Program of continuous pupil progress in the Exshaw Elementary School Exshaw Alberta Canada

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Of all educational institutions, the elementary school reaches the greatest number of children for the longest period of time. Over the years the pattern of elementary education, although subject to periodic innovations concerned with curriculum, grouping practices, unit programs, and the like, has not really been subject to appreciable change. The organization developed for the Quincy Grammar Schools in Massachusetts has held sway in America for over one-hundred years, although at that time its proponents prophesied that it would set the pattern for elementary education for fifty years. They erred only in being too conservative.

The school program of the middle years of the nineteenth century in America was designed to permit the convenient classification of great numbers of pupils pouring into the schools. It encouraged the division of knowledge into segments; it simplified the task of preparing teachers quickly; but at no time did it really concern itself with the needs of the individual student. Inevitably, critics arose who challenged such regimentation, but their protests were largely unanswered until the twentieth century when investigators revealed the basic likeness in the needs and
attitudes of the individual child. Learning became linked with inquiry rather than as the possession of a large body of facts.

During the past fifteen years, however, there has emerged a constant emphasis for change, change that will require more than administrative facility, change that will harmonize the pattern of child growth and development with the curriculum and organization of the school. Specifically, the emphasis has been toward a school program designed to fit the curriculum toward the child rather than, as at present, expecting each child to fit a set curriculum predetermined for the mythical average. Such a school program cannot easily be reconciled to a graded school organization, but requires a much more flexible administration, commonly termed a continuous progress program.
CHAPTER II

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Over the past several years, the urban school systems in the Province of Alberta have been implementing various forms of continuous progress plans in their elementary schools. The first of these programs was implemented by the Edmonton Public School Board followed by the Medicine Hat Public School Board and then the Calgary Public School Board. The student population represented by these three large school districts alone means that as of September, 1968, nearly one half of the elementary school children in Alberta will be attending schools in which there is some type of continuous progress plan in effect. Consequently, the Alberta student population involved in continuous progress plans is basically urban in nature since there have been relatively few projects aimed at implementing continuous progress in the rural systems.

Therefore, the primary purpose of this paper was to accumulate, organize, and present information pertinent to the proposed enactment and actual implementation of a continuous progress type of school organization in a rural school.

I. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem presented in this text involves eight major areas of investigation, all regarding the formulation
and operation of a continuous progress plan of school organization.

1. What are the current trends in the areas of continuous progress and non-grading as indicated by authorities in the field and the results of pertinent research?
2. How did the Exshaw Plan evolve, and how is it structured?
3. What is the theoretical basis of this plan?
4. What are the practical applications of the theoretical framework?
5. To what extent were the staff, students, and the public involved in the formulation of the plan?
6. Are there factors involved in the implementation of new programs that are peculiar to rural school areas?
7. What problems were encountered in the operation of the plan and how were they remedied?
8. What evaluation took place and to what extent were revisions in the structure of the plan necessary?
CHAPTER III

ASSUMPTIONS, DELIMITATIONS, LIMITATIONS, AND DEFINITION OF TERMS

I. ASSUMPTIONS

There are, in theory and practice, numerous significant and fundamental social, psychological, and educational concepts underlying a study of this type. It is obvious that a listing of the many and varied theories and hypotheses in the field of human relations would indeed be of immense proportions. Therefore, the assumptions listed here will be rather general in scope while pertaining specifically to the problem under consideration in this paper. The major and basic assumptions underlying the formation of this study fall into four major areas.

This study assumes that:

1. The graded system of school organization no longer adequately fulfills the educational needs of present day Canadian society and that a different type of school organization is needed. This study assumes the position that the continuous progress non-graded philosophy of school organization is a significant step in the direction of educational progress over the traditional graded concept.

2. A continuous pupil progress program that has
been structured and developed by the teachers involved in its implementation will have a high probability of success in accomplishing the goals set for the program. The basis for this assumption is that if teacher behavior in the areas of teaching method and philosophy does not incur a positive change in the direction of the new program, then the new program will be a change in name only and not in fact. This means that the old program would still predominate and very little that was new would take place. Conversely, if teacher behavior does change in compliance with the goals of the new program, then the new program would be a real, or true, change from the previous program.

Therefore, it follows that a teacher initiated and developed program of attempted change will be more successful than a program of attempted change developed and implemented by the administration without teacher involvement.

3. There are some basic differences in administrative structure, school community relations, and school board policies of a rural school system in Alberta as opposed to a large urban school system. Historically, the rural school district is the oldest surviving school administrative unit in the Province of Alberta. This system of school organization had its beginnings under the Ordinances of the Northwest Territories in 1885 and for many years it was the basic form of school administrative unit.
In the period between the two world wars, there occurred, in Alberta, a shift in population from rural to urban localities.\textsuperscript{1} With this shift in population, the enrollment of rural schools began to decrease, and as a result most of the rural school districts in the province were forced to amalgamate and form larger (divisional and county) units of organization.\textsuperscript{2} Some rural districts have, for reasons of location or economics, maintained the same basic structure as was set up nearly a century ago. The result is that there are approximately fifty independent rural school districts still in operation in Alberta.\textsuperscript{3} Each such district is autonomous with respect to the operation of its schools.\textsuperscript{4,5}

Because of the size and structure of the rural school district, any innovation in program faces certain


\textsuperscript{2}Ibid., pp. 6, 10.


unique problems for which solutions, different from those employed in larger administrative units, must be found. Of these differences that are unique to the rural district, two are of major importance: (a) the absence of central office resource personnel,\textsuperscript{6} and (b) the absence of a superintendent resident in the district.\textsuperscript{7}

The Absence of Central Office Resource Personnel

Boards of Trustees that are responsible for the operation of more than one school require some form of intermediate structure to coordinate the schools under their jurisdiction and to insure that their policy decisions are carried out. In the urban school districts this is commonly the function of the superintendent and his staff.\textsuperscript{8} As a result, any major innovation in school programming usually has its beginnings with the intermediate personnel and the responsibility for implementing change lies largely with this group.\textsuperscript{9} Use of these intermediate supervisory and resource personnel has many advantages both for the teacher

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{6}Department of Education, Government of the Province of Alberta, The School Act, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 63.
\item \textsuperscript{7}Ibid., pp. 63, 75.
\end{itemize}
and the board since such personnel are usually free of classroom responsibilities and are better able to cope with the increased work load that usually results from innovative proceedings.

The rural school district, on the other hand, because of its limited size and resources, tends to lack the intermediate structure between the school board and the individual school that is prevalent in the larger administrative units. If innovation is to take place in a rural district, it falls upon the administrator of the individual school to cope with the research, planning, and implementation of the new program. This procedure increases the work load of these administrators, and as a result, a greater period of time is necessary for planning and implementing educational change.

The Absence of a Superintendent Resident in the School District

In Alberta the superintendent responsible for the operation of rural school districts is employed by the provincial Department of Education and is given responsibility for the supervision of a number of independent school districts. As a result, he tends to locate his offices in a large urban center in close proximity to the districts under his jurisdiction. While this has many advantages, it does
tend to remove the superintendent from close association with the administration of the schools under his control.

The superintendent of schools has been defined as the educational leader of a school system and as the chief administrator of the board.\textsuperscript{10} Because of his necessary absence from an individual district for long periods of time, a large portion of his administrative responsibilities fall on the school principal. While the school superintendent is still the officer responsible for the conduct of the schools, the actual tasks of administering the affairs of a district tend to fall on the principal.\textsuperscript{11} The local school district principal in Alberta assumes, in most cases, such duties as initiating the budget, selection and securing of staff, advising the Board of Trustees, assisting the formulation, and implementing board policies, all of which in larger systems, are among the prescribed duties of the superintendent.\textsuperscript{12}

In addition to the two major differences between rural and urban school districts in Alberta there are several

\textsuperscript{10}Department of Education, Government of the Province of Alberta, \textit{The School Act, op. cit.}, p. 76.

\textsuperscript{11}Ibid.

minor and less distinct differences. Of these, three are readily discernible: (a) rigid and outdated physical facilities, (b) financial limitations, and (c) the school-community situation.

