

A DESCRIPTION AND EVALUATION OF
A PROGRAM DESIGNED TO
ENHANCE HOME-SCHOOL RELATIONS

Dissertation for the Degree of Ph. D.
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DALLAS DELANO WEGENER
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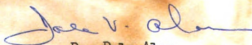
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ABSTRACT

A DESCRIPTION AND EVALUATION OF A PROGRAM DESIGNED TO ENHANCE HOME-SCHOOL RELATIONS

By

Dallas Delano Wegener

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to describe and evaluate one school district's attempt to bridge the home-school communication gap by providing some of the lower elementary teachers in the district with an opportunity to visit the homes of all of the children these teachers would have in their classrooms during the 1974-75 school year. The visitations were programmed for the summer months. The objectives established for the participating teachers were:

1. To reach out to the families and let them know that teachers are interested in them as people;
2. To provide the teachers with an opportunity to find out what goals the families had established for their children;
3. To build a communications bridge between the school and the homes;
4. To gather data that would:

- a. Enable teachers to know the children as individuals before school began and make necessary modifications in the classroom;
- b. Enable the teachers to incorporate the family in the education planning process.

Procedure

The need for the teacher-home visitation project flowed directly from concerns expressed by teachers and administrators in the district. Once the basis for the problem was identified, the staff decided to incorporate the teacher-home visitations as the vehicle for enhancing home-school relations.

On a voluntary, paid basis, twenty elementary teachers met early in the summer for orientation and briefing sessions. Equipped with class lists, the teachers proceeded to contact and visit the homes of all the children assigned to their classrooms for the following fall. Twice during the summer and once during the school year, the teacher participants attended debriefing sessions.

Outcome

Twenty teachers visited 358 families during the course of the 1974-75 school year; 209 families and 17 teachers completed evaluation instruments at the end of the project. Most of the family participants and all of the teacher participants stated that the teachers had accomplished the objectives established for the project.

Dallas Delano Wegener

The children of the participating families were the immediate benefactors of the project. The positive, personal relationships between the home and the school enabled the children to experience an environment where the parents and teachers communicated and worked together in the learning activities of their children.

A DESCRIPTION AND EVALUATION OF A PROGRAM
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By

Dallas Delano Wegener

A DISSERTATION

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1975

DEDICATION

"Sunrise, sunset,
Sunrise, sunset,
Swiftly fly the years;
One season following another,
Laden with happiness and tears."*

To my wife, Jo Ann

and

To my children: Diane, Michael
Karl and Amy Jo

Whose unselfish love and continual reassurance
have helped me to succeed

*From the music, Sunrise, Sunset
By Sheldon Harnick and Jerry Bock
Copyright 1964 by Sunbeam Music, Inc.
Los Angeles, California

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Special thanks are due to the teacher and family participants for their time, efforts, and cooperation.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Introduction

The establishment and continuation of effective home-school communications as a vehicle for perpetuating family involvement in the schools is by no means of recent concern to educators. Articles have been written expressing concern about home-school communications and parental involvement in the schools for about as long as the Parent Teacher Association and the graded school structure has been in existence.

Within the past two decades some of the traditional types of home-school communications, and the resultant home-school relationships, promoted by many school systems have been topics for controversy and criticism by many parents and educators. American school educators, encapsulated within the confines of the walls of their schools have not been careful to communicate with and involve the parents as they shifted emphasis and direction with school curriculum and school classroom management.

Since the advent of the first Russian Sputnik, American educators have expended the majority of their resources on curriculum and, more recently, on classroom management. The matter of school rules and disciplines still consume much of the educators's time on the job.

In the mid 1960s conscientious educators strained to stay in tune with new programs that mushroomed to immense proportions, especially in the areas of science and mathematics. School professional library shelves were crowded with books authored by Brunner, Piaget, Gagne, Goodlad, and Kohl.

During this same period of time the parents of school age children were left behind in the educational dust of the pre-World War II school curriculum. Even interested parents were sealed off from communication with educators by a new set of puzzling, misunderstood, educational jargon. The old fashioned three R's the parents had known in school gave way to new titles and seemingly ambiguous content. Children were coming home with softback mathematics programs with ambiguous initials, i.e., S.M.S.G. and I.P.I. Similarly many parents stood in awe while traditional science text books were replaced with "process centered" science programs like S.C.I.S. and A.A.S.A.

Visiting their child's classroom, many perplexed parents had a difficult time comprehending the scene. The children's seats, no longer arranged in straight columns, were dispersed in various arrays. The children, no longer

restricted to their own desks, not only moved about in the classroom, but even moved to other areas of the school without hall passes. Few teachers and even fewer administrators were secure enough with the new curriculum and related classroom management techniques to help parents understand the changes taking place in the classroom.

Until the late 1960s, parents continued to trust the judgment of the teachers when new programs were introduced. The primary concern of the parent remained with the one area where they still had some control--the area of rules and discipline.

What educators are beginning to find out today, in 1975, is that the new school parents, the product of the 1950-1970 schools, are equipped to make some judgments about their neighborhood school. Most of the parents encountering school personnel in 1975 have high school diplomas and college degrees. These parents use their own past classroom experience as a base for evaluating the schools. Interested in the school's curriculum these parents are usually willing to listen.

While it has long been a tradition to involve parents in the activities of the school, most efforts have taken the form of parent groups like P.T.A.'s and athletic and band booster clubs. These traditional approaches to home-school communications have not been very successful. Parents are no longer interested in ineffective P.T.A.'s. School staffs, whose professional attendance at P.T.A.

meetings usually outnumber the parents, do not view the P.T.A. as a viable means of communicating with parents.

Historically, teachers and administrators have not been proactive in initiating positive home-school relationships. A graded report card often served as the primary communications link between home and school. In some school districts, the report card has been abandoned in favor of parent-teacher conferences or some combination of conferences and evaluation forms.

Regardless of what kind of reporting and evaluating systems that are utilized, the parent usually shoulders the burden for any kind of personal interaction with the school. Even with parent-teacher conferences, the parent still must come to the school and meet on the teacher's own turf.

While the parent-teacher conference system of reporting and evaluating students' progress personalizes the home-school relationship, the system has flaws. In many systems, the first conferences are too soon, and the second or third is too late. Parents and teacher spend most of the first conference just getting acquainted. After the conference, both parties are often dissatisfied or confused. Teachers sometimes ponder questions like:

1. Do the parents really understand my philosophy of education?
2. Do the parents really understand my classroom management procedures?

3. Do the parents really understand how I handle discipline?
4. Do the parents really understand our evaluation system?
5. Do the parents really understand the content objectives?
6. Do the parents really understand how many of the problems with their child are related to home-centered problems?

Parents sometimes leave wondering:

1. Why isn't there a dress code?
2. Why aren't the student chairs lined up in some kind of order?
3. What happened to reading, writing, and arithmetic?
4. Why are the children allowed so much freedom?
5. Why can't she/he just give my child an A, B, or C?
6. Why doesn't she/he teach history?
7. Why didn't she/he know my child is far-sighted?
8. What happened to good old fashioned rote drill?
9. Why won't she/he assign homework every night?

The problem of home-school communications in many districts is compounded by mobile, changing populations.

In essence, the changing populations reflect:

1. More single parents
2. More stratified economic base
3. Greater incidence of step-parents
4. More working mothers
5. More diversified housing
6. More non-English speaking children.

If one accepts the premise that both the teachers and the parents of the children being taught should be on the same wave length concerning the educational goals and objectives for the children involved, then educators should seize the initiative to make parents active participants in their children's education.

After 200 years of experience, American elementary school educators are still searching for a practical way of establishing a personalized effective way to link the home with the school in the process of educating children. It appears from the writings of Gordon E. Greenwood, William F. Breivogel, Hattie Bessent, and Preston Wilcox, that there are few established home-school communication models for school districts to emulate.

Available research indicates that impatient families of elementary school children, who heretofore have taken a laissez faire stand about home-school relations, are becoming more militant about demanding more and better communications with their respective schools.

This study is directed toward documenting information which may be useful in gaining a greater understanding of home-school relations. In addition, it may provide information for elementary teachers which may cause them to alter their classroom environment and classroom management practices to meet the anticipated needs of their incoming students.

Teacher educators may be able to incorporate the findings in this study in their own on and off campus teacher education courses to illustrate one way a school district could attempt to enhance home-school relations by involving selected teachers in a home visitation project. Teachers and administrators may wish to use this description of the home visitation project as a framework for developing a similar project in their own district.

Purpose of the Study

It is the purpose of this dissertation to describe and evaluate one school district's attempt to bridge the home-school communication gap by providing the teachers in the district with an opportunity to visit during the summer, the homes of all the children those teachers were assigned to have in their classrooms in the fall. The objectives established for the participating teachers were:

1. To reach out to the families and let them know the teachers are interested in them as people;
2. To provide the teachers with an opportunity to find out what goals the families had established for their children;
3. To build a communication bridge between the school and the homes;
4. To gather data that would:
 - a. Enable teachers to know the children as individuals before school begins and make necessary modifications in the classroom;
 - b. Enable teachers to incorporate the family in the education planning process.

As has been noted in the introduction to this study, few adaptable models for home-school communications are available for teachers, parents, and teacher educators. It is also noteworthy that research indicates that no consistent criteria are being used in the decision making process regarding which are the best objectives for promoting and maintaining positive home-school communications. That different criteria are followed is not of central concern in this study. What is important is how one district determined the need for enhancing home-school relations and established an action model for improving communications as the delivery system for enhancing that relationship.

Significance of the Study

Each new school year, millions of elementary school children enter school with little or no knowledge of the new teacher they will live with for the entire school year. In most cases the families of the elementary student have not even met the teacher of their children. What most families know about teachers is usually unreliable information gathered via the neighborhood grapevine.

Conscientious teachers spend days gearing up for a new class of children about whom they have only insignificant knowledge. Seldom do many teachers know which children are going to be in their first class before the first staff meeting in September. The teachers may have access to some children's records from the previous years.

Typically, most school accumulative records provide inconsequential, if any, diagnostic or prescriptive information that a new teacher may use to personalize her instruction in order to meet the needs of the incoming children.

Some of the past research has provided evidence that both families and children benefit from pre-entry teacher-home visitation programs. Projects at the University of Illinois and Peabody College provide teachers with opportunities to visit homes of preschool children.¹ The twenty Model Follow Through (K-3) programs emanating from the University of Florida incorporates home visitation as part of the programs for parents mainly from low income backgrounds.² If this study demonstrates that pre-entry teacher visitation programs can bridge the home-school communication gap, then a new approach to answering the questions about home-school communications may be found.

If this descriptive study illustrates that home visitations are useful and productive to the teachers and families involved, then other school districts may be interested in using the information from this study as a base for building their own home-school visitation programs

¹I. J. Gordon, Parent Involvement in Compensatory Education (Champaign-Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1970), pp. 32-35.

²I. J. Gordon, Follow Through Annual Report (Gainesville, Fla.: Institute for Development of Human Resources, 1971), pp. 23-27.

to enhance home-school relationships in their own community.

If this descriptive study provides evidence that home visitation programs are a vital link with the home and the classroom, then teacher educators may wish to incorporate information from this study to illustrate the need to teachers for such visitations as the vehicle for improving home-school relationships. Instructors may wish to use this study as one model for a communications delivery system.

Definition of Terms

Many of the terms to be described are familiar to educators and layman alike; others are not. It is important that the meaning intended and used for each of these words or phrases be understood so that the author and the reader have a common base of understanding:

1. Teacher-Home Visitations: a preplanned visit by the teachers to the homes of the students which those teachers anticipate having in their classrooms when the school year begins.
2. Perceived Teacher Evaluations of the Home Visitations: a teacher's expressed perception of the worth of the home visitations.
3. Perceived Teacher Assessment of the Parents' Evaluation of the Home-School Visitation: a teacher's expressed perception of the parents' evaluation of the home visitations.
4. Perceived Parent Evaluation of the Home Visitations: a parent's expressed perception of the worth of the home visitations.

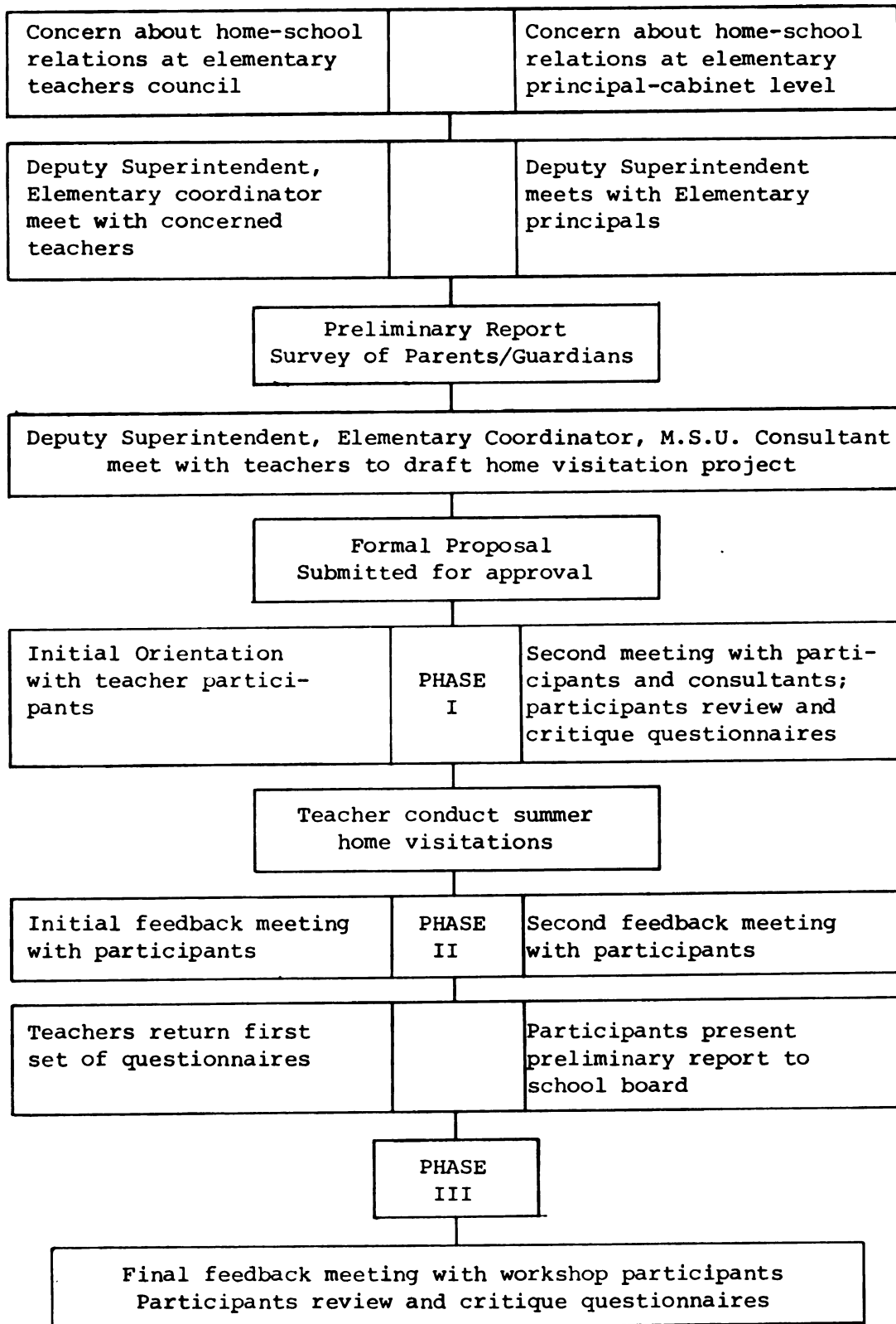
5. Inservice Workshop: a summer inservice program cooperatively planned, executed, and evaluated by school administrators and selected teachers.
6. Professional Workshop Participants: all the professional school employees who volunteered to participate in the summer inservice workshop.
7. Family Workshop Participants: all the families who were visited by the teachers during the course of the workshop.
8. Home-School Communications: all types of communication, verbal and/or written, exchanged between the home and school.
9. Home-School Relations: all the home-school interactions that affect the human relations between families and school personnel.

Data Collection Procedures

The following schematic illustrates the data collection procedures.

As noted in the schematic, the first phase of the data collection process was initiated at the orientation meeting with the home visitation project participants. When designing the home visitation questionnaire, the writer was searching for questions that would provide the teachers and family participants with a format for their discussions about educational goals and programs.

Selecting questions from the bank of questions in the Fourth (April 1972) and Fifth (May 1973) Annual Gallup Poll of Public Attitudes Toward Education, the writer chose those questions based on the information which was desirable for use in his project. As noted in this book, questions are not copyrighted and no limitations are placed upon the

Data Collection Process

use of information in this volume beyond the customary credit to the source, accuracy, completeness of questions, etc.³ Professional personnel desiring to look into their own school districts are encouraged to select those questions upon which information is requested for their district.

After the original questions were reviewed, critiqued, and revamped, the revised questionnaire was distributed to teacher participants. Teacher participants used these questionnaires to structure the interview portion of the home visitations.

The three part instrument used by the teachers for the first phase data collection would retrieve pertinent data about family participants that teachers could use in their efforts to enhance home-school relations. With responses from questions like the following, teachers were able to lead into the open-ended questions in the second section:

1. Do you think your child is learning the things you believe he/she should be learning?
2. Looking at your child's elementary school education, do you feel the child today gets a better or worse education than you did?
3. How important are schools to one's future success?

³Stanley Elam, Editor, The Gallup Polls of Attitudes Toward Education 1969-1973 (Bloomington, Ind.: Phi Delta Kappa, 1973), pp.

The families' responses to the open-ended questions like the following enabled the teachers to know if the teachers and families were on the same wave length:

1. What are the things that would make you decide that a school is a "good school"?
2. In what respect are the local schools "not so good"?
3. What are the primary reasons why you want your child to get an education?

After the visitations, the teachers recorded their perceptions of the families' responses to the questions and shared these perceptions with the other participants at the feedback meetings.

Section three of the questionnaire consisted of 5x8 index cards listing nine elementary educational programs. At the end of the visitations teachers gave the parents/guardians this card and asked them to indicate which of the three of the following nine programs (in order of their priority) the respondents would like the local schools to give more attention to:

1. Teaching students the skills of reading, writing, and arithmetic.
2. Teaching students how to solve problems and think for themselves.
3. Teaching students to respect the law and authority.
4. Teaching students how to get along with others.
5. Teaching students the skills of speaking and listening.
6. Teaching students vocational skills.
7. Teaching students health and physical education.

8. Teaching students about the world today and yesterday.
9. Teaching students how to compete with others.⁴

When all of these cards were returned, the teachers would know the families' priorities of the nine programs. She/he would then know whether or not her/his particular program emphasized in the classroom coincided with the desires of the family participants.

The composite of priorities represented by the family participants on these cards would give the teachers insight into the families' views of school program priorities.

The composite of the program priorities would provide the teachers with an overview of the families' views of the importance of school programs.

Once the teachers completed all their visitations, the data they collected were sent to the writer. These data were key punched and fed into the computer for analysis.

During the three feedback meetings, the second phase of the data collection occurred. At these meetings the teacher participants shared their experiences and their perceptions with all of the workshop participants.

The third and final phase of data collection began when the teachers met for the final debriefing meeting

⁴Ibid., p. 124.

after the first round of parent-teacher conferences were completed. At the end of their meeting, the teachers were asked to review and critique questions that were distributed to teacher and family participants.

The primary purpose of this instrument was to evaluate the project and seek direction for future projects. The participating families received the questionnaire from the teachers with the instructions to complete the instrument and return it to the writer in the enclosed stamped envelope. Family and teacher participants were assured of complete anonymity.

Limitations of the Study

Several notes of caution warrant injection here:

1. This study is a description and evaluation of a model project designed to enhance home-school relations and to improve home-school communications at the elementary school level. Because this study deals only with the elementary teachers, its findings may not necessarily be applicable to secondary teachers.

