTAGES)

School	One-half Day, One Semester	One-half Day, Two Semesters	Other
Bennington	35	63	1
Tescott	47	50	2
Culver	45	55	0
All respondents	41	58	1

TABLE X

PERCENTAGES OF RESPONDENTS IN UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 240
WHO FAVORED OR OPPOSED A UNIFIED DISTRICT HAVING A
PROGRAM FOR MENTALLY RETARDED CHILDREN

School	Favored	Opposed
Bennington	55	35
Tescott	58	31
Culver	59	40
All respondents	62	35

TABLE XI

PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS IN UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 240
WHO PREFERRED DEPARTMENTALIZED OR SELF-CONTAINED
CLASSROOMS FOR GRADES SEVEN AND EIGHT

School	Self-Contained Classroom	Departmentalized Classroom	No Opinion
Bennington	28	70	2
Tescott	22	74	4
Culver	23	77	0
All respondents	25	72	3

TABLE XII
 PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS IN UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 240
 WHO FAVORED OR OPPOSED THE COST OF NECESSARY
 WORKBOOKS BE ASSUMED BY THE DISTRICT

School	Yes	No
Bennington	30	70
Tescott	40	60
Culver	36	63
All respondents	34	66

What elementary educational specialists did the respondents feel should be available to an elementary school? Table XIII, A and B, on page 31 shows the findings. The specialists and the values placed on them by the respondents as indicated in Table XIII, Part A, were:

Art Consultant	2.5 (of moderate to little importance)
Vocal Music Instructor	1.9 (of moderate importance)
Band Instructor	1.8 (of moderate importance)
Speech Therapist	1.9 (of moderate importance)
Psychologist	2.4 (of moderate to little importance)
Remedial Reading Teacher	1.3 (very important)
Guidance Counselor	2.2 (of moderate importance)
Girls' Physical Ed. Teacher	1.9 (of moderate importance)
School Nurse	2.4 (of moderate to little importance)

TABLE XIII

(A) THE RESPONDENTS OF UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 240 PLACED THE FOLLOWING DEGREES OF IMPORTANCE ON EDUCATIONAL SPECIALISTS AVAILABLE TO THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL BY CHECKING THE APPROPRIATE NUMBER HAVING THESE VALUES: (1) VERY IMPORTANT;

(2) OF MODERATE IMPORTANCE; (3) OF LITTLE IMPORTANCE; (4) OF NO IMPORTANCE; (5) NO OPINION. (THE FIGURES UNDER THE

SPECIALIST HEADINGS ARE THE AVERAGE OF THE

VALUE NUMBERS CHECKED BY THE PARENTS.)

School	Art Consultant	Vocal Music Instructor	Band Instructor	Speech Therapist	Psychologist	Remedial Read- ing Teacher	Guidance Counselor	Girls Phys. Ed. Teacher (Female)	School Nurse
Bennington	2.4	1.7	1.7	1.9	2.4	1.2	2.1	1.8	2.4
Tescott	2.6	1.9	1.9	1.8	2.7	1.5	2.5	1.9	2.5
Culver	2.3	1.9	1.8	1.8	2.4	1.3	1.7	1.6	2.1
All respondents	2.5	1.9	1.8	1.9	2.4	1.3	2.2	1.9	2.4

(B) THE NUMBER OF PARENTS EXPRESSING NO OPINION ON EACH OF THE EDUCATIONAL SPECIALISTS IN THE TABLE ARE GIVEN BELOW IN PERCENTAGES

Bennington	7	0	4	4	11	0	0	1	4
Tescott	9	0	2	2	15	0	4	4	7
Culver	7	0	3	3	13	7	4	4	4
All respondents	5	0	3	3	13	1	2	3	5

In Table XIII, Part B, the specialist which had the greatest number of respondents expressing no opinion was the psychologist with 13 per cent. None of the others had more than 5 per cent expressing no opinion. Some of the specialists in Table XIII, Part A, were a part of the unified district's program at the time of the survey. These are listed below in the order of importance placed on them by the parents:

Remedial Reading Teacher	1.3 (very important)
Band Instructor	1.8 (of moderate importance)
Vocal Music Instructor	1.9 (of moderate importance)
Guidance Counselor	2.2 (of moderate importance)