Rigid and outdated physical facilities. Because of the shift in population over the past several decades from rural to urban centers, the enrollment of rural schools has tended to decrease. As a result, new elementary schools are rarely found in rural districts and the majority of existing elementary schools were built over twenty years ago; a good number date back to the first two decades of the present century.13 Such buildings are usually of a very fixed nature with individual classrooms having solid walls, rectangular in shape and capable of accommodating from twenty-five to thirty students. Very few of these schools have space provided for special or auxiliary areas such as multi-purpose areas, library space, audio visual rooms, industrial arts or crafts areas, although some do have gymnasium space available in adjoining junior or senior high schools.14 As a result any plans that a Board may have


14 Ibid.
regarding innovative programs in instruction will have to be made with these limitations in mind.

Financial limitations. Because enrollment tends to remain static, or decrease, and because of an inadequate tax base in most rural areas, funds for new facilities and programs are difficult to secure.\textsuperscript{15,16} If a rural district wishes to compete on a favorable basis with the large urban districts in the area of instructional supplies and audio visual materials, it must do so through a very high supplementary requisition.

The school-community. Although not clearly validated, there does seem to be some evidence to indicate that schools in the rural setting have a greater informal personal identification for the individual in the school-community.\textsuperscript{17} This factor seems to make the rural school the personal property of those in the community and it tends to become a center steeped in local folklore and tradition. On

\begin{itemize}
\end{itemize}
the other hand, the urban school-community is usually subjected to a large population and geographic area, a transient resident population, a bureaucratic administrative school system and a non-resident teaching staff, all of which tend to isolate the school from its community.18

Although there are other factors distinguishing the rural school district from the urban, the above are only cited to illustrate that there are important differences between these two types of administrative units in Alberta.

4. The Action research method of reporting a research project is a valid and legitimate technique of scientific reporting.19,20

II. DELIMITATIONS

1. Although many types of continuous pupil progress plans were studied in the developmental stages of this plan, only one will be discussed in detail: the Exshaw Plan.

2. Only major facets of the plan will be presented since no detailed day-to-day record of the plan in action

18 Ibid.


was compiled.

3. The duration of this study will only cover the period of preplanning in 1967-1968, the period of implementation in 1968-69, and the period of re-evaluation in the spring of 1969.

III. LIMITATIONS

1. Since a daily record of events occurring during the first year of implementation was not kept, certain aspects of the program might not receive the scrutiny that might occur under more detailed conditions of observation.

2. Limiting factors of time and space also conditioned the degree of detailed examination of the overall program, especially in the area of curriculum and curriculum development for the new program.

IV. DEFINITION OF TERMS

Community—the attendance area for a single school.\textsuperscript{21}

Continuous progress—based on the concept that each child has his own pattern and rate of growth and that children of the same age will vary greatly in their ability and

rate of growth. Therefore, no child is ever considered a failure. If he does not achieve in proportion to his ability, the program is adjusted to fit his needs and problems. A child may progress more slowly than others, but the attempt is made to keep his growth continuous.\textsuperscript{22}

Non-grading—the provision of opportunity for continuous progress for each learner. There is no set body of content or group of skills to be covered by each student within a prescribed period of time. Materials are selected to match the spread of individual differences in the instructional group, and students move upward according to their readiness to proceed.\textsuperscript{23}

School board—refers to the board of trustees of the Exshaw School District 1699. The school district in Alberta is the basic unit of school administration, and boards are empowered to act within the limitations of the Alberta School Act.\textsuperscript{24}


\textsuperscript{24}Dominion Bureau of Statistics, \textit{The Organization and Administration of Public Schools in Canada}, Second Ed. (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1960), pp. 48-54.
CHAPTER IV

METHOD OF PROCEDURE

If the basic premise is taken that the ultimate criterion of a scientific theory is its utility in adding to our understanding, then a fundamental theory of curriculum change must not only underlie the development of the problem under observation, but it must also be related to the organized attack on the procedures of analysis involved in the study. In this paper, certain theories will be presented in relation to various aspects of curriculum development and change that are pertinent to the particular section of the study being presented at the time.

Therefore, in a general analysis, assuming that a curriculum event involves a space-time relationship (a process occurring over time), it might be hypothesized that three curriculum aspects will occur. These three phases involve those curriculum events that are planned, those which occur and those which are evaluated. In an expose on systems theory and curriculum development, Duncan and


Frymier depict the three stage system by use of circles to represent these various curriculum aspects. For example (Fig. 1), circle "A" represents that aspect of the curriculum which is planned, circle "B" that aspect which actually occurs, and circle "C" the evaluative phase.

![Diagram](image)

Figure 1. A graphic representation of general curriculum aspects.

Therefore, "1" would represent the events that were planned and did not occur, "2" would represent the events that were planned and did occur, and "3" those events that were not planned but did occur. If there was a large

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overlap between circle "A" and "B", then a situation exists in which most of what was planned actually took place. Conversely, if there is only slight overlap it might be assumed that very little of what was planned actually occurred. It should be stressed that the degree of overlap merely indicates the extent to which the curriculum event which is planned actually takes place and does not indicate the effectiveness of the curriculum.4

If this theoretical view is extended over a period of time, today's evaluation becomes tomorrow's plan. Each curriculum unit can be viewed as developing over time both vertically and horizontally (Fig. 2).5 Each dimension could provide a different picture of the interactions inherent in curriculum development. For example, that which occurred on successive days could be studied, obtaining a picture of occurrences over time, thus revealing the changing nature of that aspect of curriculum. On the other hand, a vertical sequence of that which was planned might also be studied, noting the changes appearing in respect to this aspect of curriculum.6

This theoretical basis is used as a criterion for

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5Ibid.
6Ibid., p. 194.
Figure 2. Graphic representation of vertical and horizontal development of curriculum.
designing the basic procedures of organizational design of this text. This means that the three basic stages would include the planning stage, the operational stage, and the evaluative stage.

The planning stage consists of all preparatory events leading to the actual enactment of the program. Special areas of consideration will include:

1. The philosophy of the school.
2. A rationale for action.
3. A theoretical framework to guide development of a working plan.
4. The initial program planning stages.
5. An evaluation of the program compared to the philosophy and theory.
6. A description of the actual working plan.
7. Descriptions of pupil, teacher, and community involvement.

For the most part it is the description of the events of the planning stage that will consume the bulk of this paper.

The operational stage will describe the plan in action and events that occurred during this period of time that either assisted or hindered the progress of the plan. Areas for consideration would include staff meetings, workshops, parent-teacher meetings and interviews as well as a
description of staff and facilities.

The third area, that of evaluation is perhaps the most difficult of all to describe. However, this will mainly fall into two categories: continuous evaluation throughout the program and a term end evaluation. Those involved in evaluative procedures would include the staff, school board, students, parents, and administrative personnel.

It is hoped that this report will be presented in a complete and concise manner and that all important factors will be considered.
CHAPTER V

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

H. L. Hagman, in an analysis of the organizational arrangements of schools, brings to light several premises which seem to be basic to an understanding of the development of the continuous progress system. He states that:

1. The organization for education in the United States lags behind knowledge and skills in educating.

2. Educational organization, as commonly found in all parts of the United States, is inadequate to carry the modern tasks of public schools.

3. Educational organization, as commonly observed, is essentially authoritarian by nature and development and serves democratic principles of operation poorly.

4. Most educational organization as it has developed has come about because of serving administrative convenience rather than because of desire to serve in terms of best educational practice.

5. Educational organization, as commonly found, is wasteful of manpower and is especially wasteful of the best professional talent.
6. Major changes in educational organization are inevitable.¹

Out of this type of thinking came a continued pressure for curriculum change by those educators who were striving for a break in the rigid lock-step approach to school organization. Early attempts in this direction were evidenced by the Winnetka-McDale and the Dalton plans.² Except for the organizational differences exhibited by each of these plans, they all emphasized the same basic approach—that of individualization of instruction. In fact, according to Beggs and Buffie,³ there seemed to be a great deal of emphasis on individual instruction from about 1910 on. (The Cambridge plan, the Portland plan, the Concertive plan, the Pueblo plan, and many more.) As evidenced by this activity, it seemed to many that the traditional graded school was not in harmony with the basic purposes of American education; namely, that every child should have an opportunity to develop his talents to the fullest extent possible.

It seems that the non-graded school emerged during


the 1930s with several schools abolishing primary grade structure, the most notable of which was the Flexible Progress Plan at Western Springs Illinois.\(^4\) Several types of non-grading were evidenced during the next several years, and the most notable of these was the plan begun in 1942 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, under L. P. Goodrich. This particular plan is generally recognized as the oldest non-graded school plan still in existence.\(^5\)

However, there was no great movement in the direction of this type of school organization until J. I. Goodlad popularized the concept in 1955.\(^6\) Since that time the non-graded movement has been closely associated with J. I. Goodlad and R. H. Anderson. They have stated their philosophy underlying this organizational pattern in this way:

The non-graded school is designed to implement a theory of continuous pupil progress; since the differences among children are great and since these differences cannot be substantially modified, school structure must facilitate the continuous educational progress of each pupil. Some pupils, therefore, will require a longer period of time than others for achieving certain learnings and attaining certain developmental levels.\(^7\)

\(^4\)Ibid., p. 17.