2. While teacher participants did volunteer to work on this project, they were paid \$7.50 per hour for their time. Money, therefore, limited the total number of teacher participants.

3. Because the total number of teacher participants varied from building to building, the data gathered from the families from any one building should not be

generalized as being representative of families from the entire East Lansing district.

4. Validity of the data collected was limited by the instrumentation and procedures utilized. Bias may have entered the responses of the interviewers as they recorded their own perceptions of the verbal responses of the interviewees. Complete control over obtaining responses was lacking, as mailed returns were requested from families. Written instructions were subject to revision; all participants were assured of anonymity and identical procedures were utilized to secure the mailed responses.

Overview of Following Chapters

Literature pertinent to the study will be reviewed in Chapter II. A detailed description of the home visitation project will be presented in Chapter III. An evaluation of the project will be comprised in Chapter IV. Chapter V will contain a summary of the study, implications, recommendations, and suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

As the writer surveyed the literature for information specifically about visitation programs designed to enhance home-school relations, he realized how little action-research has been attempted in this area, i.e, a cross matching of pertinent descriptors in the E.R.I.C. search resulted in a complete computer print-out of seventeen related articles. Only five of the seventeen articles contained useful data.

Most of the reviewed literature may be classified as follows:

1. Articles about pressure groups and their influence on the schools.
2. Essays calling for the integration of the school and the community.
3. Descriptions of projects designed to develop teacher skills in working with parents to enrich the home environment for children. These programs, i.e., Head Start, Home Start, and H.O.P.E. focused on disadvantaged families and were aimed at pre-school children.

The literature will be reviewed in the following sequence:

1. Home-School Relations Defined
2. Past and Current Community and Home Pressure Groups
3. Parent Involvement in the Schools
4. Home Visitation Programs

Home-School Relations Defined

Few terms in the educator's jargon are defined in so many ways and used with so much ambiguity as community relations. Words like community relations and home-school relations may be interpreted by the user in many ways.

The writer accepts Richard W. Saxe's definition of community relations:

Community relations will include all the interactions between any element of the school and any element of the community.⁵

Support for this macroscopic view of community relations is found in Johnson's system approach where his flow charts illustrate the essential overlap of the school district and potential subsystems. In effect, events in the community system can have a direct bearing on the school system.⁶

⁵Richard W. Saxe, School Community Interactions (Berkeley, Calif.: McCutchan Publishing Corp., 1975), p. 8.

⁶John Johansen, "Serving the Client System," A Systems Approach to Education (Dubuque, Iowa: William C. Brown, 1973), pp. 238-55.

The term home-school relations will be restricted to those events and/or interactions that take place between school personnel, students and student's families. Less inclusive than community relations, home-school relations zero in on the human one-to-one actions and reactions of the participants in the act of teaching and learning. James L. Hymes, one of America's foremost authorities on childhood education, cited two broad goals under the term Home-School Relations:

1. To bring about a better understanding between teachers and parents, of what children are like.
2. To bring about a better understanding between teachers and parents, of good education.⁷

Home-school relations are in a constant state of flux. Susceptible to external forces, i.e., the Parent Teacher Association, these human relations are occasionally assisted or hindered by powerful state and national organizations interested in fostering their own goals for education. Reflecting on school relations at the national and state level, Doyle Bortner stated:

Since public education is organized into local units, and since individual communities have certain unique school problems, needs and aspirations, it is clear that the objectives of school public relations will be realized chiefly on the local level. At the same time, there are many school problems, needs and aspirations that are largely statewide or nationwide in scope, with the result that knowledge about them and action on them are most effectively and economically

⁷James L. Hymes, Jr., Effective Home-School Relations (New York: Prentice Hall, 1953), p. 9.

promoted on the national or state level. Further, many school public relations problems are common to most local districts, and assistance in their resolution can be effectively and economically given from a national or state level.⁸

Past and Current Community and Home Pressure Groups

Richard W. Saxe defined a pressure group as ". . . any collection of individuals or any organization that presents demands or attempts in any way to affect policy formation or implementation."⁹ Interpreted in this manner, a school related pressure group runs the gamut from two parents confronting the local school principal to local, state, and national organizations presenting formal recommendations and/or demands to school boards at various levels. The description of organizations in this chapter is intended to show the scope of groups interested in public schools. The listing is by no means exhaustive.

The Parent Teacher Association

Since the early 1900s, the most widely recognized school oriented pressure group is the Parent Teacher Association. Harry and Bonaro Overstreet described the formation of this mother's group:

⁸Doyle M. Bortner, Public Relations for Public Schools (Cambridge, Mass.: Schenkman Publishing Co., 1972), p. 390.

⁹Saxe, School Community Interaction, p. 58.

In 1897, before the first national convention of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers was held, one of the founders, Alice Birney said, 'If only fifty mothers come, I shall be satisfied. Yes, even if only 25 are there.'¹⁰

From this meager beginning the P.T.A. spread across America as the single link between the schools and the families they served. The objectives of the National Council of Parents and Teachers follows:

1. To promote the welfare of children and youth in home, school, church, and community.
2. To raise the standards of home life.
3. To secure adequate laws for the care and protection of children and youth.
4. To bring into closer relation the home and the school, that parents and teachers may cooperate intelligently in the training of the child.
5. To develop between educators and the general public such united efforts as will secure for every child the highest advantages in physical, mental, social, and physical education.¹¹

During the 1940s and 1950s the P.T.A. membership continued to swell, and crested during the 1960s. Citing the P.T.A. as the meeting place for parents and teachers, John Bartky wrote:

The National Congress of Parents and Teachers is a huge organization with more than 40,000 locals and over 11,000,000 members. This organization had a unique

¹⁰Harry and Bonaro Overstreet, "Where Children Come First," The National-Parent Teacher (Chicago, Ill.: National Congress of Parents and Teachers, 1949), p. 10.

¹¹"Objectives of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers," National Parent-Teacher (January 1948), p. 1.

beginning, developing out of groups of mothers who supported the kindergarten movement.¹²

Until the 1970s, the P.T.A. was primarily a parent-teacher social organization that supported schools as they were. While the National Parent-Teacher, the monthly magazine of the P.T.A., contained articles about the development and growth of children, the nature of educational programs, and ways to improve the effectiveness of local organizations, the magazine avoided any language which might threaten school personnel.

As a support organization, the P.T.A. is not a change agent in the schools. Disgruntled about the role of the P.T.A. in most schools, Paul Mok stated:

Too often P.T.A. programs have been conceived along lines similar to the program of some women's clubs: primarily as entertainment, secondarily as an uplifting fare and incidentally as educational stuff in the broadest sense of the term. A rousing talk on the mating habits of the tse-tse flies is educational, but educational to whom and for what?

There is no reason to dismiss cavalierly the concept of the P.T.A.--no reason to toss the baby out with the bath water. The P.T.A. must ask itself anew why it exists.

Is such a liasion intended as a token of harmony?

If such is the case, then social teas entertaining lecturers and free floating group association hours are defensible. If, on the other hand, the goal of such liasion are more effective communications, cooperative framing of an effective school philosophy, curriculum evaluations, discussions of classroom teaching methods and ways parents can help children learn at home, improvement of teaching, testing, reporting and

¹²John Bartky, Social Issues in Public Education (Boston, Mass.: Houghton-Mifflin Co., 1965), p. 286.

conferencing, then the social teas and expert lectures on virtue must be eliminated.¹³

Faced with a rapidly declining membership, the P.T.A. is trying to regroup and become a prime moving force in education. It may well be that this new image is too little and too late. As noted by Saxe:

If anything, the move to a more aggressive role is a bit tardy for the P.T.A., which has lost more than 3 million members since 1963.¹⁴

Even though the P.T.A. has not been an effective communications link with the schools, the association did provide the only access to the schools for a limited number of families. For middle income school clientele interested in home-school relations, it was an avenue to the schools.

National School Committees

National Citizen Committees were formed in 1949 and 1962. Doyle Bortner described the formation and purposes of the National Citizens Commission for the Public Schools as follows:

Perhaps the best known national committee concerned with public education was the National Citizens Commission for the Public Schools. It was founded in May, 1949 following a period of exploratory meetings involving distinguished educators and prominent lay citizens from the fields of industry, labor and journalism, among others. Its initial financing was through grants from the Carnegie Corporation and the

¹³Paul P. Mok, Push Button Parents and the Schools (Philadelphia: Macrae Smith Co., 1965), p. 130.

¹⁴Saxe, School Community Interaction, p. 60.

Fund for the Advancement of Education. It set two immediate goals for itself: (1) 'to help Americans realize how important our public schools are to our expanding democracy,' and (2) 'to arouse in each community the intelligence and will to improve our local public schools.' To achieve these goals, the Commission encouraged local efforts, including the creation of local citizens committees that would become directly involved in working for better schools.¹⁵

In 1962 a group of prominent lay citizens established the National Committee for Support of the Public Schools to probe problems of financing public education. Although the committee endeavored to arouse national concern and support of the public schools, the committee did not seek to impose national programs on local communities or states.¹⁶

Other School Interest Organizations

In 1970, Ronald Campbell and his associates produced a work entitled, The Organization and Control of American Schools. Campbell discussed local and national school oriented pressure groups.¹⁷

Racial and ethnic groups, as well as management and labor groups, have their own ideas about the role of the schools in American society. Devoted to the protection of rights of a free press and free assembly, the American

¹⁵Bortner, Public Schools, p. 390.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 391-92.

¹⁷Ronald F. Campbell et al., The Organization and Control of American Schools, 2nd ed. (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Co., 1970).

Civil Liberties Union has interested itself in protecting academic freedom and attacking issues related to teacher tenure.¹⁸

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People has worked to gain for the Negro full citizenship, equal economic opportunity, full civil rights, freedom of residence, and access to equal, unsegregated education and health facilities.¹⁹

In addition to Black organizations, i.e., C.O.R.E., S.C.L.C., and S.N.C.C., Saxe noted that other interest groups are immerging on the scene. "More recent events indicate that Spanish speaking and native American groups are vigorously seeking to improve educational opportunities for their members."²⁰

The Chamber of Commerce of the United States and the National Association of Manufacturers have established committees on education. Both groups are concerned with economics and education.²¹

Summarizing the impact of power groups, Saxe wrote:

Pressure groups are a part of the process of policy formation and decision making in a democracy. There is

¹⁸Bartky, Public Education, p. 292.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 293.

²⁰Saxe, School Community Interaction, p. 65.

²¹Bartky, Public Education, p. 293.

some ambiguity about them that may be associated with the long-held misconception that politics and education must be kept apart. The tactics of pressure groups vary depending upon many things but partially upon the "sacredness" of their cause. They operate in concert with other groups using widespread concern as their legitimating force for particular concerns that, they purport, will relate to the remedy of the basic social discontent. There are numerous pressure groups. Some rise and fall; others will always be with us.²²

Parent Involvement

In the aftermath of the elementary school curriculum revolution of the 1960s and the exhaustive studies of the process of learning and teaching, parents are now beginning to become actively involved with their children's schools. Unlike the passive and submissive parents in the 1940s and 1950s, the parents of the 1970s have had access to the books of Paul Goodman, John Holt, Green and Ryan, Nat Hentoff, James Hendon, Jonathan Kozol, and research by Brunner and Piaget. Not only did these writers have the talent to offer keen insight into the teaching process in the total home-school environment, but they also possessed the energy to touch those within the system.²³

During the past three decades, school personnel and the families they served have struggled through three different phases of parental involvement in the schools:

²²Saxe, School Community Interaction, p. 79.

²³William Goetz, "The Schools and Their Critics," Phi Delta Kappan 56 (December 1974):268-71.

1. 1950s: Parents were not encouraged to come to the schools. The only visible communications between the home and the school were the traditional report cards and the P.T.A. In essence, parents in the schools were intruding on the professionals; their message was clear--Stay Out!

2. 1960s: Plagued by criticism, school personnel were more inclined to open the school doors to parents, but the prevailing message was: Come In and See Us!

3. 1970s: Parents and school personnel are on the brink of establishing an educational partnership. Not only are parents coming into the schools, by invitation or invasion, but some districts are venturing forth with home-school programs building on the strengths of both teachers and parents. The new message is: If You're Coming In, You're Going to Help!

This third, current phase which may eventually epitomize effective home-school relations, has its share of unique problems that will require new solutions. School personnel and parents/guardians will have to deal with:

- A. Home-School Communications
- B. The Role of the Parents/Guardians in the School
- C. Parent/Guardian School Personnel Relationships
- D. The Home, the School, and the Child
- E. Parents/Guardians as Human Resources in the Classrooms

Home-School Communications

No one can refute the fact that many of our schools have done a poor job of communicating with the families they serve. Until school districts across the country

were confronted with dissatisfied tax payers and financial Waterloos, few districts maintained open lines of communications with their clientele.

Commenting on school-home communications, Mary Lou Sayler stated:

The current trend toward rejection of school bonds and tax elections may be due to the failure of the profession to communicate the needs of today's education in a relevant manner. It is increasingly important that parents and other citizens have first-hand information about the schools if they are to internalize the values and goals which are supportive of quality education. One elementary principal I recently talked with recognized that 'the schools today are vulnerable.' She feels that 'the better informed parents are about today's schools, the less they will see the schools through the eyes of the past because their evaluation will be based on the needs of today.'²⁴

Most school-home communications are of the following nature:

1. Communication is a one-way street, school-to-home, with a minimum of human contact between parents and their children's school. For example: school-to-home bulletins, P.T.A. newsletters, youth correspondence, and brochures prepared by curriculum writers.
2. Communication increasingly takes place by means of sophisticated mass media. For example: local and city media are used for dissemination of news of unique or timely school and district activities.
3. Advisory councils serve to maintain communication between the superintendent, the board of education, and leaders of the total community.

²⁴ Mary Lou Sayler, Parents: Active Partners in Education. A Study/Action Publication (Washington, D.C.: National Education Association, 1971) p. 33.

4. Local advisory committees interpret the needs of the school community to the administrators.²⁵

Lawrence Cremin placed the full burden for communication squarely upon the shoulders of the school professionals:

The profession is obligated, both in its own interest and in the interest of the service it performs, to assist the public in developing an ever more sophisticated body of opinion about education.²⁶

Nancy Larrick writes:

The two great forces in stopping the future of a child are the home and school.

When parents and teachers are acquainted--when both sides keep in touch with each other--the child gains. The teacher has information about your child and his classwork that you will find interesting and useful. And she needs your information and counsel for a better understanding of his character and potential.²⁷

Ultimately, it is the student in the classroom who serves as the primary communications agent. As Cutlip and Center point out:

Much of the information and attitudes held by the general public are transmitted from pupil to parent to public on the community grapevine. There is no surer route to a person's heart--or resentment--than through his child.²⁸

²⁵San Diego City Schools, The Elementary School of Tomorrow, Toward New Design and Direction, Phase II: Evaluation and Future Planning (San Diego: San Diego City Schools, 1968), pp. 24-26.

²⁶Lawrence A. Cremin, The Genius of American Education (New York: Vintage Books, 1965) p. 110.

²⁷Nancy Larrick, A Parents Guide to Children's Education (Quakertown, Penn.: Trident Press, 1963) p. 354.

²⁸Scott Cutlip and Allen Center, Effective Public Relations, 3rd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1964), p.

The Role of the Parents/
Guardians in the School

Addressing the role of the family and the school,
Preston Wilcox stated:

The concept of natural parental rights proceeds from the assumption that families have responsibility for rearing (educating, maintaining culture for, etc.) their own children. The teacher acts as an agent of the family in the transmission of values, culture, mores, customs, and traditions. The teacher is required to communicate with the parents in order to learn how to respond to the student as a member of his family and as a "learner." The teacher does this not as an act of courtesy but as a sine quā non for learning how to teach and respect the student. Similarly, the teacher is expected to perceive the parent as a person in his or her own right with many roles and many personal and occupational-professional interests. Part and parcel of this concept is the ability of the teacher to share love and security appropriately with the young student as an integral part of the affective curriculum of the school.

At issue here is the fact that the parent/family should automatically have a role in shaping the education of their children. This role as it relates to social, cultural, and political aspects of education should be respected and guarded, not undermined, by the teacher. For parents/families to be accorded this respect is a natural right which supercedes legal rights.²⁹

While the parents' rights to have a role in shaping the education of their children should be respected, this role may conflict with the teacher's perception of the family's role. For school personnel who have promoted the concept of the self-contained classroom and have never shared the responsibility for educating pupils with the

²⁹Preston Wilcox, "Parental Decision Making: An Educational Necessity," Theory into Practice 11 (June 1972):179.

pupils' parents, the very idea of a parent-teacher partnership may be foreign and threatening.

Parent/Guardian--School
Personnel

As schools become more accessible to parents and the parents continue to press their right to be actively involved in their children's education, parent-teacher relationships may be strained. Illustrating the problem of the over zealous parent, Mus Grove wrote:

But today parents are first and foremost experts in the technicalities of the educational system. Teachers may be ingenious in trying to disguise what really happens (in selecting, promoting, and classifying children, i.e.) but parents are seldom deceived.

The open society has given parents a new significance in their children's lives. Parents have been quick to realize their importance; they have responded--even they have over responded--to the challenge.³⁰

As the school official most vulnerable to verbal fire, the principal is expected to anticipate parent-teacher conflicts. Trying to be proactive to strife in these types of relations is like trying to put a cloud in a box. Commenting on the principals' dilemma, Saxe wrote:

Adding to the difficulty of the administrator's task at the building level is the teachers' seldom-voiced but quite real fear of parents. This is related to elements of professionalism, i.e., the professional cannot be questioned by the client in matters professional. But, because education is often viewed as a pseudoprofession, the professional is not really protected from his clients by the intricate mysteries of his calling. Anyone can understand and discuss

³⁰F. Mus Grove, The Family, Education and Society (London: Routledge and Paul, 1966), pp. 14-15.

education. So, the teacher, not having a secure professional armor is vulnerable to the parents of his assigned clients.³¹

This kind of pseudoprofessional paranoia is not limited to teachers. Greenwood, Breivogel, and Bessent concluded that:

Some administrators and teachers view parents as threats and wish they would stay away from the school. Some have gone so far as to suggest that school boards should be largely composed of professional educators rather than lay citizens.³²

Distressed by isolation attitudes displayed by some school administrators, Donald Arnstein argued that:

. . . if any significant change is due to appear in education, it is not to be sought from boards of education or from school administrators. If it is to come at all, it can come only from those who are most directly involved in the processes of education and most directly affected by those processes: the teachers, the students and the local parents.³³

Even teachers in the suburban light-house districts worry about parents' involvement in the schools. Grace Graham noted:

Teachers may have ambivalent feelings about the ambitious parents. These parents reinforce the school's work. They give their children cultural advantages, try to motivate their academic interest, and promote

³¹Richard Saxe, "An Unstudied Problem: Parent Visiting," The Educational Forum 33 (January 1969):241-45.

³²Gordon E. Greenwood, William F. Breivogel, and Hattie Bessent, "Some Promising Approaches to Parent Involvement," Theory into Practice 11 (June 1972):183.

