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A STUDY OF PRESENT PRACTICES AND
ADMINISTRATIVE ATTITUDES TOWARD
THE DRAMA PROGRAMS OF SELECTED
MICHIGAN HIGH SCHOOLS

Thesis for the Degree of M. A.

MICHIGAN STATE COLLEGE

Stanley James White

1951

This is to certify that the

thesis entitled


A Study of Present Practices and
Administrative Attitudes Toward
the Drama Programs of Selected
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presented by

Stanley J. White

has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for

M.A. degree in Speech


Major professor

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BIOGRAPHY

Stanley James White was born at Harbor Beach, Michigan, February 28, 1919, the third son of Henry and Frances White. He was graduated from Harbor Beach High School in 1937, and entered Michigan State College in September of the same year. During World War II, he served with the 99th Infantry Division in Europe, earning the Combat Infantry Badge, the Purple Heart, and battle stars for the Ardennes, Rhineland, and Southern Germany. Upon discharge from the Army, he returned to Michigan State College where he was granted the degree of Bachelor of Arts in 1948 having had roles in six major theatrical productions, and having attained membership in Theta Alpha Phi, national honorary dramatics fraternity. He has held teaching positions at Grand Blanc High School and Flint Central High School.

A STUDY OF PRESENT PRACTICES AND ADMINISTRATIVE
ATTITUDES TOWARD THE DRAMA PROGRAMS OF
SELECTED MICHIGAN HIGH SCHOOLS

By

Stanley James White

A THESIS

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Department of Speech, Dramatics, and Radio Education

1951

THESIS

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CHAPTER I

CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

With an ever-increasing number of trained persons engaged in the teaching of language and communication skills, particularly drama, with closer public scrutiny of the content of secondary school curricula, and with the acceptance of the Michigan Speech Association as a department of the Michigan Education Association, this study of Michigan high school drama programs was felt to be timely and valuable.

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. The purpose of this study was (1) to investigate present practices in the presentation of high school plays in the State of Michigan; and (2) to discover administrative attitudes toward such practices and toward the students and teachers engaged in them, as revealed through a questionnaire study.

Importance of the study. The results of this study are designed to present an accurate picture of dramatics activity at the secondary level that might be used as a reference point for any change in methods, objectives or instruction.

II. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

Present practices. The current methods used in employing drama teachers or directors, financing school plays, selecting school plays,

casting and presenting school plays are included in the term, "present practices."

Administrative attitudes. The attitudes of secondary school principals and superintendents were regarded as being contained in their subjective evaluation of the practices and objectives of each drama program.

Drama programs. This study was not primarily concerned with curricular drama. Play production may or may not be a part of regular classroom instruction. Many of the smaller schools conduct their dramatic arts as an extra-curricular activity. The study did attempt to explore very carefully the preparation and presentation of a play for a paying audience.

Selected Michigan High Schools. The State of Michigan divides its schools into classes A, B, C, and D according to student population. Class A schools have an enrollment of 800 and above. Class B schools have an enrollment of 325 to 799. Class C schools have an enrollment of 125 to 324. Class D schools have an enrollment of 124 or less. The class B and C schools represent the greatest total enrollment, with 435 schools in these two classes. A total of 493 questionnaires were sent to the class A, B, and C schools. Since the class D schools are few in number and small in population, it was felt that they could be omitted from the study.

CHAPTER II

CHAPTER II

PROCEDURES

The following questionnaire was sent to the administrator of each class A, B, and C public and parochial high school in the Upper and Lower peninsulas of the State of Michigan. A stamped return envelope was included with each questionnaire to insure adequate returns.

In formulating the questionnaire, an attempt was made to analyze the drama programs of Michigan high schools qualitatively rather than quantitatively under these criteria:

1. What kinds of plays are being produced?
2. What persons are responsible for the production of plays?
3. What is the educational atmosphere in which plays are produced?

The questionnaire attempted to assess the educational and cultural value of drama activity. An explanation of the items included is in order.

I. WHAT KINDS OF PLAYS ARE BEING PRODUCED?

The production of a school play should reflect well upon the author, upon the student-actor, upon the stage crew, upon the director, and upon the school. The performance of a school play demands high standards of excellence, and since spectators at school functions expect well-rehearsed bands, orchestras and vocal groups, and well-coached athletic teams, they have every right to witness a well-produced school play. Question 15

sought to locate the persons making the choice of play. Perhaps in some instances it would not be well for the director to make this choice alone, yet it seems possible that the purposes of education through a balanced program of dramatic presentations can best be served if the director is given freedom in his choice of plays. Question 16 regarding the basis for play selection was phrased affirmatively so that answers to these items would be clear-cut. Local conditions, such as number of students, royalty restrictions, religion, etc., often influence the choice of the school play, but other educational factors should be given equal weight. Question 17 investigates the matter of royalties. A reference point in determining the value of the play could be the amount of royalty paid. Questions 20 and 21 attempt to classify various plays according to audience reaction with the hope that a pattern of preference might be revealed as a guide to play directors in their future productions. Question 22 is designed to reveal specific criticisms expressed by members of the audience.

II. WHAT PERSONS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PRODUCTION OF PLAYS?

Since the finished play is largely the director's responsibility, question 8 was directly concerned with the academic training of the director, but question 7 concerning the practical experience of the director was felt to be equally important. Ideally, a director should have practical experience in all phases of play production.

Questions 9 and 10 attempted to discover the relative importance of the stage setting. Probably the director should determine what the

stage setting is to be; its color scheme, decoration and lighting. The building, painting, and lighting of the set need not be done by the director, but he should be able to closely supervise such work.

Question 6 attempts to discover whether the directing of school plays was the duty of a person trained and qualified for the task, or whether the directing of plays was assigned to teachers regardless of their training.

III. WHAT IS THE EDUCATIONAL ATMOSPHERE IN WHICH PLAYS ARE PRODUCED?

The health and vigor of a drama program flourish in a school that believes dramatics activity to be worthwhile. If some administrators have not been convinced of the worth of curricular or extra-curricular dramatics, it has not been entirely their responsibility. Drama directors as a group have never formulated a statement of their stand in Michigan.

Question 1 was designed to discover if administrators felt that their drama programs were currently serving any purpose, and question 12 was closely related in that it was meant to discover what the administrators thought to be the ideal purposes of a drama program.

Question 2 sought to reveal current practices in casting plays. If drama has educational value, a great many students should have a chance to participate. Limitations, such as membership in a particular class or grade, should not prevent students from participating in a progressive drama program.

Questions 3 and 4 investigate the financial aspects of the drama program. In meeting production costs, the tradition has been that either the class presenting the play assumes such costs, or the Board of Education assumes them.

Question 18 sought to clarify the importance of the director in the drama program. With much of the work of play production done after school hours, qualified directors will be attracted to those situations in which additional work merits additional compensation.

In the entire investigation, no mention is made of the stage equipment in the belief that a successful program may be had with minimum equipment. The assumption is that all replies to the questionnaire referred to plays presented on the familiar proscenium stage. The recent interest in central staging, also called arena or circle theatre, should be investigated by all secondary schools.