\(^5\)Ibid.


Since the popularization of the non-graded school, there has been a great interest in whether it really is an improved means of facilitating the learning process or not. In the textbooks, journals, and periodicals, many authors suggest the philosophy wholeheartedly; however, there are many who do express caution and concern over some of the present practices in non-grading. There are also those who disagree as to the degree of its effectiveness.

Others, including Goodlad, Anderson, etc.

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Rhoades, and Carswell defend the concept from the position of its intended philosophy. However, Budde, Shearon, McNally, and others express caution and deep concern for the fact that many are non-grading in name only, or have such a vague idea of the concept and philosophy that their programs are highly ineffective. Others, such as Williams and Lewin, question the value of even having


non-graded schools under the present circumstances. Truly, there is a great diversity of opinion as to the effectiveness of the non-graded concept in action. However, in light of the absence of conclusive research pointing to a detrimental effect on learning by non-graded schools, the abundance of literature favoring their inception, the basic philosophy of individualized instruction, and the lack of an alternately superior plan, it seems reasonable to assume that the continuous progress concept of school organization could provide a useful organizational device which may improve the instructional program of the school.
CHAPTER VI

PHILOSOPHY OF THE SCHOOL

During the past five years, there has emerged a constant emphasis for change in the Exshaw system. This emphasis has been mainly focused upon change that will harmonize the curriculum and organization of the school with recent knowledge concerning patterns of child growth and development. More specifically, the emphasis has been toward a school program designed to fit the curriculum toward the child rather than expecting each child to fit a set curriculum predetermined for the mythical average. It becomes evident that such a program cannot easily be reconciled to a graded school organization, but requires a much more flexible system of school organizational structure.

The staff unanimously agreed to adopt a staff policy of a basic philosophy to serve as a guideline for the type of program they desired.

I. A BASIC PHILOSOPHY

A type of school organization is desired that is based on the idea of continuous pupil progress, which promotes flexibility in grouping by removing grade levels, which is intended to lessen, or even eliminate, the problem of retention and acceleration, which is designed to
facilitate the teacher's role in providing for pupils' individual differences, and which will facilitate the learning process for the individual student to the greatest degree possible.

This entire concept of attempting to attain the goal of individual fulfillment presents a tremendous responsibility that falls upon teachers both individually and collectively, to derive means of achieving this goal. Pertaining to this ideal John Gardner states that:

we should very greatly enlarge our ways of thinking about education. We should be painting a vastly greater mural on a vastly more spacious wall. What we are trying to do is nothing less than to build a greater and more creative civilization. We propose that people accept as a universal task the fostering of individual development within a framework of rational and moral values. We propose that they accept as an all-encompassing goal the furtherance of individual growth and learning at every age, in every significant situation, in every conceivable way. By doing so we shall keep faith with our ideal of individual fulfillment and at the same time insure continued strength and creativity as a society.¹

It is the task of the school to instill the individual with a sense of dignity to recognize his potentialities, to release his creative powers, and to stimulate his initiative. Public education, based on the fact that every child has a right to be helped to achieve his potentialities to the maximum, is not enough. There must be a system of

education based on a firm commitment to enact this philosophy. It is not enough to expound upon the ideal; it must be formulated in action. Such a design is presented in *Deciding What to Teach*:

The instructional program should provide (a) opportunities for developing the individual potentialities represented in the wide range of differences among people; (b) a common fund of knowledge, values, and skills vital to the welfare of the individual.

To achieve these objectives, the instructional program cannot be the same for all. Provision for individual differences should be made by qualified teaching personnel through diagnosis of learning needs and through appropriate variety of content, resources for learning, and instructional methods.\(^2\)

This concept is further developed on a much more elaborate and concrete basis in *Planning and Organizing for Teaching*. In this publication, nine recommendations concerning school organization are presented, and they include such factors as: multigrading, nongrading, grading, ability grouping, team teaching, self-contained classroom, classroom grouping, instructional materials centers, educational television and radio, programmed instruction, and instructional media.\(^3\) Many of these areas of consideration will be dealt with in the following chapter.


CHAPTER VII

A RATIONALE FOR INDIVIDUALIZATION OF INSTRUCTION

I. THE EDUCATIVE PROCESS

This consideration of the techniques and strategies involved in a program of individualization of instruction will be presented through a discussion of some of the factors involved in the educative process. It is hoped that this internal system will be viewed in relation to the outcomes that the Province of Alberta deems as objectives for its schools.¹ For this purpose, a conceptual model will be presented in an attempt to illustrate the process of education and this schema will be used as a central point in the development of the discussion.

Before beginning a discussion of the model, it should be said that the model is in no way all-inclusive of the educative process; but it does indicate several rather general domains from which educators can work. Within the model (Figure 3), each of the three major domains are divided into their basic functional attributes, which in turn are involved in the outcomes of the process.

¹Department of Education, Program of Studies for Elementary Schools of Alberta (Edmonton: Department of Education, 1968), pp. 4-5.
Figure 3. The process of education: a conceptual model.
Substantive

The substantive, substance, or actual curriculum materials involved in the way students are required to learn their materials (strategies of inquiry). The other involves the content of the various fields of study that the student is involved in. These concepts include all areas of scope, sequence, and articulation in curriculum study and are concerned with such factors as sequential programs;\(^2\) core, activity, and subject curricula;\(^3\) analytic, inductive, and intuitive thinking;\(^4\) and such areas as flat, longitudinal, and spiral curriculum building.\(^5\)

Procedural

The procedural domain involves three major divisions and is highly concerned with the pupil-teacher and the pupil-pupil process. Throughout these areas, the teacher attempts


to use methods that will enhance the learning process and facilitate pupil acquisition, transformation, and evaluation. The teacher attempts to extend the learners' range of experiences by using devices that will aid understanding of structure, extension of range of experience and dramatization of the significance of learning. Many methods and techniques are involved in this process as exemplified by the lecture method, independent study projects, seminars, workshops, and small group instruction to mention but a few.

Environmental

The third major domain, the environmental, includes all of the mechanical and physical features involved in the process. The only purpose here, as in the other domains, is to facilitate the educative process for the learner.

Organizational aspect. Within the organizational aspect of this domain, there are three major dimensions to be considered. These are: (1) the vertical dimension, (2) the horizontal dimension, and (3) articulation. Figure 4 illustrates schematically the interrelationship of these

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7Ibid., p. 84.
Figure 4. School organization: a conceptual model.
dimensions.  

1. **Vertical school organization.** This dimension involves the administrative structure designed for moving a student upward (vertically) from entry into school through the various levels to completion of the program (e.g., from grades one through twelve). It involves three main areas of consideration:

   a. The content of the curriculum and whether it is to be variable or constant in nature.
   b. The rate by which a student is able to progress in all aspects of his endeavor and whether this factor is held to be variable or constant.
   c. The number of placement decisions that are made during the students' progression—whether there are a few, many, or an unlimited number of these decisions.

To illustrate, a structure may exist which is designed to be of constant curriculum content, a constant rate of progress is designated and few placement decisions are made. These organizational features, in this combination, would be illustrative of the traditional graded program. On the

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8NEA, *Planning and Organizing for Teaching, op. cit.*, p. 53.
other hand, if the curriculum content and the rate of
progress were both variable and if the placement decisions
were unlimited in number, this would be characteristic of
a completely individualized program. There are many such
possibilities involved in projecting administrative struc­
tures through the use of conceptual design. Figure 5
illustrates several other possibilities.

2. Horizontal school organization. This aspect
of school organization deals with the position a particular
individual student or group of students is located at any
one time in the organization. It mainly concerns the
facticety of dividing students into groups, assigning them
to teachers, and providing a program of studies.

This type of structure involves three major dimen­
sions. These are: (1) the teachers, (2) the students, and
(3) the curriculum.

Teaching personnel may be grouped in various ways.
However, the most common involve teaching by an individual
such as in the self-contained classroom; by several individ­
uals, such as in a departmentalized system; or in a group,
as in team or cooperative teaching. The students are usually
grouped within these broad areas on the bases of large
group, small group, or individual instruction. The curricu­
num is usually considered from either a combination of, or
Figure 5. Vertical school organization: a conceptual model.
one of three, areas. These would involve individual subject areas such as "reading" or "science," combined subject areas such as "language arts," or large problem areas such as "our community" or "man and his world." All three of the major dimensions are, or can be, interrelated and the total possibilities under this aspect of organization are many and varied. Figure 6 illustrates some of the possibilities that should be investigated when seeking a particular horizontal type of organization for a particular school situation.