³³Donald Arnstein, "Freedom and Bureaucracy in the Schools," in Freedom, Bureaucracy and Schooling, ed. F. Haubrich (Washington, D.C.: Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1971), p. 25.

good conditions for home study. They usually encourage experimentation and up-to-date teaching methods. Part of the stereotype of suburbia is that parents are staunch supporters of the P.T.A. Nevertheless, suburbia middle-class parents are harsh critics of schools and teachers when the latter fail to measure up to their expectations. Unlike rural parents and urban working class parents, they grant teachers no institutionalized respect, for they are either as well as or better educated than their parents. Their excessive concern for their child's welfare may be a help or a hinderance to the school.³⁴

Peeling away the layers of apparent reasons for parent-teacher conflicts usually leads to the discovery that the two parties involved, namely the parent/guardian and the teacher simply do not know each other as people. In the usual daily operation of most schools, parents and teachers seldom have time to sit down and chat. Commenting that relations between teachers and parents show an unusual paradox, Clark Moustakas stated:

Parents are viewed both as a chief threat of the teacher and as a significant resource. Teachers seek and appreciate the information and skill which parents possess but they are threatened with their ideas, plans and evaluations. Teachers often express their hostility and resentment, as well as their dependence upon support and friendship of parents. Some of the negative feelings and attitudes lessen in intensity as teachers explore their relations with parents, as teachers have an opportunity to see themselves, and understand the nature of their involvement. Sometimes a clear perception of the issue or conflict occurs and a change in attitude results. As the teacher talks, different aspects of a total experience enter the relationship: In every case there is an emotional release felt by the teacher when understood and

³⁴Grace Graham, The Public School in the American Community (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), p. 285.

supported by other teachers, he is open to positive and healthy contacts with parents.³⁵

Writing about the gap between the home and the school, W. R. Wees charged:

To achieve these personal aims, even the best of teachers frequently has to work with one hand tied behind his back; the child's home environment has doubled the difficulty of the teacher's task before he starts it. On the other hand, even the best of parents look on in helpless dismay as they watch the schools destroy the human values and the eagerness to learn that they have tried to nurture in their children. Yet parents and teachers, home and school, should be a team in helping children as they grow up.³⁶

Educators should know by now that it is imperative for the home and the school to work together. If open communications may solve some of the parent/educator personality conflicts, then educators and parents should be searching for means of getting together. William D. Boutwell claimed this is not happening in the schools:

You would think . . . that the evidence of the importance of the home to the success of the children in the school would lead administrators and teachers to relate more closely with parents. Instead, you find teacher union contracts providing that a teacher may not be asked to confer with parents more than once per year. Some contracts rule out any obligation to call on parents. A principal no longer can suggest that teachers participate in P.T.A.'s because it's not in their contract.³⁷

³⁵Clark Moustakas, Teaching as Learning (New York: Ballentine Books, 1970), p. 105.

³⁶W. R. Wees, Nobody Can Teach Anyone Anything (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1971), p. 43.

³⁷William O. Boutwell, "Educators Try to Avoid the Public, Speaker Claims," American Association of School Administrators Reporter (Washington, D.C., 1971), p.5.

The Home, the School,
and the Child

In spite of the difficulties that are bound to surface during the present transition stage when parents are becoming a more integral part of their children's education, there is evidence for those advocating the case for involving the parent/guardian in the school, as well as, bringing the teacher to the home front.

It is worth noting that a review of the research by Leopate, Flaxman, and Gordon illustrated that parent involvement can integrate the child's school and home life and provide him with a model of participation and control in a major area of his life.³⁸

Maintaining that many people help a child develop during his/her formative years, W. F. Totten wrote:

Parental involvement in the school program has much to do with the child's attitude toward school, and toward his own position in society. Such involvement tends to strengthen the parents' influence on the child and to help parents gain insights as to how to direct their children in areas of respect for school, for individual rights, for personal and public property and toward necessary laws and civil requirements. Involvement of parents in the learning program help the child to develop a good self image.³⁹

Summarizing the third phase of parent involvement in the public schools, Dorothy Rich, President of the Home

³⁸C. Lopate, E. Flaxman, and E. Gordon, "Decentralization and Community Participation in Public Education," Review of Educational Research.

³⁹W. F. Totten, The Power of Community Education (Midland, Mich.: Pendell Publishing Co., 1970), p. 29.

and School Institute stated:

Once upon a time, and not so long ago, a teacher could graduate from a top-notch school of education having rarely, if ever, heard the word "parent" mentioned. I was a mid-fifties graduate of Teachers College, Columbia University, and I think it fair to say that many of my colleagues and I came away with the understanding that parents were to be kept an arm's length from the schooling process. The basic philosophy was "leave education to the educators."

That's no longer true today. As a teacher and a parent, I can only say Hurrah! It's unrealistic for the school alone to be held accountable for a youngster's educational achievements or underachievements. Children don't get educated neatly between the hours of 9 and 3, half the days of the year. It's obvious that responsibility for education has got to be shared by teachers and parents.⁴⁰

Parents/Guardians as Resources in the Classroom

Countless numbers of articles and books have been written about community resources and the schools. Depending upon the make-up of the community, a multitude of resources are available to educators. Luvern L. Cunningham noted the importance of blending the schools with community resources:

Central to the concept of responsible autonomy is the belief that school communities have substantial resources to use in solving their own problems. Problems are there; resources are there. The genius is the ability to release those resources and bring them to bear on the problems that citizens of the school community define as most significant for them. A responsibility autonomous school should develop a posture of reaching out for help and resources. The process of building community-school strength are not well known. Nor have they been taught to teachers and other professionals. Most buildings will need

⁴⁰Dorothy Rich, "The Handwriting on the School Wall," The Scholastic Teacher, May 1973, p. 23.

assistance with these matters--intellectual help as well as fiscal resources will be required--but the basic raw materials for improvement is in each neighborhood in the country.⁴¹

The basic raw materials Cunningham referred to were human resources--the families in each school neighborhood. In many schools parents have gained at least a "partial partnership" with teachers by volunteering as aides in the classroom or by accepting school employment as part or full time paid aides. Noting the importance of volunteers in the classroom, Hunter and Breit wrote:

Throughout the country, parents and other adults are becoming involved in volunteer service in the classroom. They constitute a powerful resource which promises relief to schools. And community understanding of and support for schools can be an important by-product.⁴²

Providing assistance for the teachers in their classrooms is not a new revolutionary idea. As Dr. Howard Brighton noted: "Teacher aides are not a new educational innovation for teacher aide implementatin is as old as planned education. But teacher aides, as implemented in the past and present will not meet future educational needs."⁴³

⁴¹Luvern L. Cunningham, "The Reform and Renewal of American Education," Futures Conference: New Directions in American Education (Washington, D.C.: Proceedings of the Conference, 1972), pp. 93-94.

⁴²Madeline Hunter and Sally Breit, "Use Staff Meetings for Effective Introduction of Volunteer Aides," Instructor, May 1974, p. 20.

⁴³Dr. Howard Brighton, Handbook for Teacher Aides (Midland, Mich.: Pendell Publishing Co., 1972), p. 8.

Noting the changing role of the professional teacher in today's classroom, G. Bowman and Gordon Klopf stated:

In contemporary education a new leadership role is being developed for professional teachers that will help lessen the non-instructional work load. As the teacher assumes the managerial position and learns to coordinate the talents and manpower available from teacher aides, she will become the pivotal person responsible and accountable for insuring that education occurs in the classroom.⁴⁴

The aide is a vibrant link between the home and the school. If an aide has an active role in the classroom and is excited by his/her experience, the word will be out via the neighborhood grapevine, that school is a beautiful place. Vivian Todd wrote:

Whether he is a prospective parent or an active one, an aide has an invaluable experience that prepares him for being a better parent than he would otherwise be. As he works with teachers who have studied the learning process and the ways of guiding it effectively, the aide develops concepts that are as applicable to guiding children in a family as they are to guiding children in school. The aide who has become comfortable in his role is prepared to develop comfortable relationships with his own children. Furthermore, his interest in reading and study about how children learn and develop should motivate the aide to read about how a parent, as well as other aides, facilitate the learning process.

The aide has a unique function in linking school and communications for the good of the children. The parents, teachers or other aides who take time to help your children on the school playground or in the

⁴⁴Garda W. Bowman and Gordon J. Klopf, "New Careers and Roles in the American School," A Study Conducted for the Office of Economic Opportunity (New York: Bank Street College of Education, September 1967), pp. 36-37 and 153-54.

classroom is a visible reminder of the importance of community support for, and involvement in, the schools.⁴⁵

Believing that involvement of the parent, both physically and emotionally, in the education of his child represents the ultimate in school-home relationships, James L. Hymes advised educators to:

Call in your parents. Draft them. Bring them into your classroom. Turn them into assistant teachers. Make teacher-aides out of them. Every single day have two or three or four parents working right beside you, teaching in the classroom with you.

Schools and children and teachers need a revolutionary approach right now. We need a device immediately to insure that every child can find some intellectual content that he can master and put to good use. Drafting the help of parents is the only solution that will overnight let the boys and girls in school today have the teacher-pupil ratio that decent education demands.⁴⁶

As more teachers shift from self-contained classrooms volunteer aides will be needed. Other factors which contribute to the rapid growth of volunteer programs include:

1. A greater emphasis on individualized instruction.
2. Innovative programs developed through compensatory education practices.
3. The knowledge explosion.
4. An increase in team-teaching assignments.
5. The addition of paraprofessionals to the teaching staff.

⁴⁵Vivian E. Todd, The Aide in Early Childhood Education (New York: MacMillan Co., 1973) p. 205.

⁴⁶James L. Hymes, A Child Development Point of View (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1961) p. 96.

6. Required parent participation in Head Start programs.
7. The development of school learning centers equipped with new technology.⁴⁷

School districts use parent/guardian volunteers and paid aides in a myriad of ways. Brighton lists twenty-three ways aides may be used in the classroom:

1. Give extra help to students who do not understand assignments.
2. Assist students with difficult information and pertinent information on missed assignments and make-up work.
3. Record data on cumulative records.
4. Correct and grade assignment papers, workbooks and reports and projects.
5. Correct objective tests.
6. Score and profile achievement and diagnostic tests.
7. Serve as a laboratory assistant.
8. Serve as an instructional and project demonstrator.
9. Conduct reading and spelling groups.
10. Serve as a proctor.
11. Complete school and county reports.
12. Supervise the class when the teacher must leave.
13. Keep attendance records.
14. Telephone parents on routine matters such as verifying notes for requests to leave school early and to check on student absences.
15. Help prepare school newspaper materials.
16. Enter grades into teacher's record book.
17. Supervise club meetings.
18. Supervise indoor games on rainy days.
19. Prepare introductions to audio-visual materials to provide students with background in either using or viewing them.
20. Escort injured or sick students, who have no telephone or transportation, home
21. Escort an injured or sick child to a doctor or hospital.
22. Conduct tutorials with individuals or small groups.
23. Decorate the classroom or auditorium for special occasions.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Sayler, Partners in Education, p. 33

⁴⁸ Brighton, Teacher Aides, pp. 100-101.

Most school districts have few problems finding parents/guardians interested in assisting the teachers with tasks like those mentioned above. The principal, as the educational leader in the building should take the initiative in rallying parents to the cause. Noting the availability of human resources, Inge Maerowitz wrote:

Everywhere, probably, there are parents who would be willing to help in schools if given a chance. A principal is better equipped than the teacher to reach out and round up parents for the classroom. And, from a position of authority, the principal can do a lot to convince even the reluctant parent that she has a valuable contribution to make to a classroom. From the principal can come the guidelines for both teachers and volunteers in a parent-participation program. And from the principal, certainly should come the encouragement needed to make the program work.⁴⁹

Recruiting volunteers is often the easiest part of establishing a parent/guardian volunteer program. To be effective, volunteer aides must be trained. An administrator looking for guidance in training volunteers and orienting school personnel should read the works of Brighton, Hubley, Brotherson and Johnson, Fever and Cook, as well as those from the Mott Institute for Community Development. For approximately \$75.00, districts may purchase a kit developed by the National Education Association specifically designed to help administrators train volunteer aides.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Inge Maerowitz, "Parents! Bless Them and Keep Them in Your Classroom," Early Years 3 (January 1973):29-32.

⁵⁰ National Education Association, Parents and Teachers Together (For Benefit of Children) (Washington, D.C.: N.E.A. Publications, 1972), pp. 54-64.

A statement by John Goodlad summarized parental involvement in the schools:

Parent volunteers and paraprofessionals can assist teachers in meeting the needs of individual children. The added staff also allows the teacher to plan a greater variety of learning activities. Their contributions can enhance the environment of the classroom. The increased ratio of adults to children increases the opportunities for meeting the unique needs of each child. Children, like adults, are attracted to a variety of personalities. By adding more adults to the classroom, we increase the likelihood of making available the adult who will spark 'that which is already waiting' in each child.⁵¹

Parental involvement in volunteer programs are forming another bridge between the school and the community.⁵² These bridges to the homes will enhance home-school relations.

Programs like the volunteer aide program are blending in with school projects that lead to an even greater cohesion of the schools and the family clientele. Maintaining that the parents and school personnel both have roles in education, George Gallup stated:

Education, or perhaps we should call it "learning," goes on in the home as well as in the school. Education is a joint responsibility--the mother and the father are, in fact, teachers. Their part of the job has to do with many things. A child's respect for law and order, his behavior at home and at school, his ability to think things out for himself, his respect for elders, his ability to get along with other

⁵¹John J. Goodlad, Planning and Organizing for Teaching, Project on the Instructional Program of the Public Schools (Washington, D.C.: National Education Association, 1963).

⁵²Edward G. Olsen, The School and Communication Reader (New York: MacMillan Co., 1963), p. 145.

children, his manners, and his moral standards depend largely on the kind of training he receives at home.⁵³

Maintaining that the home and the school should establish a symbiotic relationship where both groups benefit from mutual cooperation, Richard R. Garlepy wrote:

The fact that American children, in general, are treasured, worked for, and cared for makes effective home-school relations possible. Nothing touches a parent so deeply as information about his child--an extension of himself--in the school situation. A parent will many times sacrifice his own needs and desires to help his child.

Some parents are of the opinion that the home and the school today tend to operate more and more independently of one another. They need a greater cooperation. The first step in establishing a cooperative climate is to recognize and act upon a well established fact: The school and the home need each other. The goals they seek in the lives of children should be mutual goals. If the goals of the home and the school are in conflict, children often become confused and develop anxieties which prevent learning.⁵⁴

As more parents/guardians become involved with the schools through indirect participation in various pressure groups or through direct involvement in school activities, i.e., volunteers and paid aides, school personnel may wish to capitalize on this expressed parent interest and reciprocate by becoming professionally involved with the families in their homes. A single visit by the teacher to the homes and the families she/he serves, may be the

⁵³ Stanley Elam, ed., The Gallup Polls of Attitudes Toward Education 1969-73 (Bloomington, Ind.: Phi Delta Kappa, 1973), pp.

⁵⁴ Richard R. Garlepy, Your Child is Dying to Learn (Barre, Mass.: Barre Publishers, 1967), pp. 156-70.

final connecting link in the chain of teacher-parent communications and home-school relations.

A home visitation program would certainly be in line with the platform goals of the National Education Association. Goal Seven reads as follows:

Public understanding and appreciation are the vital role of education in an American democracy.

a. Systematic effort by the profession, using all appropriate media of communications, to promote public understanding of education and encourage wider public and parent participation in solving its problems.

b. The development of methods and material to help teachers' associations and school officials to maintain good relations with the public.⁵⁵

Federal, state and local school-home visitation programs are reviewed in the next section. Most of these programs involve disadvantaged pupils.

Home Visitation Programs

Even though the present wave of home visitation programs began just over a decade ago, the ideas underlying these programs, i.e., Head Start, Home Start, and the Home Oriented Preschool Program, are rooted in the nineteenth century. When massive waves of immigrants flooded the eastern seaboard in the 1880s and 1890s, social workers, philanthropists, and educators gave aid and assistance to these new arrivals. One result of these

⁵⁵ Jean D. Grambs, "The Role of the Teacher in School and Society," Readings in the Social and Philosophical Foundations of Education, ed. Carl H. Gross, Stanley P. Wronski, and John Hanson (Boston: D. C. Heath and Co., 1962), pp.

efforts was the creation of kindergartens, where teachers taught youngsters in the morning and visited the homes of the families in the afternoon.⁵⁶

Even though the Center based programs such as Head Start were not successful, several researchers did pioneer home-based intervention programs for low-income families.

The Home Start Evaluation Study in 1972 noted:

Several Agencies in the Federal Government (the Children's Bureau, the Office of Economic Opportunity, the National Institute of Child and Human Development, the National Institute of Mental Health, the Office of Education, the National Institute of Health) each funded part or all of a home visiting research/demonstration project. With the support of these Federal funds, researchers like Dr. Susan Gray at George Peabody Teachers College in Tennessee, Dr. Phyllis Levenstein at the Verbal-Interaction Project in New York, Dr. David Weikart at the Ypsilanti-Carnegie Infant Education Project in Michigan, Dr. Earl Schaeffer at the Infant Research Education Project in Washington, D.C., Dr. Ira Gordon at the University of Florida, and Dr. Roy Lally, Syracuse University, Dr. Betty Caldwell, Dr. Rich Heber, Dr. Merle Karnes, and Dr. Glen Nimicht, sought to test the viability and effects of pre-school home visiting intervention projects for children of low-income families.⁵⁷

Ira J. Gordon wrote about the early kindergarten visitaton programs:

Indeed, in 1891, a meeting of educators was told that they must labor earnestly in the home as well as in Kindergarten using regular and systematic home visits by persons specially prepared for the work.⁵⁸

⁵⁶A.B.T. Association, Cambridge, Mass., Home Start Evaluation Study, High Scope Education Research Foundation, Ypsilanti, Mich. (August, 1972).

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 90.

⁵⁸Ira J. Gordon, "What Do We Know About Parents As Teachers," Theory Into Practice 11 (June 1972):146.

Varieties of home visiting programs concerned with child development and family support have emerged since the nineteenth century. In the 1920s, the nursery school movement swept across the nation. During the Great Depression, WPA nursery schools with home components served many communities. When mothers were needed on assembly lines during World War II, family day care support programs were funded to provide family assistance.⁵⁹

During the 1960s, the American public was concerned about the millions of American children who were being consumed in a cycle of poverty. IN 1965, as part of the war on poverty, the Johnson administration began to experiment with educational programs related to financial poverty. These programs, i.e., Head Start and Home Start, stemmed from that belief that disadvantaged children were not prepared for the first grade experience. Parents of disadvantaged were drawn into these experimental educational solutions to financial problems. Commenting about the attempts to educate these parents, Ira J. Gordon stated:

The recent history of parent education, especially in the last ten years under the impetus of the poverty programs, has been based upon global assumptions, often untested, of what parents know and can do. These were: (1) that, at least in early childhood, what parents did influenced the development of children, (2) low-income parents lacked knowledge or skills in teaching, and (3) one could intervene in the home to change parents' behavior and therefore improve the development and achievement of children. To some

⁵⁹A.B.T. Association, Home Start Evaluation Study, p. 2.

degree it was missionary work now couched in a more professional scientific framework.⁶⁰

The original Head Start Project was largely a summer project for underprivileged children who were about to begin school. While the project involved millions of American families and their children and millions more of American tax dollars, the project failed to live up to the expectations of the Washington bureaucrats. Evaluating the project in 1967, Maya Pines wrote:

For project Head Start as it stands today--largely a summer project for underprivileged five and six year olds who will enter school the following fall--can help only those children who don't need it very much. To affect the hard core cases, it would have had to act as a spring board for much more radical programs including year round classes with specific objectives for children of three and four. Most importantly it would have to change the entire content and emphasis of its classes. So far it has failed to learn from the short comings revealed during its first summer.⁶¹

Many state and local home visitation programs spawned from Head Start. In 1966 the Leflore County Schools in Greenwood, Mississippi, implemented a program designed to assist the children of migrant workers. To encourage children of migrant agricultural workers to remain in school and to persuade children who never

⁶⁰Gordon, Theory Into Practice, p. 147.

⁶¹Maya Pines, Revolution in Learning (New York: Harper Row, 1967), p. 9.

attended school to start, the school district began a program of visiting teachers.⁶²

Beginning in September 1969, Pacific Oaks College in Pasadena, California, developed a program to develop teachers' skills in working with disadvantaged parents to enrich the home learning environment for children and to enrich the home learning experience for children. Weekly home visits were made by twenty participating teachers who selected the families, and emphasis was placed on supporting innovation by the teachers to work out approaches reflecting the needs of individual teachers and families.⁶³

In 1970, the University of Illinois and Peabody College began teacher home visitation programs for the parents of preschoolers. Both programs were designed to make parents aware of their role as teachers of their children and formally assisting teachers in the process.⁶⁴

In New York, a school-home contact program was initiated in 1970 as stated in the Executive Summary Report:

The main stated purpose of this project is to send 100 family Assistants who are familiar with the community into the homes of senior high school students

⁶²"Visions of Sugarplums," (Greenwood, Miss: Leflore County Schools, May 1972).