TOWARD DRAMA PROGRAMS OF SELECTED MICHIGAN HIGH SCHOOLS

Name _____ School _____
Position _____

- 1—Which of the following statements would you regard as true in reference to your drama program?
☐ Yes ☐ No **Drama is an educational experience for students.**
☐ Yes ☐ No **Drama is a fund-raising device for a class.**
☐ Yes ☐ No **Drama is a public relations medium.**
☐ Yes ☐ No **Drama serves as a school-community experience.**
☐ Yes ☐ No **Drama is good entertainment.**
- 2—Are your school plays presented by classes, by casts chosen from the entire student body, or both?
☐ Classes ☐ All-School ☐ Both
- 3—Do proceeds from a play go entirely to the producing group, or is some percentage returned to a dramatics fund to purchase equipment?
☐ All Proceeds to Group ☐ Percentage Returned
- 4—Does your school budget allow the purchase of essential equipment such as sample play scripts, lumber, hardware, scene paint, etc., even though all proceeds go to the group presenting the play?
☐ Yes ☐ No
- 5—Would you welcome qualified critics or technical advisers from one of the following areas to evaluate the performance of a play?
☐ Yes ☐ No—Other High Schools
☐ Yes ☐ No—Michigan Community Colleges
☐ Yes ☐ No—Michigan Colleges and Universities
☐ Have No Need for Critics
- 6—Is the responsibility for directing school plays given to one person or is it divided among the faculty?
☐ One Person ☐ Divided
- 7—Has your play director ever participated in an extra-curricular in college, civic, or professional drama?
☐ Yes ☐ No
- 8—On your faculty at the present time, which of the following persons do you have directing school plays?
☐ Speech Major
☐ English Major with Speech Minor
☐ _____ Major with Speech Minor
☐ B.A. with no Training in Dramatics
Other? Please specify: _____
- 9—Is the construction, painting, and lighting of stage settings done by:
☐ Industrial Arts Teacher
☐ Dramatics Teacher or Director
☐ Janitorial Staff
Other? Please specify: _____
- 10—Is work on stage settings assigned or voluntary?
☐ Assigned ☐ Voluntary
- 11—In view of the fact that other departments of the school are often asked to assist in play production, would you say that the majority of your faculty, clerical, and janitorial staff regard the plays as a justifiable activity for students?
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Uncertain

- 12—Which of the following items would you regard as benefits to the student participating in dramatics? Check any or all.
☐ Wholesome Personality Development
☐ Development of Responsibility Toward the Group
☐ Acquisition of Vocational Skills
☐ Stimulation for an Adult Hobby
☐ Development of Appreciation for Language and Literature
☐ Training of Discriminating Consumers of Entertainment
- 13—Does your school have a dramatics club?
☐ Yes ☐ No
- 14—If your school has a dramatics club, does it have an active program of play production, or is it social in nature?
☐ Active Program ☐ Social
- 15—Do students, director, faculty, or combination of these select the school plays?
☐ Students ☐ Director ☐ Faculty ☐ Combination of
- 16—On what basis is a play selected?
☐ Yes ☐ No—Must Have a Large Cast
☐ Yes ☐ No—Must Have More Girls than Boys
☐ Yes ☐ No—Must Be Easily Staged in One Setting
☐ Yes ☐ No—Must Be a Comedy
☐ Yes ☐ No—Must Have a Great Amount of Action
☐ Yes ☐ No—Must Have Literary Merit
☐ Yes ☐ No—Must Not Involve Smoking or Drinking
☐ Yes ☐ No—Must Be Under \$25 Royalty
☐ Yes ☐ No—Must Be Familiar to the Public as a Book or Movie
Other? Please specify: _____
- 17—Indicate the amount you customarily pay for production rights for each 3-act play.
☐ \$5 ☐ \$10 ☐ \$15 ☐ \$25 ☐ Over \$25 ☐ Royalty Free
- 18—Does your play director receive additional compensation over his base salary either in money or in reduced schedule?
☐ Yes ☐ No
- 19—Do people in your community sometimes get in touch with you to comment on a school play?
☐ Often ☐ Seldom ☐ Never
- 20—Give the name of a school play which brought favorable comment from people in your community.
Title _____
Title _____
- 21—Give the name of a school play which brought unfavorable comment from people in your community.
Title _____
Title _____
- 22—If you have had some unfavorable comments, were they in regard to:
☐ The Choice of Play
☐ The Training of the Actors
☐ The Conduct of the Actors
☐ Stage Setting, Lighting, Make-up
Other? Please specify: _____

COMMENTS

11522 Davis Street
Grand Blanc, Michigan

Dear Friend:

To discover the status of secondary school dramatics programs in our state, this questionnaire is being sent to all Class A, B, and C schools. It is designed to permit each administrator to quickly and easily check mark the blanks without lengthy writing. Space is provided on the last page for remarks concerning your drama program, drama programs in general, or the merits of this investigation. The results of this study will be submitted as a thesis to the School of Graduate Studies of Michigan State College, and to the drama division of the Michigan Speech Association.

A summary of the results will be sent to all those returning the questionnaire.

Sincerely yours,

Stanley J. White

Stanley J. White
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Chairman, Speech Section, Region 2
1951 M.E.A. Regional Conference

Prepared by

STANLEY J. WHITE

TEACHER OF SPEECH AND DRAMA

Flint Central High School

Address.....11522 Davis Street, Grand Blanc, Michigan

CHAPTER III

CHAPTER III

STATISTICAL SUMMARY OF QUESTIONNAIRE RETURNS

<u>School</u>	<u>Number Sent</u>	<u>Number Replying</u>	<u>Percent Replying</u>
Class A	58	40	69
Class B	128	81	63
Class C	307	166	54
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Totals	493	287	58

1. Which of the following statements would you regard as true in reference to your drama program?

A. Drama is an educational experience for students.

Class A	100%
Class B	91%
Class C	87%

B. Drama is a fund raising device for a class.

Class A	53%
Class B	68%
Class C	78%

C. Drama is a public relations medium.

Class A	83%
Class B	68%
Class C	67%

D. Drama serves as a school-community experience.

Class A	65%
Class B	49%
Class C	59%

E. Drama is good entertainment.

Class A	83%
Class B	77%
Class C	69%

RANK ORDER OF ITEMS IN QUESTION 1 BY MEAN PERCENTAGE

A. Drama is an educational experience for students.	92.6%
E. Drama is good entertainment.	76.3%
C. Drama is a public relations medium.	72.7%
B. Drama is a fund-raising device for a class.	66.3%
D. Drama serves as a school-community experience.	57.6%

2. Are your school plays presented by classes, by casts chosen from the entire student body, or both?

	Classes	All-school	Both
Class A	40%	30%	30%
Class B	59%	.09%	32%
Class C	78%	.06%	19%
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Mean	59%	10.5%	27%

3. Do proceeds from a play go entirely to the producing group, or is some percentage returned to a dramatics fund to purchase equipment?

	All proceeds to group	Percentage returned
Class A	40%	50%
Class B	69%	31%
Class C	80%	20%
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Mean	63%	30.3%

4. Does your school budget allow the purchase of essential equipment such as sample play scripts, lumber, hardware, scene paint, etc., even though all proceeds go to the group presenting the play?

	Yes	No
Class A	45%	50%
Class B	43%	53%
Class C	38%	57%
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Mean	43%	53%

5. Would you welcome qualified critics or technical advisers from one of the following areas to evaluate the performance of a play?