3. Articulation. Articulation runs throughout both the horizontal and vertical aspects as well as between all features of the two. This aspect of organizational structure must be imbedded in the very fibre of the program for there is nothing so devastating to the educative process as a poorly constructed and disjointed organizational pattern. In the final analysis, the only reason the pattern has for justifying its very existence is in the degree to which it facilitates and enhances the educative process for the individual student.

Physical Conditions. The second area of the environmental domain involves the physical conditions that are involved in the educative process. This is mainly the area of the school facility. It concerns factors of change and progress involving school plant facilities, school leadership,
Figure 6. Horizontal school organization: a conceptual model.
school personnel, and the school-community. As a guide to action, McClurkin suggests four steps toward obtaining an adequate school plant: (1) long-range community planning, (2) educational planning for the particular school center, (3) architectural planning, and (4) the actual construction. Perhaps one further step could be added as a catalyst to the process—that is the involvement of the people who will be affected by the program. Included in this group would be administrators, teachers, students, parents, citizens' committees, and any others who may be affected by the particular design of a program of planning.

Since several aspects of school planning will be considered in the following chapters, it will suffice to emphasize that school planning will involve the broad areas of: (1) instructional procedures, (2) school sites, (3) community planning, (4) possible remodeling, (5) plant management, (6) budgeting, (7) the school-community, (8) the aims of education, and most important of all, (9) consideration of and planning for the future.

It is essential that the keynote concept in school facilities be flexibility. Johnson and Hunt emphasize

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this point by stating that:

The building design must include provisions for changeable, flexible, and usable space which must be adapted to the teaching needs at any particular time and in relation to any requirement that improved learning opportunity places on the teacher. . . . 11

Technologies. The third area of the environmental domain involves the technologies used in enhancing and enriching the educative process. Bruner refers to modern technology in relation to the function by which they assist the educative process and classifies these devices into three categories: 12

1. Model devices (e.g., Cuisenaire rods).
2. Dramatizing devices (e.g., films).
3. Automatizing devices (e.g., teaching machines).

In Bruner's estimation, these devices aid the teacher in helping the student through (1) the understanding of structure, (2) by extending his range of experiences, and (3) by dramatizing the significance of what he is learning. 13 However, one point is paramount, that is, "the devices themselves cannot dictate their purpose" and thus it is the "teacher who constitutes the principal aid in the teaching process." 14

12 Jerome S. Bruner, op. cit., pp. 82-83.
13 Ibid., p. 84.
14 Ibid., p. 88.
From this, it can be summised that the technology is only as useful a tool as the operator makes it. If the teacher does not adapt to new situations and the use of new techniques, then the technological facilities that are supplied will go unused. However, if the teacher is a true educator, continually seeking new and varied means of demonstrating, illustrating, and emphasizing, then the technological facilities will be used to greatly enhance the educative process.

II. CONTINUOUS PROGRESS

One of the means with the greatest potential for facilitating the educative process is the concept of continuous pupil progress. This concept seems to fulfill most of the requirements encompassing all aspects of the educative process. However, before beginning a discussion of the techniques involved in the implementation of this concept, a brief consideration of the problems involved in rigid, or lock-step, pupil progress will be undertaken.

The Graded System

The graded system of school organization has remained basically unchanged for over one hundred years. Although there were some attempts in the 1900s (Winnetka, Dalton, Pueblo plans) and again in the 1930s (Western Springs Flexible
Progress Plan) and 1940s (Milwaukee), it was not until 1955 when Goodlad published a report on nongraded schools for the NEA that any real interest was stirred in individualized instruction. From that time on there has emerged a constant emphasis for change in school organization. This new emphasis has been toward school programs designed to fit the curriculum toward the child, rather than expecting each child to fit a set curriculum.

The traditional graded program, originally designed to permit the quick and convenient classification of the great number of pupils which were pouring into the schools in the early days of this country's development, encouraged the division of knowledge into segments, simplified the task of preparing teachers, and offered a minimal education to the population. However, at no time did this system of education really concern itself with the needs of the individual student. It was mass education; students were educated by groups and if a student couldn't keep up with the group, he simply dropped out or behind.

**Basic Facts**

This leads to several basic facts concerning human individuality, particularly in regard to children. It is quite evident that all children differ in all aspects of their personalities--physically, socially, emotionally, and
intellectually. Physically, some children are tall, some short, some slender, and others heavy set. Socially, children display a variety of characteristics (solitary, sensitive, withdrawn, gregarious, confident, outgoing, etc.), and these often vary from situation to situation. Upon considering personality, there are those who are inquisitive, emotionally secure, or highly motivated, while others may be indifferent, insecure, or lethargic. Great extremes also exist in the realm of intellectual differences. There is a great variation in the range of measured I.Q. and achievement from those considered mentally uneducable to genius ratings. Throughout the entire spectrum of humanity, there exists this tremendous variation in the uniqueness of each individual.

Problems

With this in mind, a consideration of the graded structure will then present certain problems for many students. Such problems might include:

1. Students who had difficulty with the academic program suffered non-promotion (failure) if they could not keep up with what is considered to be the average.

2. Faster moving students were often "skipped" and as a result lost a considerable amount of
beneficial experiences by missing the program of an entire grade.

3. There is a heavy emphasis on the "average" and the "group" and not enough emphasis on the "individual."

4. Grades do not provide for the wide range of abilities of the students in an average class.

5. Non-promotion meant repeating one whole year (or grade).

6. Faster students had no room to expand intellectually and academically and either adapted to or became frustrated with the slower pace.

A Conclusion

If the position is taken that there is a general inadequacy in the traditional graded system as a means of implementing the educative process, then the conclusion depicted in Figure 7 and the proposition in Figure 8 may be presented for consideration.

III. NON-GRADING

If the graded system does not serve the concept of individualized instruction, and if it is to be replaced, it must be replaced with a system of school organization which does fulfill the function of individualized instruction. It
Figure 7. A tenable assumption.

1. If there are no grades and

2. If children progress continuously according to their individual abilities and

3. If the teacher makes a genuine provision for the individual differences of children in terms of classroom program then

4. There will be a natural growth of the individual in social and academic accomplishment.

Figure 8. A proposition regarding school structure.
is, therefore, proposed that a non-graded structure of school organization will fulfill the above requirements.

In this regard, Stewart Dean states:

... the rationale of nongradedness submits that, through flexibility of operational machinery and individualization of instruction, we shall be in an improved position to offer educational programs which are more viable, in which higher motivation may be stimulated, and in which more realistic accomplishments can be attained.15

Organizationally, this plan also appears to meet all of the principles for good school organization suggested by Burr et al. The principles state that the organizational plan should:16

1. Provide that teachers know the children they teach.

2. Facilitate equal educational opportunity for all children.

3. Be appropriate for the educational goals of the school.

4. Be projected in cognizance of the needs of young children.

5. Contribute to conditions of practice of democratic behaviors.


6. Facilitate integrative learning experiences of the child.

7. Encourage teachers to be concerned with the total development of the child.

8. Facilitate desirable flexibility in the individual child's school day.

9. Provide for the grouping of children in harmony with respect for the individual.

10. Be designed to challenge teachers to be competent academically and in their understanding of child development.

This pattern of school organization is generally characterized by the following situations:¹⁷

1. Grade designations are removed from classes.
2. Pupils move at their own rate.
3. Progress is based largely on the pupil's success in reading, language, and arithmetic, although there is no reason why this could not be extended to include other areas.
4. Individual differences in pupils are recognized and provision made for them.
5. Pupils may remain with the same teacher for two

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or three years.
6. Although external standards exist, they are treated as guides.
7. External standards are related specifically to the individual rather than the group.

In conclusion, it may be said that non-grading is an attempt to give each child an opportunity to work at the level where he is in each subject and to progress in the best way he can. In this way, each child is able to explore his own potential without having to contend with the frustrating experiences that are an inherent part of the graded system.

IV. TEAM TEACHING

This is a technique on the horizontal dimension that lends itself to vertical programs of individualized instruction. Johnson and Hunt list several aspects of this method as related to the improvement of the instructional program.\(^{18}\)

1. Team teaching builds teacher-administrator morale due to the involvement aspects of the technique.
2. It provides balance in the instructional program.