⁶³Elizabeth J. Jones, "Preparing Teachers to Involve Parents in Children's Learning," Project Report (Pasadena, Calif.: Pacific Oaks College, 1970), p. 153.

⁶⁴*Ibid.*, p. 183.

who show serious problems in school attendance, adjustment and/or achievement. The project is designed to provide a link between home and school for 15,000 such potential dropouts by having the Family Assistants serve as models for the students, in a ratio of 150 to 1, under the supervision of the school administration. Visitations are made by these para-professionals to the homes to teach the parents what to expect from the school and what to do to help their children adjust and achieve. The Family Assistants are recruited from the target neighborhoods and serve 18 schools throughout the city. They work five hours a day, and when home visits are not possible in the daytime, evening or weekend visits are arranged and made.⁶⁵

While many of these home based programs were flourishing, the Head Start Project faded after a disastrous Westinghouse and Ohio State Evaluation in 1969. Noting that several home visitation programs had produced impressive test scores, the Office of Child Development initiated a one and one-half million dollar Federal Home Start Project.⁶⁶

Project HOPE (Home Oriented Preschool Program) was launched in Charleston, West Virginia, to help prepare preschoolers in the Appalachian area by using televised instruction in mobile classrooms to train parents of three, four, and five year old children. Home visitations were an integral part of the program.

⁶⁵Edsel Erickson, "Final Report of the Evaluation of the 1970-71 School Home Contact Program," New York State: Urban Edition, 1971.

⁶⁶Ibid.

In addition to federal programs, there have been some attempts by state and local districts to establish home-school visitation programs:

Family community aides were used in disadvantaged East Saint Louis, Illinois Schools to bridge the communication gap between the school and the home. The nonprofessional aides received 16 weeks of training to perform auxiliary noninstructional service and to act as liaison personnel between school and parents with information about school programs and personnel, and services available from social agencies.⁶⁷

An experimental Nursery School Program, staffed by home school coordinators, social workers, teaching staff and student volunteers from Temple University, operated in four North Philadelphia, Pennsylvania elementary schools. Home-school contact was enhanced by parent conferences and a health program.⁶⁸

Local districts are beginning to rediscover the value of teacher-home visitation programs. Even though dramatic changes in many communities resulting from urbanization and rural consolidation, have made home visitation difficult, teachers still are searching for ways to incorporate visitation programs in order to promote and maintain parent relations. Noting the effectiveness of home visitation programs, Mary Lou Sayler stated:

⁶⁷Leo B. Hicks, "An Experiment in School-Community Relations" (Charleston: West Virginia State Commission on Mental Retardation, August 1967).

⁶⁸"Progress Report of the Experimental Nursery School Program, 1964-1965" (Penn.: Philadelphia Council for Community Advancement, 1965).

Over the years, visits have been effective first steps toward involving parents in the child's learning activities and progress. They also help teachers to discover situations and attitudes in the home that affect the child's ability to learn.⁶⁹

First graders at Poinciana Elementary School are dismissed for one-half day in the first month of school so teachers can visit their homes in Key West, Florida. Guidance teachers visit the homes of the children in the other elementary grades.

Before school opens in the fall in the Fairfield (Iowa) Community School District, elementary teachers conduct home visits to the homes of the children the school serves. In that district teachers recognize the practice of home visitation as extremely valuable. Also, a citizen's study committee in Fairfield, considered the home visitation as one of the most important features of the home-school relationship.⁷⁰

Summary

The pendulum in education is swinging toward closer ties between the teacher and the parent/guardian. Teacher-home visitation programs may be one effective delivery system for enhancing home-school relations. Pressure groups and professional critics were forcing educators to reevaluate their goals and objectives and

⁶⁹Saylor, Partners in Education, p. 27.

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 30.

their involvement with their communities. As school support measures, i.e., millages and fiscal allocations failed at an alarming rate, school administrators who began to worry about home-school relations, ventured into uncharted waters and began communicating with parents.

With Sputnik in orbit and school critics writing volumes about American education, educators invited the parent to come to visit their schools. As leary administrators opened their doors, many principals and teachers found that interested, insistent, inquisitive parents could be used in the schools as volunteers and aides. A new partnership between the home and school was forming. As parents/guardians and teachers worked together in the classroom they formed a bond of professional and personal respect and trust. In this new relationship, teacher and parent talked and listened to each other.

Responding to the parent involvement in the schools, many teachers are reviewing an old method of enhancing home school relations--the teacher home visitation program. Many governmental and social agencies have used forms of home visitation programs to assist families with social and economic problems.

Wishing to be proactive, many educators and politicians initiated home school programs designed to benefit preschool and/or disadvantaged children. The early experiments, i.e., Head Start, registered disappointing results because the summer center based programs

focused on the children as an entity in the classroom; no changes were made at home. Citing the lack of involvement of the family in early federal projects, Judith Sheldon stated:

Many of the educationally related services of Title I elementary schools are essentially student centered and tend to focus on one child in the family. There is a tendency to overlook the dynamics of family life and to overlook the relationships between parents, children, and teachers as a functional social-emotional unit. In other words, most educational programs are planned and administered in terms of what professionals think is best for the student rather than taking into consideration the needs and goals of parents and teachers.⁷¹

Many state and local home-school programs blossomed from the Federal Government's attempt to find educational solutions to problems in our society. Most of the off-spring programs, like their federally funded predecessors, are aimed at preschool disadvantaged children. Sensitive to critical evaluations of the federal programs, most of the state level programs directly involve the families in their programs by some means of parental involvement in the schools as teacher-home visitation programs.

In addition to the federal and state programs, local school districts are incorporating teacher visitation projects as part of their program to enhance home-school relations. Some of these programs are uniformly structured

⁷¹Judith Sheldon, "Family Program," An Analysis of a Family Involvement Communication System in a Title I Elementary School--Final Report (Stillwater, Okla., Oklahoma State University, p. 67.

whereas others leave the structure of the home visitations entirely in the hands of the participating teachers.

Teacher-home visitation programs are a logical product of the blending of the home and school which perpetuate and enhance home-school relations.

CHAPTER III

THE EAST LANSING SCHOOL DISTRICT TEACHER-HOME VISITATION PROJECT

Because the City of East Lansing, and the East Lansing School district have characteristics that both enhance and restrict the home visitation project, it is important for the reader to be acquainted with a few pertinent facts about that school community.

The City of East Lansing

East Lansing is a wealthy, college-centered town. Michigan State University serves as the nucleus of the community. The population of the city is a conglomerate of people composed of thousands of students, university personnel, professionals, semiprofessionals, skilled and unskilled workers.

The East Lansing School District Structure

Typical of most small school districts in the State of Michigan, the hierarchal administration of the East Lansing schools follows a line of staff organization

beginning with an elected School Board descending through the superintendent, the directors, the principals, and finally to the teachers. Unlike many small districts, the East Lansing School District does employ a deputy superintendent who also serves as the director of instruction, and an elementary coordinator, and a secondary coordinator. Both coordinators also are full time principals.

The School Populations

Five thousand students attend the East Lansing Public Schools. The nine elementary schools, accomodating the children in kindergarten through the fifth grade, house 2300 children. The two middle schools support an enrollment of 1200 students. The high school houses the remaining 1500 students.

The Elementary School Communities

While a set of teacher generated performance objectives serves as a base for the elementary school curriculum, each of the nine elementary buildings is semi-autonomous and preserves a degree of uniqueness in diverse neighborhoods.

Bailey School is close to the business district and to campus. The student population of the school is stable even though student housing affects the neighborhood, which is comprised of middle income families.

Central School, the oldest (1897) and smallest (150 children) school is located in a stable part of the community. Many of the middle-income families in this school area are associated with Michigan State University. This area also has a high density of Michigan State student population.

Donley School, the only school outside of the city limits, has experienced a rapid increase in its student population because of the number of new apartment complexes recently built in that area. The students attending Donley School represent a broad spectrum of American life.

Glencairn School with an average student population of 220 is situated in the high social-economic neighborhood. Most of the families in this area are permanent residents of the city.

Marble School's student population has decreased from 620 students in 1965 to 280 students in 1974. Much of private housing in that area has been converted to accommodate single students who attend Michigan State University.

Pinecrest School, the largest elementary school, has an enrollment of 470 students. Like Donley, Pinecrest is now serving a more diverse cross-section of the social-economic spectrum.

Red Cedar School borders the Michigan State University campus. University enrollment has a direct impact on this school, too. Many of the families in this section are directly affiliated with the University.

Spartan Village School is located on the Michigan State University campus. The student population, in a state of flux each time a new term begins, reflects a variety of ethnic groups. Many of the students do not speak the English language.

Whitehills School represents a complex social-economic mix of families and students. This neighborhood is a stable part of the community.

School Financial Support

Presently East Lansing is the eighth highest local tax supported school district in the State of Michigan. Home owners pay a total millage of 36.3 mills. This represents an expenditure of \$1640 per child. The East Lansing Community is supporting public schools at an ever-increasing tax rate. As the tax rate escalates and school priorities become a matter of public issue and debate, all school personnel are becoming personally involved with school-community concerns.

The Need for Enhancing Home-School Relationships

Community Changes

Dramatic social-economic changes have occurred in East Lansing during the past half decade. These changes are reflected in emerging housing patterns. Since more students are now permitted to live off campus, family type dwellings are being converted for student rental. The city

is being surrounded by large apartment complexes. New families representing a broader spectrum of America are confronting elementary teachers and administrators with a host of needs, problems, and issues that were virtually non-existent five years ago.

Midyear changes in approved state aid funds wreaked havoc on the best made plans of teachers and administrators. When districts like East Lansing are forced to slash one-quarter of a million dollars from their budget in January, the professionals try hard to avoid the syndrome of incipient cannibalism when readjusting their school priorities.

All of the aforementioned changes eventually have impact upon school-community relations. The spin-off problems ultimately effect administrators, parents/guardians, teachers, and children in the classrooms.

Professional Concerns

Professional concerns about new problems associated with the changing community surfaced independently at two levels. In March 1974, the Elementary Teachers Council met for their regular monthly meeting with the Deputy Superintendent to discuss problems and concerns of the elementary teachers. Teachers on the council, representing all nine elementary buildings, discussed the problems they were having during their parent/guardian teacher conferences. The teachers were having a difficult time trying

to cover all the points on the evaluation and reporting forms because so many of the parents/guardians were anxious to discuss other topics.

Some of the teachers reported that many of the single parents wanted to talk about their own needs. Working mothers wanted to talk about work-related problems. Other parents/guardians wanted to talk about discipline, classroom management, and curriculum. Teachers in previously all white student schools were now talking with Black and Latino families.

The common problem shared by the elementary teachers was to find some way of linking up with the families so both the teachers and the families could become aware of their mutual problems and explore possible solutions to these problems. It was apparent that the teachers were looking for a way to bridge the home-school communications gap to establish positive home-school relationships.

Simultaneously, in March 1974 school principals were discussing plans for the 1974-75 school year with the school district cabinet officers. Cabinet officers learned that the school principals were facing a new set of school community problems. Student attendance was becoming a problem. An increasing amount of the administrators' time was being consumed with discipline problems in the classroom and at recess. More parents were becoming harder to reach. At some schools, home-school correspondence was

becoming ineffective. Parents/guardians were becoming more interested and/or concerned about classroom management, curriculum, and discipline.

Common Problems

Problems stated by teachers and administrators had common threads that wove the two groups together:

1. Many of the teachers and families of the children in their classrooms did not know each other as real persons.
2. Home-school written communications were often sporadic and sometimes ineffective.
3. Telephone conversations were of necessity, spontaneous, too short, and moderately effective.
4. Face-to-face communications between parents/guardians and school personnel were confined to the parent-teacher conferences and to one or two school related activities.
5. Most face-to-face conversations occurred on school grounds, usually in the classroom.
6. Many parents were not acquainted with school curriculum.
7. Some school personnel, unaware of minority value systems, were struggling with conferences.
8. In some instances, classroom disturbances and related discipline problems were consuming too much classroom time.
9. Many of the students' problems stemmed from family-centered problems.
10. Parents were expressing the need to be more active participants in their children's education.

Home-School Relations

Recognizing the problems, and wanting to be proactive, teachers and administrators searched for ways to

enhance home-school relations. School personnel did have additional data to support their actions.

Survey of Parents/Guardians

In order to more accurately determine opinions and attitudes about school held by various groups within the community, the East Lansing Board of Education authorized a series of surveys to be conducted from 1973 through 1975. While the results of the 1973-75 survey indicated that the parents of the children in the East Lansing Public Schools were overwhelmingly positive about present educational programs, there were some disturbing overtones. Some parents did express concern about curriculum. Still others were worried about discipline. One concern registered by some parents centered around the lack of open home-school communications.

Plan for Action

Acknowledging the problems expressed by significant numbers of elementary teachers, administrators, parents/guardians and students, the Deputy Superintendent called a meeting of concerned personnel to try to clarify the problems and to explore some strategies for action-oriented solutions.

Dr. Lawrence Lezotte, Professor in the College of Urban Affairs, was invited to attend the meeting to provide the participants with direction and external insight.

Serving a dual role as a statistician and a parent in the East Lansing community, Dr. Lezotte guided the group discussion.

The staff reiterated the problems expressed by the teachers and principals early in the year, stating that they were experiencing significant changes in the school clientele whom they were serving. Changes noted by the staff included:

1. More single parent families
2. More diverse, stratified economic population
3. More working mothers
4. More incidence of step-parents
5. More minority families
6. More ethnic groups
7. More transient families
8. More non-English language speaking families

Parallel with these changes in the community, the staff noted that many of the children in their classroom were exhibiting behavior in the classroom that was detrimental to effective classroom management. The behavioral indicators included:

1. More interest in violence
2. More personal insecurity
3. More emotional loads
4. More use of "bad" language
5. Lack of sensitivity toward others
6. Lack of empathy
7. Lack of mutual trust
8. Lack of respect for authority
9. Lack of respect for elders
10. Lack of self-discipline
11. Lack of self-direction
12. Lack of immediate gratification
13. Lack of long range goals

Proposal for Enhancing
Home-School Relations

After the problems were identified, the group wrestled with various means of attacking the problems related to improving home-school relations. After much discussion, the group decided that the best first step towards solving their problem was to develop a means of having teachers better understand and appreciate the students they serve and help families better understand the school and know the teachers. The vehicle to implement that first step was a project that would enable the teachers to visit families in their own homes.

The teachers recognized their own inadequacies and asked for inservice training in the skills of effective interview techniques, if a home visitation project became a reality. Because home visitations are part of their daily routine, social workers were identified as the resource people who could best inservice teachers to hone their interviewing skills.

A formal proposal (Appendix A) was submitted to the Deputy Superintendent recommending that a home visitation project be implemented during the 1974-75 school year as a means of enhancing home-school relations. The proposal included three components which outlined the project:

1. A process to identify the teacher participants in the project.

2. Procedures for teachers to follow for family interviews.
3. A schedule and means for retrieving data. The purpose for gathering data was two-fold:
 - (1) to acquaint each teacher with the goals each family had for their children; and
 - (2) to evaluate the project in terms of how well it helped enhance home-school relations.

Calendar of Events for the Project

The following timetable was set to carry out the project:

1. Teacher participants were to be called together three times during the summer--an initial meeting in May, a second meeting in July, and a final meeting at the end of the second week in August to permit the project coordinator to surface problems, discuss alternatives and retrieve feedback. At the meeting in July, the teachers were to meet and discuss the data received.
2. During the last two weeks in August 1974, data was to be collected and assimilated.
3. In July, August, and September, the teachers were to complete the majority of the home visitations. The remaining visitations were to be completed before the first parent-teacher conferences in the fall.
4. The teachers and parents were to evaluate the project after the first round of parent-teacher conferences. The effectiveness of the project was not to be determined by statistical data, but rather by the teachers' and parents' perceptions of the value of the program.

Recruitment of Teacher Participants

In May 1974, a flyer (Appendix B) was distributed to all the teachers of children in kindergarten through

third grade. Most of the elementary teachers had heard through informal feedback channels (grapevine) that plans were underway to modify the summer inservice model during the summer of 1974. Rather than host a series of content-oriented courses, the teachers learned they could have the opportunity to have time to meet and talk to parents prior to having the parents' child in their classroom that fall.

The teachers were informed that they could accomplish this task through home visitations during the summer vacation period. To dispel their fears about interviews, the teachers were informed that they would receive a short inservice in "do's" and "dont's" of home visitations. As explained to the staff, the purpose of the teacher visitations would be to:

1. Reach out to the parent and let them know you are interested in them as people.
2. Find out what goals they hold for their child.
3. Let the parent meet you and find out what kind of person you are.
4. Build a bridge between home and school--before the child begins formal instructions in September.

As spelled out to the teachers, the participants would visit all of the homes in which their 1974-75 children reside to talk with the parent(s). Later in the summer, the teachers would meet to share their experiences and receive assistance (if needed).

Teacher participants were offered up to fifty hours at \$7.50 per hour to accomplish the visits and meet in

seminars. Anyone interested in participating in the program had to return a declaration by the end of May 1974.

Teacher Participants

On June 20, 1974, nineteen elementary teachers, representing seven of the nine elementary schools, elected to participate in the Home Visitation Program. One additional teacher joined the group during the summer months.

A mixture of participants applied (Table 1). Age and experience diversity were particularly beneficial. It might have been interesting to have had more men included, but only two applied.

Table 1.--Characteristics of Teacher Participants.

		Number of Participants
Ethnic Origin	Anglo	17
	Latino	1
	Black	1
Age	20-29	9
	30-39	5
	40 and over	5
Sex	Female	17
	Male	2
Education (Highest Degree)	B.A.	8
	M.A.	6
	M.A.+	5
Years of Teaching Experience	0-5	10
	6-10	5
	11 and over	4

Workshop Participants
Orientation Sessions

On June 20, 1974 the teacher participants met with the Deputy Superintendent, the Elementary Coordinator, and the consultant from Michigan State University.

As an overview, participants were given a Rationale for the Workshop (Appendix C). In the rationale the writer quoted the following statements from The Gallup Polls of Attitudes Toward Education 1969-1973:

Parents must become an integral part of any educational program, and their instructional effort in the home must be seen as essential to the success of the child in the school. Programs must be launched in every district to educate parents and to see that they live up to their responsibilities.

A properly conceived plan of helping parents do a more effective job of motivating their student-age children, organizing their home life to enable them to do the best work in the classroom, and instructing them in many areas not included in formal education offers in my opinion, the greatest opportunity to reach higher educational standards at the lowest cost.⁷²

The purpose of the orientation meeting was to:

1. Allow the workshop participants a chance to become reacquainted with each other.
2. Distribute and discuss the rationale for the workshop.
3. Explain the purposes of the data retrieval instruments. As discussed, the instrument they would be using initially was designed to structure the interview during the visitation. It was hoped that the first instrument would provide the teachers with a set of questions that would enable the teachers to know from the response what the parents thought about:

⁷²Elam, Attitudes Toward Education, p. 7.

- a. The curriculum in the schools
- b. The classroom management in the schools
- c. The discipline in the schools
- d. The goals the parents and teachers have for the children.

In most cases, the home visitation would provide the teacher and family participants with their first personal contact. Choosing not to take the risk of closing off open communications by writing down responses, the group decided they would ask the questions and record their perceptions of the parents' responses after the interview was over.

4. Ask the participants what kind of back-up support staff they might need. It was suggested that part of the tasks assigned to the teachers was to work through any problems they encountered without reliance and dependence on consultants.

