THE PARENT' CONCEPTION OF THE IDEAL CURRICULUM

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OCT 6 1981
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THE PARENTS' CONCEPTION OF THE IDEAL CURRICULUM

by

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A Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirement for the degree of
Master of Education

Department of Curriculum and Instruction
Memorial Univeristy of Newfoundland
March 1, 1980

ABSTRACT

A study of the survey, "The Eleventh Annual Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools", conducted by the Gallup Poll in the United States prompted the author's interest in conducting a similar study of high schools in Newfoundland. After reading "Public Attitudes Towards Education in Newfoundland and Labrador" by P.J. Warren, the writer was convinced that a need for an investigation existed. Whereas both of these studies cover virtually the entire education system, the present study focuses specifically on the program of studies in the high schools of Newfoundland.

The study was based on the assumption that the curriculum in use in the province's high schools was the outcome of the labours of professional educators whose own conception of curriculum might often be vastly different from the parents' conceptions of instructional programming. The intent of the research, then, was to arrange a method of investigation that would provide parents with an opportunity to make known their feelings regarding the high school curriculum in use in Newfoundland schools.

Two methods for collecting data were considered - the questionnaire and/or the interview. A combination of

both methods was eventually employed. A questionnaire consisting of thirty-five questions was compiled and used as a basis for discussion throughout the interviews. Most questions required a simple "Yes" or "No" answer; however, some questions were open-ended and the responses from parents, in the case of these questions, were duly recorded, categorized and analyzed.

Time and finances prohibited extending the survey to cover the whole of the province. It was decided, therefore, to choose three areas for survey purposes. One high school, Prince of Wales Collegiate, was chosen to represent the largest city in the province, St. John's. This area was designated Area I. Because Gander Academy was considered a middle-sized high school, Gander was designated as Area II. Glovertown, Eastport, Dark Cove and Hare Bay areas, where smaller schools were situated, were considered Area III.

For sampling purposes each area was divided, with the help of the fire chiefs of the various communities, into sections or sub-divisions; North, South, East, Central for example. (A detailed description of sampling procedure is contained in Chapter II). Parents' names and addresses, obtained from class lists provided by the school principals, were compiled in accordance with each sub-division of the area and a draw was arranged. Thirty names were chosen in

Area I, Sixteen in Area II and fourteen in Area III. Following the draw, arrangements were made by telephone for interviews with the parents.

Although sampling was small and only two School Board Districts were included in this study, certain general conclusions that may well reflect the attitudes of parents throughout the province may be drawn.

1. The co-operation of parents that was experienced throughout this investigation and the apparent concern expressed by parents during the interviews reflected, it was felt, a genuine desire on the part of parents to be involved in school affairs.

2. Parents were conscious of their "exclusion" with regards to the planning and implementation of educational programs in the schools. Not one in sixty parents felt that the curriculum in use in Newfoundland high schools intentionally reflected the "wishes of the parent." If it did reflect, then, it was quite co-incidental. Yet, 78% of parents interviewed expressed a desire to have an input into curriculum planning.

3. Although parents were critical of some as-

pects of the educational system, the study reflected an over-all satisfaction with the curriculum employed in Newfoundland high schools.

4. The study reflected the cognizance of parents concerning the urgent need for continuous revisions of the program of studies. It was sensed that parents welcomed the challenge of necessary change. It was concluded that professional curriculum planners need not fear the need for revisions of school programs of study - parents, it would appear, are fully prepared to support innovations.

5. There was little or no significant difference recorded between the general attitudes of parents in Areas I, II or III. Neither was there any significant difference recorded between opinions expressed by the two sexes. However, older parents were more inclined to favour the teaching of religion and sticking to the basics than their younger counterparts.

Although this investigation attempted to focus on curriculum, "teacher performance" was considered by practically every parent interviewed a topic of grave concern. The writer concluded that important as the program of studies

may be, the performance of the person who uses it is equally important.

Acknowledgements

There were many people who helped make this study possible. I acknowledge my appreciation to:

Dr. Frank Wolfe who patiently guided me through to the final page.

Peggy Taite and Douglas Taite who painstakingly counted the responses and checked the statistics.

The sixty parents who co-operated throughout the interviews.

The principals and fire chiefs of the selected communities.

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Hilda Taba, a distinguished, American education curriculum developer, concluded that curriculum planning is "a complex undertaking that involves many kinds of decisions." Whatever truth may be ascribed to this description, until just a few years ago this "complex undertaking" for Newfoundland schools was handled by and large by a one-man committee at the Department of Education. However, the complexity of curriculum planning is being recognized and in recent years many changes have occurred and various groups have become involved in the decisions making process: individual teachers, staffs of large schools, principals and superintendents, and officials of the Newfoundland Teachers Association as well as the increased staff of the Curriculum Division of the Department of Education. Many questions are being asked and demands are being made in an attempt to provide Newfoundland children with the best education possible. The underlying, primary question, of course, concerns the definition of "best education" and it is this search for a definitive description of "best education" that makes curriculum planning the "undertaking" that is so "complex."

Is the best education that which is described in the few sentences contained in the small, scantily-worded pub-

lication entitled, The Aims of Public Education for Newfoundland, or are there more specific questions that need to be formulated and answered? Is curriculum planning completed when the general objectives as contained in Aims of Public Education for Newfoundland are stated, or are those objectives to be considered a necessary precedent to a much more involved planning process? What shall we teach so that our children will "understand the Christian Principles, develop moral values, mature mentally and emotionally" and..."appreciate the benefit from what is good and valuable in history, literature, science and the arts"?[1] Might we simply assume that a "best education" will be generated from the interacting of professional teachers, administrators, and school board members who meet occasionally to contemplate these general aims, or is there a need for a much broader and more involved interacting of many people, parents included?

More and more we come to realize how very complicated human nature is and how complex our society has become. The mountain of available knowledge grows higher and higher and the rate of change in society as a consequence of this knowledge renders the human practically helpless in the attempts to cope with life's situations. Although the question of "how" to teach may be a challenging one, the selecting of "what" to teach remains a problem of paramount importance. Whatever the learning capabilities of an individual may be, a child cannot

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[1] Aims of Public Education for Newfoundland, Department of Education, St. John's, Newfoundland, Bulletin No. 2-A, 1959.

be expected to become a master in every aspect of human endeavours. What, then, must the schools offer? What knowledge is most important? What knowledge is important to whom? What "knowledge" belongs in Grade I, in Grade V, in Grade XI? and then, who decides what to teach? Who should decide?

Without any intention of undermining the dignity of children, it could be said that they are owned by their parents. The courts hold the parents responsible for the behaviour of their children, and only in the face of irrefutable evidence of parental malpractice will the court separate a child from the family. Professional educators, therefore, who assume full authority with regard to the educational development of children stand in loco parentis. True, parents cannot be expected to be "the experts" in all matters concerning education. Parents who have answered in the affirmative to the question, "Do you think that you should have a voice as to what the schools should teach?" (Item 2) did so with acknowledged admission that the expertise of professionals was necessary for the formulation of specific content of school programs. However, the study strongly indicated that parents would like to have a significant input into curriculum planning.

This study was established on the assumption that the curriculum presently in use in Newfoundland high schools was virtually dictated by professionals in the absence of

any significant parental input. The problem, therefore, was to ascertain through a systematic approach the feelings of parents regarding the program of studies in Newfoundland high schools. How best to organize this approach was a primary concern. Honest, straightforward answers from parents reflecting their attitudes towards their schools was the desired goal.

In recent years several attempts have been made to identify attitudes of the general public towards the schools. Most of these studies were not designed to focus specifically upon curriculum concerns. Generally they dealt with virtually the whole gamut of education: curriculum, teacher performances, administrative organizations and so on. The three studies referred to in this thesis were chosen on the basis of their reference to the program of studies in the high school. These studies are as follows. (Full documentation can be found in the Bibliography.)

1. Educational Perspectives, a survey of 10,000 Ontario Students, Teachers and Parents, conducted by Michael Adams.
2. Public Attitudes Towards Education in Newfoundland and Labrador, a study by Dr. P.J. Warren, Faculty of Education, Memorial University, St. John's, Newfoundland.
3. How the Nation Views the Public Schools, a study conducted by the Gallup Poll Organization, Inc., 1969.