It may be assumed that the four specialists listed above are looked upon with favor by the majority of the respondents since 97 per cent or more expressed an opinion with the results as indicated in the above list. The remainder of the specialists and their ratings in Table XIII, Part A, which were available to elementary schools but which were not utilized by the unified district at the time of the survey, are:

Girls' Physical Ed. Teacher	1.9 (of moderate importance)
Speech Therapist	1.9 (of moderate importance)
Psychologist	2.4 (of moderate to little importance)
School Nurse	2.4 (of moderate to little importance)
Art Consultant	2.5 (of moderate to little importance)

It was noted by the writer that there seemed to be some confusion on the part of the respondents relative to the difference between a remedial reading teacher and a speech therapist. According to the notes added to the questionnaires by approximately 18 per cent of the respondents, it was indicated that they considered a remedial reading teacher and a

speech therapist to be one and the same. The psychologist, the school nurse, and the art consultant received the poorest ratings. For the psychologist 13 per cent of the parents expressed no opinion. This percentage was very high in comparison with the percentages expressing no opinion for the other specialists.

What subjects did the respondents feel should be available to a seventh and eighth grade student? Table XIV on page 34 shows the findings. The majority of the Bennington respondents favored vocal music while the percentages for industrial arts, girls' home economics, and foreign languages was 50 per cent or less. The Tescott respondents did not favor any of these by more than 49 per cent. The Culver respondents favored industrial arts by 54 per cent, girls' home economics by 73 per cent and vocal music by 54 per cent while only 45 per cent favored foreign languages. The averages for all respondents of the district favored girls' home economics by 53 per cent, and vocal music by 54 per cent. Less than 50 per cent of all the respondents favored industrial arts and foreign languages while 7 per cent favored none of these. At the time of the survey vocal music and a Spanish language course were offered to the seventh and eighth grade students of the district.

Did the respondents favor or oppose elementary children riding on the same bus as high school students in attending school? Table XV on page 34 shows that they favored this by a 75 per cent majority. On 17 per cent of the returned questionnaires which were marked in favor of elementary children riding the same bus with high school students in attending school the respondents added a note stating that they were not in favor of this but that the added taxes necessary to do otherwise caused them to mark their questionnaires in the affirmative.

TABLE XIV

PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS IN UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 240
WHO FELT THE FOLLOWING SUBJECTS SHOULD BE AVAILABLE
TO THE SEVENTH AND EIGHTH GRADES

School	Industrial Arts (boys)	Home Ec. (girls)	Foreign Languages	Vocal Music	None of These
Bennington	47	50	44	58	5
Tescott	42	49	40	47	9
Culver	54	73	45	54	9
All respondents	48	53	43	54	7

TABLE XV

PERCENTAGE OF THE RESPONDENTS OF UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 240
IN FAVOR OR OPPOSED TO ELEMENTARY AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS
RIDING IN THE SAME BUS TO AND FROM SCHOOL

School	Yes	No
Bennington	69	29
Tescott	84	13
Culver	77	23
All respondents	75	23

Did the respondents favor a summer program at their elementary school facility and if they favored summer programs what programs did they feel were desirable? Table XVI, A and B, on page 36 shows the findings. A majority of the respondents of each of the attendance centers favored summer programs by the following percentages: Bennington with 59 per cent, Tescott with 51 per cent and Culver with 54 per cent. The per cent of all the respondents favoring summer programs was 56.

Part B of Table XVI on page 36 shows that remedial programs were favored by 86 per cent for reading and by 70 per cent for mathematics. The percentages of the respondents in favor of the two remedial programs were quite high except for the Culver respondents of whom only 25 per cent were in favor of remedial mathematics. Suggestions for other programs of a remedial nature given by 8 per cent of the respondents were in the language arts area.

The enrichment program were not as favorably treated. Of the three suggested in the questionnaire the only one desired by the majority of those favoring summer programs was a program of arts and crafts. This was favored by 64 per cent. Piano lessons were favored by 48 per cent while art instruction was favored by only 22 per cent of respondents. The respondents who desired enrichment programs other than those named above amounted to 8 per cent. Those consisted of programs in foreign languages, typing, and literature.