\(^{18}\)Robert H. Johnson and John J. Hunt, _op. cit._, pp. 92-98.
3. It is based on educational outcomes from which teachers will reap the benefit of diversified applications, thinking, and experiences.

4. Better use can be made of the human resources and talent available in the community (professional and lay citizens).

5. It is a democratic tool (equal opportunity of involvement by all).

6. It is a vehicle which allows the determination of scope and sequence of the instructional program by professional educators.

7. It affords an opportunity to improve the instructional program through proper planning and execution.

It seems evident that team teaching can greatly enhance programs of continuous pupil progress. Mainly, this technique has been used in the upper levels of the school strata and very little at the primary level. However, it does seem that the team approach is gaining in use in the elementary school due to its many desirable qualities and a general rise in the level of professionalism of elementary school teachers. Once elementary school teachers are able to shake loose from their narrow and fearful attitudes in relation to cooperative teaching, they will reap the benefits of being involved in this method of instruction. As
has been stated by Gross:

Teachers are showing more enthusiasm for their work and are making far greater use of their creative talents. Relieved of many non-professional chores, they have more time to teach, to develop new effective ways and to know and help children they teach. By working together in teams, they are developing professional partnerships of real value. Educational leadership is becoming more dynamic, and lines of communication between administration and staff are being strengthened.19

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19Ibid., p. 96.
CHAPTER VIII

THE COMMUNITY-SCHOOL SITUATION

I. EXSHAW, ALBERTA

Geographically situated in the Bow River Valley of the eastern slopes of the Canadian Rocky Mountains (Figure 9), the regional climate is greatly affected by the prevailing westerly winds dropping in altitude from the mountains to the prairie. The wind blows continually and varies greatly in velocity.

The town (Figure 10), lying between a major metropolitan area (Calgary) and a major resort area (Banff), is an industrial community with a population of approximately 800 and is, in the main, a payroll town. The major employer and taxpayer is the Canada Cement Company which employs most of the heads of families resident in the town. Most other employers in the town also depend upon the cement plant either directly, by contract arrangements, or indirectly by a dependence upon the people who work at the plant, for their clientele.

The community is quite highly organized. It supports a powerful union, a branch of the Canadian Legion, three churches, and curling, bowling, hockey and ski clubs. All of these organizations maintain their own physical
Figure 9. The Bow Valley from Banff to Calgary
facilities. Other organizations would include the Boy Scouts and Cubs, Girl Guides and Brownies, church youth groups, a pre-school organization, and a teen club. The major social centers are the school gymnasium, the Athletic Club and the Canadian Legion.

II. THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Exshaw is an independent school district, and its boundaries are coterminous with that of the town. However, the school receives children from surrounding areas by bus. Two of the centers, two miles on either side of Exshaw, are small mills whose employees consider themselves to be a part of the Exshaw community. A third center (Seebe) is a small community of technical people who operate and maintain the main control center for most of Alberta's hydroelectric power. A fourth area includes people from a forest experimental station and ranches in a wilderness area. The fifth major area is a large Indian reservation. Of these areas, all of which are independent school districts, two maintain schools: Seebe, a one-room, grades 1-6 school; and Morley, a Federal government Indian school, grades 1-8.

Each of the areas have separate boards of education and each has a contract arrangement with the Exshaw School Board to accept their students. Therefore, none of the people in these other areas have a direct vote in the
election of trustees to the Exshaw School Board even though their children attend the school.

However, a similar situation arises with the Exshaw people since all high school students (grades 10-12) are bussed to the high school in Banff, some twenty-five miles distant.

Therefore, the actual school community for the Exshaw school far exceeds the physical boundaries of the town itself, and even though people from the surrounding area do not have a direct voice in local school matters, their views and opinions must be taken into consideration.

III. PRESENT SCHOOL SITUATION

The Exshaw school population is approximately 230 students spread throughout nine grades. There are also 70 students who attend high school in Banff and approximately 160 of pre-school age. In the town, there are two schools on separate sites—the primary school (School #1) containing four classrooms, and the elementary-junior high school (School #2) of five classrooms.

IV. PHYSICAL FACILITIES

School #1

This building is a one-level and full basement box type structure constructed of solid concrete and is

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approximately forty-five years old. The main floor (Figure 11) consists of four classrooms and a small staff room; the basement (Figure 13) contains boys and girls washrooms and four larger rooms, two of which are used for playrooms, one for a workshop, and one for a storage room.

The heating and plumbing systems are antiquated and are a continual source of difficulty. The piping for the plumbing is buried in the concrete floors and a plan of pipe locations is no longer available. The furnace is old and inefficient and all hot air ducts are located near the ceilings of the classrooms, presenting circulation problems. The indoor play area is small for the number of students, and the outdoor play area is inadequate and very rocky.

However, in preparation for the new program, both the main floor and basement areas were rearranged slightly in an attempt to improve teaching and learning facilities in the building. On the main floor (Figure 12), the area previously used as a combination office, staff room, storage room and staff work area was converted to a primary educational materials center. The lockers were moved from the north hall to the basement's north hallway and the enlarged main hallway converted to an auxiliary library and free work area.

In the basement storage area, Room B (Figure 13) was cleared and partitioned to include three major sections: a
Figure 11. School #1--main floor plan: prior to Sept., 1968.
Figure 12. School #1--main floor plan: after Sept., 1968.
Figure 13. School "1" - basement floor plan: prior to Sept., 1968.
health and first aid room, a staff work area and a staff lounge (Figure 14). The old storage area Room A (Figure 13) was rearranged to include maintenance equipment and storage of maintenance materials.

**School #2**

School #2 (Figures 15 and 16) is a one-level structure of the traditional box type built on a concrete slab; it is ten years old. The building contains four traditional classrooms, a science-classroom, an auditorium-gymnasium (including boys and girls washrooms and changerooms) and several smaller sized rooms. The smaller rooms are being used as follows: a library, a staff room, a general office and teacher workroom, and principal's office. In addition, there are several smaller utility and service rooms: a stock room, furnace room, caretaker's room, and storage closets.

This school is located on a seven acre site. Two other facilities on this site should also be mentioned: a large multi-purpose asphalt slab (85' x 185') and an oval one-eighth mile track.

**V. ADMINISTRATION**

Both schools are under the administration of one principal. There is an assistant principal resident in and
Figure 15. School "2--location of facilities as of Sept., 1968.
responsible for each of the respective buildings. The two buildings are connected by a central communications system.

Prior to September, 1968, building #1 housed grades one to four, and building #2, grades five to nine. Grades five and six were partially departmentalized and grades seven to nine were completely departmentalized.

However, in September, 1968, the primary and elementary sections moved to a system of continuous progress through levels. Under this system, the previous six grades were replaced with a tentative system of eighteen (plus) levels.
CHAPTER IX

INITIAL PHASES

I. STAFF RECOGNITION

The first and most essential phase was recognition of certain perplexing and irritating problems that were connected with the graded structure. Although the staff expressed concern over many areas of the system, the major problem pertained to the yearly promotion-non-promotion aspect of the graded structure. It seemed that several teachers had students who did not "fit" the graded pattern and were either far advanced or far behind the "average" for their particular grade. Concern was also expressed over certain students who did not "fit" in relation to subject matter. Some of these students exhibited a tendency to be able to cope with material far beyond the "average" for a grade in one subject while just keeping up in other subjects. Others exhibited the ability to maintain an average level in most of their class subjects but were far behind in one or two areas.

It was agreed that all staff members would attempt to investigate the possibilities for change, and a series of staff meetings was set up. These meetings were held during school time, for two hours, one afternoon a month.
One of the final outcomes of these meetings was a staff policy adoption of a basic philosophy to serve as a guideline for the type of program that they desired.

As a result of the investigation, it was agreed that the concept of the non-graded school as described by Goodlad and Anderson in *The Nongraded Elementary School* would be an acceptable basis for a start in the formulation of a continuous progress plan. From this point the staff went on to list a set of basic aims and objectives that they considered pertinent to the local situation. However, since a discussion of this has previously been considered in Chapter VI it will not be necessary to dwell on it further at this time.

**II. SCHOOL BOARD POLICY**

The next step was to present the basic idea to the board for study and consideration. A program was prepared and the material presented at a special board meeting. The board then considered the points that were presented by the staff, approved of the basic philosophy, and directed the administration to proceed with the investigation and preparation of a plan suited to the local situation. The board favored implementation of the plan at the discretion of the administration, but wanted to be kept informed, at

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regular intervals, of the progress that was being made.

III. ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION

The principal and two assistant principals then held a series of meetings to explore the possibilities of investigating other non-graded systems now in operation. The three main school systems explored were Edmonton, Calgary, and Medicine Hat.

Letters were written, materials gathered, and interviews set up with personnel in each of these systems. It was extremely encouraging for the staff and administration to see the keen interest and gracious assistance afforded by these large school systems. Personnel from all systems were enthusiastic about the possibilities of their respective continuous progress programs; however, they were also realistic in their appraisal of the successes, failures, and problems involved in the system.

IV. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

In connection with further investigation, a questionnaire was sent to the parents of all students. This questionnaire inquired as to the parents' opinion regarding what they considered to be important in the education of their children. Even though the questionnaire was labeled "Aims and Objectives of Education," it was hoped that the
staff could obtain some idea as to the community's receptiveness to a more individualized type of instruction.

However, it is not the purpose of this paper to elaborate on the preparation, production, administration, and analysis of the particular instrument of investigation. It will merely suffice to say that although the results were rather difficult to determine, there were several indications that seemed to place a very high emphasis on more individual responsibility and initiative.

After consideration of the local concept of education, the staff recommended that a definite program should be instituted to keep the community informed on the development of the new program. It was agreed that the community could be informed briefly and simply, by letter, as to the objectives of the proposed program and that a general community meeting would be held as soon as the staff felt that the program was sufficiently structured so as to enable adequate explanation to the public.
CHAPTER X

THE EXSHAW PLAN

I. GENERAL VIEW

The following outline briefly indicates the general nature of the continuous progress plan. It will probably undergo many modifications as teachers work with it and develop improvements.

It should be emphasized at the beginning of this section that even though a level system of vertical organization and a grouping system of horizontal organization are used in the structuring of this system, the plan is only intended to be a guide. All staff members have stated that they will endeavor to facilitate continuous progress and individualized instruction practices to their utmost ability.

The work of the six elementary grades is divided into eighteen levels or three levels per grade (Figure 17). This level division of work applies chiefly to the Language

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Figure 17. General level sketch.
Arts area, specifically reading, and in the later part of the program the Mathematics-Science areas. A local curriculum guide indicates the content and suggested limits of each level.

The first year in school is an observation and screening period. While the first year teacher proceeds with the instruction program, the pupils are carefully studied to determine their abilities and what rates of progress will be best for them in succeeding years.

The teachers' observations and decisions are supported by intelligence tests given during the year, achievement tests in reading given at various points throughout the year, and a standardized achievement test. In the final screening of classification of pupils for the next year, age, health, and emotional maturity are also considered.

II. ON THE BASIS OF CAREFUL SCREENING

The pupils are divided into three groups or classifications: a faster moving group, an average group, and a slower moving group. It is hoped that each group will travel at a pace to challenge, but not to frustrate.

In a school year it is likely that:

The faster moving group completes 4 levels.
The average group completes 3 levels.

Students experiencing academic difficulty complete 2+ levels.

Figure 18. A general sketch of three levels of vertical movement.

Thus the superior pupils should complete the six years work in five years without "skipping." The average group will take the regular six years. Some pupils may take a year or more longer, but they will not have to "fail" or "repeat" a year.

An overall general picture of the plan is depicted in Figure 19. This figure shows the three main groupings; however, what is not shown is the fact that there will also be vertical movement as well as horizontal in relation to program progression. In other words, since progress is individual and continuous, a pupil will be able to move within the range of the five, six, and seven year program.

A comparison of three students' rates of progress might serve as an example at this point. For the sake of similarity of comparison, all three of these students will
### Figure 19. Continuous progress plan.

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<tr>
<th>Observation and screening year</th>
<th>Modified Grade Plan starts in second year and continues until the end of the sixth year except for slower pupils.</th>
<th>Special program for superior achievers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade I</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
<td>18+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade II</td>
<td>4 5 6</td>
<td>Plus a horizontal enrichment program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade III</td>
<td>7 8 9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade IV</td>
<td>10 11 12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade V</td>
<td>13 14 15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade VI</td>
<td>16 17 18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extended</td>
<td>18+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### The five year program for superior achievers

- **Regular program**
- **Enrichment**
  - Grade I: 4 units
  - Grade II: 4 units
  - Grade III: 4 units
  - Grade IV: 3 units

### The six year program for average achievers

- Progression from year to year as at present.

### The seven year program for slower achievers

- Objective is about 22 units per year, but subject to variation.
be considered to have come from similar backgrounds; however, these students exhibit differences in their ability to handle academic work.

![Example One](image)

**Figure 20.** Example one: vertical advancement of a faster achieving student.

Example one (Figure 20), a very academically inclined student begins his second year by starting level 4, progresses through level 5, and is finished with level 6 by April. He then begins level 7 and works on this until June. In September, his third year in school, he starts off with level 8 work and continues through levels 9, 10, and 11 by the end of June. He then goes on in his next year (fourth year) to complete levels 12, 13, 14, and 15. The following year (his fifth year) he completes levels 16, 17, 18, and goes on into 18 plus, a special and highly individualized program.

Example two (Figure 21), had a very slow start in his first year and did not complete level three. He begins
September of his second year in school in level 3 and works his way through levels 4, 5, and half of level 6.

The next year (his third) he completes level 6 and moves through levels 7, 8, and 9. In September (his fourth year) he starts in level 10 and completes level 12 by June. In the following two years he completes three levels per year, completing the elementary program in six years. This example points out that even though this student was a slow starter, he did hit a spurt in his third year and was able to move to a different pattern completing in six years instead of five.

Example three (Figure 22) experiences considerable difficulty in his first year and completes only two levels. From this time on he only is able to complete two and a half levels a year. At the end of seven years in the elementary
school program he is at the end of level 17, has not failed a "grade," and has completed most of the elementary school program. In all probability this student would then begin the junior high school program.

Figure 22. Example three: vertical advancement of a student experiencing academic difficulty.

It should be emphasized that throughout the entire program the key must be flexibility.

III. A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The general working plan which follows this section is an outline based on a conceptual framework devised by the staff to enable the systematic construction of a continuous progress program. The theoretical framework, depicted in Figure 23, indicates the two main levels of school organization and the dimensions that were selected for consideration in each. From this schema a continuous progress program
1. **Vertical organization**: A system for moving students upward or vertically from entry to departure from school.

   **Three main considerations:**
   1. Number of placement decisions in a year.
   2. The rate of a student's progress.
   3. The curriculum content (material to be covered).

2. **Horizontal organization**: A system for dividing students into instructional groups and allocating them to teachers.

   **Three main considerations:**
   1. Organization of curriculum.
   2. Organization of students.
   3. Organization of teachers.

---

**Figure 23.** Conceptual framework: two main areas of school organization.
of school organization suited to the staff's concept of current conditions in the school and community was devised.

**Vertical Organization**

**Placement decisions**

1. Major placement decisions to be made three times a year:
   a. end of December
   b. end of March
   c. end of June

2. The average group of students should be able to cover three levels per school year.

3. Minor placement decisions to be made at the end of each month (or each subject unit).

**Rate of progress**

1. Will be varied according to the capabilities of the individual student.

2. Slower students should cover two levels in a school year; average students, three levels; fast students, four levels. However, many students will cover partial levels as well and in no case will a student progress at a rate faster than four levels per year.

3. At the beginning of the September term, a student
will continue from the point he or she left off the previous June.

**Curriculum content**

1. The content will be arranged according to major subject areas, e.g., Language Arts.
2. Each subject area will consist of the more important component subjects that are considered to be important to the understanding of the major area, e.g., Phonics in the Language Arts program.
3. Each specific subject will be divided into three major levels which would comprise a year's work at average progress.
4. Division I (Primary) would consist of nine levels of curriculum content progress, and Division II (Intermediate), another nine levels. Therefore, the entire elementary program for each subject would consist of eighteen major levels of work.

**Method of Assessment**

Figure 24 is an example showing the method that will be employed in attempting to assess the students' progress vertically. No percentage marks will be used--only a line to show where the student stands in relation to the program.
Horizontal Organization

Curriculum organization

1. The program will vary according to content level and will vary in the use of:
   a. individual subject areas (specific subjects).
   b. combined subject areas.
   c. major problem areas, as the need is determined by the individual teacher.

2. A horizontal enrichment program will be set up in each major subject at the end of every level to provide for horizontal development of a student who is not ready to progress to the next level due to a deficiency in one of the major areas. This will enable the student to improve in the deficient area while carrying on with a new parallel program in the other areas and not having to repeat material when progressing to the new level.