Yes

A. Other High Schools

Class A	40%
Class B	47%
Class C	48%

B. Michigan Speech Association

Class A	50%
Class B	50%
Class C	52%

C. Michigan Colleges and Universities

Class A	63%
Class B	48%
Class C	45%

D. Have No Need For Such Assistance

Class A	25%
Class B	29%
Class C	21%

RANK ORDER OF ITEMS IN QUESTION 5 BY MEAN PERCENTAGE

C. Michigan Colleges and Universities	52%
B. Michigan Speech Association	50.6%
A. Other High Schools	45%
D. Have No Need For Such Assistance	25%

6. Is the responsibility for directing school plays given to one person or is it divided among the faculty?

	One person	Divided
Class A	83%	15%
Class B	70%	28%
Class C	51%	46%
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Mean	68%	29.7%

6. Is the responsibility for directing school plays given to one person or is it divided among the faculty?

	One person	Divided
Class A	83%	15%
Class B	70%	28%
Class C	51%	46%
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Mean	68%	29.7%

7. Has your play director ever participated as an actor or technician in college, civic, or professional drama?

	Yes	No
Class A	90%	13%
Class B	73%	21%
Class C	59%	36%

8. On your faculty at the present time, which of the following persons do you have directing school plays?

A. Speech Major

Class A	65%
Class B	44%
Class C	21%

B. English Major with Speech Minor

Class A	33%
Class B	49%
Class C	53%

C. B. A. With No Training In Dramatics

Class A	.08%
Class B	11%
Class C	26%

D. Other

Class A

English major (1)
 Social Studies Major Speech Minor (1)
 History Major Speech Minor (1)
 Many years experience in Elementary School dramatics (1)

Class B

English Major with professional acting experience (1)
 Mathematics Major, Speech Minor (1)
 One who has had considerable experience in play production (1)
 Class sponsor with some drama training (1)
 No training but much experience as amateur (1)
 Outside director (3)
 Social Studies Major, Speech Minor (1)
 Older teacher with broad experience (1)
 Language Major with Mathematics and Speech Minors (1)
 English Major (2)

Class C

Mathematics Major, Speech Minor (3)
 English Major, Social Studies Minor (1)

B. A. with some training in dramatics (3)
 History Major, Speech Minor (2)
 Person experienced in dramatics (1)
 Social Studies Major, Speech Minor (2)

D. Other

Class C

Art Major, Speech Minor (3)
 Commercial Major, Speech Minor (2)
 English Major, Journalism Minor (1)
 Civic Theatre Director, M. A. Speech (1)
 Latin Major, Speech Minor (1)
 Music Major, Speech Minor (2)
 English Major (9)
 Music Major (1)
 English Major with almost a Speech Minor (1)
 Any English teacher likely to be chosen by the class (1)
 Spanish Major, English Minor with some training in dramatics (1)
 English Major, extra-curricular dramatics in college (1)
 Mathematics Major with some drama experience (1)
 B. S. with four hours college speech (1)

9. Is the construction, painting and lighting of stage settings done by:

A. Industrial Arts teacher

Class A	25%
Class B	39%
Class C	39%

B. Dramatics teacher or director

Class A	53%
Class B	51%
Class C	43%

C. Janitorial staff

Class A	1%
Class B	20%
Class C	16%

D. Other

Class A

Switch Board Club (1)
 Students plus help of an interested father (1)
 Stage technician (4)
 Stagecraft classes (2)
 Students (1)
 Dramatics class (1)
 Director and students (2)
 Director of staging (1)
 Technicians Club and Director (1)
 Sets are rented (1)

Class B

Art department (7)
 Outside help (1)
 Class adviser and students (1)
 Physics teacher who is interested in the work (1)
 Paint and decorating classes (1)
 Students (30)

Class C

Professional painter (1)
Community help (1)
Sponsor and students (1)
Permanent stage crew (2)
Art teacher (5)
Combination of A, B, C (13)
Students (43)

10. Is work on stage settings assigned or voluntary?

	Assigned	Voluntary
Class A	35%	63%
Class B	34%	66%
Class C	44%	56%
Mean	<hr/> 37.7%	<hr/> 58.3%

11. In view of the fact that other departments of the school are often asked to assist in play production, would you say that the majority of your faculty, clerical, and janitorial staff regard the plays as a justifiable activity for students?

	Yes	No	Uncertain	Not Answering
Class A	78%	0	2%	20%
Class B	81%	.02%	14%	4.98%
Class C	78%	.04%	12%	9.96%
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Mean	79%	.02%	9%	11.31%

12. Which of the following items would you regard as benefits to the student participating in dramatics?

A. Wholesome Personality Development

Class A	90%
Class B	85%
Class C	89%

B. Development of Responsibility Toward the Group

Class A	90%
Class B	89%
Class C	85%

C. Acquisition of Vocational Skills

Class A	35%
Class B	26%
Class C	25%

D. Stimulation For An Adult Hobby

Class A	75%
Class B	58%
Class C	39%

E. Development of Appreciation For Language And Literature

Class A	60%
Class B	48%
Class C	38%

F. Training of Discriminating Consumers of Entertainment

Class A	65%
Class B	41%
Class C	36%

RANK ORDER OF ITEMS IN QUESTION 12 BY MEAN PERCENTAGE

A. Wholesome personality development	88%
B. Development of responsibility toward the group	88%
D. Stimulation for an adult hobby	57.3%
E. Development of appreciation for language and literature	48.6%
F. Training of discriminating consumers of entertainment	47.3%
C. Acquisition of vocational skills	28.6%

13. Does your school have a dramatics club?

	Yes	No
Class A	60%	40%
Class B	47%	53%
Class C	16%	84%
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Mean	41%	59%

14. If your school has a drama club, does it have an active program of play production, or is it social in nature?

	Active Program	Social
Class A	88%	12%
Class B	82%	18%
Class C	74%	26%
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Mean	81.3%	18.7%

15. Do students, director, faculty, or combination of these select the school plays?

A. Students

Class A	.05%
Class B	.04%
Class C	.05%

B. Director

Class A	40%
Class B	22%
Class C	14%

C. Faculty

Class A	.08%
Class B	.02%
Class C	.02%

D. Combinations

Class A

Director, Department Head, and students (1)
 Faculty and students (3)
 Students, director, faculty (8)
 Students and director (11)

Class B

Faculty, Board of Education, director, students (1)
 Students and director with director making final selection (1)
 Director and faculty (1)
 Faculty (2)
 Director and Principal (2)
 Director and class sponsors (3)
 Director only (18)
 Students, director, faculty (8)
 Students and director (42)

Class C

Students and faculty (2)
 Director and faculty (4)
 Students, director, faculty (25)
 Students and director

COMBINATIONS OF STUDENTS AND DIRECTORS IN PERCENT

Class A	28%
Class B	52%
Class C	53%

16. On what basis is a play selected?

	Yes
A. Must have a large cast	
Class A	18%
Class B	15%
Class C	13%
B. Must have more girls than boys	
Class A	.08%
Class B	11%
Class C	10%
C. Must be easily staged in one setting	
Class A	28%
Class B	46%
Class C	61%
D. Must be a comedy	
Class A	.05%
Class B	12%
Class C	13%
E. Must have a great amount of action	
Class A	15%
Class B	12%
Class C	25%
F. Must have literary merit	
Class A	53%
Class B	44%
Class C	29%
G. Must not involve smoking or drinking	
Class A	33%
Class B	44%
Class C	37%

H. Must be under \$25 royalty

Class A	0
Class B	.09%
Class C	30%

I. Must be familiar to the public as a book or movie

Class A	.05%
Class B	.04%
Class C	.006%

J. Other bases for play selection

Class A

The more recent the copyright date
 Able to stage with high school students
 Interesting to read
 To suit talent and community
 It helps if play is well-known
 Must be adequate for mixed racial cast
 Interested in a good play
 Entertainment value
 Not offensive to religious public
 Desire of club to produce
 Must help maintain varied dramatic fare and yet be worth the
 time spent

Class B

Entertaining play
 Not definite, varies
 General interest
 Must present challenge to students
 Have some value in addition to literary
 Appropriate for high school group
 Fit the community
 Must fit available cast
 Educationally sound
 No restrictions
 Valuable characters and situations
 Depends upon the group each year
 Comedy usually desired

Class C

Generally wholesome
 Fill needs of a particular group
 Merit only
 Offer variety
 Must have good lines
 Available talent
 Should draw the public
 No permanent basis for choice
 Moral value desirable
 Must be actable and have a definite interest for teen-agers
 Play must be chosen for the audience
 Well written, good conversation, good plot, enjoyable for most
 Is the play worth doing? Can we effectively cast it? Can we
 effectively stage it? Can we meet the expenses?