It should be said at this point that the respondents showed themselves to be concerned and interested in their elementary schools and their children's education. This interest and concerns was not only shown by the large number of completed returns but also by the additional comments stated by the respondents. In only one instance did a

parent become unreasonable in her extensive, sometimes incoherent, comments. In general, however, the additional comments were worthy of note and led the writer to the conclusion that a followup survey should be given consideration in the near future.

(A)

TABLE XVI

PERCENTAGES OF RESPONDENTS IN UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 240
WHO APPROVED OR OPPOSED SUMMER PROGRAMS AT THE
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL FACILITY

School	Yes	No
Bennington	59	38
Tescott	51	42
Culver	54	41
All respondents	56	40

(B)

THE RESPONDENTS OF UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 240
WHO APPROVED OF SUMMER PROGRAMS EXPRESSED
A DESIRE FOR THE FOLLOWING PROGRAMS

School	Remedial Programs			Enrichment Programs			Other
	Reading	Math.	Other	Piano	Art	Arts/Crafts	
Bennington	89	75	5	27	25	68	7
Tescott	91	80	17	43	17	60	9
Culver	67	25	8	50	12	67	8
All respondents	86	70	8	48	22	64	8

SUMMARY

It was the purpose of this study to discover the present attitudes and concerns of the parents of elementary school children attending school in Unified School District No. 240, toward various phases of their schools' operations, services, and facilities.

In order to carry out this study, a questionnaire was developed and sent to all the elementary school parents of the Unified School District No. 240. Based on a return of 74 per cent of the 193 questionnaires, the following findings resulted as answers to the Statement of Questions:

1. How did the respondents evaluate the overall instruction in their elementary schools? The results were: excellent--15 per cent, good--69 per cent, fair--13 per cent, poor--2 per cent, and no opinion--1 per cent.
2. How did the respondents evaluate their present school building and equipment? The findings were: excellent--26 per cent, good--57 per cent, fair--15 per cent, poor--2 per cent, and no opinion--1 per cent.
3. What degree of emphasis did the respondents feel should be placed on athletics in the upper grades? The feelings were: (for boys) present emphasis satisfactory--73 per cent, more emphasis--3 per cent, less emphasis--18 per cent, and no opinion--6 per cent; (for girls) present emphasis satisfactory--60 per cent, more emphasis--18 per cent, less emphasis--13 per cent, and no opinion--7 per cent.

4. How did the respondents feel about the number of grades a teacher should have with a normal class load in a self-contained classroom? The returns showed the following: one grade--76 per cent, two grades--18 per cent, three or more grades--2 per cent, and no opinion--4 per cent.
5. How did the respondents feel about the maximum miles, one-way, that a kindergarten child should have to travel in attending school? The average maximum distance as obtained from the returns was between 8 and 12 miles.
6. How did the respondents feel about the maximum miles, one-way, that a seventh or eighth grader should have to travel in attending school? The average maximum miles figured from the returns was 15.
7. According to the respondents, how much teaching duty should a principal have in a school with an enrollment between 125-200 pupils? The findings were: full-time teaching duty--9 per cent, part-time teaching duty--63 per cent, no-teaching duty--25 per cent, and no opinion--4 per cent.
8. Did the respondents favor a kindergarten program and what length of term did they feel was desirable? The findings were: in favor--88 per cent, opposed--10 per cent, and no opinion given--2 per cent.
Length of term desired by the parents who favored a

kindergarten program were: one-half day for one semester--41 per cent, one-half day for two semesters--58 per cent, and those who favored some length of term other than the two stated in the questionnaire--1 per cent.