3. At the end of level eighteen, an additional program of study will be set up for students who complete the eighteen levels in less than five years, or for students who have only a portion of the eighteenth level to complete in their
fifth or sixth year.

Student organization
1. This will be, to the greatest extent possible, on an individual basis.
2. Room groupings will be heterogeneous (due to the size of the school), although there will be some provision made for inter-room movement of students for grouping purposes in certain subject areas.
3. Subject grouping will be at the discretion of the individual teacher and may be either homogeneous or heterogeneous.

Teacher organization
1. This will be, for the most part, on an individual teacher basis, although some departmentalization may take place in the upper levels.
2. There will be some degree of flexibility to allow for programs that may involve team teaching.

Placement Decisions

Major placement assessments
Major placement assessments (decisions) will be made three times during a school year, segmenting the school year into three terms or sessions (Figure 25).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Time Split</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sept.</td>
<td>3 wks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct.</td>
<td>4 wks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov.</td>
<td>3 wks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec.</td>
<td>3 wks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 to 6 wks. orientation or review</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Christmas Vacation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Time Split</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan.</td>
<td>4 wks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb.</td>
<td>4 wks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>3½ wks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11 wks.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Time Split</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>3½ wks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>4 wks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>4 wks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11 wks.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Summer Vacation**

Figure 25. Approximate time split for level promotion.
1. During the first term (September to December) the first two or three weeks will be used as an orientation period for teachers to familiarize themselves with their incoming group of students. This period of time will enable new teachers to acquaint themselves with the continuous progress program and with the pupils that they have been assigned. It will also afford returning staff members with a similar opportunity as well as to provide a time for a re-evaluation, reorganization, and setting of the program for the coming term. These first two or three weeks will also provide time necessary for re-testing and re-evaluation of new and returning students. Following the orientation and testing period, comes the fall session which will consist of approximately twelve weeks and which ends with the Christmas vacation.

2. The second term or winter session (January through March) consists of approximately eleven weeks.

3. The third term or spring session (April through June) consists of approximately eleven weeks.

4. Therefore, the major placement decisions will take place at the end of the December, March,
and June sessions.

**Minor placement decisions**

Minor placement decisions may take place at any time during the sessions and will generally be related to achievement in the various subject areas.

**Placement decision times**

Placement decision times are an administrative device setting down set times when teachers must take time to sit down and actually attempt to evaluate what each student is doing. These placement decisions times are not meant to be times of promotion-non-promotion. In fact, the student need not even be aware of the evaluation. It must also be emphasized that these major assessments should not be looked upon in the light of the traditional graded report card. They are only meant to be times of mental assessment of students' progress by the teachers and a bringing up to date of the pupils' cumulative record card.

**Parent-teacher interviews**

The major assessment times are to be followed by parent-teacher interviews. The mental assessment that preceded will most likely be of great value to
the teacher when discussing the child's progress with the parent.

Again, it must be emphasized that the degree of flexibility exhibited will depend entirely on the individual teacher's own personal attitude toward continuous progress. If the teacher does not adapt his or her teaching methods to the general concept of flexibility, individualized instruction, and continuous progress, then nothing will really have changed and the program will be "non-graded" in name only. However, it is hoped that the teacher will assume the responsibility and offer as flexible a program as possible.
CHAPTER XI

STAFF MEETINGS AND WORKSHOPS

I. PLANNING PHASE

So as to dispel any notion that staff initiation of this project was based on a snap decision or a whim, it should be noted that a discussion and investigation period of approximately three years elapsed before any concrete action actually took place. Originally, the administration had discussed a plan of action to institute a type of continuous progress in the school. However, it was abandoned in favor of a program designed to entice the interest, whet the professional appetite, and stimulate the teacher's curiosity for knowledge. The administration assumed the view that if the teachers who were to enact the program were not ready to modify their attitudes and behavior patterns in the direction of a new program then the program would have very little chance of success. On the other hand, if the program were teacher initiated, developed, and enacted, with the administration offering advice and coordination information, then the program should have a greater probability of success.¹

The administration assumed the view that if conditions were favorable and the dissemination of information to staff proved to be successful then a new program would evolve. Conversely, the alternative view also had to be considered, that is, under this type of arrangement a new program might never evolve. However, an optimistic attitude prevailed and was encouraged by a slow but steadily increasing interest on the part of the staff toward a program devised on the basis of increased individualization.

Administrative devices relating to the dissemination of information involved guest speakers at staff meetings, reprinted articles from magazines, discussion of pertinent audio-visual materials, appropriately placed and conveniently opened magazine articles on currently operating programs of non-grading and continuous progress, staff members giving book reviews to general staff meetings on a text specializing in continuous progress, teachers visiting continuous progress organizational meetings in a nearby city and reporting to staff, and many other subtle devices of social persuasion. However, whatever the methods used to whet their interest, it was the teachers who recommended the change from the graded structure to a type of non-graded structure, after a period of approximately three years. Moreover, once the teachers had committed themselves to a period of change and the construction of a new program, it was only a short
time until the operational machinery was established.

A discussion of this phase of the program has previously been discussed in Chapter IX and will not be repeated at this time.

II. FIRST WORKSHOP

In their consideration of the plan, the staff recommended that a two-day workshop be conducted so that teachers could consider the curriculum content in relation to the proposed plan. All the staff agreed to a Friday-Saturday workshop and the School Board approved this venture.

On the Friday of the workshop the teachers arrived loaded with materials, ideas, and a certain degree of reservation regarding the hard factuality of the implementation of the program. However, as the day went on and the interaction between teachers increased, the enthusiasm grew by leaps and bounds. This statement is perhaps best exemplified by the fact that many staff members returned that evening and worked well into the night. Even with the late night work all were on hand well before nine o'clock on Saturday morning and worked through the day. Many also felt that more time was needed and so returned to continue their endeavor on Sunday.

At the conclusion of the workshop, staff members agreed on six rather general outcomes resulting from their
participation in this experience.

1. It greatly assisted teachers in taking a look at and gaining insight into the new program.

2. It promoted staff solidarity through extensive work and cooperation on a common problem.

3. It afforded the classroom teacher with the opportunity of experiencing the difficulties involved in actually coming to grips with a very real problem in curriculum development.

4. It afforded the teacher an opportunity to re-evaluate and re-assess his or her own personal reasons for presenting the curriculum in the particular manner in which they did.

5. It gave teachers an opportunity to exchange ideas on methodology and practice.

6. It gave teachers an opportunity for professional discussion on the way in which they planned to approach the new program.

All staff members stated that they felt the workshop was extremely beneficial to them personally and would welcome the opportunity to share in another such experience.

III. PRE-OPERATIONAL MEETINGS

A series of four short meetings were held in May and
June of 1968 so that the organization of curriculum guides could be articulated. During these meetings teachers and administrators worked together in an attempt to have a tentative program organized for the opening of school in September. Two other staff meetings were also held in which teachers attempted to evaluate where students might be placed in relation to the new program for the coming September.

In addition to the above meetings, the administrative staff also had several meetings to consider problems in programming and scheduling caused by the institution of the new program.

IV. PRE-SCHOOL INFORMATION

Prior to school opening all teachers were supplied with printed copies of the new program and of the curriculum guide as prepared the previous June. Staff members were urged to study these materials before school opened.

V. OPENING DAY MEETING

A one-half day meeting was held on the afternoon of the first school day in September. At this time staff members discussed problems in programming and level organization. A discussion was also held on the basic philosophy of
the program and the staff, including new members, were unanimous in their support for the new program.

There was a general recognition that there would be many problems in connection with the program and it was decided that these should be handled at such time as they might arise rather than attempting hypothetical solutions at the present time. All agreed that flexibility must be the keynote in dealing with emerging problems, and the administration assured the teachers that this attitude would be supported.

VI. OPERATIONAL MEETINGS

A number of meetings occurred throughout the course of the 1968-69 school term that were directly related to the operation of the continuous progress program. The following is a brief listing of those meetings and the relevant points of concern to the operation of the program.

September

Due to the disproportionate number of students in some levels, a meeting had to be called to discuss the best means of reallocating these students according to the teacher resources available. The allocation of levels was adjusted slightly so that all teachers had approximately the same number of students and so that the number of levels to be
handled would not prove to be overburdening.

October

A meeting was held to discuss the amount of material to be covered in the various subject areas. Some of the staff had found the number of subject areas to be taught and the amount of time available in a day were not compatible. It was decided that the teachers could cut down on subject area time load at their own discretion, but there was still to be a strong emphasis on the Language Arts areas.