The Gallup Poll

The involvement of the author in this particular project was prompted initially by his study of the Gallup Poll conducted in the United States.[2] Although most of the questions contained in this survey were related to aspects of education other than curriculum, those pertaining to the program of studies were used as models. Some significant findings recorded by this study by the Gallup Poll Organization were as follows:

1. The list of subjects considered essential for all students was led by Mathematics and English Language. Ninety-seven percent agreed that Mathematics was very important while only thirty-seven percent considered Art as essential.

2. To the question: "Should the school programs include a wide variety of courses or should they include a few, basic courses?", forty-four percent favoured the wide variety of courses as opposed to forty-nine percent favouring fewer courses.

3. It was indicated that the schools lacked guidance services. Only one in five parents polled mentioned that his or her child was given help in career guidance.

4. 'Good teachers' led the list of answers given by

[2] How the Nation Views the Public Schools, The Gallup Poll Organization, Inc., 1969.

parents to the question: "What do you like most about the school your child attends?"

5. 'Lack of discipline' was mentioned as the thing that was liked least.

Educational Perspectives - Ontario[4]

The significant findings of this study in Ontario were as follows:

1. Eighty-five percent of parents surveyed tended to agree or strongly agree that more emphasis should be given to teaching fundamentals like reading, writing and arithmetic.
2. Fifty-nine percent of parents polled tended to agree or strongly agree that schools should offer a broader range of subjects for students.
3. Eighty-nine percent of the parents questioned assigned a high priority to having special programs for slow-learning students.
4. The study results reflected a wide-spread belief in the desirability of billingualism.
5. Fifty-three percent of parents considered that discipline was not strict enough in Ontario schools.
6. Only three percent of parents felt that discipline was too strict in Ontario's schools.
7. Ninety-one percent of teachers polled considered

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[3]Michael Adams, Educational Perspectives, Ministry of Education, Ontario, 1976

that parents should be very involved or moderately involved in selecting courses for their children.

Public Attitudes Towards Elementary and Secondary Education in Newfoundland and Labrador - Newfoundland

In Chapter I, Dr. Warren writes: "While parents are by no means experts on education, either in respect of the curriculum or teaching methods, they have a right, as consumers, to help delineate the kind of education which best serves the needs of their children."[4] This statement precisely presents the point of view held by the writer and was the underlying principle that motivated the author to investigate the truth concerning the attitudes of parents regarding the program of studies. There were many significant findings presented in the study by Dr. Warren.

1. Responding parents felt that the schools should accept greater responsibility for drug education, vocational education, consumer education and sex education.

2. When asked whether the schools should accept greater, lesser or the same responsibility for a religious education program, 35 percent of parents checked the first option, 20 percent the second and 41 percent the third.

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[4]P.J. Warren, Public Attitudes Towards Education in Newfoundland and Labrador, Memorial University of Newfoundland, St. John's, Newfoundland.

3. Over three-quarters of the respondents supported the idea of introducing Grade XII in the province.

4. Nearly two-thirds of the total sample favoured students passing a standard, province-wide examination in order to get a high school diploma.

5. More than half the respondents called for greater emphasis on the three R's.

6. The feature of schools that was considered best by most respondents was good student-teacher relationship.

7. Two out of every three respondents stated that the quality of education had improved over the past ten years.

8. Over half of the respondents stated that discipline was not strict enough.

A detailed description of the areas surveyed, the interviews and questionnaire, the random sampling and evaluation procedures are contained in Chapter II. However the spirit of co-operation that was experienced throughout this

study is considered worthy of note in this introductory chapter.

To help cope with the problem of random sampling, it was decided to elicit the co-operation of the fire chiefs of the various communities in the school districts. It was felt that the persons in charge of the local community fire stations had first hand knowledge regarding the area sub-divisions within the perimeters of their particular municipalities. This information was required so that names of eligible, prospective interviewees could be arranged in a draw such that each section or sub-division of the town would be represented. For example, at the Glovertown Regional High School, names of parents were compiled in accordance with the section of town where they lived; Saunders' Cove, Anglo-Brook, Traytown, Terra Nova and so on.

The idea of contacting the fire chiefs for such information was first presented to the Provincial Fire Commissioner, St. John's. The enthusiasm expressed concerning this idea was the encouragement required to proceed. Principals of the various schools readily provided the class lists from which the names of parents were copied; information regarding the town divisions were gleaned from the fire chiefs. The co-operation of both parties enabled the writer to arrange, to his satisfaction, at least, an acceptable random sampling of parents.

Chapter II

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The Interview

Several reasons are offered to support the procedure of eliciting parents' responses through the medium of the interview. Some of these reasons are supported by Deobold B. VanDalen in Understanding Educational Research.[5]

1. It was felt that most people are more willing to communicate information verbally than in writing.
2. It was felt that although much time was spent on preparation of the thirty-five questions involved in the study, some questions might have needed clarification depending upon the questions asked by the interviewee.
3. It was felt that in an interview parents could be encouraged to probe more deeply into a problem before responding.
4. It was felt that the honesty and sincerity of the interviewee could be assessed through the incidental comments, facial and bodily expressions, tone of voice, etc.

The interview, although structured so that the same questions were presented in the same manner and order to

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[5] Deobold B. VanDalen, Understanding Educational Research, McGraw-Hill Book Company Inc., New York, 1962, p. 258.

each subject, did not involve a rigidity that stymied parents' responses. In most cases only one parent was present. However, in a few cases both parents were together and both interviews were conducted simultaneously, They were instructed because of this circumstance not to allow the response of one to interfere with the honest response of the other. There was no evidence observed that caused the interviewer to consider the dominance of one parent over the other.

The Questionnaire

The prepared questionnaire consisted of thirty-five questions. Most questions required a 'yes' or 'no' answer; e.g., Do you think that the schools are meeting the needs of your children? Other questions required a statement of opinion; e.g., What reasons do you offer for supporting the introduction of Grade XII to the high school program? And still there were other questions that required parents to select alternatives as in the case of No. 32 question: With what statement would you agree: (a) Teachers expect too much of my child; (b) Teachers could expect more from my child; or (c) I am satisfied with the teachers' level of expectation.

Although parents were expected to draw on their experience in their own school district the questions were not designed to evaluate the performance of any particular school. The study was arranged to focus on the overall program generally offered in Newfoundland high

schools. A few parents whose knowledge of the Newfoundland high school system was limited due to their recent moves to the province were not requested to answer any questions related to subjects outside of their scope of experience.

Although no figures were recorded, a fair estimate of the time spent on each interview was two hours. In spite of the co-operation of all parents called, sometimes two, three or more calls were necessary before an interview date could be arranged. (The estimated two hours does not include travelling time around the city.) In the case of the smaller communities, fewer mothers worked; consequently, interview dates could be made during the working-day. A reasonable estimate of total time spent, including interviewing time as well as travel time would be two hundred hours.

Sampling

Because of the constraints of time and finance, the idea of covering the whole of the province of Newfoundland (30 school districts - plus Labrador) could not be entertained. It was decided, therefore, to choose one school, Prince of Wales Collegiate, to represent the largest community on the island, St. John's. The Terra Nova Integrated School District offered both the variety of a medium size school, Gander Collegiate, and the smaller schools, Smallwood Academy, and Glovertown Regional High.

In the case of St. John's, a list of all parents hav-

ing children attending Prince of Wales Collegiate was requested from the school principal. The school co-operated. All names and addresses were recorded on small strips of paper in preparation for the draw. A map of St. John's was employed to aid the stratified random sampling selection. The area served by Prince of Wales Collegiate was divided into ten blocks. The names of the streets in each area block were recorded and the names of all parents were sorted into ten groups in accordance with the addresses. Three names were picked from each group. The list of selected names was taken to the school principal to ensure that the sampling had not included parents who had requested that their addresses be kept confidential. Parents were then contacted by telephone and interviews were arranged. In spite of busy schedules, all of the thirty parents called co-operated and arrangements were made for the interview - generally at the end of the working day.

The school district of the Terra Nova Integrated School Board stretches from Glenwood to Glovertown and includes Eastport, Gambo-Dark Cove, Hare Bay-Dover, Gander Bay, Carmanville, Musgrave Harbour and Fogo Island. The inclusion of all schools was not considered necessary for the study since the objective of the research was the discovery of differences of opinion, if any, between parents of children going to smaller schools and parents of

children in the larger communities. Consequently, interviews were conducted as follows:

Gander.....16

Glovertown.....4

Gambo-Dark Cove.....5

Hare Bay-Dover.....3

Eastport.....2

The number of interviews in each community was based on the 1976 census of Canadian Statistics and followed an approximate ratio of one interview per five hundred population. This ratio does not apply to the city of St. John's.