RANK ORDER OF ITEMS IN QUESTION 16 BY MEAN PERCENTAGE

C. Must be easily staged in one setting	45%
F. Must have literary merit	43%
G. Must not involve smoking or drinking	38%
E. Must have a great amount of action	17.3%
A. Must have a large cast	15.3%
H. Must be under \$25 royalty	10%
D. Must be a comedy	8.4%
B. Must have more girls than boys	7%
I. Must be familiar to the public as a book or movie	.032%

17. Indicate the amount you customarily pay for production rights for each three-act play.

A. \$5

Class A	0
Class B	0
Class C	.01%

B. \$10

Class A	.03%
Class B	.05%
Class C	21%

C. \$15

Class A	.05%
Class B	.04%
Class C	19%

D. \$25

Class A	60%
Class B	58%
Class C	42%

E. Over \$25

Class A	63%
Class B	42%
Class C	13%

F. Royalty free

Class A	.03%
Class B	.06%
Class C	.09%

18. Does your play director receive additional compensation over his base salary either in money or in reduced schedule?

	Yes	No
Class A	65%	35%
Class B	59%	41%
Class C	43%	52%
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Mean	55.6%	46%

19. Do people in your community sometimes get in touch with you to comment on a school play?

	Often	Seldom	Never
Class A	45%	48%	.03%
Class B	57%	38%	.05%
Class C	45%	43%	.07%
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Mean	49%	43%	.05%

20. School plays which have brought favorable comment.

Each title represents one listing unless otherwise indicated by a number following.

Class A

Anne of Green Gables
All My Sons
A Date With Judy
A Young Man's Fancy

Berkley Square
Beyond The Horizon

Cheaper By The Dozen (4)
Children Of The Moon

Detective, The
Death Takes A Holiday
Dear Ruth (2)
Ever Since Eve

Gold In The Hills
George Washington Slept Here
Great American Family, The

Harriet

Inner Willy, The
Imaginary Invalid, The
I Remember Mama (6)

Jane Eyre
January Thaw (5)

Little Women (2)
Little Minister, The
Life With Father
Lost Horizon
Let's Get Together
Lavender And Old Lace

Murder In A Nunnery (2)
Mother Is A Freshman (2)
Meet Me In St. Louis
Man Who Came To Dinner, The (3)

Pride and Prejudice
Pygmalion
Peg O' My Heart
Patriots, The

Royal Family
Release
Rest Assured

Sure As You're Born
Spring Green

That Girl Patsy
Tom Sawyer
Time For Elizabeth

What A Life (2)

You Can't Take It With You (5)
Young Abe Lincoln
Years Ago

Zarageta

Class B

A Full House
 Abe Lincoln In Illinois
 Arsenic And Old Lace (2)
 Almost Summer
 Almost Eighteen
 All Through The Night (2)

Big Help, The
 Barretts of Wimpole Street

Cheaper By The Dozen (5)
 Connecticut Yankee (2)
 Charley's Aunt (2)

Don't Take My Penny
 Double Door
 Date Bait
 Dear Ruth (2)
 Darling Brats

Fool, The
 Forever Albert (2)

Great Big Doorstep, The
 Goodbye My Fancy
 Growing Pains
 George Washington Slept Here

Happy Journey, The
 Heaven Can Wait (3)
 Here Comes Charlie

Ice Bound
 Inner Willy, The
 I Remember Mama

Joan of Lorraine
 Janie
 Junior Miss (2)
 January Thaw

Kind Lady

Letters To Lucerne (2)
 Life With Father
 Love Is Too Much Trouble

Last Flight Over
 Little Women (3)
 Lost Horizon
 Lease On Liberty
 Little Minister (2)

Mizer, The (2)
 Meet Me In St. Louis (6)
 Marrying Marion
 Mother Is A Freshman (4)

Night of January 16th

One Foot In Heaven (4)
 Our Hearts Were Young And Gay (5)
 Our Miss Brooks (5)
 Old Doc
 Our Town (5)

Pink Dress, The
 Pride And Prejudice

Rich Full Life, The
 Ramshackle Inn
 Ring Around Elizabeth

Smilin' Through
 Stranger In The Night
 Smoke Screen
 Sky Road
 Servant In The House
 Seventeenth Summer (2)
 Submerged

Trail Of The Lonesome Pine
 Too Many Dates
 Tidings Brought To Many
 Take Your Medicine
 Taming Of The Shrew
 Three Old Maid Aunts

We Shook The Family Tree
 Western Union, Please
 Wedding Spells

You Can't Take It With You (4)
 Young Mr. Lincoln

Class C

Aria da Capo
 A Date With Judy (3)
 All The World Sings At Xmas
 A Little Honey
 Almost Summer
 Are You A Mason
 Angell Brats, The
 Arsenic And Old Lace (2)
 Aaron Slick From Punkin'Crick
 A Billet For Bill
 A Ghost In The Belfry
 Almost Eighteen
 Absent Minded Professor

Big Help, The
 Bells Of Normandy
 Brother Goose (3)
 Boarding House Reach, The (4)
 Beauty And The Beef
 Best Years
 Bat, The
 Bolts And Nuts
 Brainstorm
 Bandits For Breakfast

Chonita
 Christmas Carol
 Christmas Star Fantasy
 Campus Quarantine
 Campbells Are Coming, The (3)
 Clementine (2)
 Charley's Aunt
 Cannibal Queen, The
 Cheaper By The Dozen (4)
 Come Over To Our House
 Clock Strikes Twelve, The
 Calling All Girls
 Cracked Nutts

Don't Take My Penny (6)
 Demon In The Dark
 Daffydills
 Desperate Ambrose (2)
 Dear Ruth (2)
 Dear Brutus

Everybody's Crazy
 Every Family Has One (2)
 Fighting Littles, The
 Ghost Of A Chance
 Girl Shy (2)
 Great Big Doorstep, The
 Growing Pains
 Ghosts Wanted (2)
 Great Ben Allah, The
 George Washington Slept Here
 Grandad Steps Out
 Galloping Ghosts
 Gay
 Green Light, The
 Ghost Of Roaring Pines, The
 Haunted High School, The
 His Ozark Cousin
 Here Comes Charley (5)
 Home Sweet Homicide
 Hearts And Hats
 House Beautiful

I Remember Mama
 It's A Riot
 It's All In Your Head
 Inner Willy, The (7)

Just Ducky (2)
 Junior Prom
 January Thaw (2)
 Jeanne d'Arc
 June 'Mad

Little Women (5)
 Lunatics At Large
 Love Your Neighbor
 Late Mr. Early, The
 Lavender And Old Lace
 Life With Father
 Love Is Too Much Trouble
 Long Lane, The
 Late Christopher Bean, The
 Lost Horizon

Midnight
 Meet Me In St. Louis (2)
 More The Merrier, The
 Mumbo Jumbo
 Meliss'
 Men Are Like Streetcars
 Murder In Rehearsal
 Mother Is A Freshman (4)