During the interval between the first and second orientation sessions, the following data was collected from the principals that participants worked with during the school year:

1. Class lists, including parent/guardian names, addresses, and telephone numbers of the children assigned to the teacher participants during the 1974-1975 school year.
2. Cumulative Information Cards
3. Revised Data Retrieval Forms (Appendix D)

Acting on the feedback from the participants at the first orientation session, the following support staff was summoned together:

1. The Director of Special Services
2. Two school social workers
3. A Bilingual Counselor

The entire support staff met with the workshop participants for a second orientation meeting. The purpose of this meeting was to:

1. Distribute the class list, cumulative cards, and revised instruments.
2. Distribute copies of The Gallup Polls of Attitudes Toward Education 1969-1973 to each of the workshop participants. The book provided participants with important facts about national attitudes toward education. Combining this information with the facts retrieved from the survey of the parents/guardians, the teachers had a data base to draw from before they met the families.
3. Distribute a list of resource people (Appendix E).

A cover letter (Appendix F) on the packet of materials the participants received specified the time limits (50 hours) and payroll procedure for submitting time sheets.

In addition, teachers received the revised data retrieval instrument reflecting their suggestions and concerns. Feeling directly responsible for the success of the project, the teacher participants suggested the following:

1. A number of questions could be combined and therefore condense the instrument.
2. The second part of the instrument, the yellow cards (Appendix G) should be filled out by the parents at the conclusion of the conference.

One point of discussion at this meeting concerned the manner in which teachers would make the initial appointment with the families. At first, each teacher was to generate his/her own letter for the family participants,

but the group decided a form letter (Appendix H) would serve everyone's purpose. Teachers were directed to complete the blanks on the letter, address the envelopes, and return them to the central office to be processed through the stamp machine.

A significant portion of the meeting was devoted to a short inservice session concluded by the social workers and the bilingual consultant. Some of the suggestions offered by the social workers were:

1. Let the families choose the time for the visitation; don't "box them in" to two or three alternatives.
2. Encourage the fathers/step-fathers to be there.
3. Let the families decide if the children are to be present during the interview.
4. Dress informally; set a relaxed mood.
5. If possible, let the family take the lead in the conversation.
6. Casually weave the pertinent questions into the conversation; don't come off like a computer analysis.
7. Listen to what the families say. What they're sharing is important to them.
8. Listen to yourself talk. Refrain from using education jargon. One of the objectives of the project is to improve communications. Talk in layman's language. Try to be sure the families really understand what you are saying.
9. Be open, warm, and responsive. If you end up with a child or an animal in your lap, relax and enjoy it. It will be worth the instant rapport.
10. If offered refreshments, accept them. Chances are the mothers have spent some time preparing something special. Forget the diet! Remember the purpose of the program is to enhance relations.

11. Be honest. One of the reasons for the visitation is to find out if the teacher and the participants are on the same "wave length." If asked a difficult question, answer it to the best of your ability. Don't give the families answers that you think they want to hear instead of what you believe; you will regret it later.
12. Be empathetic. One of the purposes for the workshop is to allow the teacher and family participants to learn to know each other as real people. This is risky, but hopefully, worth it.
13. Be gracious when it is time to leave. The one hour is going to fly by. If the family is in the middle of something important, let them finish; it might be the most significant time of your visitation.
14. Remember that the visitation is just the start of something big. Encourage the parents to remain in contact with you. Leave them the school telephone number, and if there is no personal "hang-up," give them your telephone number at home.
15. Thank them for their time. Arrival of a teacher at anyone's home is no small matter. The child's mother has probably spent the better part of the day cleaning the house, preparing something "special" and priming the children. If the father is there, chances are he had to leave his place of business. Let all of them know that you are grateful for their time and appreciate their cooperation.

The bilingual (Latino) counselor had sound advice for the attentive participants. He offered tips to dovetail with the suggestions from the social workers.

Before the meeting adjourned, the writer asked the participants to have completed at least three home visitations by the time of the first debriefing session scheduled for July 11. If time permitted, participants were encouraged to complete at least ten home visitations by August 1, in time for the second session.

Nineteen enthusiastic teachers, leary of the unknown, but excited by the potential of the visitation project, began to set the wheels in motion. Their parent/guardian letters were mailed and visitations were scheduled.

The First Debriefing Session

The teacher participants received a memorandum (Appendix I) reminding them of the session on July 11. The agenda (Appendix J) for the session requested teachers to answer and/or discuss the following:

1. What are your assessments of the worth of the home visitations?
2. What are your perceptions of the parents' assessment of the worth of the home visitations?
3. List two or three types of information that you have retrieved that you believe will help you do a better job of preparing for the individual children in your classroom this fall.
4. All generalizations (including this one) are dangerous. If however, after the initial home visits you were to generalize about family attitudes, what would you say about the families' perceptions (real or imaginary) of the school's strengths and/or potential areas of concern?

The purpose of the debriefing session was to:

1. Give participants a chance to share their experiences.
2. Find out if the organized plans for accomplishing the objectives for the workshop were functional.

After a brief welcoming, the teachers met in small groups to:

1. Summarize the visitations.
2. Surface any problems, concerns, and/or suggestions.
3. Prepare a brief response to the four major questions on the agenda.

Each teacher participant had been instructed to visit at least three families before the debriefing session. The seventeen teachers attending the first session had visited a total of ninety-three families.

Clustering together by the grade level they teach, the participants met in small groups to share their experiences. Most of the teachers were excited with their initial experiences. Delighted by the warm welcomes, the teachers reported that the families had accepted them into their homes.

For the majority of the families, having their children's teacher in their home was a new experience. Both the teacher and family participants were anxious to make a good and lasting impression.

While a few families and teachers were apprehensive when the visits began, the teachers commented that everyone seemed to relax as the visits continued. It was apparent to the teachers that during the course of the visitation, the participants began to know each other as real people.

A few visits had been rather formal. For the most part, the teachers stated they had experienced a casual and relaxed atmosphere.

After enjoying a cup of coffee, the teachers presented their briefs. One teacher in each of the small groups responded to the agenda questions.

Question One dealt with the teachers' assessments of the worth of the home visitations. Without exception, all of the teachers strongly believed that the home visitations were worthwhile.

Although most of the participants had conducted only three visitations, they believed they had learned a great deal about the children and their families. It was satisfying for them to know that so many of the parents were open and supportive.

Question Two concerned the teachers' perceptions of the parents' assessment of the worth of the home visitations. It was the teachers' perception that the families supported the project. The teachers reported that the families were pleased to have an opportunity to:

1. meet the teachers
2. talk about their children
3. discuss curriculum
4. discuss classroom management
5. discuss discipline
6. discuss home-school communications

Question Three asked the teachers to list two or three types of information they retrieved during the home visitations that they believed would help them to do a better job of preparing for the individual children in the classrooms during the 1974-75 school year.

Three categories of information emerged:

1. Health Factors: A number of parents informed the teachers about the children's physical problems. Other parents were concerned about medical precautions. Types of information were:
 - a. Allergy Problems: Some teachers learned about children's allergies to guinea pigs, rabbits, and gerbils. Obviously, inclusion of these animals in the classroom would cause various degrees of discomfort for these children.
 - b. Medication Needs: Other teachers were told that children would need to have medication at school for problems ranging from headaches to asthma. This information had implications for other school personnel such as administrators, the school nurse, and the physical education instructor.
 - c. Physical Disabilities: In some cases teachers were informed about eyesight and hearing handicaps. The teachers would need to consider these factors when arranging seating charts and audio-visual equipment.
2. Classroom Factors: Several parents told the teachers what kind of classroom management and discipline would work best for their children. Types of information were:
 - a. Classroom Management: Believing their children would work best if there was little movement and noise in the classroom, some parents desired quiet, structured classrooms for their children. Other parents, desirous of more flexible scheduling and freedom, indicated they would prefer classrooms where assignments were individualized.
 - b. Classroom Discipline: The majority of the parents who already had children in the schools seemed satisfied with the discipline in the schools. There were some requests for more stringent discipline practices.

3. Curriculum Factors: Most parents were interested in what was going on in the school rooms. Many parents were interested in knowing more about the curriculum so they could assist their children at home. The three areas where the parents showed the most interest were:

- a. Reading
- b. Arithmetic
- c. Writing Skills

Question Four on the agenda asked the teachers to make some general statements about the families' perceptions of the schools' strengths and/or potential areas of concern. Concurrent with the results from the District Survey of Parents/Guardians, the majority of the participants were pleased with the East Lansing Schools. Many families were appreciative of:

- a. good academic programs--teaching basic skills
- b. good teachers who care
- c. congenial classroom atmosphere
- d. individualized instruction
- e. communications between home and school
- f. small class size--low pupil-teacher ratio
- g. freedom to learn
- h. challenges in the classroom
- i. discipline

Most of the potential areas of concern expressed by the guardians had been expressed by other parents/guardians at open school-community meetings. Some of the concerns dealt with:

- a. discipline
- b. academic standards
- c. communications
- d. lunch programs

- e. overcrowding
- f. emphasis on academics
- g. many changes in the schools

At the conclusion of the session, the consensus of the teacher participants and the staff was that the visitation program was on the right track. It was obvious to everyone at the session that the enthusiasm displayed by the participants was going to be a key factor in maintaining the momentum for the project.

In between the summer debriefing sessions, an update report was prepared for the Superintendent (Appendix K). A similar report was presented by the writer and two teacher participants to the East Lansing School Board.

Just prior to the second debriefing session, the Lansing State Journal printed an article (Appendix L) about the visitation program. This article described the program and highlighted the experiences of two of the participants.

The Second Debriefing Session

In August the writer assembled the participants and the supporting staff to monitor the progress of the project. After meeting in small groups, the teachers reassembled with the support staff. Because the feedback from the small group meetings at this second debriefing session so closely paralleled the feedback from the first debriefing session, the group did not dwell on answering questions listed on the agenda (Appendix M).

Accomplishing the original project objectives, teachers and family participants were getting together and becoming involved. Some of the interactions were:

1. Parents/Guardians were volunteering as aides in the classroom.
2. A few parents/guardians had asked to be used as resource people in the classroom.
3. Several parents/guardians had called teachers at home to ask questions or request additional information.
4. Some family participants had asked teachers to come back again.
5. Many of the teacher and family participants had discussed ways of effectively communicating once school began.

Toward the end of the session, teachers voiced some concern over problems related to the visitations.

Some of the problems were:

1. While original plans called for one hour visitations, the majority of the visitations were lasting between one and one half to two hours.
2. It was difficult to schedule appointments with many of the single parents.
3. Not familiar with middle school or high school programs, some teachers felt uncomfortable answering questions about those schools.
4. Since the final class lists for the two schools located on or near campus (Spartan Village and Red Cedar) were dependent upon fall registration, the teachers at these schools were going to have to continue their visitations in September.
5. In order to have a father present, many of the visitations had to be scheduled for the evening hours. Some of the participants were concerned about the time they had to spend away from their own homes.

Believing a third summer feedback session would not be productive, the teacher participants decided not to meet as a group again until the fall conferences were completed.

After the August debriefing session, teachers continued to visit the remaining families on their class lists. By the end of August, most of the teachers had concluded their visitations.

As a result of the visitations, teacher participants were able to plan for the children they knew they would have in the classrooms in the fall. Having a first hand knowledge of each child, the teacher participants were able to:

1. arrange seating charts.
2. plan for individual differences.
3. key on individual interests.
4. prepare for children with special needs.

Because the children had the opportunity to meet and talk with their teachers before school opened, few were apprehensive about coming to the classroom on the first day of school. Teachers welcomed the students to class and were able to communicate with the children on a first name basis.

As the first month of school passed, teacher and family participants were able to communicate about plans, problems, or concerns. Knowing each other as real people, many participants were not hesitant to call on one another as the need arose.

When it was time for the open house, the teacher participants welcomed the family participants not as strangers, but as friends. For many teachers their open houses were more casual and relaxed. Several parents asked questions about projects that teachers had mentioned during their visitations.

During the time interval between the opening of school and the first parent-teacher conferences, the writer noted the following:

1. Not one family participating in the visitation project requested that their child be moved to another class.
2. Not one parent/guardian called the office about a problem without contacting the teacher first.
3. Parents/guardians called the office to acknowledge their appreciation for their child's teacher.

In late October, the first round of parent-teacher conferences began. Most conferences were finished by the Winter Holiday recess. For most participants, the first conference marked at least their third personal contact during the school year. (The home visit and the open house accounted for the first two contacts.) Teachers and parents/guardians were able to by-pass the usual initial conversations and general introductory questions. In most instances, the participants had time to discuss the details on the evaluation form, as well as other pertinent information.

In September 1974, the Spotlight, an East Lansing School District publication featured an article about the Teacher-Home Visitation Project (Appendix N). The article described the project and the objectives of the summer inservice.

The Follow-Up Session

After the first round of parent-teacher conferences was completed and the teachers and students had moved into the second semester, the teacher participants were called together for a follow-up session in February 1975. At the meeting, each teacher was asked to verbally convey his/her perceptions of the visitation project to the other participants.

Teachers' responses were overwhelmingly positive.

Most of the teachers believed that:

1. They were more comfortable than usual with the children on the first day of school because the teachers had previously met all of the children and had an important talk with them.
2. They were able to prepare the room for the particular needs of their new students.
3. The children were anxious to get to the classroom on the first day.
4. The parents and guardians were warm and friendly during the opening weeks of school.
5. The parents and guardians were more like friends.
6. Knowing the backgrounds of the families made it easier for the teachers to be closer to the families.

7. Because they knew the parents/guardians, their open houses were friendlier and more effective.
8. Conferences were far more effective because they were not meeting the parent/guardians for the first time. Formal introductions and cursory questions were dispensed with and that time was spent discussing the child's evaluation and reporting form.
9. Involvement of many fathers during the home visitations accounted for an increase in the number of fathers attending the parent-teacher conferences.
10. They had developed a good communication system with their parents.
11. Parents/guardians were interested in serving as aides in the classroom and supervisors on field trips.

Teacher participants were asked if they could offer suggestions for improving the project if the project was repeated during the 1975-76 school year. Having cycled through the first project, the participants offered the following suggestions:

1. Revise the tone of the questions the teachers asked the families during the structural portion of the interview. Because some of the questions generated negative responses, the teachers believed the questions should accent the positive.
2. Allow the participants to begin their home visitations before school is out.
3. Reschedule the first round of parent conferences. Since many of the teachers did not finish their home visitations until late August or early September, the teachers believed the parent conferences could be rescheduled to later in the school year. With their present guidelines for conferences, the teachers could schedule their first conferences for December and January, and still have time for a second conference.

At the end of the session, the participants were given drafts of teachers and family participant forms for

evaluating the home visitation project (Appendix O and P) and asked to critique the questions.

When the teachers returned the participant evaluation forms, the writer revised the forms as per the teachers' suggestions. An envelope containing a cover letter (Appendix P) an evaluation form, and a preaddressed, stamped envelope was hand carried home by each child in the room of the teacher participants. The data gathered from the evaluation forms is documented in Chapter IV.

CHAPTER IV

AN EVALUATION OF THE HOME VISITATION PROJECT

As indicated on the Data Collection Process Schematic on page twelve in Chapter I, there were three phases in the collection of data during the visitation project. Phase I was completed when the teacher participants finished their home visitations and returned their questionnaires (Appendix D and G).

Designed to retrieve information the teachers would find useful in enhancing home-school relations, the first set of questions were not evaluative in design. Summaries of the data assimilated from this set of questionnaires will be presented in this chapter to illustrate the kinds of information a teacher may retrieve for use in the classroom. This type of information has implications for school district-home relations as well.

Informal, but important, useful information was shared by the participants during Phase II, the debriefing sessions. A summary of the debriefing sessions was presented in Chapter III.

Phase III was concluded when the family participants returned their evaluation forms. It is important for the reader to know that the data in this chapter will be used to evaluate the home-visitation project on a system wide basis. Therefore, the reader will not find any direct quotes or specific data that could be identified with any particular student, family, school personnel, or any particular school.

It is the writer's intent to use this chapter to evaluate the Home Visitation Project as one school district's attempt to enhance home-school relations.

Data Analysis Procedures

Teacher participant questionnaires and Teacher-family evaluation forms were key punched for computer analysis. All the individual responses were sorted into similar responses to specific questions. Percentile charts will be used to illustrate the number of participants with similar responses.

The Teacher Home Visitation Project Questionnaire--Data Analysis Phase I

When the teachers completed each home visitation they recorded their perceptions of the families' responses to a number of short and open ended questions (Appendix D). Section I consisted of eight short answer questions. Questions and response tables follow:

Question One:

Is your child happy to go to school--that is, does he/she go because he/she wants to or simply because he/she is required to?

- a. wants to go
- b. goes because it is required
- c. no opinion

Table 2.--Responses to Question One.

	Goes because							
	Wants to go		It is required		No opinion		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Total	248	99.20	1	0.40	1	0.40	250	100

Question Two:

Can anything be done by the school to increase your child's interest in going to school?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Table 3.--Responses to Question Two.

	Yes		No		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Total	57	25.44	167	74.55	224	100

Question Three:

In the schools in our community, do you think too many educational changes are being tried, or not enough?

- a. too many
- b. not enough
- c. just about right
- d. don't know

Table 4.--Responses to Question Three.

	<u>Too Many</u>		<u>Not enough</u>		<u>Just About right</u>		<u>Don't know</u>		<u>Total</u>	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Total	11	4.56	8	3.31	195	80.91	27	11.20	241	100

Question Four:

Some people say that if the schools and the teachers interest the children in learning, most disciplinary problems disappear. Do you agree or disagree?

- a. agree
- b. disagree

Table 5.--Responses to Question Four.

	<u>Agree</u>		<u>Disagree</u>		<u>Total</u>	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Total	180	78.69	50	21.31	230	100

Question Five:

As you look at your child's elementary school education, is it your impression that the child today gets a better or worst education than you did?

- a. better
- b. worse
- c. about the same

Table 6.--Responses to Question Five.

	<u>Better</u>		<u>Worse</u>		<u>About the Same</u>		<u>Total</u>	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Total	202	80.47	11	4.38	38	15.13	251	100

Question Six:

Do you think your child is learning the things you believe he/she should be learning?

- a. yes
- b. no
- c. don't know

Table 7.--Responses to Question Six.

	<u>Yes</u>		<u>No</u>		<u>Don't know</u>		<u>Total</u>	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Total	220	89.43	17	6.91	9	3.65	246	100

Question Seven:

A suggestion has been made that parents of school children have the opportunity to attend one evening class a month to find out what they can do at home to improve their children's behavior and interest in school work. Would you be interested in attending such a class?

- a. interested
- b. not interested

Table 8.--Responses to Question Seven.

	<u>Interested</u>		<u>Not Interested</u>		<u>Total</u>	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Total	213	89.12	26	10.88	239	100

Question Eight:

How important are schools to one's future success?

- a. extremely
- b. fairly
- c. not too important

Table 9.--Responses to Question Eight.

	<u>Extremely</u>		<u>Fairly</u>		<u>Not too Important</u>		<u>Total</u>	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Total	186	77.17	51	21.16	4	1.65	241	100

Section II of the questionnaire consisted of five open ended questions. Questions and response tables follow:

Question One:

What are the things that would make you decide that a school is a good school?*

Table 10.--Responses to Question One.

	Individual- ization	Congenial atmosphere (child happy & learning	Communi- cation between home & school	Provides for child's social & emotional growth	Good academic program- teaching basic skills
	N	N	N	N	N
Total	45	73	23	14	102

	Teachers (good teachers- teachers who care	Class size (low pupil- teacher ratio)	Equipment & materials	Other freedom structures challenge discipline, etc.	Total
	N	N	N	N	N
Total	80	13	19	51	420

*The total across does not refer to total responses because many of the respondents listed several alternatives.

Question Two:

In what respect are the local schools "not so good"?

Table 11.--Responses to Question Two.

	<u>Discipline</u>		<u>Low academic standards-- poor academic program</u>		<u>Poor Communi- cations</u>		<u>Lunch program</u>		<u>Over-Crowded</u>	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Total	30	13.99	31	14.35	35	16.20	21	9.70	15	6.90
	<u>Too much emphasis on academic</u>		<u>Schools are great</u>		<u>Other--too many changes no opinion etc.</u>		<u>Total</u>			
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
Total	13	6.00	38	17.59	33	15.28	216		100	

Question Three:

How do you feel about the discipline in the school your child attends?