The first approach in the Gander area included an interview with the district superintendent. A description of the study was outlined and permission was requested to conduct the research in the Terra Nova School Board District. Co-operation was a feature that high-lighted the course of events throughout the study. As was the case with St. John's, the principals of the various schools were contacted and arrangements made to record on small strips of paper the names of all parents having children attending high school. In an attempt to reach all parts of the communities involved, principals were consulted regarding the divisions of the towns into specific areas, North, South, East, West, Central or the local, specific names of the different community

sections served by the high schools. Necessary information concerning these divisions that was not forthcoming from the schools was obtained from the fire chiefs of the various communities. Papers containing names of parents and addresses were sorted in accordance with the sections of towns described above. Finally, names of parents representing each section were drawn and contact was made by telephone regarding convenient times for interviews.

Evaluation of Responses

It was proposed at the beginning of this study that questions would be worded such that all questions could be evaluated in accordance with a Likert-type scale using numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 with the middle three representing 'don't know' and the remaining numbers indicating strong agreement or strong disagreement. However, this was modified to 'Yes', 'Don't Know' and 'No' responses. (It was discovered during trial runs that respondents were inclined to choose the middle number, three, for any questions that could be considered controversial or demanded concentrated thought. These "trial runs" were conducted with the co-operation of fourteen adult interviewees.) The 'Yes' and 'No' responses did not eliminate the parents' perogative to admit any reservations regarding a positive or negative response. When doubts were indicated by the interviewee, they were duly recorded and categorized. Simple statistical recordings of numbers of responses and percentages were used for convenience of interpretation. This description refers to the questions demanding a 'Yes' or 'No' reply.

Regarding questions requesting a parent's point of view, the opinions expressed were noted and categorized as described in Chapter III.

Limitations

(a) Due to the inconveniences of time and expenses, the sampling size was small (an approximate ratio of one to five hundred);

(b) In the St. John's area the study was limited to those parents having children attending one high school, Prince of Wales Collegiate;

(c) In the Terra Nova area towns were chosen on the basis of accessibility during the winter months as well as the size of the population; and

(d) The parents interviewed throughout this investigation had at least one child in high school. This was the only stipulation that was stated regarding the qualifications of a parent for interviews. Apart from a very few cases, the children of the parents interviewed were doing satisfactory work at school. Consequently, parents were generally satisfied as the data contained in this study reflects. When this general satisfaction on the part of parents became apparent, the author attempted to contact a few parents in Area III whose children had dropped out of school. It was felt that the attitudes of these parents could be vastly different from those already

interviewed. No parent was prepared to arrange an interview date.

Maybe another research effort would be successful in contacting the parents of drop-outs. Maybe their stories would be different. It could be an interesting, comparative study.

Definition of Terms

Parents. Parents refer to those having children attending the selected high schools in the Terra Nova Integrated School Board District and Prince of Wales Collegiate, St. John's.

Curriculum. This term refers to the total structured program in operation in the selected schools. It includes all learning activities sponsored by the schools.

Study Areas. This term refers to the three geographical areas identified for purposes of this study. They are: Area One, St. John's; Area Two, Gander; and Area Three, Gambo-Dark Cove, Glovertown, Hare Bay-Dover and Eastport.

Table 1

Town Population and Sample Size

Geographical Area	Town Pop.	Sample Size
Area I - St. John's	Over 20,000	30
Area II - Gander	9,301	16
Area III - Glovertown Gambo-Dark Cove, Hare Bay-Dover	7,335	14

Chpater III

RESULTS

This chapter will consist of a presentation and analysis of the data collected during the several interviews conducted in six locations. A copy of the questionnaire presented to parents during the interviews is included as Appendix A. For our purposes here, questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 12, 15, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 29, 33, and 34 have been shortened in order to facilitate the reader's reference to the tabular data. (Tables II through IX will appear immediately following the detailed description.) The questions, in short form, are as follows:

1. Are schools meeting the needs of your children?

2. Should you have a "voice" as to what the schools should teach?

3. Do you think that what the schools are doing is not practical and is irrelevant?

4. Do your children like school?

7. Do you maintain that the school is a contributing factor to bad behaviour of students around the community?

8. Are high school programs too academic?

9. Are your children too much involved with student travel?

12. Do you think that the school's job is "to prepare" a child for the remainder of his life span?

15. Do you approve of the introduction of Grade XII?

19. Should the high schools teach religion?

20. Should French be a mandatory subject?

21. Should the high schools be involved in programs such as Industrial Arts and Home Economics?

22. Is there a need for a "Family Living" course?

23. Do you agree with the "work experience" program.

24. Are the schools too involved with Physical Education?

25. Should "Newfoundlandia" be emphasized more in high school programs?

26. Should the schools include in the programs courses dealing with law, poverty, housing, etc?

27. Do you think the "shared-evaluation program" is fair?

29. Are the school reports that you receive satisfactory?

33. Is there enough counselling service in the high schools?

34. Are your children more involved in school than you were?

In contrast, questions 5, 6, 10, 11, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18, 28, 30, 31, 32, and 35 are presented singly; again, to accommodate the reader.

Question one was a general question. Parents were told that the "needs" mentioned in the question was to be interpreted as parents perceived the "needs" to be. 67% of the sixty parents interviewed agreed that the schools were meeting the needs of their children. 12% felt that the schools were not doing the job that they were supposed to do - (Table II). Of the three areas studied, parents from Area I seemed to be the most pleased with their school - 80% answering in the affirmative. This is compatible with Area III where 79% of parents interviewed considered that the schools were doing the job - (Table V). 69% of parents interviewed in Area II felt that the schools were measuring up to their expectation - (Table IV). There was no significant difference between attitudes of males and females regarding question one. 79% of males agreed that the schools were meeting the needs of children as compared to 76% of females interviewed agreeing. The least favourable attitudes were indi-

cated by females in Area II, where only 60% of those interviewed responded in the affirmative - (Table VII). As in the "sex" categories there was no significant difference in the "age" categories. The lowest percentages were recorded in Area II where 60% of those in the 35-49 year limit favoured the schools and 67% in the age category of fifty years and over - (Table VIII). In the "occupation" groups managerial, professional and clerical recorded 68% and 67% agreement, whereas craftsmen and housewives indicated 78% agreement - (Table IX).

For question two, 78% of respondents felt that they should have an input into curriculum planning. It was interesting to note that 100% of parents in the smaller communities in Area III responded in the affirmative - (Table V). In Area II only 69% of parents interviewed felt that they should have a "say" as to what the schools were teaching. Those who replied in the negative suggested that the curriculum planning should be placed and kept in the hands of professional educators - (Table VI). The only significant difference of opinions was found in the male category of Area II, where only 50% felt that they should have a "voice" and in the age category of fifty years and over in Area II where only 33% of interviewed parents suggested that they should have an input into program planning - (Table VIII).

Regarding question three, most parents agreed that the

programs that the schools are employing are practical and relevant. Only 33% agreed with the statement that what the schools are doing is not practical. However, in Area III, 50% of respondents felt that much of what the schools were doing is a waste of time. The highest percentage agreeing with the statement was found in the "occupation" grouping, where 56% of "craftsmen" reported their discontent with the practicality of school work - (Table IX).

83% of parents interviewed stated that their children liked going to school - (Table II). The highest percentage was recorded in Area III where 93% answered in the affirmative. The lowest percentage, 69, was recorded in Area II. The most significant difference was found in Area II, where only 33% of parents fifty years and over reported that their children liked school - (Table VIII). What children liked or disliked about school is reflected in questions five and six and will be dealt with later in this chapter.

Question seven was concerned with soliciting from parents their views regarding the bad behaviour of children on the streets. Parents found it difficult to decide. One half of those interviewed suggested that the lack of discipline in the schools could be a contributing factor relative to vandalism in the community - (Table I). 37% of respondents in Area I considered the schools a contributing factor to vandalism on the streets - (Table III). In Area III, 63% of parents interviewed felt that the lack of disci-

pline in schools contributed to lack of discipline on the streets - (Table IV). 57% of interviewed parents in Area III held the schools responsible for the bad behaviour of the adolescent on the street. Of the total number of males interviewed 61% considered the lack of discipline in the community attributable to the lack of discipline in the schools. Only 46% of females considered this so. A significant difference of opinions between the sexes was recorded in Area III, where 71% of males responded in the affirmative to the question, whereas only 42% of females responded in the affirmative - (Table VII). Table VIII reflects the difference of opinions on the basis of age. No significant difference exists. 50% of those between thirty-five and forty-nine years replied in the affirmative. 59% of parents over fifty felt that the schools were a contributing factor to vandalism. 37% of those interviewed in the professional class considered the schools a contributing factor to poor discipline on the streets. In the clerical category, 58% was recorded. "Craftsmen" and "housewives" felt strongest about lack of discipline in the schools. In both classifications 78% of those interviewed agreed with the statement that what was done in the schools was a contributing factor to bad behaviour of children in the community.