No Bride For The Groom
 Nothing But The Truth
 Night of January 16th

One Foot In Heaven (4)
 Out Of The Frying Pan
 Old Man's Money, The
 Object Matrimony
 Our Miss Brooks (2)
 Our Hearts Were Young And Gay (3)
 One Wild Night
 Our Town (3)
 Ozark Cousin

Professor, How Could You
 Perfect Idiot, The
 Poor Married Man, The
 Pride And Prejudice (2)
 Papa Is All
 Papa Says No
 Prize Family
 Pure As The Driven Snow

Quit Your Kidding

Red Mill, The
 Ready Made Family (3)
 Riddle Me Riches (3)
 Rest Assured (2)
 Room Number 13

Skeleton Walks, The (2)
 Sing Out Sweet Land
 Spring Green
 Smilin' Through (2)
 Spring Fever
 Seventeen
 Showdown At Sawtooth
 Song Of The South
 Summons Of Saniel
 Seventeenth Summer (2)
 Sunshine Twins, The (2)
 Stranger In The Night

There Goes The Bride
 That Crazy Smith Family
 Tiger House (3)
 Tattle Tale
 Tish
 Twixteen
 Tumblin' Creek

Upper Room
 Up To Your Ears

We Shook The Family Tree (5)
 Who Wouldn't Be Crazy
 Wanted, A Hero
 Welcome Home, Jimmy

You're The Doctor

21. School plays which have brought unfavorable comment.

Each title represents one listing unless otherwise indicated by a number following.

Class A

All My Sons

John Loves Mary

Dear Ruth

Life With Father

George Washington Slept Here (2)

Night Must Fall

Hill Between, The

R. U. R.

Class B

Arsenic And Old Lace

Inner Willie

A Date With Judy

Man Who Came To Dinner, The
Man Bites Dog

Barretts of Wimpole Street (2)

Charley's Aunt

See How They Run
Singing Ghost, The

Dear Ruth

Tidings Brought To Many

Here Comes Charlie

You Can't Take It With You (2)

Heaven Can Wait

Huck Finn, Detective

Hawk Island

Class C

Arsenic And Old Lace

Man Who Came To Dinner, The

Bolts And Nuts

Ozark Cousin, The

Baby Sitter, The

Our Miss Brooks

One Wild Night

Don't Darken My Door

Professor Goes Haywire, The

George Washington Slept Here

Ramshackle Inn

Hoosier Schoolmaster, The

Seven Sisters

Hillbilly Courtship

Heart Trouble

Tattletale

Inner Willy, The

You Can't Take It With You

22. If you have had some unfavorable comments were they in regard to:

A. Choice of play	Number of Occurrences
Class A	6
Class B	16
Class C	34
B. The training of the actors	
Class A	0
Class B	5
Class C	16
C. The conduct of the actors	
Class A	1
Class B	1
Class C	9
D. Stage setting, lighting, make-up	
Class A	0
Class B	3
Class C	9
E. Other: One listing per item	
Class A	
Length of time in changing scenery	
Suggestive lines	
Swearing	
Occasionally too "high brow" for the community	
Class B	
Swearing	
Use of words such as "dance," "darn," "heaven," "movie"	
Actors lines	
Interpretation	
Not including enough unknowns in cast	
Language used in play	
Can't hear the actors	
Our Hearts Were Young And Gay was too long	
Actors in performance replaced parts that had been cut	

Class C

Actors speak too rapidly, move too woodenly, speak too softly

Educational message

Strong drink bottles in play

Actors failed to respond adequately to training

Conduct of house managers and ushers

Poor acoustics

Mystery play proved too scary for elementary school audience

Actors laughing and not knowing lines

CHAPTER IV

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION AND SUMMARY

In analyzing the data revealed by the questionnaire, there seems to be no need to justify the presence of the drama program as a curricular or extra-curricular activity in Michigan schools. In every case, a majority of administrators stated that their programs were serving the following functions:

- | | |
|---|-------|
| 1. Drama is an educational experience for students. | 92.6% |
| 2. Drama is good entertainment. | 76.3% |
| 3. Drama is a public relations medium. | 72.7% |
| 4. Drama is a fund raising device for a class. | 66.3% |
| 5. Drama serves as a school-community experience. | 57.6% |

Let us examine the results in terms of the criteria outlined in Chapter III.

I. WHAT KINDS OF PLAYS ARE BEING PRODUCED?

A majority of Michigan schools are producing the best plays offered by the publishers. An examination of the catalogues of such publishers as Samuel French, Dramatists Play Service, Dramatic Publishing Company, Bakers Plays, Northwestern Press, etc., shows that the \$25 royalty play is the most expensive, with some few listed at \$35 and \$50. From this we can assume that the publishers have set the \$25 price as representative of their best royalty plays. In Michigan schools, 53% of those replying to the questionnaire indicated that their customary expenditure for production rights was \$25 for each performance.

The titles of plays listed in the questionnaire show all classes of schools producing all types of plays. There is no indication of the quality of dramatic effort evidenced by play titles alone to show that one type of school is more proficient than another.

The fact that certain plays were favorably received in one community and not in another is worth noting, since it emphasizes the importance of audience analysis before the selection of any play.

Also of interest is the type of play listed most frequently as receiving favorable comment. By classes, these plays are:

Class A I Remember Mama (6)

Class B Meet Me In St. Louis (6)

Class C The Inner Willy (7)

Gee and Dietrich in their survey of Wisconsin high school drama rate "I Remember Mama" very highly as Broadway at its comic best. "Meet Me In St. Louis" receives a favorable rating because it is dramatized from a novel, while "The Inner Willy" is grouped among a class of plays written for high schools and being of extremely doubtful worth since they have no perceivable literary base.¹

No conclusions can be drawn from the group of plays listed as bringing unfavorable comment since no significant number is indicated, however, non-acceptance of plays seems to stem from unacceptable language and situations, trivial material, or poor preparation.

1. Ronald C. Gee, John E. Dietrich, "A Survey of Dramatic Activity in Wisconsin High Schools: 1947-48," The Quarterly Journal of Speech, 36:68, February, 1950.

If schools have received criticism of their drama program, it has been in the matter of play selection. Fifty-six schools in classes A, B, and C indicated that they had received such criticism.

In the selection of plays, Michigan schools indicate that the outstanding factor has been the need for simple staging. Forty-five percent of the schools replying stated that the play chosen must be easily staged in one setting. The next most important factor was the quality of the play itself. Forty-three percent of the schools replying stated that the play must have literary merit. High school plays should be "clean" plays, since 38% of the schools stated that the play should not involve smoking or drinking. Other replies were scattered. Factors such as a large cast, a great amount of action, and the suitability for the talent available were frequently mentioned.

In the choosing of the play, cooperative choice is the rule, with students and director most frequently working together in this activity. In the class A schools there is a marked tendency for the director to make the choice of play with 40% of them doing so. Other replies were scattered, with combinations of principal, director, students, Board of Education, class sponsors, and faculty mentioned.

In the staging of plays, such as the building, painting, and lighting of stage settings, the questionnaire reveals that the play director is the most important single person engaged in this activity. Complete responsibility for the stage setting is given to 53% of the directors in class A schools, 51% in class B, and 43% in class C. Making significant

contributions to this activity are Industrial Arts teachers, custodians, and students under supervision. Other persons were mentioned as contributing to the staging of plays such as Art teachers, stage-craft clubs and classes, science teachers, permanent technicians, and outside sources, but these are not in significant number.

II. WHAT PERSONS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PRODUCTION OF PLAYS?

Only in the class A schools is there a majority of persons trained to direct the dramatics program. In class A schools, 65% of the directors are Speech majors, in class B, 44%, and in class C, 21%.