9. Were the respondents in favor of a unified district having a program to care for mentally retarded children? The feelings were: in favor--62 per cent, and opposed--35 per cent.
10. Did the respondents prefer the departmentalized or the self-contained classroom for the instruction of the seventh and eighth graders? The tabulated results showed the following: self-contained classroom--25 per cent, the departmentalized classroom--72 per cent, and no opinion--3 per cent.
11. Were the respondents in favor of the district assuming the cost of all necessary workbooks? The findings were: in favor--34 per cent, and opposed--66 per cent.
12. What degree of importance did the respondents place upon some educational specialists available to the elementary schools? The findings were based on the numbered degrees of importance as follows: 1--very important, 2--of moderate importance, 3--of little importance, 4--of no

importance, and 5--no opinion. The average degree of importance expressed by the respondents were: art consultant--2.5 (of moderate to little importance), vocal music instructor--1.9 (of moderate importance), band instructor--1.8 (of moderate importance), speech therapist--1.9 (of moderate importance), psychologist--2.4 (of moderate to little importance), remedial reading teacher--1.3 (very important), guidance counselor--2.2 (of moderate importance), and school nurse--2.4 (of moderate to little importance).

The percentages of the respondents expressing no opinion on each of the educational specialists were: art consultant--5 per cent, vocal music instructor--0 per cent, band instructor--3 per cent, speech therapist--3 per cent, psychologist--13 per cent, remedial reading teacher--1 per cent, guidance counselor--2 per cent, girls' physical education teacher--3 per cent, and school nurse--5 per cent.

13. What subjects did the respondents feel should be available to the seventh and eighth grade students? The following percentages in favor of each of the listed subject areas were compiled from the returned questionnaires: Industrial arts for boys--48 per cent, home economics for

girls--53 per cent, foreign languages--43 per cent, vocal music--54 per cent, and those who favored none of these--7 per cent.

14. Did the respondents favor or oppose elementary children riding on the same bus as high school students in attending school? The findings were: in favor--75 per cent, and opposed--23 per cent.
15. Did the respondents favor a summer program at their elementary school facility and if so, what programs did they favor? The tabulated results were: in favor of summer programs--56 per cent, and those opposed--38 per cent. The parents desiring summer programs indicated that they favored the following types of programs: remedial reading--86 per cent, remedial mathematics--70 per cent, other remedial programs--8 per cent, piano lessons--48 per cent, art instruction--22 per cent, arts and crafts--64 per cent, and other enrichment programs--8 per cent.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings in the study led the writer to the following conclusions based on the attitudes of the respondents as interpreted from the returned questionnaires:

1. The respondents felt that their children's instruction, school buildings, and equipment were quite satisfactory.
2. The majority of the respondents were satisfied with the present emphasis on athletics in the upper grades. However it was noted that approximately 20 per cent of the respondents of the sub-districts of Bennington and Tescott indicated a desire for less emphasis on boys athletics, while less than 2 per cent were for more emphasis. In these same two sub-districts approximately 14 per cent indicated a desire for less emphasis for girls athletics and approximately 17 per cent for more emphasis. The respondents of the sub-district of Culver indicated a desire for more emphasis in upper grade athletics for both boys and girls by a much larger percentage than did the respondents for less emphasis.
3. The majority of the respondents in the sub-districts of Bennington and Tescott indicated a strong preference for one grade per teacher in a self-contained classroom with a normal number of pupils. On 50 per cent of the returns from Culver, the only sub-district

having more than one grade per teacher in a self-contained classroom, the respondents indicated a desire for two grades per teacher while the other 50 per cent expressed a desire for one grade per teacher.

4. The majority felt that the longest distance that should be traveled in attending school by a kindergartner should be not over 12 miles, one-way, and not more than 15 miles, one-way, for a seventh or eighth grader.
5. The largest group felt that the elementary principal should have only part-time teaching duty.
6. A majority favored a kindergarten program and a program for the mentally retarded. The majority of those favoring a kindergarten program desired a length of term of one-half day for two semesters.
7. The respondents did not feel that the unified district should assume the cost of workbooks used in the elementary grades.
8. According to the respondents' ratings, the following educational specialists available to the elementary school were considered to be of moderate importance: vocal music instructor, band instructor, speech therapist, guidance counselor and girls' physical education teacher. The highest rating received by any of the educational specialists was

the remedial reading teacher. This specialist was considered very important.

9. The majority group favored the departmentalized classroom for grades seven and eight.
10. The largest group felt that the seventh and eighth graders should have home economics (girls) and vocal music available to them.
11. The majority felt that elementary and high school pupils should ride in the same bus to and from school.
12. The majority also favored summer programs at their elementary school facility where remedial and enrichment programs would be carried out.