In question eight, parents were asked whether they considered the high school programs too academic and uni-

versity-oriented. Of the sixty parents interviewed 40% said "yes" - (Table II). In Area I, 43% answered in the affirmative. In Area II, 50% answered in the affirmative and in Area III, 43% of respondents considered high school programs too academic - (Table VI). 44% of males and 39% of females considered high school programs university-oriented - (Table VII). Of parents between the ages of thirty-five and forty-nine years 42% answered in the affirmative, whereas 59% of those over fifty replied in the affirmative. In the occupation categories 32% of the "professional" group responded with a "yes", 33% of the "clerical" group, 39% of the "home duties" group and 67% of the "craftsmen" category.

In recent years, schools have become very much involved with student travel - overseas travel, sports travel, provincial exchange visits and so on. Parents were asked whether they felt that the schools had gone too far in this regard and whether students were spending too much time on such trips. 90% of respondents supported the schools' involvement. Only 10% stated that students were getting very little educational value out of such trips-(Table II). Not one parent interviewed in Area I objected to students' involvement in travel programs - (Table III). In Area II, 13% of those interviewed objected to so much student travel. In Area III, 29% of the interviewed parents felt that their children were spending alot of time travelling, particularly

on trips for hockey games, volleyball games and so on. Not one parent, male or female, in Area I objected to the school's involvement in travel. In Area II, 16% of the males interviewed objected, compared with 10% of the females interviewed. In Area III, 42% of the male respondents felt that students were spending too much time away from school. 14% of the interviewed females felt that the schools had gone too far with having children away on sports trips, exchange visits and so on. In Area II, 15% of those under forty-nine objected to too much travel time. No one over fifty years objected. In Area III, 30% of the group thirty-five to forty-nine years felt that too much time was being spent away from school and 25% of those over fifty years thought so. In the "occupation" grouping, 11% of the professional-managerial group felt that children were spending too much time in school-sponsored activities which involved travel. No one in the "clerical" group objected. 44% of "craftsmen" objected and 17% of "home duties" objected. It was noteworthy that parents from Area III objected to so much travelling time. Is it that children in the rural areas, more so than their city counterparts, seem to be always travelling on the buses?

Parents were asked in number twelve question whether they considered the school years as a period of "preparation" for life or was the school years a period of "life" in its own right. It was pointed out to parents that if

the school term was considered a period of "preparation" then the emphasis in the school program would be placed on the future life of the child. If the school term was not a period for "preparation", then the emphasis in the program would be on the "here" and "now". 80% of the sixty respondents felt that the school term of eleven years or so should be regarded as a period of "preparation" for the future. 97% of parents interviewed felt so in Area I. In Area II, 69% felt so and in Area III, 57% felt so. In Area I, 100% of males interviewed considered the school term a period of "preparation"; 94% of the females in Area I thought so. There was a significant difference in male responses to question twelve. In Area I, there was a 100% affirmative response as compared to only a 50% affirmative response in Area II and in Area III, 71% of the males interviewed considered the formal school year of a child's life as a term for "preparation". In Area I, 94% of the females interviewed considered high school years as years of preparation; in Area II, 80% did so and in Area III, 42% did so. There was no significant difference between the age groups in Area I with regards to this question; 96% of the younger group replied in the affirmative and 100% of the older group considered the school's job was to "prepare". There was also compatibility in Area II. 69% of the younger group and 67% of the older group felt that the school's job was to "prepare" the child for the future. 95% of the

"professional" group, 92% of the "clerical" group, 89% of the "craftsmen" and 72% of the "home duties" group felt that the school's main job was to "prepare."

In question number fifteen, parents were asked to reveal their feelings about the introduction of Grade XII to the high school program. The interviewer was often queried about the program for Grade XII - "For whom is the Grade XII program designed?," and so on. No information was given the interviewee for the simple reason that the writer had none to give. It was explained, therefore, that parents could make the assumptions that there were no problems regarding finances or programs - all of these matters could be assumed to be looked after and if this were so, then, would they approve or disapprove of Grade XII. Statistics revealed that if Grade XII is properly introduced to the high school program of studies and there is an acceptable and reasonable program offered, then nearly 100% of parents interviewed were in favour of the introduction of Grade XII. In Area I, 89% of respondents were in favour of introducing Grade XII; in Area II, 100% were in favour and in Area III, 79% of interviewees were. No significant differences were observed in the "age" grouping. In Area I, 88% of the younger group, thirty-five to forty-nine years, favoured the introduction of Grade XII. 84% of the over fifty years group favoured the introduction. In area II there was a 100% agreement

with introducing Grade XII to the school program. In Area III, 71% of males favoured Grade XII and 85% of females favoured the introduction. There was no significant difference reflected by the various groups. 89% of the "professional" group voted affirmatively, 92% of the "clerical" group favoured Grade XII, 89% of the "craftsmen" group favoured the move and 94% of housewives approved of the introduction of Grade XII to the high school program of studies in Newfoundland high schools.

Item number sixteen and seventeen provided parents with an opportunity to give arguments for their approval or disapproval of the introduction of Grade XII. These items will be dealt with separately and in detail later on in this chapter.

Item nineteen dealt with the teaching of religion in the high schools. Parents were asked, "Do you think that high schools should assume responsibility for teaching religion?" Only 38% of the sixty respondents answered "yes." In Area I, only 30% felt that the high schools should assume responsibility for teaching religion. In Area II, 38% felt that the schools should and 50% of those interviewed in Area III felt that the schools should. With the exception of Area II it seemed that the older groups of parents favoured the teaching of religion. In Area I, 60% of the older group favoured the school's involvement as compared

with 24% of the younger group in that area. In Area III, 75% of the older group favoured the teaching of religion in the high schools - only 40% of the younger group did. A slight difference of opinion existed between males and females with regards to the teaching of religion in the high schools. 42% of the males said, "Yes, the schools should teach religion." Only 35% of the females said so. 28% of "home duties" parents interviewed favoured the teaching of religion. 56% of "craftsmen" did; 44% of the "clerical" group did and 42% of the "professional" group did. The point must be noted here that all respondents were informed to interpret "religion" as they wished. Interviewees were given no information regarding any "religion programs" in the high schools. The negative vote was not a reflection of a disgruntled attitude expressed by parents concerning a particular school program of religious studies.

Throughout the interviews, parents were asked to consider themselves a part of a high school program planning committee. Would their decision favour making "French" a compulsory subject in the high school program? A little over one half of the parents interviewed would decide to make French mandatory. 70% of those interviewed in Area I said they would. In Area II, 38% of parents interviewed said that they would and 43% of parents interviewed in Area III said that they would consider French a compulsory course. 82% of females interviewed

in Area I stated that they would as contrasted with an affirmative response of 53% of the males. In Area II, 67% of the males said they would have French a mandatory course - only 20% of the females in this area stated that they would. In Area III, 28% of the males interviewed said "yes" as compared with 57% of the females interviewed in this area. A figure worthy of note was that 59% of those over fifty would consider French a compulsory course compared with 47% of those under fifty. The highest figure, 75%, indicating agreement with making French compulsory was found in the "clerical" occupational grouping. The lowest percentage, 22%, was indicated by the "craftsmen" - (Table IX).

With the exception of the strong feeling expressed in favour of the introduction of grade XII, no other aspect of high school programs received stronger support than the inclusion of Industrial Arts, Home Economics and so on. 92% responding indicated that they considered such programs a "must." There was nothing to indicate any difference of opinions between city dwellers or smaller town residents. In Area I, 90% agreeemnt was recorded; in Area II, 94% was recorded and in Area III, 93% was recorded - (Table VI). There was also no significant difference of opinions expressed by the male parent or the female parent. In Area I, 92% of the males interviewed agreed that Home Economics and Industrial Arts are a necessary component of the high school pro-

gram; 88% of females in this area agreed. In Area II, 100% of male respondents agreed, while 90% of female respondents agreed - (Table VII). In Area III, 100% of the male parents interviewed agreed and 85% of female parents agreed - (Table VII). 100% of parents involved with "home duties" voted in favour of including Home Economics in a high school program. Other statistics reveal the following information regarding the occupational classification: "professional" group, 95% agreed; "clerical group, 92% agreed; "craftsmen" group, 89% agreed.