The next largest group of persons engaged in play production were those with English majors and Speech minors. In class A, 33% were in this classification, in class B, 49%, and in class C, 53%.

Persons without any drama training amount to .08% in class A, 11% in class B, and 26% in class C.

Other majors with Speech minors were indicated in the questionnaire, but they do not form a significant group since there were not more than three persons in any one classification.

Play directors in Michigan schools have had worthwhile experiences as actors or technicians in college, civic, and professional drama. In class A, 90% of the directors had participated in such activities, in class B 73%, and in class C 59%.

III. WHAT IS THE EDUCATIONAL ATMOSPHERE IN WHICH PLAYS ARE PRODUCED?

Plays produced in Michigan schools have met with the approval of the school and community. In response to item 11 in the questionnaire which

asked, "In view of the fact that other departments of the school are often asked to assist in play production, would you say that the majority of your faculty, clerical, and janitorial staff regard the plays as a justifiable activity for students?", 79% of the schools indicated "Yes," .02% indicated "No," and 9% indicated "Uncertain."

Community response is further investigated by item 19 concerning the response of the community to school plays. Forty-nine percent of the schools stated that people in the community "Often" commented on plays, 43% stated that they "Seldom" did so, and .05% stated that people "Never" expressed a reaction to school performances.

Administrators are largely agreed on the purposes of the drama program. In response to item 12 which asks, "Which of the following items would you regard as benefits to the student participating in dramatics?", they have indicated the importance of these as follows:

- | | |
|--|-------|
| 1. Wholesome personality development | 88% |
| 2. Development of responsibility toward the group | 88% |
| 3. Stimulation for an adult hobby | 57.3% |
| 4. Development of appreciation for language and literature | 48.6% |
| 5. Training of discriminating consumers of entertainment | 47.3% |
| 6. Acquisition of vocational skills | 26.6% |

Casts for plays in Michigan schools are largely chosen from a particular class sponsoring a given play. In Michigan, 59% of the schools present class plays, 10.5% cast their plays from the entire student body, and 27% of the schools employ both methods in selecting casts.

Proceeds from plays generally go to the class presenting the play. In 63% of the schools, the entire proceeds from the presentation of a play go to the class engaged in the production. In 30.3% of Michigan schools, a part of the proceeds is returned to a drama fund.

While 43% of Michigan schools give financial support to the drama program in the form of funds for sample play scripts, lumber, hardware, scene paint, etc., 53% of the schools do not do so.

The general practice in Michigan is to present class plays, the expenses for these being borne by the class which also receives the net proceeds.

As evidence of an interest in improvement of drama programs generally, the questionnaire reveals that administrators are interested in consulting qualified experts in the improvement of their productions, or having critics attend the performance of their school plays.

To supply information or criticism, 52% of Michigan schools prefer to consult the colleges and universities, 50.6% prefer to consult the Michigan Speech Association, and 45% feel that qualified persons in other high schools could be used as resources. Twenty-five percent of the schools indicated that they had no need for the assistance of any of these groups.

The presence of drama clubs seems to be proportional to the school population. Among class A schools, 60% have drama clubs, 47% of class B schools have drama clubs, and 16% in class C.

The role of the director in the drama program has been recognized by the fact that 65% of the class A schools give their directors additional compensation over a base salary, 59% follow this practice in class B, and 43% in class C also do so.

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APPENDIX A

APPENDIX A

COMMENTS BY SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

The framing of the items in the questionnaire did not permit any elaboration on the part of the respondent, therefore space was provided for pertinent remarks if he felt inclined to include them. This section represents a complete listing of all such remarks.

Class A

"The big problem is to get a play that is not slap-stick and that has something to it---yet not too sophisticated. Many of the so-called popular plays for high school or teen-age are too juvenile. To my way of thinking, we would greatly welcome a service which would supply the names of particularly strong plays for high school."

"We have no Senior Play tradition at _____. All plays have always been done by the Drama Club. We have been unusually fortunate in having a Principal more interested in the educational value of drama as a teaching device than in earning money. We very often do a play because it is considered too difficult for high school students."

"I would like to see drama used as a means of introducing students from one community to another, but not on a competitive basis."

"Drama training should begin in Junior High. If it did, I feel that there would be fewer low grades and poorly adjusted students in History, English, etc., because the fear of talking in front of a group would have been lessened if not completely removed."

"We produce the following each semester:

1. A 3-act professional production at public performances
2. A miniature theatre production for invited, interested persons
3. Assemblies
4. Occasional student directed one-acts"

"We have over 350 students taking part in some activity in the Speech Department. Students may take 6 semesters of stage-craft for credit. The same applies to dramatics, radio, and debate."

"Twenty weeks or 100 hours of speech are required of every high school student."

"Our facilities are inadequate, our auditorium is very poor, but our plays are well done under adverse conditions."

Class B

"We give 2 public plays each year; one by the Junior class and one by the Seniors. Short one-act plays are often given by other groups for high school assembly programs."

"If I could arrange such a program, I would require every student in high school to take part in at least one dramatic production during the high school course."

"This is my first attempt at a high school play. Many mistakes are being made (including giving it in June) but it is a truly fine experience for all of us concerned."

"The Footlighters, our drama club, usually puts on two or three one-acts for assemblies. These are both comedy and drama. For instance, 'The Trysting Place' and 'Confessional' have been among our best. About the middle of the year we have a drama night which includes a comedy, melodrama, and a drama. Among our best have been 'Submerged,' 'Where Love Is,' and 'Two Crooks And A Lady.' This year we tried a tragedy which was a fantasy entitled, 'Darkness Falls On Laughter.' Our comedies and melodramas have been the usual ones. The money earned supports our club which has no dues. We also do dramatic readings and attend plays as often as possible."

"Out of a town of about 1,200, an attendance crowd is from 1,000 to 1,200. Consequently a play has to satisfy all types of people. Especially do we have to be careful in regard to what the church groups consider right to be in a high school play."

"We have had some very fine Senior Class plays and they have been successful from the financial, social, and aesthetic angle. We have a small stage and not a good set up for lighting, etc., but we have had satisfactory results through the splendid cooperation of the Edison Company, our stage crew, and others. Teachers interested in plays from other schools as well as students have always been well pleased with our productions, so we do everything to keep up a good standard of natural acting."

"The club mentioned is a Speech and Drama Club designed to stimulate interest and loyalty regarding all activities in these fields. The chief activities are:

1. An exchange evening with Charlotte, Michigan Drama Club
2. An evening of one-act plays or long assembly program

3. The club supplies the program for the drama meeting of the local Womens' Club.

It's impossible for one teacher to teach 5 classes, sponsor a club, coach Forensics and direct two plays a year."

"_____ High School gives ten weeks of speech (five of which are in dramatics) to every Freshman and Sophomore. A Junior or Senior may elect one semester of advanced speech. The Junior and Senior classes present class plays each year. The Thespian Society which has about 60 members sponsors a one-act play festival for all-school participation. One of these plays is used as an entry to a one-act play festival at Central Michigan College. Each semester the advanced class in speech gives a 1 act play for an assembly. The Music and Dramatics departments combine into an operetta once a year."

"We do not have a gym or auditorium in our high school. Our plays for over 20 years were produced in the Elks Club, local theatre, or one of the grade school gyms. The last two or three years, this difficulty has lessened the number of plays so we are quite inactive. Our Speech teacher has so much to do with Forensics that he hasn't had time and we haven't been able to get a good teacher of drama."

"In our Drama Club we are trying to build a noon hour activity program in the winter months.