It can be assumed, in general, that the parents were satisfied with their schools and did not tend to reject new ideas or new programs not already established in their schools. As examples, the majority of the respondents favored a program of departmentalization for the upper grades, a program for the training of the mentally retarded, a girls' physical education instructor (female), full-time kindergarten program, and summer programs in the nature of remedial and enrichment. None of these programs as given here were available to the students at the time of the study.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The review of the literature and the findings by questionnaire led the writer to make these recommendations.

A special program should be developed and implemented for the training of the handicapped and the mentally retarded school-age children in the district.

Increase the school term for kindergarteners from one-half day for one semester to one-half day for two semesters.

A feasibility study should be made by the school administration relative to a program for the departmentalization of the seventh and eighth grades in the study area.

Special education personnel who should be made available to the school district include a speech therapist, a girls' physical education instructor, and a specialist in working with handicapped or mentally retarded children. The special education personnel already utilized by the district were music instructors, a guidance counselor, and a remedial reading teacher. These were all considered to be important by the parents of the school district and should be continued.

Further study by the school administration is necessary to determine the need and desirability of summer programs in the study area.

In order that all children of the district in grades 1 - 6 might attend a self-contained classroom with one grade per teacher, the Culver attendance center should be closed. The kindergarten class presently located at Culver consisting of children from both the Tescott and Culver sub-districts should be moved to the Tescott attendance center. A temporary kindergarten classroom unit could be utilized there. The

Bennington and Tescott attendance centers have adequate facilities to absorb the students in grades 1 - 6 who presently make up the Culver Grade School. A more balanced educational opportunity is the primary reason for recommending the closing of the Culver attendance center. A secondary reason is that the cost per pupil for the 1966-67 school term was more than double the cost per pupil at the Bennington and Tescott attendance centers.¹

In conclusion the writer recommends a more extensive survey be made in the near future with planned follow-up surveys at regular intervals. Minor problems are normally easier to rectify than major issues. Surveys tailored to fit the current and future needs of students can result in the improvement of educational opportunity and school-community relationships.

¹Central Office Records, Unified School District No. 240, Bennington, Kansas, January, 1968.

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APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE

Name the elementary school(s) in which your child or children are enrolled.

1. Rate the instructional program of your school.

_____excellent
 _____good
 _____fair
 _____poor
 _____no opinion

2. Rate your elementary school building and equipment.

_____no opinion
 _____fair
 _____poor
 _____good
 _____excellent

3. What degree of emphasis should be placed on athletics in the upper grades as compared with the present emphasis as you see it?

For boys

For girls

_____	no opinion	_____
_____	more emphasis	_____
_____	present emphasis satisfactory	_____
_____	less emphasis	_____

4. Assuming that an elementary teacher may have a normal load of approximately twenty-five pupils in a self-contained classroom (classroom in which one teacher teaches almost all the subjects) how many grades would you be in favor of her teaching in that room?

_____ two grades

_____ three or more grades

_____ one grade regardless of class size

_____ no opinion

5. What is the longest distance, one-way, that a kindergarnter should travel to school?

_____ 4 miles

_____ 12 miles

_____ 20 miles

_____ 8 miles

_____ 15 miles

6. What, in your opinion, is the longest distance, one-way, that a seventh or eighth grader should travel to school?

_____ 4 miles

_____ 12 miles

_____ 20 miles

_____ 8 miles

_____ 15 miles

7. In an elementary school with an enrollment of between 125 and 200 pupils, should the principal also have:

_____ full-time teaching duty

_____ part-time teaching duty

_____ no teaching duty

_____ no opinion

8. Do you favor a kindergartner program? yes no

If yes, indicate the length of term that, in your judgment, is most desirable.

one-half day for one semester each year

one-half day for two semesters each year

Length of term other than either of the above

Assuming that the following programs would not involve sharp increases in taxes regardless of the way you marked them, please indicate your feelings about them. (Some of the following programs are already in operation as you will note. However, your opinion of them is as important to this study as your opinion of the programs which are not a part of the elementary system of Unified District No. 240.)