In item twenty-two parents were asked if they felt a need for a "Family Living Course" which would include topics dealing with sex education, drug edcuation, child care and so on. Figures reveal strong support for such a course. 95% of the sixty parents interviewed would include a "Family Living Course" in the high school program. 100% of parents interviewed in Area I considered such a course an absolute necessity. Such feelings were revealed in Area III where 100% of the parents interviewed responded in the affirmative. In Area II, 88% agreed that the school should include courses dealing with sex, drugs, family care and so on - (Table VI). 100% of the male respondents and 93% of the female respondents indicated that a "Family Living Course" would be included in the high school programs had they the authority to implement it. There was no significant difference indicated between age groups. 95% of those parents in the thirty-five

to forty-nine age category indicated an affirmative response as compared with a 100% affirmative response from those over fifty years. All group classification indicated the same opinion concerning the "Family Living Course". All strongly agreed with its inclusion.

Although many parents were not familiar with the term "work experience" program, many were and did not hesitate to indicate their approval of this move by the high schools. Parents were informed that this program was designed for special students who were experiencing difficulty with an academic work load. As they became familiar with the idea of students having part time jobs while continuing their education at school, they indicated a strong measure of enthusiasm. 89% of all respondents indicated approval of the "work experience" idea. In Area I, 83% of parents interviewed favoured the plan. In Area II, 76% agreed with the idea and in Area III, 100% favoured such a program. All groups indicated approval of the plan with 84% of the "professional" group agreeing, 92% of the "clerical" group, 89% of the "craftsmen" group and 78% of the "home duties" group. Both "age" categories indicated strong agreement with the "work experience" plan - the lowest percent recorded was in Area II where only 67% of those parents over fifty years felt that such programs were beneficial to the student. The highest percentage was recorded in Area III where 100% of those interviewed acknowledged approval of the "work experience" plan.

In item twenty-four, parents were asked to indicate their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the high schools' Physical Education Program. Did parents believe that the Physical Education Program was taking too much time away from academic studies? Only 18% of all parents interviewed indicated dissatisfaction with this aspect of the high school program. In Areas I and II, 13% of those interviewed indicated displeasure with the Physical Education Program. However, in Area III, 36% of respondents felt that the Physical Education Program was taking too much of their child's time - (Table VI). (In Area III parents were advised to include travelling time by bus to and from games played in schools outside of their home towns.) 34% of males interviewed reported dissatisfaction with the time spent involved with sports. Only 7% of the females interviewed thought that sports were taking too much time. Males in Area III strongly condemned the involvement in the Physical Education Program. 71% of those interviewed in Area III disapproved. The group that felt strongly about student involvement in the sports program was the "craftsmen" group. 67% of those interviewed in this category objected to the time committed to sports - (Table IX).

Parents were not quite sure how much time was devoted to the study of Newfoundland history and culture. However, they felt that "Newfoundlandia" was not emphasized enough.

Only 15% agreed that enough was being done. In Area I, 20% of the parents interviewed indicated that enough time was spent on the study of Newfoundland culture. In Area II, 19% felt so and in Area III, only 7% indicated that enough was being done. The younger group of parents seemed to indicate the strongest support for more study of "Newfoundlandia." 24% of the younger group in Area I stressed that more study was required. 15% thought so in Area II and in Area III only 10% felt that enough time was spent in the high schools on the history and culture of the province. There was no significant difference in opinions between males and females regarding this question. 13% of males interviewed felt that enough time was spent in this area of studies compared with 17% of the females interviewed - (Table VIII). Only 11% of parents classified as "craftsmen" and "home duties" indicated that enough was being done with regards to the study of the history of Canada's youngest province - (Table IX).

In Item 26, parents were asked to make known their views concerning the demands of today's society. Was there a need for the schools to get involved in courses dealing with law, union-management problems, poverty and so on. 89% of the parents interviewed said "yes" there was a need. In Area I, 90% indicated a need. In Area II, 88% felt there was a need and in Area III, 100% of the parents interviewed

expressed a desire for the high schools to get involved with such courses. Both "age" categories in all three areas indicated a strong feeling for having the schools involved in these timely topics. 86% of the younger group of parents and 92% of the older group indicated this feeling. Both males and females strongly felt that the schools should be involved with such topics as housing, poverty and so on. 86% of the males indicated this desire for involvement and 92% of females interviewed felt strongly that the schools should be involved - (Table VIII). 79% of the "professional" group, 92% of the "clerical" group, 89% of the "craftsmen" group and 89% of the "home duties" group indicated that the demands of our present society were such that the schools had better keep in step and include courses dealing with the challenges of todays society.

Until recently a grade XI high school diploma was granted on the basis of marks obtained in a public examination written at the end of the school year. The examination was set by Department of Education officials, supervised by officials designated by this Department and the child's performance on this examination was evaluated by markers who were hired temporarily by the Department of Education. Today, most Newfoundland high schools are operating under a student evaluation system termed as the "Shared-Evaluation Program." Under this system the students particular school is involved in the evaluation process and responsible to the student for

one-half of the total possible mark. Parents were asked if they considered the "Shared-Evaluation Program" a fair method for evaluating a students' school performance. The over-all total indicated 78% of parents interviewed favoured the system. In Area I, 80% of parents did; in Area II, 69% did; and in Area III, 71% favoured the program. Both younger parents and older parents felt that the system was a fair one - 76% of parents in the younger category indicated a favourable opinion while in the over fifty years group of parents 74% believed it to be a good method - (Table VIII). Both males and females were of the same opinion regarding this evaluation procedure. 77% of male parents interviewed considered it fair while 71% of the females considered it so - (Table VII). The "managerial" and "clerical" groups indicated a 79% and a 75% favourable response - (Table IX). 56% of respondents in the "craftsmen" category considered the system a fair one and 67% of housewives interviewed considered it so.

"Are you satisfied with the report cards that you receive?," parents were asked in Item twenty-nine. 73% of the sixty respondents indicated that they were satisfied. This figure was consistent in Areas I, II and III. It was also consistent with the figures of 72% and 74% recorded in the male and female categories - (Table VIII). (More information concerning this question will be forthcoming in the chapter to follow.)

Question thirty-three was concerned with the counselling service provided by the schools. Only 17% of the parents interviewed expressed a measure of satisfaction with the service. In Area I, only 10% of parents interviewed were satisfied with the service - (Table VI). In Area II, 25% were satisfied and in Area III, only 21% were pleased with the counselling services provided by the school. In the case of parents between the ages of thirty-five and forty-nine, only 18% indicated satisfaction with the counselling services. 26% of those parents over fifty years considered the services satisfactory. Females were more tolerant of the lack of services than males. Only 12% of males interviewed expressed an acceptance of the amount of counselling services - 26% of interviewed females did. Al groups; "professional," "clerical, "craftsmen," and "home duties" indicated a felt need for more counselling services. Only 16% of the "clerical" group interviewed were pleased and only 11% of those categorized as "craftsmen" indicated satisfaction.

Item thirty-four was designed to elicit information that would serve as a basis for comparing the involvement of students today with their parents' involvement in school activities. No clear cut pattern emerged. In Area I, the approximate figure of 50% was reflected in all aspects of the study. One-half of parents interviewed felt that today's students

are more active - one-half of those interviewed felt that students were as much involved twenty years ago. Area II and III were seen in a differenct perspective. 69% of those interviewed in Area II felt that students are more involved today than twenty years ago and in Area III, 71% of parents interviewed thought that this was so.

An interesting difference existed between younger parents and the older group of parents. In the case of the former only 60% felt that today students were more involved whereas 78% of the older parents felt that students are more involved now than they were twenty or thiry years ago. It was considered that there are simply more activities which offer an opportunity for involvement today than there were a decade ago.