Table 12.--Responses to Question Three.

	<u>Positive</u>		<u>Negative</u>		<u>Neutral</u>		<u>Don't Know</u>		<u>Total</u>	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Total	179	78.17	27	11.79	19	8.30	4	1.75	229	100

Question Four:

What do you believe are the biggest problems in the school your child attends?

Table 13.--Responses to Question Four.

	<u>Over-crowded</u>		<u>Lunch program</u>		<u>Discipline</u>		<u>Curriculum</u>		<u>No big problems</u>	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Total	12	4.80	19	7.60	19	7.60	19	7.60	140	56.00
	<u>School organization</u>		<u>Communication</u>		<u>Other</u>		<u>Total</u>			
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
Total	15	6.00	21	8.40	5	2.00	250		100	

Question Five:

People have different reasons why they want their children to get an education. What are the primary reasons that come to your mind?

Table 14.--Responses to Question Five.

	<u>Learn to get along with others</u>		<u>Learn basic skills</u>		<u>Develop as indivi- duals (pre- pare for future)</u>		<u>Prepara- tion for earning a living & getting a job</u>	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Total	20	8.76	99	40.91	66	27.27	41	16.94
	<u>Critical thinking problem solving</u>		<u>To be better off than I</u>		<u>Total</u>			
	N	%	N	%	N		%	
Total	11	4.55	5	2.07	242		100	

At the end of the visitations, the teachers gave the family participants an index card listing nine educational programs (Appendix G). The following directions were printed on the card:

Please put the number 1, 2, or 3 beside three of the following you would like your child's elementary school (K-3) to give more attention to. The number one will indicate that you think this is the most important, two will indicate the second most important and the number three will indicate you think this is the third most important. It is not necessary to mark more than three.

Table 15 illustrates the parent/guardian responses. The number and corresponding percentile next to each program indicates how many parents/guardians listed that particular program as number one, number two, or number three.

The Teacher-Home Visitation Project
Evaluation Data Analysis
Phase III

Family Participant Evaluation

Three hundred fifty eight families were involved in the teacher home visitation project. During the course of the 1974-75 school year 47 of the families left the district. Of the 311 remaining families 209 returned completed Home-Visitation Evaluation forms. To encourage family participants to return their evaluation forms, a follow-up letter was sent to the homes of the participants on May 1, 1975.

Data Analysis Procedures

The forms were key punched for computer analysis. The first fourteen questions could be answered with either a yes, no, or a neutral response. In addition, on some of the questions, the respondents were asked to elaborate their responses. The lead statement, related questions and families responses follow:

The primary objective of this past summer's Home Visitation Project was to enhance home-school relations.

Table 15.--Responses to Question Six.

Education Program	1		2		3		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Testing students skills of reading, writing, and arithmetic	103	57	52	29	26	14	181	100
Teaching students how to solve problems and think for themselves	99	47	86	41	26	12	211	100
Teaching students respect for law and authority	17	26	27	42	21	32	65	100
Teaching students how to get along with others	39	26	48	32	61	41	148	100
Teaching students skills of speaking and listening	18	15	46	38	58	48	122	100
Teaching students vocational skills	5	20	5	20	15	60	25	100
Teaching students health and physical education	5	15	15	45	13	39	33	100
Teaching students about the world yesterday and today	6	14	16	37	21	49	43	100
Teaching students how to compete with others	1	3	5	16	26	81	32	100

We are interested in knowing whether or not you believe we accomplished this objective. As a result of the Home Visitation Project:

Question One:

Do you believe you know your child's teacher as a "human being"? If so, please elaborate.

Table 16.--Responses to Question One.

Yes		No		Neutral		Total	
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
189	92.65	12	5.88	3	1.47	204	100

Sample comments included:

She is very interesting and enjoyable to talk with and I have really enjoyed her. She is not only a top notch teacher but also a fine person.

Yes, because she knew how to share in a one-to-one relationship.

No, because the teacher really didn't talk to the parents. She talked to our child most of the time she was here.

Yes, I think we were able to meet in an informal setting where each of us were to exchange ideas.

One visit certainly cannot accomplish this objective. However, I definitely feel that home visitations very strongly contributed to the development of a friendly relationship between my child's teacher and my husband and I as parents. In fact, I would rate it as one of the largest contributing factors to the establishment of a home-school relationship.

Question Two:

Did you have an opportunity to discuss classroom management? If so, please elaborate.

Table 17.--Responses to Question Two.

<u>Yes</u>		<u>No</u>		<u>Neutral</u>		<u>Other</u>		<u>Total</u>	
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
161	80.50	37	18.50	1	.50	1	.50	200	100

Sample comments included:

Yes, we discussed what our daughter had been exposed to in the past, and what the teacher planned to do this year.

Yes, we were anxious to learn how structured the classroom would be, and she gave us her philosophy on why she had it set up as she does.

Basically, but not in detail.

Yes. She explained her daily routine and methods of teaching different subjects.

Question Three:

Did you have an opportunity to discuss school curriculum? If so, please elaborate.

Table 18.--Responses to Question Three.

<u>Yes</u>		<u>No</u>		<u>Neutral</u>		<u>Total</u>	
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
174	85.29	29	14.22	1	.49	204	100

Sample comments were:

Yes, especially in the areas of extra activities.

Yes, we did discuss classroom management with her. I suggested to her the kind of management my child could best handle, and was glad to know that there would be variety and movement involved in team teaching.

Yes. We went through material and objectives the teacher would use, and discussed what she hoped to accomplish.

Yes. This came up in relation to our questions about current trends.

Question Four:

Did you have an opportunity to discuss discipline?
If so, please elaborate.

Table 19.--Responses to Question Four.

Yes		No		Neutral		Total	
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
146	73.00	53	26.50	1	.50	200	100

Sample comments were:

Yes, she gave me a brief overview of her methods of dealing with discipline problems.

Yes, we discussed problems my own child has and how she could best handle them.

Yes, we discussed our philosophy of discipline with the teacher. We both agreed that each youngster must realize that he is responsible for his own actions and their consequences.

Question Five:

Were you uncomfortable with any of the questions the teacher asked?

Table 20.--Responses to Question Five.

Yes		No		Other		Total	
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
6	2.94	197	96.57	1	.49	204	100

Sample comments included:

No. It was a very easy and comfortable situation.

No--the questions were obviously intended to benefit our child.

No. I'm sure it is helpful for a teacher to see the child in a different light.

Question Six:

Did you have an opportunity to ask the teacher the kinds of questions about school that you wanted to ask, and did you feel comfortable doing so?

Table 21.--Responses to Question Six.

Yes		No		Total	
N	%	N	%	N	%
191	95.02	10	4.98	201	100

Sample comments included:

At the time I felt we asked all the questions that seemed important to us with little reservations to do so.

Yes, and I felt comfortable during the process.

Yes, very definitely. I think both my husband and I felt more relaxed in the atmosphere of our own home, than we did at school.

Question Seven:

Have you had more communications with your child's teacher?

Table 22.--Responses to Question Seven.

Yes		No		Neutral		Other		Total	
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
172	87.31	22	11.17	2	1.02	1	.51	197	100

Sample comments:

Yes, at conferences and through weekly newsletters.

Yes. I've observed and helped on classroom projects and as a volunteer.

Yes. We talk on the phone every few weeks, and there have been room suppers and other school activities to attend which gives us an opportunity to communicate more often.

No--only at Open House, conferences and room parties, which I would have done anyway.

Question Eight:

Have you felt free to visit your child's classroom more often than you have in the past?

Table 23.--Responses to Question Eight.

Yes		No		Neutral		Other		Total	
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
127	65.46	58	29.90	5	2.58	4	2.06	194	100

Sample comments included:

That's never been a problem.

We have felt more free to visit than we would have without the home visit.

I have not done so, but previous contact with the teacher made me feel that had I wanted to visit her class, I would be welcome.

Yes, but I still contend that each teacher makes you feel differently.

Question Nine:

Do you believe your child was less apprehensive about starting school this year than he/she has been in the past?

Table 24.--Responses to Question Nine.

Yes		No		Neutral		Total	
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
122	65.24	63	33.69	2	1.07	187	100

Sample comments were:

Yes--by meeting the teacher beforehand, our child was looking forward to the first day of school.

Difficult to say as she has always been eager about school.

The visit made him more comfortable since he knew what his teacher would be like ahead of time.

Question Ten

If this child is not your first to enter kindergarten, do you believe that the home visit made the transition from home to kindergarten easier than it was with your older child/children?

Table 25.--Responses to Question Ten.

Yes		No		Neutral		Other		Total	
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
57	81.43	10	14.29	1	1.43	2	2.86	70	100

Sample comments included:

Absolutely! I believe the visit was helpful in many ways in bridging the gap between home and school.

Yes. We had a problem with our older child, but because of the home visit our kindergartener has adjusted beautifully.

Yes--especially since we are new to the town and the school system.

Definitely, yes!

Question Eleven:

Do you believe you are more familiar with the school curriculum than you would have been in the past?

Table 26.--Responses to Question Eleven.

Yes		No		Neutral		Total	
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
125	67.89	51	26.84	10	5.26	190	100

Sample comments were:

Yes, the fall group meetings for the parents in the classroom meant more to us after the home visitation.

Yes, we discussed performance objectives for this school year.

Yes, somewhat more familiar with it.

No. I believe I was as well informed through the years.

Question Twelve:

Would you like your child's teacher to continue to visit your home during the school year?

Table 27.--Responses to Question Twelve.

Yes		No		Neutral		Total	
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
128	62.14	66	32.04	12	5.83	206	100

Sample comments included:

Emphatically yes!

Only if she felt it was necessary.

Yes, I feel it gives us more time and privacy to discuss things in a more relaxed atmosphere.

I'm sure the children would enjoy it.

Question Thirteen:

Were there any parts of the home visitation that you did not like?

Table 28.--Responses to Question Thirteen.

Yes		No		Total	
N	%	N	%	N	%
17	8.67	179	91.33	196	100

Sample comments were:

I think it was a good program, I didn't dislike any part of it.

Since it is hard for a parent with younger children at home to attend school conferences, why not have more home conferences?

No, but I wish the program had started one year earlier.

Yes, I wasn't prepared to answer questions about discipline and curriculum.

Question Fourteen

If a similar home visitation program is funded for the 1975-76 school year, and your child's teacher elects to participate, would you be interested in being included in the program?

Table 29.--Responses to Question Fourteen.

Yes		No		Neutral		Total	
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
174	84.88	28	13.66	3	1.46	205	100

Sample comments were:

I would like it very much!

Yes, if these funds do not detract from other funds for instance, such as those set aside for textbooks.

Yes, we felt it established a good relationship between our home and our child's teacher.

No, save your money!

Question Fifteen:

If we do fund a similar program for next year, what suggestions do you have for improving the project?

Table 30.--Responses to Question Fifteen.

Have Suggestions		No Suggestions		No Responses		Total	
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
69	33.82	47	23.03	88	43.15	204	100

Sample suggestions included:

Be prepared to inform the families of more details on what the teacher has planned for the year.

Make plans for appointments earlier in the summer.

Don't fund it; East Lansing education is already too costly.

Teachers having returning students shouldn't visit the homes of those students.

All new students to the school should be visited by the teachers

In the past we've had teacher visits without "funds."

Find a less expensive way of reaching the same goals.

I feel the program is more worthwhile to kindergarten and first grade children and parents.

No additional suggestions--we felt it was successful for us on the whole, that is.

At the end of the questionnaire, the family participants were asked for additional comments. Samples of these comments included:

I think this is a fantastic project which enables each child to feel that he is seen by his teacher as an individual. For our child, the home visit was an invaluable experience and we thank the East Lansing Public Schools.

I felt this program did much to enhance relationships between parents, teachers, and students.

One advantage of the program is that it may involve fathers in school matters sooner and more deeply than many of them have been in previous years.

I think this program made teacher/parent contact easier, and must have made parent involvement in the classroom more accessible.

We feel the home visitation project is excellent. The child feels more secure about going to school and has less anxieties about the whole experience.

I think it is an excellent program and a good idea, but it should not be "funded"--why not include it as part of the regular teacher responsibility?

My child was thrilled to have her teacher come to her house. I feel it makes a big impression on the children, and knowing the parents are working with the teachers helps the children.

We feel the home visitation program is worthwhile in that it starts the child-teacher relationship off on a more personal footing than an initial classroom meeting can. In the child's home, the child is in a comfortable environment, and the teacher can observe this environment and probably gain insight into the child's individuality.

This program is helpful to the student as well as the teacher, since she can evaluate the child better through some home-life understanding.

I was delighted when I heard of this program last summer and have been pleased with the results.

The only improvement I might suggest is for the teacher to include the other children besides the child that she is going to have in her class, so they don't feel "left out." This way the teacher could observe the entire family environment.

I feel the money spent for the Home Visitation could be used in other areas, and that the funding for this project should be low on the priority list.

Summary of the Family Participants'
Evaluation of the Teacher-Home
Visitation Project

The goal of the Home Visitation Project was to enhance home-school relationships. Responses from the family participants indicated that the project did indeed enhance home-school relations.

As a result of their participation in the project, the participants did have an opportunity to:

1. Have the teacher visit with them in their homes.
2. Come to know each other as professionals and friends.
3. Discuss classroom management, discipline, and curriculum.
4. Discuss how to improve oral and written communications.
5. Learn how they could support each other.
6. Decide how they could join together in the education of the children.

Teacher Participant Evaluation

When the teachers were given the Family Participant Evaluation Forms, they were also provided with a

Teacher Participant Evaluation Form. Seventeen of the participating teachers returned their completed forms.

Data Analysis

Since there were only seventeen forms to analyze, the forms were not key punched for analysis. Responses were totaled and reported in percentile tables. Individualized teacher comments were summarized.

The lead statement on the Teacher Participant Evaluation Forms, the questions, and the related tables are as follows:

The primary objective of this past summer's Home Visitation Project was to enhance home-school relations. We are interested in knowing whether or not you believe we accomplished this objective. As a result of the Home Visitation Project:

Question One:

Do you believe you are acquainted with the students' families?

Table 31.--Responses to Question One.

<u>Yes</u>		<u>No</u>		<u>Total</u>	
<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
17	100	0	0.00	17	100

As noted in Table 31, all the teacher participants believe they were acquainted with the families of the children in their classrooms. Several teachers mentioned that they were on a first name basis with several of their

parents. Being familiar with the home environment of their students, some of the teacher participants said they were more comfortable in working with parents.

Question Two:

Did you have an opportunity to discuss classroom management and curriculum?

Table 32.--Responses to Question Two.

Yes		No		In most Instances		Total	
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
11	65.00	1	6.00	5	29.00	17	100

Many teachers mentioned that just knowing what the parents expected in the way of discipline was helpful in managing the children in the classroom.

Some teachers noted that many parents made specific recommendations to them on the best way to handle their children. In several cases, teachers believed visitation discussions with parents had headed off potential problems in class.

In some cases, teachers noted that they not only discussed the curriculum, but offered suggestions as to how the parents could become involved in the education of their child. Interested in their child's school experience, many parents had specific questions about the basic classes--reading, writing, and arithmetic.

Question Three:

Did you have an opportunity to ask the parents or guardians the kinds of questions you believed would be helpful in preparing your class for the first term?

Table 33.--Responses to Question Three.

Yes		No		In most Instances		Total	
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
13	76.00	0	0.00	4	24.00	17	100

Several teachers believed this was the most significant portion of the visitation. Answers to these questions provided many teachers with insights to children with special problems where additional help, guidance, and patience might be needed. In addition, many teachers reported that the responses to the question provided them with information concerning individual children's strengths and/or weaknesses, health or physical problems, as well as the children's special areas of interest.

Question Four:

Have you felt freer to telephone the students' parents or guardians with problems and/or concerns?

Table 34.--Responses to Question Four.

Yes		No		Total	
N	%	N	%	N	%
17	100	0	0.00	17	100

Without exception, all of the teacher participants stated a freer exchange of telephone calls. Several teachers noted that they had initiated many calls asking for help from the parents/guardians. While many teachers said they had made many calls prior to the first conference, they still felt freer later in the year to contact homes.

Question Five:

Have you revisited any of the homes of the children in your classroom?

Table 35.--Responses to Question Five.

Yes		No		Total	
N	%	N	%	N	%
14	82.00	3	18.00	17	100

Three of the teacher conducted all of their fall conferences in the homes they visited during the visitation project. Many of the other teachers were back in the homes responding to lunch and dinner invitations. Several of the teachers had been back in the homes to discuss problems and strategies.

Question Six:

Have you had more opportunities for written communications with the parents or guardians?

Table 36.--Responses to Question Six.

Yes		No		About the same		Total	
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
12	71.00	4	24.00	1	6.00	17	100

As a result of the visitation project several teachers thought they received more written communications from parents and guardians this year. Three of the teachers gave a negative response to this question and clarified the response by stating that they were far more likely to call on the telephone, rather than chance a written communication.

Question Seven:

Do you believe the children in your classroom were less apprehensive about starting school this year?

Table 37.--Responses to Question Seven.

Yes		No		Total	
N	%	N	%	N	%
17	100	0	0.00	17	100

All of the teachers agreed that the children in their classrooms were less apprehensive during the first few days of school. Many teacher participants attributed the relaxed atmosphere to the fact that all the children

not only knew who their teacher was going to be before school opened, but had actually spent time with the teacher during the home visitation.

Question Eight:

Do you believe you have had fewer discipline problems in your classroom this year?

Table 38.--Responses to Question Eight.

Yes		No		About the same		Total	
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
6	35.00	7	41.00	4	24.00	17	100

Because there were so many variables in determining the behavior patterns in any classroom, none of the teacher participants attributed the increase or decrease in discipline problems to the visitation project. Several teachers did say, however, that home visitations did prepare them for the problems and they were able to deal more effectively with the problems when they occurred.

Question Nine:

Do you believe the children in your classroom have demonstrated a more positive attitude toward school this year?

Table 39.--Responses to Question Nine.

Yes		No		Total	
N	%	N	%	N	%
14	82.00	3	18.00	17	100

While many of the teacher participants indicated that their children had demonstrated a more positive attitude toward school this year, they also stated they believed that a positive attitude toward school is something that is developed and nurtured over a course of years. Those teachers who responded with a resounding "yes," thought that the home visitations had set the stage for a positive school experience for the children. Half of the teachers who gave negative responses to the question did state that while the children's attitude toward school wasn't any more positive, their parents' attitude was definitely more positive than it had been.

Question Ten:

Were you able to structure your classroom to meet the individual needs of the students when they entered school? If so, cite some examples:

Table 40.--Responses to Question Ten.

Yes		No		Total	
N	%	N	%	N	%
15	88.00	2	12.00	17	100

Some of the examples cited by teachers of the ways they were able to structure their classrooms to meet the needs of their students when they entered school included:

1. Manipulating devices and games for assisting children with fine motor control were placed throughout the classroom.
2. Skill cards, games, and specific reading skill development books were purchased for children with individual reading problems.
3. Seating plans were no longer guess work--avoided initial discipline problems.
4. Specific activities were initiated for a class especially interested in music.
5. Knowing a medical problem existed, proper testing was immediately initiated.
6. Conferences were scheduled at realistic times for working parents/guardians.
7. Specific provisions were made for children who preferred languages.
8. Reading programs were adjusted to meet the needs of kindergarten and first grade students who were all ready reading at an advanced level.

Question Eleven:

Were you able to recruit more parent volunteers than you have in the past?

Table 41.--Responses to Question Eleven.

Yes		No		About the same		Total	
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
10	59.00	3	18.00	4	24.00	17	100

In most of the schools, the parent volunteers are recruited by the parent director. Acting as a coordinator, the parent director usually fills the needs for assistance expressed by a teacher. Several teacher participants did indicate an increased parent/guardian interest in helping in the classroom with tutoring, field trip supervision, and clerical assistance.