9. Do you think a unified school district should have some type of program to help train the mentally retarded?

yes no

10. Check the organization that you feel is better for grades seven and eight.

self-contained classroom (basic subjects taught by one teacher)

_____ departmentalized classroom (subjects taught by specialized teachers of their fields)

no opinion

11. Should the unified school district assume the cost of all necessary workbooks used in the elementary grades? (Each workbook can be used only one term because the pupil does written exercises in it.)

 yes no

12. Indicate the degree of importance which you would place upon the following educational specialists available to the elementary schools, by checking the appropriate number using the following values: (1) very important; (2) of moderate importance; (3) of little importance; (4) of no importance; (5) no opinion.

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) art consultant

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) music instructor (vocal)

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) band instructor

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) speech therapist

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) psychologist

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) remedial reading teacher

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) guidance counselor

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) girls physical education instructor (female)

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) school nurse

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) other(s) desired _____

13. Which of the following do you think should be available for the seventh and eighth grades?

_____ industrial arts (boys)

_____ home economics (girls)

_____ foreign languages

_____ vocal music

_____ none of these

_____ other(s) desired _____

14. In your opinion, should elementary and high school pupils ride in the same bus to and from school?

_____ yes

_____ no

15. Are you in favor of summer programs at your elementary school facility?

_____yes

_____no

If your answer is yes, please indicate your preferences below.

Remedial program: _____reading _____mathematics

_____other desired

Enrichment programs: _____piano lessons _____art classes

_____arts and crafts

_____other desired

A SURVEY OF SPECIFIC ATTITUDES OF PARENTS
IN UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 240
OTTAWA COUNTY, KANSAS

by

CHARLES WILLIAM BYRD

B. A., Kansas Wesleyan University, 1964

AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

College of Education

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

1969

This evaluative survey of the Unified School District No. 240, Ottawa County, Kansas, was conducted to determine the attitudes of the parents toward various phases of their schools' operations, services, and facilities. Since the district was recently unified, and to this point unevaluated, it was considered important that the parents' attitudes toward certain aspects of the schools' operations be measured so that the assets and liabilities of the school become known and thus available to the administration and board of education of the school district for future planning. By this means it was thought that the educational opportunity for the children could be improved by utilizing as many of the school-community sources of information as possible.

A review of the literature indicated that a survey of the opinions of a school district's parents, if properly conducted, could be used to gain an understanding of the attitudes of the parents toward their schools. This information could then be utilized in an attempt to upgrade the quality of education and improve school-community relations.

The cooperation of the administration and board of education of Unified School District No. 240 facilitated the acquisition of data necessary for the implementation of the survey by providing basic information. Other sources of data were the literature made available by the Kansas State University Library and its library services, bulletins from the Kansas State Department of Education, records from the office of the Ottawa County Superintendent, and the returned questionnaires by the parents of the study area.

Questionnaires were sent to all parents of the district who had children in grades K - 8. A total of 193 questionnaires were sent out. Of this total, 74 per cent were completed and returned.

The survey of Unified School District No. 240, Ottawa County, Kansas, disclosed that the parents reporting were satisfied with their schools, but indicated a desire for some organizational and instructional changes in the future.

The results of the survey led to the following recommendations which were deemed educationally sound in the light of the needs and desires of the school-community: The development and implementation of a program for the training of the handicapped and the mentally retarded. A two-semester program should be provided for the kindergartners of the district. A feasibility study relative to the departmentalization of the seventh and eighth grades should be made. Further study by the administration was recommended concerning summer programs as to need, desirability, and type. Special education personnel who should be made available to the school district are a speech therapist, a girls' physical education instructor, and a specialist in working with the handicapped and the mentally retarded. Special service personnel already utilized by the school district should all be continued. The Culver attendance center should be closed and the students of the sub-district of Culver should attend the Bennington and Tescott attendance centers utilizing a temporary housing unit at Tescott for the kindergarten class made up of the students from the Tescott and Culver sub-districts. This would not involve more than twelve miles, one-way, in attending kindergarten class. It was also recommended that more intensive surveys be programmed for the future in the study area.