TABLE II

TOTAL RESPONSES FOR ALL THREE AREAS

Question Number	Sample Size	Number Agreeing with Statement	Don't Know	Number Disagreeing with Statement	Percent Agreeing with Statement
1	60	46	2	12	77
2	60	47	0	13	78
3	60	20	0	13	33
4	60	50	0	10	83
7	60	30	0	30	50
8	60	24	3	33	40
9	60	6	0	54	10
12	60	48	2	10	80
15	60	53	1	6	89
19	60	23	2	35	38
20	60	33	0	27	55
21	60	55	0	5	92
22	60	57	1	2	95
23	60	53	1	6	89
24	60	11	0	49	18
25	60	9	8	43	15
26	60	53	0	7	89
27	60	47	4	9	78
29	60	44	0	16	73
33	60	10	9	41	17
34	60	35	0	25	58

TABLE III

RESPONSES FOR AREA I - ST. JOHN'S

Question Number	Sample Size	Number Agreeing with Statement	Don't Know	Number Disagreeing with Statement	Percent Agreeing with Statement
1	30	24	0	6	80
2	30	23	0	7	78
3	30	8	0	22	27
4	30	25	1	4	83
7	30	11	0	19	37
8	30	13	2	15	43
9	30	0	0	30	100
12	30	29	0	1	97
15	30	26	0	4	87
19	30	9	3	18	30
20	30	21	0	9	70
21	30	27	0	3	90
22	30	30	0	0	100
23	30	25	0	5	83
24	30	4	0	26	13
25	30	6	4	20	20
26	30	27	0	3	90
27	30	24	1	5	80
29	30	22	0	8	73
33	30	3	4	23	10
34	30	15	0	15	50

TABE IV

RESPONSES FOR AREA II - GANDER

Question Number	Sample Size	Number Agreeing with Statement	Don't Know	Number Disagreeing with Statement	Percent Agreeing with Statement
1	16	11	1	4	69
2	16	11	0	5	69
3	16	4	0	12	25
4	16	11	0	5	69
7	16	10	0	6	63
8	16	8	2	6	50
9	16	2	0	14	13
12	16	11	1	4	69
15	16	16	0	0	100
19	16	6	0	10	38
20	16	6	0	10	38
21	16	15	0	1	94
22	16	14	1	1	88
23	16	12	2	2	76
24	16	2	1	13	13
25	16	3	2	11	19
26	16	14	0	2	88
27	16	11	1	4	69
29	16	12	0	4	76
33	16	4	3	9	25
34	16	11	0	5	69

TABLE V

RESPONSES FOR AREA III - GLOVERTOWN, EASTPORT, GAMBO-DARK COVE, HARE BAY-DOVER

Question Number	Sample Size	Number Agreeing with Statement	Don't Know	Number Disagreeing with Statement	Percent Agreeing with Statement
1	14	11	0	3	79
2	14	14	0	0	100
3	14	7	0	7	50
4	14	13	0	1	93
7	14	8	0	6	57
8	14	6	0	8	43
9	14	4	0	10	29
12	14	8	1	5	57
15	14	11	1	2	79
19	14	7	0	7	50
20	14	6	0	8	43
21	14	13	0	1	93
22	14	14	0	0	100
23	14	14	0	0	100
24	14	5	0	9	36
25	14	1	0	13	7
26	14	12	1	1	86
27	14	10	2	2	71
29	14	10	0	4	71
33	14	3	2	9	21
34	14	10	0	4	71

TABLE VI

RESPONSES COMPARISON FOR TOTALS IN AREA I, AREA II AND AREA III. FIGURES IN THIS TABLE INDICATE THE PERCENTAGES OF RESPONDENTS WHO AGREED WITH THE STATEMENTS AS CONTAINED IN THE QUESTIONNAIRE.

Question Number	Totals %	Area I St. John's %	Area II Gander %	Area III Glovertown, Eastport Dark Cove, Dover %
1	77	80	69	79
2	78	78	69	100
3	33	27	25	50
4	83	83	69	93
7	50	37	63	57
8	40	43	50	43
9	10	0	13	29
12	80	97	69	57
15	89	87	100	79
19	38	30	38	50
20	55	70	38	43
21	92	90	94	93
22	95	100	88	100
23	89	83	76	100
24	18	13	13	36
25	15	20	19	7
26	89	90	88	86
27	78	80	69	71
29	73	73	76	71
33	17	10	25	21
34	58	50	69	71

TABLE VII

FIGURES IN THIS TABLE INDICATE THE PERCENTAGES OF MALE AND FEMALE RESPONSES THAT CONCURRED WITH THE STATEMENT AS PRESENTED IN THE QUESTIONNAIRE.

Question Number	Area I		Area II		Area III		Totals	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1	84	82	83	60	71	85	79	76
2	84	70	50	80	100	100	78	83
3	30	23	16	30	57	42	34	32
4	58	88	100	60	57	100	72	83
7	46	35	67	60	71	42	61	46
8	23	35	67	40	42	42	44	39
9	0	0	16	10	42	14	19	8
12	100	94	50	80	71	42	74	72
15	88	85	100	100	71	85	86	90
19	38	28	16	50	71	28	42	35
20	53	82	67	20	28	57	49	53
21	92	88	100	90	100	85	97	88
22	100	100	100	80	100	100	100	93
23	92	76	83	70	100	100	92	82
24	15	11	16	10	71	0	34	7
25	23	17	16	20	0	14	13	17
26	92	88	83	90	85	85	87	88
27	76	82	83	60	71	71	77	71
29	61	82	83	70	71	71	72	74
33	7	11	16	30	14	28	12	23
34	53	47	83	60	71	71	69	59

TABLE VIII

FIGURES IN THIS TABLE INDICATE THE PERCENTAGES OF AFFIRMATIVE RESPONSES TO THE QUESTIONS AS CONTAINED IN THE QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE BASIS OF "AGE" CLASSIFICATION.

Question Number	Area I		Area II		Area III		Total	
	35-49	50 & Over	35-49	50 & Over	35-49	50 & Over	35-49	50 & Over
1	80	80	69	67	80	75	76	74
2	72	100	76	33	100	100	83	78
3	32	20	23	33	50	50	35	34
4	88	60	77	33	90	100	85	64
7	28	60	62	67	60	50	50	59
8	24	60	62	67	40	50	42	59
9	0	0	15	0	30	25	15	8
12	96	100	69	67	50	75	72	80
15	96	40	100	100	70	100	87	80
19	24	60	38	33	40	75	34	56
20	72	60	30	67	40	50	47	59
21	88	100	100	67	90	100	93	89
22	100	100	85	100	100	100	95	100
23	80	100	77	67	100	100	86	89
24	12	20	15	0	30	50	19	23
25	24	0	15	33	10	0	16	11
26	84	100	85	100	90	75	86	92
27	80	80	69	67	80	75	76	74
29	68	100	69	100	80	50	72	83
33	8	20	15	33	30	25	18	26
34	48	60	62	100	70	75	60	78

TABLE IX

FIGURES IN THIS TABLE INDICATE THE PERCENTAGES OF AFFIRMATIVE RESPONSES TO THE QUESTIONS CONTAINED IN THE QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE BASIS OF OCCUPATIONAL CLASSIFICATION

Question	Managerial Professional	Clerical Sales & Services	Craftsmen	Home Duties
1	68	67	78	78
2	79	75	89	78
3	26	25	56	22
4	68	100	78	78
7	37	58	78	39
8	32	33	67	39
9	11	0	44	17
12	95	92	89	72
15	89	92	89	94
19	42	33	56	28
20	53	75	22	56
21	95	92	89	100
22	100	100	100	94
23	84	92	89	78
24	16	17	67	11
25	16	33	11	11
26	79	92	89	89
27	79	75	56	67
29	74	92	78	67
33	11	16	11	28
34	68	42	67	50

As indicated at the beginning of this chapter, questions not included in Tables II through IX would be dealt with on an individual basis. Parents were completely free to offer any information that they wished to offer. Because it was not possible in this report to include every response given by the sixty parents interviewed, the author has classified the responses into three categories and indicated the percentages of respondents that supplied the interviewer with that particular response.

Response to Item Five -
What does your child like about school?

TABLE X

Response	Percent
Friendly teachers	39
Sports activities	32
Discussion periods	18
Being with friends	11

In spite of the fact that this study attempted to focus on curriculum, whenever parents were given an opportunity to discuss matters that they considered urgent and timely the chief topic of interest was "teachers." Nothing seemed to concern parents more than teachers' competence. As Table X indicated, friendly teachers topped the list of what students liked best about schools. Table XI indicated

again the grave concern of parents about teacher efficiency. Teachers also topped the list - this time as an item that was disliked most about school.

Response to Item Six -
"What does your child dislike most about school?"