Question Twelve:

Were you able to incorporate the parents or guardians in the learning processes of your classroom? If so, could you cite some examples:

Table 42.--Responses to Question Twelve.

Yes		No		Total	
N	%	N	%	N	%
13	76.00	4	24.00	17	100

Examples of parent participation in the learning processes in the classroom included the following:

1. A lesson in art was taught by one of the fathers who is a talented cartoonist.
2. Parents joined social studies classes to share personal artifacts with the children.
3. Musically gifted parents assisted with music lessons.
4. Parents with academic specialties have served as tutors in the classroom.
5. Several parents were in the classroom to share their interests and hobbies with the children.

6. On a regular basis, as "Parents of the Week," many families were invited to the classroom to talk about their jobs, their backgrounds, and their special interests.
7. On special holidays, parents have shared their beliefs and customs with the children.
8. Professors from the University have served as resource specialists for the teachers, i.e., one father, a geologist from M.S.U., taught a class about volcanoes and dinosaurs.
9. Parents with close ties from a foreign country have lectured classes about the background and customs of those countries.
10. Learning Centers have been manned by parent volunteers.
11. Parents and guardians have taught classes in foreign languages.

Summary of the Teacher Participants'
Evaluation of the Teacher-Home
Visitation Project

One of the primary objectives of the Home Visitation Project was to provide the teachers and family participants with an opportunity to become acquainted and to learn about each other before the school year began. The responses from the teacher participants indicate that the teachers did accomplish this objective.

Most of the teachers believe that the home visitations served as a cornerstone for a teacher-parent/guardian relationship that continued to grow as the school year progressed.

For the teachers, the visitation project did not end in August. They were able to effectively prepare for their classes in the fall, communicate more freely with

parents, plan more effective open houses and parent conferences, and incorporate many of the parents into the learning process in their classrooms. All the teachers had indicated a desire to participate in the project again if one is funded for the 1975-76 school year.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this dissertation was to describe a school district's attempt to enhance home-school relations. Teachers and administrators in the district expressed a need to know and understand what changes were occurring in their schools. The changing population reflected:

1. More single parents
2. More stratified economic base
3. Greater incidence of step-parents
4. More working mothers
5. More diversified housing
6. More non-English speaking children

After a series of organization meetings, twenty elementary teachers (K-3) made plans to visit the homes of the families with the children they would have in their classrooms during the 1974-75 school year.

The purpose of the project was:

1. To reach out to the families and let them know teachers were interested in them as people.
2. To provide teachers with an opportunity to find out what goals the families had established for their children.

3. To build a communication bridge between school and home.
4. To gather data that would:
 - a. Enable teachers to know the children as individuals before school began and make necessary modifications in the classroom
 - b. Enable the teachers to incorporate the family in the education process.

After the teachers had participated in a mini course in developing effective interview techniques, they were given advance class lists and time to make contact with families for the visitations.

During the summer, teacher participants met to discuss their experiences. At the debriefing sessions, teachers discussed:

1. The teachers' perception of the worth of the visitation.
2. The teachers' assessment of the parents' assessment of the worth of the home visitation.
3. The kind of information they received that would be helpful in preparing for the school year.
4. The teachers' assessment of the parents' perceptions of the strengths of the schools and possible areas of concern with the schools.

Prior to the opening day of school, the teacher participants used the information they had gained during the visitations to organize their classrooms to meet the needs of their students.

During the course of the school year, the project continued to benefit teachers and families. Knowing the individual families as friends, teachers were able to

organize more meaningful open houses in September.

Because most participants continued to communicate during the fall term, the first round of parent conferences were more significant to both parents and teachers.

In late February teachers met for a few debriefing sessions. Evaluation forms were critiqued and discussed with the participants. These evaluations clearly indicated that teachers and families profited by the visitation experience. Responses on the evaluation provided the necessary documentation to illustrate that the Teacher-Home Visitation Project did enhance the home-school relations in the district.

Implications for Teacher Education

Prior to their experiences with the Teacher-Home Visitation Project, only three of the teacher participants had used home visitations on a regular basis as a means of communicating with their parents. Before all of the participants conducted their home visitations, they requested a mini inservice in effective interview techniques. Clearly, there existed a hiatus in their preparation of course work. Teacher educators may wish to explore the development of a school community involvement course for teachers.

Trinity College and the Home and School Institute in Washington, D.C. offers a graduate course entitled:

School and Parent Community Involvement. Ten competency-keyed objectives are listed for the course:

1. The participants will learn of the current research findings and news of the scene in child care and the impact of the home and community in education.
2. The participants will learn how to help parents become more effective teachers of their children at home, using home materials and home abilities so that these children will have stronger self-esteem and a better chance to succeed in school. The participants will have a real practice in developing home-teaching activities that supplement and reinforce the work of the school.
3. The participants will learn about ways to involve parents and community in the work of the school, including ways to communicate more effectively in conferences, newsletters, meetings.
4. The participants will find out about resources in the national and local area that can provide materials and people to help their school.
5. The participants will find out what other schools and national programs are doing: including Home Start, Head Start, Follow-Through, Right to Read, etc.
6. The participants will, through fieldwork disseminate the program's approach and materials to colleagues, parents, etc., and in training for paraprofessionals and volunteers.
7. The participants will receive problem solving training for home-school-community conflict situations.
8. The participants will take part in readings and evaluations of materials in the emerging field on home/school/community involvement, learning about citizen involvement in education, theoretical and practical, touching on past with emphasis on present.
9. Participants will learn techniques for helping parents and community leaders in school-community decision making and the how-to's of system evaluation of personnel and school programs.

10. Participants will learn the how-to's of follow up, of dissemination of the school-community approach and the career implications of this new professional field in education.⁷³

Characteristics of the HSI/Trinity Program include:

1. An innovative use of the school to build an education for children that ties together school-home-community experiences, including but also going beyond traditional school public relations into ways to bridge the educational gap between the institutions and to tap the educational resources outside the classroom.
2. Practical experience in school-community and product/plans development are major components in the training programs, regardless of their time duration.
3. A team approach which brings together school personnel, teachers and administrators, parents and school aides.
4. Development of specific, needed competencies in school-community work.
5. Major emphasis on work with inservice educators, these already on the job who will be staying on the job and who realize needs in school-community.
6. Providing this school-community approach for educators in the "regular" school years, not just in the preschool, where work with parents has been traditionally accepted.⁷⁴

Universities and colleges have the resources to offer off-campus courses to teachers in the field who wish to hone their communication skills and to improve home-school relations.

⁷³Trinity College M.A.T. Program and the Home and School Institute, Washington, D.C., 1974-75.

⁷⁴Ibid.

Implications for Professional
Workshops

School administrators, as well as teachers, should be encouraged to make home visitations. As the key professional responsible for curriculum, classroom management, discipline policies and decisions, these school officials need to know the family constituents in the community. Home Visitations could provide school principals, curriculum directors, and district superintendents with a convenient vehicle for enhancing relations with their school clientele.

It is not uncommon for most school districts to fund some kind of in-service training for their teachers and administrators. These in-service projects often deal with the teaching of mathematics, reading, writing skills, and science. Seldom involving anyone except professional staff, these workshops may help teachers to be more knowledgeable about content courses. The educators in subject matter workshops may emerge better prepared to teach a course, but they are not better equipped to deal with their children or the parents of their children.

As stated earlier in the dissertation, other school districts may wish to use the East Lansing School District Teacher-Home Visitation Project model in their own district. Before initiating their own projects, those responsible for in-service coordination will be well advised to note the following cautions:

1. It is important to remember that the thrust for the Teacher-Home Visitation Project was from the teachers up to the administration. After the teachers established the need for such a project, the teachers and administrators worked together to plan the project. Much of the success of the project stemmed from the enthusiasm and interest displayed by the teacher participants. An edict issued by an administration to the teachers to carry out such a project, without teacher input, could produce a disastrous effect.
2. Determine the need first. Survey the teachers and administrators to search the scope of the home-school relations problems.
3. Enlist the aid of an outside consultant. Experienced personnel can save planners hours of valuable time. An outside advisor can see the total problem without being encapsulated by internal problems.
4. Let the teachers determine the best approach to the problem. If a home visitation project is the obvious solution, teachers must have ownership with the project. To take such a professional risk, the teacher participants must believe in the need for the project.
5. Once the decision is made to go ahead with a home visitation project, let the teachers decide which teachers will participate. If staffs are paid for their inservice participation, the total monies available will restrict the number of participants. Additional strictures may be implemented by restricting the grade level involved.
6. Keep all the elementary teachers informed. Non-participating teachers will eventually have to answer questions about the project. Internal problems can be avoided by bringing all the staff along as the project develops.
7. When merchandising the project to the public, do not attempt to capitalize on the public relations aspect of the project. The primary goal of a home visitation is to help the children. Improved public relations will be an added positive spin-off of the project.

8. Determine in advance how the project will be evaluated. The evaluation of a visitation project can be more effective if evaluation forms can be left with the families at the time of the visitation.

Adopting a format of the project described in this study, other school districts could use teacher-home visitations to allow teachers to:

1. Tutor children on a one-to-one basis.
2. Tutor families in specific skill areas.
3. Plan with families for better home-school communications.
4. Plan and operate a system for involving the parents/guardians in the daily instructions of the children.
5. Organize family volunteers in the classroom.

When school personnel are willing to set aside traditional modes of building school district and/or school budgets, monies may all ready be available for home visitation projects. One rewarding experience a principal and his staff may have is to plan for the next school year using the total monies allocated to the building as the umbrella structure and consider new ways of expending the funds. If workshops such as the Teacher-Home Visitation Project are deemed sufficiently important, often trade-offs in textbooks, instructional supplies, and audio-visual or even personnel can be made to free up monies.

If school districts are committed to enhancing home-school relations, the time, monies, and personnel may be found to support projects that will permit teachers and families with opportunities to interact and learn with each other. Elementary school educators and parents are just

beginning to form a new home-school partnership in the business of educating children. Teacher-home visitation projects are one means of initiating such a partnership.

Recommendations for East Lansing
School District Workshops

In order to continue to enhance home-school relations, elementary teachers should request staff development funds to continue the Teacher-Home Visitation Workshop. The design of the 1975-76 Workshop should:

1. Follow a format similar to the 1974-75 workshop.
2. Allow a new group of teachers to participate in the workshop.
3. Allow teachers from the 1974-75 workshop to repeat the experience again in the 1975-76 only if monies are available from their respective school budgets or from Title I funds.
4. Allow participating teachers to use their own discretion concerning the use of the short and open ended questions.
5. Permit the teachers and family participants to evaluate the workshop no later than November 1975.

The 1975-76 Home Visitation Workshop should be expanded to include the school administrators. In place of the traditional administrative inservice program after school has been dismissed, the twenty-six school administrators could visit families of school age children in the district. The design of the workshop for administrators should:

1. Allow each administrator to visit a minimum of nine families.

2. Permit the administrators the opportunity to share their experiences and evaluate the project.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

PROPOSAL FOR STAFF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

SUMMER 1974

APPENDIX A

PROPOSAL FOR STAFF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM SUMMER 1974

MEMO

To: Dr. Docking
Fr: Dallas Wegener
Sj: Proposal for staff development program - summer 1974

Please consider this communique a formal proposal for staff development for a selected number of elementary school teachers during the 1974-75 school year.

Background of Proposal

As the elementary principals reviewed their priorities for the 1974-75 school year, a common concern surfaced; the principals are experiencing significant changes in the school clientele they are servicing. A number of elementary teachers have reiterated similar concerns.

The changes in the clientele noted by staff members include the following:

1. More single parents.
2. More stratified economic population particularly more minority (and economic separation family).
3. More working mothers.
4. More incidence of step-parents.
5. More non-English speaking children.

In addition, some staff have observed that fewer children in the class are conformist. In contrast to many

children who used to sit in highly structured classrooms, many children today expect to be entertained in class.

Proposal

Members of the staff have identified a number of behavioral indicators which have been associated with their new student clients. Most of these indicators have been judged to be detrimental to effective classroom management. These behavioral indicators include:

1. More interest in violence.
2. More personal insecurity.
3. More emotional loads.
4. More use of "bad" language
5. Lack of sensitivity toward others
6. Lack of empathy
7. Lack of mutual trust
8. Lack of respect for authority
9. Lack of respect for elders
10. Lack of self discipline
11. Lack of immediate gratification
12. Lack of long range goals

Staff Development Program - Process

1. Identify a cadre of teachers (at least ten, but not more than 15) who are willing to go to the parents of the new clients for the purpose of developing a better understanding of their perceptions and expectations of educators, the schools, and classroom management.
2. Prior to the time the selected cadre of teachers interview the parents in an informal context, the teachers will be taught proper, effective interview techniques.

Interview Approach

1. Interview by a teacher will be restricted to parents of the children he/she will have in their classroom during the 1974-75 school year.
2. Parent-teacher interviews will last approximately one hour.
3. All interviews will be scheduled in advance.

4. All teachers will follow a standard format for interviewing parents and for documenting information.

Data Retrieval

1. The teachers will be called together three times during the summer - the initial meeting, once midway through the summer, and again at the end of the second week in August to permit the project coordinator to surface problems, discuss alternatives and retrieve feedback. At the third meeting prior to the opening of school, the teachers and coordinators will meet to discuss the data.
2. During the last two weeks in August 1974, the director will meet with the teachers for debriefing.
3. The teachers will meet again after the first round of parent-teacher conferences to evaluate the project.
4. Parents will be surveyed to evaluate the effectiveness of the project.

APPENDIX B

**FLYER FOR RECRUITMENT OF
TEACHER PARTICIPANTS**

1

APPENDIX B
FLYER FOR RECRUITMENT OF
TEACHER PARTICIPANTS

MEMORANDUM

May 21, 1974

To: Elementary Pre-K through Grade 3 Teachers

Fr: Bob Docking

Re: Summer Inservice Work, 1974

Most of you have heard through informal feedback channels (grapevine) that we would like to modify our summer in-service model during this next summer. Basically, what we want to do is provide time for teachers in pre-K through grade 3 to meet and talk to parents prior to having the parent's child in your classroom next September.

This would be accomplished through home visitations during the summer vacation period. You would receive a short in-service in "do's and don't's" of home visitations and some clear objectives of what you hope to accomplish prior to making your first visit. You would then visit as many (if not all) of the homes in which your 1974-75 children reside to talk with the parent(s). The purpose of the visit would be to:

1. Reach out to the parents and let them know you're interested in them as people.
2. Find out what goals they hold for their child.
3. Let the parent meet you and find out what kind of person you are.
4. Build a bridge between home and school--before the child begins formal instruction in September.

A couple or three times during the summer we will bring those teachers together who are involved in the visitation project, to share experiences and receive assistance (if needed).

We figure that you will need about fifty (50) hours @ 7.50/hour to accomplish the visits and meet in seminars. If you are interested please sign below and send it back to me by Tuesday, May 28, 1974.

*Thanks

SUMMER IN-SERVICE - 1974

NAME _____

Return to:

SCHOOL _____

Bob Docking
Board Offices

GRADE _____

*Any questions, please call me - 337-1781.

APPENDIX C

RATIONALE FOR THE WORKSHOP

APPENDIX C

RATIONALE FOR THE WORKSHOP

June 20, 1974

To: Summer Inservice Work Participants
Fr: Dallas Wegener
Sj: Rationale for the Workshop

A simplistic view of education divides the educational tasks into three components:

1. Curriculum
2. Classroom Management
3. School Rules and Discipline

Most administrative or teaching tasks fall into these three categories.

Since the advent of the first Russian Sputnik, American educators have expended the majority of their resources on curriculum and, more recently, on classroom management. While the matter of school rules and discipline still consume much of the educators time on the job, rules and discipline have not been a focal point for innovation.

Conscientious educators have strained to stay in tune with new programs that have mushroomed to magnanimous proportions, especially in the areas of science and mathematics. School professional library shelves are crowded with books authored by Brunner, Piaget, Gagne, Goodlad, and Kohl.

During this same period of time the parents of children experiencing the new curriculum were left behind in the educational dust of the pre-World War II school curriculum. Even the interested parents were sealed off from communication with educators by a set of puzzling,

misunderstood, educational "jargonese." The old fashioned three R's the parents had known in school gave way to new titles and seemingly ambiguous content. Children were coming home with soft back mathematics programs with innocuous initials, S.M.S.G. and I.P.I. Similarly many parents stood in awe while the traditional science text book was replaced with "process centered" science programs like S.C.I.S. and A.A.S.A.

Few teachers and even fewer administrators were secure enough with the new curriculum and related classroom management techniques to inservice the parents in the changes taking place in the classroom. Until the late '60s, parents continued to trust the judgment of the teachers when new programs were introduced. The primary concern of the parents remained at the one area where the parents felt they still had some control--the area of rules and discipline. Parent concern over discipline on a major scale reached historic proportions during the crisis period on campus during the Viet Nam War. According to the Gallup Polls of Attitudes Toward Education, 1969-73, only once in a five year period from 1969 to 1973 did the parents not list discipline as a primary problem with public schools in America.

Visiting their child's classroom, many perplexed parents have a difficult time comprehending the scene. The children's seats, no longer arranged in straight columns, are dispersed in various arrays. The children, no longer restricted to their own desks, not only move about in the classroom, but even move to other areas of the school without a hall pass.

What educators are beginning to find out today, in 1974, is that the new parent is equipped to make some judgments about the school scene. Most of the parents encountering school personnel in 1974 have high school degrees, and many have college degrees. These parents use their own past classroom experience as a base for evaluating in the schools. This hybrid parent is interested in the school's curriculum and is usually willing to learn. Unfortunately, many educators do not take the time to capitalize on the parents' willingness to learn and work with the school. If one accepts the premise that both the educators and the parents of the children being taught should be on the same wave length concerning the educational goals and objectives for the children involved, then educators must seize the initiative to make parents active participants in their children's education.

Understanding the importance of the parent-school relationship, Dr. Gallup has written the following:

It seems obvious to me that the educational programs of the nation must take into account more fully than it has in the past, the home environment of the student.

Historically the schools have avoided making parents part of the teacher team under the mistaken notion that teachers should not meddle in outside matters.

A properly conceived plan of helping parents do a more effective job of motivating their school aged children, organizing their home life to enable them to do the best work in the classroom and instructing them in the many areas not included in formal education offers, in my opinion, the greatest opportunity to reach higher educational standards and at the lowest cost.¹

Without crisis conditions, selected educators in the East Lansing Public Elementary Schools (K-3) are taking the initiative to go out into the community and visit the families in the district. As stated in Dr. Docking's memorandum dated May 21, 1974, the purpose of the visitations are:

1. Reach out to the parent and let them know you're interested in them as people.
2. Find out what goals they hold for their child.
3. Let the parent meet you and find out what kind of person you are.
4. Build a bridge between home and school--before the child begins formal instruction in September.

¹Elam, Stanley (Editor), The Gallup Polls of Attitudes Toward Education 1969-1973 (Bloomington, Indiana: Phi Delta Kappan, 1973).

APPENDIX D

DATA RETRIEVAL FORMS

FIRST SECTION

APPENDIX D
DATA RETRIEVAL FORMS
FIRST SECTION

Teacher's Name _____ Parent's Name _____

Please remember that the primary purpose of this workshop is to permit you to have the opportunity to get to know the families you will be dealing with during the 1974-75 school year. That is to be the focal point of your visit. If, after the interview, you have been able to retrieve the following information, please complete this form and bring it to the next seminar.

Section I SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. Is your child happy to go to school--that is, does he/she go because he/she wants to or simply because he/she is required to?

 (a) wants to go__ (b) goes because it is required__
 (c) no opinion__
2. Can anything be done by the school to increase your child's interest in going to school?

 Yes__ No__
3. In the schools in our community, do you think too many educational changes are being tried, or not enough?

 (a) too many__ (b) not enough__ (c) just about right__
 (d) don't know__
4. Some people say that if the schools and the teachers interest the children in learning, most disciplinary problems disappear. Do you agree or disagree?