1. one-act plays
2. stage construction

This is good; I'm interested in the results. We need to examine our programs in relation to those in our own status, so as to effect closer harmony in setting up dramatic goals."

"Here at _____ our experienced dramatics students belong to the National Thespian Society. We have a regular dramatics class 3 periods a week; one period devoted to class work and two periods on the stage for rehearsals, etc. We present one-act plays for assemblies and previews of three-act plays. We usually have one 3 act play a year for the public. The one-act plays give stage experience needed for the beginner. We always present a one-act play for the Play Festival each spring at Central Michigan College. Our dramatics class is composed of Thespians and beginners. This set up has proved successful for the past 4 years. Until we can have full use of the auditorium, we cannot increase our number of three-act plays per year."

"Our class plays are primarily fund-raisers, comedies, and comparatively simple in acting and production. Our drama club plays are chosen for the value of the literature, acting instruction for the participants, and so-called value to the community which is literally played to death.

Since we are in a college town, we are in competition with their productions. We try, therefore, to maintain a standard which will compare with theirs."

"I should be more than glad to receive criticism from any competent person at any time during my production. The greatest medicine for dramatics at _____ is Dramatics Club and Speech classes. We put on a Christmas play, Junior play, and Senior play, plus several one-act plays in the Dramatics Club."

"When I came to teach in _____ three years ago, I found that the school plays had been coached for some time by people who had been assigned to the job because it had to be done for it was a custom to have plays. Standards of achievement were low. Laughs were not legitimate. Attendance was small. I've slowly worked toward a better type comedy, and in my Dramatics Club we have produced some one-act plays which have literary merit as well as entertainment value."

"There is much enthusiasm about plays in the high school, especially among girls. The dramatics club meets every Tuesday after school and had to be limited to 10th, 11th, and 12th grades in recent years because of size. About 60-80 join in the fall, a third of whom drop out by spring when other activities and jobs interfere with rehearsals and club meetings. Boys are not interested so much anyway. The town for the last five years has had a lively Little Theatre group which puts on three plays a year. This group cooperates closely with the high school and vice versa. They have a professional director. Two Clare Tree Major productions have been brought here by the A.A.U.W."

"Dramatics at _____ is extremely incidental. Facilities are meager and the inevitable competition for use-time of a combined gym-auditorium precludes working dramatics curricular in concept. It is my personal belief that dramatics is neglected in the average Michigan high school, poorly done, and that its inherent values are not accomplished because there is little or no integration with the other educational experiences in the general English field. We are doubtless typical of schools that might do much more with drama, but just don't have the 'Little Theatre' situation that would make high school dramatics meaningful and valuable."

"We need more courses in dramatics. At the present time we have two classes meeting the first semester. I hope that a second semester course will be added next year. All of our rehearsals are on our own time."

"Our superintendent is vitally interested in dramatics and in former years was very active in directing. He has staged Shakespearean plays with high school people which were very professional. As a result, interest among the students is very high. We have a beautiful auditorium and interested participants, both students and directors, and a community which expects exceptional quality of performance from the school. We are very proud of our record and would be most interested in hearing what other schools are doing."

Class C

"Here at _____ we are severely handicapped by a small stage, lack of lighting fixtures, and a small (but adequate) budget. We are fortunate to have an Art teacher who is trained in stage production and can do good work with little equipment and money. As a result I think that we produce exceptionally successful plays. Drama is considered extra-curricular, and no place is made for it in the school program, except in English classes. Since we are a consolidated school, and 90% or more of our students are transported, rehearsals become a headache. I think drama could be served a great turn if critics were made available to high school directors, and if there were available more good plays at low royalties. This would serve the small school director in her attempt to have speech and drama recognized as a valuable educational tool."

"We put on only one play each year---the Senior Class play---mainly for the enjoyment of those who take part, and for their parents and friends who attend. Admission is by complimentary tickets only. We do not raise any money."

"Directing was an assignment for a volunteer. I like it and enjoy seeing the students get a thrill out of making a successful finale to a long, tough job of practising. Extra pay was talked about two years ago, but whether it comes or not, I feel that time spent and the students' reactions are worth more than that."

"We feel that our plays have been too much of the hill-billy type. We are limited to \$10 royalty plays, or non-royalty plays. Our one big handicap is the arrangement of rehearsals. This is a consolidated township school. Many pupils travel back and forth by bus, so find it impossible to get in for evening rehearsals. We are not allowed to take any school time for rehearsals. They must be entirely extra-curricular. Consequently our plays lack the finish and the spontaneity that they should have."

"All of our school plays have to be given in the Community building, therefore we have to select a play with a simple setting. We give only two plays each year, Junior and Senior Class plays. Our students are very inexperienced, therefore we have to select a play that is not too difficult for them."

"Because of the pinch of time, several plays have been picked with only catalogue comment. Often there have been so few boys that I have had to borrow one from another grade. Such a condition gives no chance for selection but they've usually been done very well anyway. Someone has said each time that that particular play was the best one put on here. In some cases it may have been a parent of an actor speaking. The plays have enough faults, but the actors become surprisingly natural sometimes."

"Our drama program is very limited. We usually give some type of Christmas pageant and a Senior Class play at the end of the term. Our auditorium is also the gym and it is impossible to use it for dramatics during the entire basketball season. This usually begins in early December and ends in April. Hence no plays except possibly dramatizations in English classes."

"Our dramatics program needs revitalizing; too much emphasis on money raising as a class project. We need a more adequate dramatics organization in which a greater number of our youngsters are involved."

"I do not feel that the choice of plays should rest with students. As the weight of criticism goes to the director, he should have the final choice as to the play presented. We have good responses from the public, but do too many comedies and not plays of unusual literary value."

"I would like to see a definite period relegated to dramatics. We have time for Public Speaking, but it does not contain many of those interested in dramatics."

"Students here have a tremendous amount of competition and interest in any dramatic production, and every production has been a financial and entertainment hit."

"We do a one-act play festival. Actually the work is carried on in conjunction with the English classroom activities."

"Comedies are our usual choice for the Senior plays, but the class in dramatics has successfully staged more serious things. I would like to see the Forensic programs or contests in Michigan be expanded to include contests in the one-act play field as is done in many other states. The over-all benefits seem greater from such activity than from individual speech competition."

"At the present time, there is no drama program in _____. Each class asks a teacher to direct a play. There has been a tendency to produce more royalty plays here, usually comedies."

APPENDIX B

APPENDIX B

PROPOSED REVISIONS OF DRAMA PROGRAMS

The material in this section is beyond the scope of the study itself and the findings of the questionnaire, but in view of the written requests of many administrators for specific recommendations in regard to school drama programs, the following personal remarks are appended. In the main, they coincide with the recommendations of an authority in the field of high school dramatics, the late Earnest Bavely, editor of *DRAMATICS* magazine which is a publication of the NATIONAL THESPIAN SOCIETY, represented by more than 1,000 high schools throughout the nation. He recommends:¹

1. Our secondary schools should offer, as a minimum training for all students, at least one semester in dramatic arts study and appreciation.
2. The high school curriculum in dramatic arts must offer opportunity for some advanced study for those students who show special interests and abilities.
3. A third requirement of the modern high school dramatic arts curriculum is that instruction must be entrusted only to trained teachers and directors--persons with broad training and experience in theatre arts, radio, and motion pictures.
4. The fourth aspect of a successful program in dramatic arts calls for a high degree of integration with recreation agencies and activities in the home, church, and community.

In view of Bavely's criteria, let us examine the situation in Michigan point by point.