TABLE XI

Response	Percent
Poor teachers	55
Religion classes	15
Surprise tests	15
Mathematics	15

Response for Item Ten -
"What should be the most important, determining factor regarding the development of a high school program?"

TABLE XII

Response	Percent
Requirements of society	15
Wishes of the parents	3
The abilities and interests of students	67
The abilities and interests of the teaching staff	18

Items Ten and Eleven were designed to ascertain whether there existed a difference in what parents perceived <u>should</u>

be the most important determining factor regarding the development of a high school program and what was the basic determining factor. 67% of parents interviewed felt that the abilities of the students, should be a basic determining factor; however, only 28% felt that such was the case. The most significant result recorded in Table XII was that only 3% of those interviewed believed that the wishes of the parent was a determining factor regarding the development of the high school program.

Response to Item Thirteen -

"What do you consider the biggest problem your child will have to face after leaving school?"

TABLE XIII

Response	Percent
Finding satisfactory vocation	70
Social adjustment	24
Retraining for changing job markets	6

The primary concern of parents focused on the choice of vocation. 76% of those interviewed indicated so. Not only did parents express concern over the finding of appropriate employment but they also recognized that their children would likely change jobs three or four times throughout their life spans. These figures reflect a definite need for vocational guidance in the high schools.

Response to Item Fourteen
"Should students be offered a wide variety of courses or a few basic courses?"

TABLE XIV

Response	Percent
Schools should offer a wide variety of courses	60
Schools should stick to the basics	40

Although 40% of respondents felt that high schools should concentrate on the basic courses such as English and Mathematics, the figure does not reflect the opinion that a variety of courses should not be offered. The investigator sensed that many parents felt that a wide variety of courses should not be offered at the expense of a mastery of the basics.

89% of parents interviewed approved of the Newfoundland Government's intentions to introduce Grade XII to the high school program of studies - (Table II). Items sixteen and seventeen were included in the questionnaire to ascertain from parents reasons for favouring or disapproving the introduction of Grade XII.

Response to Item Sixteen -
"What reasons do you offer
for supporting the Grade XII plan?"

TABLE XV

Response	Percent
Another year in high school is another year to mature	77
Preparation for post-secondary training	23

Response to Item Seventeen -
"What reasons do you offer for
disagreeing with Grade XII plan?"

TABLE XVI

Response	Percent
Money should be more wisely spent on other grades	75
Grade XII is not required for entrance to post-secondary institutions	25

There is no conflict between the second response in Table XV and the second response in Table XVI. In the case of the former, parents assumed that Grade XII would be required as a prerequisite for entrance to the post-secondary institution. In Table XVI no such assumption was made - respondents reacted to the educational system as it is today in Newfoundland.

Response to Item Eighteen -
"Parents' classification of subjects into two categories, Essential or Not too Essential"

TABLE XVII

Subject	Essential Percent	Not too Essential Percent
English Language	100	0
Civics	60	40
Mathematics	100	0
Canadian History	67	33
Physics	41	59
Chemistry	37	63
Economics	97	3
Geography	53	47
Music	17	83
Art	17	83
Physical Education	70	30

It should be pointed out that the intent of the question was not to establish priorities based on the importance of the particular subject area. Parents were told that "essential" meant that the subject would be mandatory for all students. Apart from the two subject areas; English Language and Mathematics, where parents indicated 100% agreement for having these two courses compulsory, and interesting figure is the 97% favouring Economics as a mandatory course in our high school. Is this a reflection of the economic turmoil of our times?

Although generally parents were not strongly opinionated concerning grading by letters or grading by percentages, the majority favoured the percentage system of evaluation simply because that is what they were familiar with when they were students.

Response to Item Twenty-Eight -
"Grading with letters, A, B, C, D, or with percentages"

TABLE XVIII

Response	Percent
Grading school performances by using the "letter" system	33
Grading school performance by using percentages	67

Item Thirty was included in the questionnaire in order that parents might have an opportunity to elaborate on their dissatisfaction with report cards. Generally, there was no strong feeling indicated but 100% of parents interviewed stated that the report cards need to be supplemented with parent-teacher interviews.

Response to Item Thirty-One -
"How often do you think the school should inform you of your child's progress?"

TABLE XIX

Response	Percent
Four times per year	53
Three times per year	33
Twice per year	14

Although parents felt that the schools' policy of reporting three or four times per year was satisfactory, there is no doubt that parents wished to be informed immediately if their child were not doing satisfactory work.

Response to Item Thirty-Two -
"With what statement would you agree?"

TABLE XX

Response	Percent
Teachers expect too much of my child	5
Teachers could expect more from my child	43
The teachers' level of expectation is satisfactory	52

It is interesting to note that only 5% of parents interviewed felt that the schools were expecting too much from students. 43% felt that the schools could expect more. Even

among the 52% of parents that reported satisfaction there were those who reluctantly chose the third statement in preference to the second. It was this slight hesitation on the part of the 52% of parents who chose the third statement that caused the writer to conclude that parents believe that the schools could expect more from students.

In Item Thirty-five parents were asked to indicate their views concerning the implementation of new ideas in the school programs. Parents were told to assume that they had a good idea that could prove to be beneficial to all children in their school. To whom would they go with the idea - confident that it would be implemented into the school program?

Response to Item Thirty-five - "What would be the most effective method of bringing about change?"

TABLE XXI

Response	Percent
Meet with Department of Education Curriculum Planning Officials (Government Level)	13
Through Electing Qualified Curriculum Planners (School Board Level)	40
Through Parental Repesentation on school Curriculum Planning Committees (School Level)	47

Parents generally felt that authority to implement change lay with the School Board, however, 47% of those interviewed stated that the first move would be to the principal of the school. Then, it was assumed that if the idea were a good one, the principal would be delighted to carry the idea along the chain of authority.

Although the writer is conscious of the fallacy of sweeping generalizations, the data compiled in this study has prompted him to conclude that there is wide-spread support for the curriculum presently in use in our Newfoundland high schools.

Chapter IV

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this investigation was to record and analyze the attitudes of parents towards the program of studies currently in use in Newfoundland high schools. It was felt that parents had little or no input with regards to the courses of study offered in today's schools. It was felt that the curriculum in use is in fact the outcome of the labours of professional educators whose own conception of curriculum might often be far removed from the parents' conceptions of instructional programming. The intent of this study, then, was to arrange a method of investigation that would provide parents with an opportunity to make known their feelings regarding high school curriculum.

The necessary data was collected through interviews with sixty parents: thirty in St. John's, sixteen in Gander and fourteen parents in Glovertown, Eastport, Gambo-Dark Cove, and Eare Bay-Dover. "Parents" were those having at least one child in school.

The method of sampling may be best described as "stratified, random sampling." In the case of St. John's, one school, Prince of Wales Collegiate, was chosen to represent the city. (This high school generally serves the East End, Portugal Cove, Pouch Cove and Torbay.) The area served by this school was divided into ten blocks. Class lists were

obtained from the Principal of the school and names and addresses of parents were recorded on strips of paper. These strips were sorted into ten collections - each collection representing one of the ten blocks mentioned. Three names were then drawn from each collection - numbering thirty, total. In the case of all other towns, co-operation was elicited from the school principals and the fire chiefs in the various communities. Principals supplied the class lists from which names and addresses of parents were recorded and fire-chiefs helped in dividing their towns into smaller sections similar to the "blocks" division arranged in the city. For example, the area served by the Glovertown Regional High School was divided into Saunder's Cove, North Shore, Central, Anglo-Brook, South Side, Traytown, Cull's Harbour and so on. As was the case in the city, names of parents were compiled in accordance with the section of town where they lived. "Draws" were then conducted and the selected parents were contacted by telephone to arrange interview dates.

Parents were very co-operative. In St. John's, arrangements for interviews were made by thirty out of the thirty-one parents called. Out of eighteen parents called in Gander, arrangements for interviews were made by sixteen parents and in Area III, fourteen of the fifteen parents called accepted. This co-operation was considered signifi-

cant, for it indicated that parents would like to be involved and would like to have a "voice" as to what programs are offered their children. The hypothesis that the schools were doing what parents didn't want was dismissed. Rather, it was concluded that there was general satisfaction with the programs offered in the high school in Newfoundland. This generalization is a confirmation of the conclusions reached by Dr. Warren in his study, "Public Attitudes Towards Education in Newfoundland and Labrador."