 (a) agree__ (b) disagree__

5. As you look at your child's elementary school education, is it your impression that the child today gets a better or worse education than you did?

(a) better___ (b) worse___ (c) about the same___
6. Do you think your child is learning the things you believe he/she should be learning?

(a) yes___ (b) no___ (c) don't know___
7. A suggestion has been made that parents of school children have the opportunity to attend one evening class a month to find out what they can do at home to improve their children's behavior and interest in school work. Would you be interested in attending such a class?

(a) yes___ (b) no___
8. How important are schools to one's future success?

(a) extremely___ (b) fairly___ (c) not too important___

Section II

OPEN ENDED QUESTIONS

1. What are the things that would make you decide that a school is a "good school"?
2. In what respect are the local schools "not so good"?
3. How do you feel about the discipline in the school your child attends?
4. What do you believe are the biggest problems in the school your child attends?

5. People have different reasons why they want their children to get an education. What are the primary reasons that come to your mind?

APPENDIX E

LIST OF RESOURCE PEOPLE

APPENDIX E
LIST OF RESOURCE PEOPLE

<u>NAME</u>	<u>POSITION</u>	<u>TELEPHONE</u>
Docking, W. Robert	Deputy Supt.	351-8196
Davis, Gary	Dir. of Special Serv.	332-8617
Kreider, Susan	Social Worker	332-1621
Lezotte, Larry	MSU	332-5531
Olivarez, Carlos	Counselor	355-0811
Treves, Rene	Social Worker	351-8448
Wegener, Dallas	Headmaster	332-2450

APPENDIX F

COVER LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS

APPENDIX F

COVER LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS

June 24, 1974

To: Summer Inservice workshop participants
Fr: Mr. Dallas Wegener
Sj: Packet of materials for interview

At our last meeting we promised to have available for you the following: Class lists, C.A. folder, enrollment cards, information retrieval forms, a copy of the elementary school parent survey, a copy of the Gallup Polls of Attitudes Toward Education and a telephone list of resource people.

In every case you should find all of these materials available to you except the copy of the Gallup Poll book. It has been ordered and will be available to you at our next seminar.

Some of the principals were reticent to permit the C.A. 60s to leave the school building. In these cases the principals have agreed to provide the teachers with complete access to the C.A. files. If access to class lists, C.A. 60s, or enrollment cards are a problem for you on Monday, June 24, please call me at my office. The phone numbers at Central School are 332-1614 or 351-4738.

Included in this packet are the time sheets for you to compile the times you spend with this project. Please remember that the maximum number of hours for any one participant is 50 hours.

You will find that the number of questions asked on the retrieval form have been reduced. Please complete these questionnaires after each interview and bring them to the seminar.

It is imperative that you remember that the primary purpose for this workshop is to provide you and the parents with the opportunity to come to know each other as human beings. If in that process we are able to retrieve information that will be valuable to you in dealing with that parent and child next fall, and enable educators in the district to serve the parents better, that's super! During the course of your conversation with the families, I am sure you will have an opportunity to weave these kinds of questions in. You need not make duplication of these forms; I will do that for you.

Please bring your copy of the letter you would like to have duplicated for your parents to Dr. Docking's secretary, Connie, as soon as possible. Connie will type a master and run off as many copies as you need. You can then hand write or type in the parent/guardian's name on the envelopes which will be provided for you. Once your letter and envelopes are ready to be mailed, please leave them with Connie and she will process them through the stamp machine.

As we agreed on Thursday night, the next seminar is scheduled for Thursday, July 11, 7:30-9:30 in the Board Room. Please have at least three interviews completed by that time. The last seminar for July is scheduled for the evening of Tuesday, July 30, same time and place. If you can have seven more interviews completed by that time then everyone will have completed a minimum of 10 interviews by July 30.

Good luck with your adventure. I am looking forward to meeting with all of you again at the next seminar.

APPENDIX G

DATA RETRIEVAL FORM

SECOND SECTION

APPENDIX G

DATA RETRIEVAL FORM
SECOND SECTION

Which of the following educational programs would you like your child's elementary school (grades K-3) to give more attention to?

- _____ Teaching students the skills of reading, writing, and arithmetic.
- _____ Teaching students how to solve problems and think for themselves.
- _____ Teaching students to respect law and authority.
- _____ Teaching students how to get along with others.
- _____ Teaching students the skills of speaking and listening.
- _____ Teaching students vocational skills.
- _____ Teaching students health and physical education.
- _____ Teaching students about the world of today and yesterday.
- _____ Teaching students how to compete with others.

APPENDIX H

MODEL LETTER FORM

APPENDIX H
MODEL LETTER FORM

To:

A number of our elementary teachers are visiting homes this summer to meet the parents or guardians of the children they have - come next September.

The purpose of the visit is to provide an opportunity for parent(s) or guardian(s) to discuss their goals, and teachers' goals for the child during the 1974-75 school year.

I will call you and set up a specific time prior to meeting with you.

I'm looking forward to our meeting and trust that through face to face communication, we can improve home-school communications during the coming school year.

Sincerely,

APPENDIX I

MEMORANDUM TO IN-SERVICE PARTICIPANTS

APPENDIX I

MEMORANDUM TO IN-SERVICE PARTICIPANTS

July 5, 1974

To: In-Service Participants

Fr: Dallas Wegener
Bob Docking

Re: Our meeting - Thursday, July 11th

Please remember that the summer in-service participants will meet this Thursday evening, July 11th in the Board Room, from 7:30 P.M. to 9:30 P.M.

Hopefully, by that time, you will have interviewed at least three of the families on your class list.

The meeting on Thursday is for you. This time, you do the talking, and we will listen. We're anxious to hear how all of you are doing. We will do our best to answer your questions, and provide you with all the help you need.

See you on Thursday!

DW:c

APPENDIX J

AGENDA FOR DEBRIEFING SESSION

JULY 11, 1974

APPENDIX J

AGENDA FOR DEBRIEFING SESSION JULY 11, 1974

To: Summer In-Service Work Participants
From: Dallas Wegener
Re: Agenda for Debriefing Session
Date: July 11, 1974

Time Table

7:30 - 8:15	Small group discussions
8:15 - 8:30	Coffee - prepare briefs
8:30 - 9:20	Feedback - general discussion
9:20 - 9:30	How can we help?

In your small group sessions, will you please attempt to answer and/or discuss the following:

1. What are your assessments of your perceptions of the worth of the home visitations?
2. What are your assessments of the parents' perceptions of the worth of the home visitations?
3. List two or three types of information that you have retrieved that you believe will help you do a better job of preparing for the individual children in your classroom this fall.
4. All generalizations (including this one) are dangerous. If however, after your initial home visits you were to generalize about family attitudes, what would you say about the families' perceptions (real or imaginery) of the schools' strengths and/or potential areas of concern?

APPENDIX K

SUMMER IN-SERVICE

AN OVERVIEW

APPENDIX K
SUMMER IN-SERVICE
AN OVERVIEW

August 12, 1974

To: Dr. Malcolm Katz

From: Dr. W. Robert Docking

Subj: Elementary Teachers - Summer In-Service
An Overview

During the Spring term of the 1973-74 school year, a group of teachers met with Dr. W. Robert Docking, Dr. Lawrence Lezotte (M.S.U.), and two elementary principals to plan the elementary summer in-service program. At this meeting, the teachers and principals expressed a need to know and understand what changes were occurring in the schools now that the elementary school population is reflecting a more representative cross section of America. In essence, the changing population reflects:

1. More single parents;
2. More stratified economic base;
3. Greater incidence of step parents;
4. More working mothers;
5. More diversified housing;
6. More non-English speaking children;

At subsequent planning meetings, it was decided that participating teachers, acting in a proactive manner under non-threatening conditions would take the initiative and conduct home visitations with the parents of the children the teachers would have in their classroom during the 1974-75 school year. After a formal proposal for this project was approved, all the elementary teachers in levels K-3 were informed of the opportunity to participate in this in-service.

As explained to the staff, the purposes of the summer in-service project are:

1. To reach out to the families and let them know the teachers are interested in them as people;
2. To provide the teachers with an opportunity to find out what goals the families have established for their children;
3. To build a communication bridge between the school and the homes;
4. To gather data that will:
 - a. enable teachers to know the children as individuals before school begins and make necessary modifications in the classroom;
 - b. enable the teachers to incorporate the family in the education planning process.

On a voluntary paid basis twenty teachers representing eight of the nine elementary schools attended the first in-service session. Social workers and a consultant provided the participants with a min-course in effective interview techniques. Equipped with advance class lists and other pertinent information, the teachers informed the parents, via the mail, that the teachers desired to make home visitations.

During the course of the summer, the teachers have met to discuss their experiences. At these debriefing sessions the teachers were encouraged to discuss:

1. The teachers' perceptions of the worth of the visitation;
2. The teachers' assessment of the parents' assessment of the worth of the home visitations;
3. The kind of information they received that will be helpful in preparing for the school year;
4. The teachers' assessment of the parents' perceptions of the strengths of the schools and possible areas of concern with the schools.

The feedback from the teachers has been exciting and extremely positive. The families have been overwhelmingly receptive to the notion of home visitations. An indicator of the involvement of the teachers and the families during the visitations is obvious in the length of the home visitation. While the original design of the in-service

called for a one hour home visitation, the teachers are reporting that many visits have lasted one and one-half to two hours.

The participating teachers will meet once more during August, once in September and once again after Fall conferences. Since the families and the participants have already met during the summer and have opened direct channels of communication, the Fall conferences should be more productive and useful for all concerned parties.

While this summer in-service project is a direct out-growth of an expressed need in East Lansing elementary schools, home-school communications and parent involvement in education are becoming focal points of research in education. The in-service work this summer could be the obvious first stage of a continuing home-school summer in-service program in East Lansing, that could eventually involve the families as an extension of the school in the dynamic business of educating children.

WRD:m

APPENDIX L

NEWSPAPER ARTICLE

LANSING STATE JOURNAL, AUGUST 1974

APPENDIX L

NEWSPAPER ARTICLE LANSING STATE JOURNAL, AUGUST 1974

Teachers Try New Role Visit Homes

When Shirley Quimby walks into her classroom the first day of school she'll be able to call all her children by their first names.

That's not because she's known these kids before--most of them will be new to her--but because she visited them in their homes this summer and perhaps had a cup of coffee with mom and dad.

Mrs. Quimby, a reading teacher at Spartan Village School, is one of 18 East Lansing teachers taking part in an unusual summer in-service program, the only one of its kind in the state and perhaps the nation.

Called a home visitation program, it simply means that East Lansing teachers are going into the homes of their students this summer, rather than waiting for the first parent-teacher conference this fall to talk to families.

While the program is starting small with only 18 teachers involved, East Lansing school officials are hopeful that the concept will grow to where eventually "families can become a real extension of the school in the dynamic business of educating children."

By the start of school on Sept. 5, more than 400 families will have been visited.

"During the regular parent-teacher conferences, the parent meets the teacher on the teacher's home ground,"

explained Debbie Thomas, one of the young, enthusiastic teachers in the program. "Always before, talks have been in the teacher's world, in her room, in her school, where she is backed up by the principal and other teachers just a few feet away.

"Home visits turn the thing around," Mrs. Thomas added, "now it's the teacher who is taking the risk and saying 'this is what I'm like. What are you like? This is the way I run my classroom. What do you think?'"

Response by both teachers and the parents already visited has been "fantastic," Mrs. Thomas said.

"It's a big thing with the kids, too," the Pinecrest first-grade teacher added, "mothers tell me that sometimes the children get so excited about the teacher's visit they can't sleep the night before.

"And occasionally the kids will bake a special dessert in honor of the teacher's visit."

The enthusiasm and excitement of the kids is one of the most worthwhile things about the program, Mrs. Thomas observed.

Dallas Wegener, coordinator of the home visits, said the apparent success of the program stems, in part, from the concept of "talking 'with' parents, not 'to' parents."

"It's a trust thing," Wegener said, "when you're in their homes parents feel very comfortable to ask you anything that's on their mind. And that's what we're after."

The new principal at Pinecrest School, who has accompanied Mrs. Thomas on some of her home visits, referred to today's parents as "a new breed."

"They get into some real nitty, gritty questions--especially about school rules and discipline," Wegener recalled. He also noted that in most cases the fathers make sure they're in on the visit, even if it means taking time off work.

"The long-range payoff of the program, we hope, will be to bridge the communication gap between the home and school," Wegener said.

"Parents are anxious to dive in. 'How can we help,' is their attitude," the principal said.

"I just have to wonder 'why didn't we do this 50 years ago?' "

APPENDIX M

AGENDA FOR SECOND DEBRIEFING SESSION

AUGUST 1, 1974

APPENDIX M

AGENDA FOR SECOND DEBRIEFING SESSION
AUGUST 1, 1974

To: Summer In-Service Participants
Fr: Dallas Wegener and Bob Docking
Re: Agenda for Debriefing Session

Time Table

7:30 - 8:15 Small Group Discussions
8:15 - 8:30 Coffee - prepare briefs
8:30 - 9:20 Feedback - general discussion
9:20 - 9:30 How can we help?

In your small group sessions, will you, again, please attempt to answer and/or discuss the following?

1. What are your assessments of your perceptions of the worth of the home visitations?
2. What are your assessments of the parents' perceptions of the worth of the home visitations.
3. List two or three types of information that you have retrieved that you believe will help you do a better job of preparing for the individual children in your classroom this Fall.
4. All generalizations (including this one) are dangerous. If however, after your initial home visits you were to generalize about family attitudes, what would you say about the families' perception (real or imaginary) of the schools' strengths and/or potential areas of concern?

In addition, when we first initiated this summer in-service work, we stated that the objectives of the visitations were:

1. To reach out to the families and let them know teachers are interested in them as people.
2. To find out what goals the families hold for their children.
3. To let the families meet the teachers and let them know you as a human.
4. To build a communications bridge between home and school.

Assuming you have met the goals one and three, what kinds of information have you retrieved, or what kinds of interaction have you experienced that leads you to believe (if you do) that you are meeting objectives two and four?

DW:c

APPENDIX N

**SPOTLIGHT ON EAST LANSING
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

APPENDIX N

SPOTLIGHT ON EAST LANSING PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Summer Visits Make School Opening Easier

The beginning of school will come a little easier for some East Lansing teachers and families this year. Those first day fears of facing the unknown will be gone.

As part of a new-type in-service workshop, approximately 20 pre-kindergarten through third grade teachers this summer visited the homes of the students they will have in class in September.

They were, in a sense, "reaching out to the parents or guardians to let them know the teachers are interested in them as people," according to Dallas Wegener, Pinecrest principal and director of the project. "Just as important, teachers let the parents or guardians see what kind of people they are."

The teachers explained the goals they have for the child and encouraged the parents or guardians to discuss their goals, Mr. Wegener said. They were also able "to get a feel" for the environment from which the child comes.

"We feel this puts us ahead about three months as far as bridging the gap between home and school," Mr. Wegener said. In three months, teachers will hold conferences and would usually be meeting the parents or guardians for the first time.

Whether or not the home visits help with teaching the child will be determined when three evaluative sessions are held throughout the school year by participating teachers, Mr. Wegener, Director of Instruction Robert Docking, and the workshop consultants.

The consultants include Dr. Lawrence Lezotte of the College of Urban Development at Michigan State University; Susan Kreider and Rene Treves, school social workers; and Carlos Olivarez, high school staff.

Teachers participated in the workshop on a voluntary basis and were paid for their time.

APPENDIX O

TEACHER PARTICIPANTS EVALUATION FORM

APPENDIX O

TEACHER PARTICIPANTS' EVALUATION FORM

Teacher-Home Visitation Project

The primary objective of this past summer's Home Visitation Project was to enhance home-school relations. We are interested in knowing whether or not you believe we accomplished this objective. As a result of the Home Visitation Project:

- 1) Do you believe you are acquainted with the students' families?
- 2) Did you have an opportunity to discuss classroom management and curriculum?
- 3) Did you have an opportunity to ask the parents or guardians the kinds of questions you believed would be helpful in preparing your class for the first term?
- 4) Have you felt freer to telephone the students' parents or guardians with problems and/or concerns?
- 5) Have you revisited any of the homes of the children in your classroom?
- 6) Have you had more opportunities for written communication with the parents or guardians?
- 7) Do you believe the children in your classroom were less apprehensive about starting school this year?
- 8) Do you believe you have had fewer discipline problems in your classroom this year?
- 9) Do you believe the children in your classroom have demonstrated a more positive attitude toward school this year?

- 10) Were you able to structure your classroom to meet the individual needs of the students when they entered school?

If so, could you cite some examples:

- 11) Were you able to recruit more parent volunteers than you have in the past?

- 12) Were you able to incorporate the parents or guardians in the learning processes of your classroom children?

If so, could you cite some examples:

APPENDIX P

FAMILY PARTICIPANTS' EVALUATION FORM

APPENDIX P
FAMILY PARTICIPANTS EVALUATION FORM

April 22, 1975

To: Family participants in the Home-School
Visitation Program

Fr: Dallas D. Wegener, Elementary Coordinator
Dr. W. Robert Docking, Deputy Superintendent

As we approach the final months of the 1974-75 school year, we would like to evaluate the Home-School Visitation Project you helped us with this past summer. We would like to know your thoughts about the effectiveness of the project. Please complete the attached questionnaire and return it in the self-addressed, stamped envelope. When responding to the questionnaire, please refrain from using your family or child's name, your child's teacher's name or the name of the school which your child attends. All responses will be treated confidentially.

Thank you for your time and cooperation. Your feedback is valuable in evaluating the past workshop, as well as assisting us in planning this summer's workshop.

April 15, 1975

To: Family Participants of the Home-School
Visitation Program

From: Dallas D. Wegener

Subj: Home Visitation Evaluation

The primary objectives of this past summer's Home Visitation Project was to enhance home-school relations. We are interested in knowing whether or not you believe we accomplished this objective. As a result of the Home Visitation Project:

- 1) Do you believe you know your child's teacher as a human being? If so, please elaborate.
- 2) Did you have an opportunity to discuss classroom management? If so, please elaborate.
- 3) Did you have an opportunity to discuss school curriculum? If so, please elaborate.
- 4) Did you have an opportunity to discuss discipline? If so, please elaborate.
- 5) Were you uncomfortable with any of the questions the teacher asked?
- 6) Did you have an opportunity to ask the teacher the kinds of questions about school that you had wanted to ask, and did you feel comfortable doing so?

- 7) Have you had more communications with your child's teacher?
- 8) Have you felt free to visit your child's classroom more often than you have in the past?
- 9) Do you believe your child was less apprehensive about starting school this year than he/she has been in the past?
- 10) If this child is not your first to enter kindergarten, do you believe that the home visit made the transition from home to kindergarten easier than it was with your older child/children?
- 11) Do you believe you are more familiar with the school curriculum than you would have been in the past?
- 12) Would you like your child's teacher to continue to visit your home during the school year?
- 13) Were there any parts of the home visitation program that you did not like?
- 14) If a similar home-visitation program is funded for the 1975-76 school year, and your child's teacher elects to participate, would you be interested in being included in the program?
- 15) If we do fund a similar program for the 1975-76 school year, what suggestions do you have for improving the project?
- 16) Additional comments:

APPENDIX Q

**EVALUATION FOLLOW-UP LETTER
TO FAMILY PARTICIPANTS**

APPENDIX Q

EVALUATION FOLLOW-UP LETTER
TO FAMILY PARTICIPANTS

May 1, 1975

Dear Parents and Guardians:

A few days ago your child(ren) brought home a brown envelope containing a Teacher-Home Visitation Project evaluation form and a return envelope addressed to the central administration office. If you haven't yet returned the form, will you please complete the questionnaire, place it in the stamped, addressed envelope and place it in the U. S. mail.

If you have already returned the questionnaire, please know that we appreciate your cooperation. Thank you for your participation in the project.

Sincerely yours,

Dr. W. R. Docking,
Deputy Superintendent
Director of Instruction
and
Dallas D. Wegener
Elementary Coordinator

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