1. Earnest Bavely, "Dramatic Arts in Secondary Education," The Quarterly Journal of Speech, 32:45, February, 1946.

1. The study conducted by Carruth shows that 63% of Michigan schools offer one or more courses in speech.² Because many schools simply label their course as "Speech," it is impossible to determine how much curricular drama is taught from his study. However, a definite increase in the teaching of speech is indicated by the fact that in the school year 1948-49, 56% of Michigan schools offered one or more courses in speech, while in the year 1949-50, 63% of the schools offered one or more courses in speech. It is hoped that a portion of the "Speech" courses is set aside for the study of drama.

2. Michigan schools that have drama clubs are offering opportunities for advanced study as Bavelly suggests. He recommends further that the drama club be assigned the complete responsibility for the production of all school plays, eliminating the outmoded and educationally unsound practice of presenting class plays. The production of all plays by the dramatics organization would guarantee to a large degree the use of the best talent available in school, for it would be only natural that students with special interests and talents should seek membership in this group. The point which Bavelly makes is that there should be provided a training ground within the drama club to give members a chance to develop before being placed on the school stage before a paying audience. In the matter of play financing, Bavelly adds that the well-directed dramatics organization should always be permitted to retain a portion of the funds it earns

2. Hayden K. Carruth, Curricular Speech in Michigan High Schools (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan, 1950), p. 1.

for the advancement of its own program. According to Bavely's standard, Michigan schools need to initiate or expand the activities of drama clubs, particularly in the smaller schools, and place all dramatic activity on a sound financial basis by making provision for a systematic return of receipts into a drama fund.

3. Bavely defined trained teachers and directors as "persons with broad training and experience in theatre arts, radio, and motion picture." An investigation conducted by the National Thespian Society among its troupe sponsors shows that high school play directors feel that the following courses, listed in order of sponsors' ratings, should be emphasized by teacher-training institutions for those expecting to teach and direct dramatics in the secondary schools:³

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| a. Voice and Diction | j. Public Relations |
| b. General Speech | k. Speech Correction |
| c. Acting | l. Dramatic Literature |
| d. Organization | m. Scene Design |
| e. Interpretation | n. Costuming) |
| f. Stage Directing | Theatre Management) tie |
| g. Play Selection | o. Radio Techniques |
| h. Stagecraft | p. Children's Theatre) |
| | History of the Theatre) tie |
| i. Stage Lighting) | q. Motion Picture Appreciation |
| Make-up) tie | |

3. Statistics compiled by the National Thespian Society as submitted by its high school sponsors, and read at its Fifth National Convention held in New York City in December, 1950.

To be certified as a teacher of Speech by the Michigan State Department of Public Instruction, a major consisting of 24 semester or 36 term hours is required, plus two minors of 15 semester or 23 term hours.⁴ The Department of Public Instruction does not specify the courses to be contained in the major or minor fields, but allows each institution to do so. The following hours are required for a major in Speech at several Michigan teacher-training institutions. Also listed are the number of drama hours in the required total, and the number of elective drama hours available at each institution.⁵

<u>Institution</u>	<u>Total Hrs. Req. Major</u>	<u>Drama Hours Required</u>	<u>Hours Elective</u>
Central Michigan	24	3	15
Western Michigan	27	6	9
Wayne University	24	3	36
University of Michigan	30	3	60
Michigan State	39 (term)	12 (term)	75 (term)

Since teachers of drama are also teachers of speech, the teacher should have groundwork in Voice and Diction, Public Speaking, and Oral Interpretation, which all of the above institutions now require. The play director should have courses in Acting, Directing, Stagecraft, and Theatre Management beyond an introductory course. In any case, the administrator should be aware of the amount of specialized work in drama

4. Teacher's Certification Code, 1942 Revision (Lansing, Michigan: State Department of Public Instruction, 1942), p. 6.

5. Course requirements and offerings were taken from 1950-51 catalogues of each institution. Mention should be made of elective hours in the total required hours at each institution which permit the student to weigh his training in the direction of drama if he so chooses.

offered by Michigan institutions. He can reasonably expect a person who is to direct plays to have taken more than the minimum requirements.

Helen Schrader remarks--

The great disparity in certification requirements for teachers of speech and drama has significance for the administrator. The best method by which he may determine whether or not a prospective teacher is qualified to teach drama is that of examining the number and kinds of units the teacher can present in his transcript. If the teacher is certificated as a teacher of drama in a state which certifies drama under English, the administrator should discover the number of units this particular teacher has completed in courses in drama. Such courses should include acting, directing, stage production, lighting, make-up, dramatic literature, scene design, and dramatic structure. If the teacher is certificated as a teacher of speech and if he desires to teach courses in drama, the administrator should discover whether or not he has had courses in drama as such. The term "speech" is a broad one which includes departments of theatre and drama as well as departments of public speaking and speech correction. It is only by examining specific course requirements that the administrator can be certain in some cases that the prospective teacher of drama is qualified to instruct in that area.⁶

4. Several schools in replying to the questionnaire indicated that their drama clubs made regular presentations to community groups, thereby fulfilling Bavelly's suggestion that there be integration of the school drama program with other agencies. A majority of the administrators stated that one of the values of the drama program lay in training for an adult hobby. In view of the expressed desire of administrators that a drama program serve to train for the future use of leisure time, drama directors may well emphasize that portion of their programs by concentrating on the integration of their programs with community agencies.

Conversely, the high school drama program should be so well planned and executed that public performances become a part of the community

6. Helen Schrader, "State Certification Requirements," The Bulletin of the National Association of Secondary-School Principals, 33:85-6, December, 1949.

consciousness. Communities need to be assured of stimulating, interesting entertainment in the high school theatre, and then the educational values of the program will be more readily credited to it.

Bavely concludes, "No claim is made anywhere in this article that the program proposed here is perfectly adjusted to our present educational and social needs. But one fact should be perfectly clear. A well-planned, well-integrated, competently-directed dramatic arts program constitutes an essential part of the modern high-school curriculum."⁷

The results of a study of high school dramatic activity in Wisconsin conducted by Gee and Dietrich for the school year 1947-1948 are worthy of mention here. The conditions in Michigan as revealed by the questionnaire are very similar to those in Wisconsin.

While the scope of dramatic activity (in Wisconsin) is encouraging, certain practices of the secondary schools may be viewed with some concern. The habit of choosing plays with an eye to large profits should be discouraged. Too many of the productions are sponsored by groups whose prime interest is in the profit rather than the play. The great majority of the schools do not use the net proceeds for the extension and improvement of the drama program.

Perhaps the sharpest criticism to be leveled at the high-school program is in matters of play selection. The plethora of farce comedy on the high-school playbills should be reviewed. Many of the schools produce more than one play each year. At least these schools should be able to experiment with more serious dramatic fare. In addition, more than three-quarters of the productions have little perceivable dramatic or literary merit. These scripts are apparently chosen either because they are cheap-to-produce and easy-to-play or because the high-school directors have such a limited theatrical background that they are unaware of the expanse of dramatic material available.

If students are expected to spend several weeks of intensive effort in the production of a play, some correlation should be found between curricular goals and extra-curricular practice. The after-school play should reflect in-school ideas and principles.⁸

7. Bavely, op. cit., p. 47.

8. Ronald C. Gee, John E. Dietrich, op. cit., p. 69.

01 24 '52

AG 10 '53

Ag 17 '53

Jl 13 '54

Jl 30 '54

OC 27 '54

De 23 '54

Mar 5 '55

MY 12 '55

Jul 31 '56

Oct 25 '57

Jan 17 '58

Jul 16 '58

Aug 4 '58

Aug 12 '58

30 Jul 58

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