Certain general conclusions of this study may be summarized as follows:

1. Although certain aspects of our education system were criticized by parents, generally the study reflected wide-spread support for the program of studies offered in the Newfoundland high schools. 77% of the parents interviewed felt that the schools were satisfactorily meeting needs of their children.

2. Parents believed that they should have an input into high school program planning. 78% of the respondents felt that they should have a voice as to what the schools should teach. An interesting point to note in Item Eleven is that only 3% of parents believed that the "wishes of parents" was a basic determining factor in the

development of a high school curriculum - (Table XII).

3. Parents are not afraid of change. In spite of their admittance of general satisfaction with the schools, the investigator sensed an overwhelming enthusiasm on the part of parents for the introduction of new ideas. 90% of interviewed parents welcomed the Government's announcement concerning the inclusion of Grade XII to the high school program of studies. 95% of those interviewed saw a need and indicated a support for schools to get involved in sex education, drug education, consumer education and so on. 89% considered the "work experience" program (Item 23) a positive step towards a better education program. 84% favoured the schools' involvement in such current topics as poverty, housing and union-management problems. It was concluded that school programs must change in order to meet the needs of a rapidly changing society, and that parents welcome the leadership that will help them meet the challenge of that change. Professional curriculum planners need not fear the continuing need to modify the school curriculum - parents, it would appear, are quite prepared to support innovation.

4. Parents favoured the moves made by schools to accommodate the varied interests and capabilities of students. 60% of those interviewed would offer a wide variety of courses. 92% would include subject areas as Industrial Arts and Home Economics. However, it was repeatedly stressed that their decision to include a wide variety of courses did not mean they could condone a lowering of standards, nor should a wide variety of courses be offered at the expense of the mastery of the "basics."

5. Parents view teachers as a very important component of the school organization. Throughout the interviews, when the formal interrogations were completed, "teachers" was the main topic of conversation. Parents were quite pleased when a healthy relationship existed between the teacher and their child. In the few cases where the child was not doing satisfactory work at school, parents did not hesitate to consider the teacher a contributing factor regarding the poor performance.

6. Parents were not altogether concerned about the teaching

of religion in the high schools. (Parents were free to interpret "religion" as they wished.) Only 38% favoured the teaching of religion. Most of those who agreed that the schools should assume responsibility for the teaching of religion were in the "over fifty" age category.

7. Only 17% of the parents interviewed felt that the schools were providing enough counselling services. The investigation reflected the very deep concern of parents regarding the urgent need for more vocational guidance. Parents expressed a concern about the length of time it takes an adolescent to begin considering a life's vocation. "Finding satisfactory employment" was the answer given by 70% of parents interviewed to the question, "What do you consider the biggest problem your child will face when the formal education is completed?"

8. Physical Education was considered a very important part of the high school program. Only 18% of the respondents felt that too much time was spent on this aspect of a child's development. Most of the objections were raised in

Area III, where students have to travel all day on buses in order to participate in an out-of-town game.

9. Although parents in Area I considered French an essential subject more so than parents in the other two areas, the general feeling reflected in the study was that French be considered a mandatory subject for all students.

10. Although parents were not certain as to what extent Newfoundland history and culture was studied in the schools, the general feeling expressed was a demand for more such studies.

11. Parents favoured the shared-evaluation program. 78% of parents interviewed felt that there was a need for a public examination in Grade XI but it was felt that the schools should have an input into the evaluation of a student's school performance.

12. There was general satisfaction expressed concerning the schools reporting system. A formal report three or four times a year was what parents expected. It was pointed out, however, that in case of a childs poor performance, schools

should assume a responsibility for immediately notifying the parent of the situation. With regards to the poor performance of students, parents stressed an urgent need for parent-teacher interviews.

Some General Recommendations

On the basis of the data analyzed in this study it is recommended that:

1. School curriculum be continuously revised in the light of a changing society. However, modifications of the school program should not be made with any intent of lowering standards to accommodate poor performance of students.
2. Schools broaden the scope of their programs to accommodate the differences in abilities and interests of all children.
3. School provide more guidance counselling services.
4. Schools make a genuine attempt to promote a healthy, close relationship between parents and teachers. A number of periods per week for parent-teacher interviews should be considered a legitimate part of a teacher's work load.
5. Schools promote for study purposes all the best materials available regarding the history and cultural activities of Newfoundland.
6. On principle, Grade XII should be added to the program of studies in Newfoundland high schools.

Appendix A

The Questionnaire

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Do you think that the schools are meeting the "Needs" of your children?

2. Do you think that you should have a "voice" as to what the schools should teach?

3. It is being said that much of what the schools are presently doing is not practical and is irrelevant. Do you consider this a fair criticism?

4. Do your children like school?

5. From your personal viewpoint, what does your child like best about school?

6. From your personal viewpoint, what does your child dislike most about school?

7. If it be true that students today are dissident, restless and undisciplined, that truancy is rampant and vandalism is on the increase, would you maintain that what is being done in the schools is a contributing factor?

8. High school programs have often been criticized on the grounds that they are too academic and university oriented. Do you think so?

9. In recent years, schools have become very much involved with student travel -- overseas travel, sports travel, provincial exchange visits, etc. Do you think that your child is spending too much time away from his school on such trips?

10. From your personal viewpoint, what should be the most important, determining factor regarding the development of a high school curriculum:

    a. Requirements of society
    b. Wishes of the parents
    c. The abilities and interests of the students
    d. The abilities and interests of the teaching personnel

11. From your personal viewpoint, what is the basic determining factor in the development of a high school curriculum:

    a. Requirements of society
    b. Wishes of the parents
    c. The abilities and interests of the students
    d. The abilities and interests of the teaching staff

12. Some curriculum organizers consider the school term of 11-13 years as a period of "preparation" for living the next 50 or 60 years, and they plan programs in

accordance with this premise. Do you agree?

13. What do you consider the biggest problem your child will have to face 10-20 years from now?

14. Some educators believe that high schools should offer students a wide variety of courses. Others think that the high school should concentrate on fewer basic courses such as English, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies. Which of these two policies do you think high school curriculum planners should follow?

15. Recently the Newfoundland Government announced its intentions to introduce Grade XII to the high school program of studies. Do you approve or disapprove?

16. What reasons would you offer for supporting the Grade XII plan?

17. If you disagree with the Grade XII plan, what reasons do you offer for disagreeing?

18. Generally, most schools include in their programs the following subject areas. Will you tell me in the case of each of these high school subjects whether you regard it as essential for all students or not too essential:

English Language

Civics

Mathematics

Canadian History

Physics

Chemistry

Economics

Geography

Music

Art

Physical Education

19. Do you think that high schools should assume responsibility for teaching religion?

20. Do you think that "French" should be a mandatory subject in Newfoundland high schools?

21. The inclusion of such subject areas as Industrial Arts, Home Economics, etc. in a high school program is very expensive. Should these subjects be included whatever the cost?

22. Is there a need for a family living course for all high school students (family living course to include consumer education, sex education, child care, drug education, etc.)?

23. Some schools have introduced in their programs the "work experience" program: (Explain). Would you consider this an important positive change?

24. Do you feel that the physical education program in your school is taking too much of your child's time?

25. Do you think that the culture and history of Newfoundland - Newfoundlandia - is emphasized enough in our high schools?

26. Do you feel that high schools should include in their programs, courses dealing with law, union/management, poverty, housing, etc?

27. Do you consider the "shared-evaluation program" (Explain) a fair method for evaluating your child's school performance?

28. Would you rather have your child's school performance graded with letters A, B, C, D etc., or with percentages: 67, 51, 88, etc.?

29. Do the reports that you receive on the progress of your child in school provide you with the information that you would like to have?

30. If Question 29 is qualified, what other information would you like to have?

31. How often do you think the school should inform you of your child's progress?

32. With what statement would you agree?

(a) Teachers expect too much of my child.
(b) Teachers could expect more from my child.

33. Do you feel that your school is providing enough counselling services in regard to vocational choices, school programs, etc.?

34. Do you think that your child has more to do in school than was expected of you when you were a student?

35. From your personal viewpoint, what would be the most effective method of bringing about changes in school programs?

(a) Through parents' meetings with Department of Education curriculum planning officials (Government level).
(b) Through elections of qualified curriculum planners (school board level).

(c) Through parental representation on school curriculum planning committees (school level).

(d) Through P.T.A. meetings.

Appendix B

List of Communities Included in the Sample

List of Communities

St. John's

Gander

Glovertown

Eastport

Gambo

Dark Cove

Hare Bay

Dover

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