November

The primary teachers requested a meeting to discuss the steadily increasing work load. Most teachers were finding that the preparation and marking time were becoming unbearable. It was noted by the administration that these teachers were now working approximately a twelve- to fourteen-hour day and still felt that they were not able to satisfactorily carry out the aims of the program. The administration suggested that the Board could be approached to consider the possibility of securing a teacher aide to give assistance to each teacher.

November

A meeting was held with the School Board to consider the possibility of initiating a Teacher Aide Program. The
present feelings of the teachers in regard to the work load created by the new program as well as the administration's recommendation that this measure was necessary for the continuation of the operation of the new program were submitted to the Board. The Board stated that they favored the continuation of the new program and would not like to see it suffer any setbacks in its first year of operation. However, due to the lack of available funds at the end of the year and the lack of time to study the administration's proposal, the matter was tabled until the December meeting.

December

A meeting was held to discuss the movement of students between rooms and buildings at the end of the first level of time. It was decided that the time for the end of the first level's work would be extended until the middle of January and those students involved would move at that time.

December

At the regular School Board meeting, the Teacher Aide Program was again brought forward. The Board stated that they favored such a move but due to a lack of funds could not begin the program until January, the beginning of a new financial year. Furthermore, the Board requested that the program be placed on an experimental basis and that they
be regularly kept informed as to the progress and utility of the Teacher Aide Program.

January, 1969

A meeting was held to consider the method of reporting student progress. A new form of reporting was requested resulting in a delay of the reporting period until the end of the month.

February

The staff requested a special meeting where teachers (especially those new to the staff) could consider information pertinent to the construction and implementation of non-graded programs.

March

At the March regular monthly meeting the Board was asked to grant permission for a one-half day workshop for the purpose of re-orientation of the staff to the non-graded concept. The Board granted this request.

Other meetings were held with and between individual teachers; however, these were on a very informal basis and usually pertained to some specific problem occurring at that particular time in relation to a specific teacher, class, or individual student. These meetings were not recorded, but it is hoped that any of the problems that were felt to be
really significant by the teachers will be listed in the final evaluation.

VII. SECOND WORKSHOP (MARCH 1969)

This workshop was organized at the request of the staff, who expressed a desire for a meeting to discuss various aspects of the new program that were presenting problems. The administration considered this to be a good opportunity to enhance the lines of communication between staff members while affording the teachers with the opportunity for self-evaluation and assistance in regard to their own programs. The School Board approved the administration's request to hold this workshop during school time, and an afternoon session was planned.

The session began with a general review of the "Exshaw Continuous Progress Plan for the Elementary School 1968"\(^2\) and the "Exshaw Continuous Progress Plan Curriculum Guide."\(^3\) The major point emphasized was the necessity of individualizing the program to the greatest extent possible and attempt to modify the program in accord with the needs


of each student.

A general discussion followed in which the staff raised questions regarding the following problem areas:

1. Adaptation of the program for superior students.
2. Problems experienced in handling more than three reading groups at any one time.
3. Difficulties in covering the course work described in the curriculum guide, particularly in the subject area of mathematics.
4. Indecision regarding priorities in subject areas.
5. The degree of effectiveness of the present system of reporting student progress to parents.
6. Special problems pertaining to the teaching and evaluating of progress of Indian children.

During the discussion of the above points, the staff generally agreed on the following suggestions:

1. Superior students should be given as much freedom as possible to expand their potentials. However, great care should be exercised so that the superior student obtains a good foundation in all subject areas and does not excel in any one area at the expense of other areas of academic endeavor. Most agreed that since these children were capable of working on their own a great deal, additional programs and materials should be provided upon which they could proceed with a limited amount of supervision. Great
care should be exercised, however, so that these children are not segregated from their social group, receive less teacher interest and attention, or specialize in one subject area to the exclusion of others.

The administration stated that they would attempt to provide teachers with all instructional materials requested so that greater flexibility in work materials would be feasible.

2. Some of the teachers expressed concern over the problem of handling more than three reading groups at any one time. It was suggested that the individual reading program could be extended by the use of the SRA reading labs provided in each classroom and supplementary material from the instructional aids files. Another teacher suggested having the reading for the individual levels at different times during the day. While those in other levels are working on a different subject, one particular reading level could be divided into various groupings for reading instruction. In this way a teacher could handle more reading groups such as the maximum three groups of three (nine reading groups) or whatever arrangement they preferred to use. Again, teachers requested increased use of instructional materials and the administration stated that all requests for reading materials would be filled.

3. Some teachers expressed concern over their
inability to cover the bulk of the material in some of the courses, particularly mathematics. The principal stated that the curriculum guide was only meant to be a "guide" and not a course of studies. It would be left to the teachers to select the pertinent material that would be necessary for the child to understand the basic concepts and to omit any material that they felt might be repetitious. However, the mathematics teacher (upper elementary and junior high) agreed to meet with the primary teachers for the purpose of determining priorities in the new mathematics program.

4. It was the consensus of opinion that the most important area of concentration in the elementary school, and in particular the primary school, is the language arts program. Although the progress of the students was not to be based entirely upon this one area the teachers stressed the importance of placing a high priority on language arts. Other areas mentioned included priority in regard to creative and reasoning activities.

5. A great deal of discussion took place regarding the effectiveness of the present reporting system. Although the parent-teacher interviews seemed to be well received, the report card was deemed to be inadequate in communicating the child's progress to the parent. After much discussion, it was decided to add a personal letter type of report to supplement the present graph type report card form. With
this letter form the teacher would be able to open another avenue of communication with the parents.

6. Special problems pertaining to the evaluating and placing of Indian children proved to be rather difficult to solve. It was agreed that since the Indian children presented special problems in the area of language special consideration must be given to placing these children in social groups where they will be able to achieve some degree of satisfaction in learning rather than frustration in the attempt. This would probably mean a wider spread of inter-age grouping for Indian children than for non-Indian children.

VIII. THIRD WORKSHOP (MAY 1969)

This workshop, now considered to be a necessary annual event, was held mainly for the purpose of consideration and revision of the curriculum guide. However, two other areas of consideration were also deemed important enough to be incorporated into this workshop: a general discussion of the program and related problems, and an evaluation of the program to date. As in the 1968 workshop, two days were considered necessary to complete the amount of work that had to be done; again, the Board and teachers both approved a

\[4\text{Ibid.}\]
Friday and Saturday workshop.

The main project of the workshop was to examine, evaluate, and redesign the curriculum guide on the basis of one year of actual operation of the program. It must be remembered that at the time the original draft of the guide was prepared, it was based on the teacher's untested concept of how the program "might" operate. Now the teachers were able to evaluate on the basis of how it "did" operate. This single factor, that of the actual experience of carrying out the operation, seemed to establish a different kind of atmosphere in the workshops than had prevailed in the original workshop. The teachers generally seemed much more confident about what they were doing and how to go about setting it up; there seemed to be a definite and direct direction of purpose. Where the teachers of the original workshop seemed to flounder in confusion many times, they now appeared quite confident in what they were doing. As a result the revision and updating of the curriculum guide took much less time than expected, leaving more time for inter-teacher discussion on various aspects of common interest in the program.

The second area of consideration, that of a discussion of general problem areas, was discussed on an informal basis between the teachers during rather extended and frequent coffee breaks. The staff felt that they would like to
have the opportunity to discuss these problems on a close and more personal communitive basis with their colleagues than would take place in meeting form. They felt that each person could then express those things that he, or she, felt to be of concern to the program in the evaluation session.

The third area of consideration in the workshop was that of an evaluation of the program to date. During this time, a questionnaire was presented to the teachers to fill out according to their own feelings and opinions. The preparation, operation, and results of this device will not be discussed further at this time since it is explained in depth in Chapter XVI.
CHAPTER XII

TEACHER AIDE PROGRAM

I. SPECIAL STAFF MEETING

Near the end of October, the staff of the primary school requested a meeting with the principal. All teachers were deeply concerned with the problem of not having enough hours in the day to adequately perform all of their teaching duties. Now that instruction was individualized to a greater extent, the planning and preparation became much more time consuming and as a result there was little time left for checking student work and preparing instructional materials.

As a result, the principal suggested that the School Board could be approached regarding the possibility of securing a teacher aide to assist teachers in the primary rooms. The teachers agreed that para-professional assistance might relieve a substantial portion of the tension and requested that the principal follow up this course of action.

II. SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS

November

The plight of the teachers and the dangerous situation
that an overload of work would present to the new program were presented to the Board. Although the Board sympathized with the situation they could not act at this time due to the lack of funds. However, the matter was left open for consideration at the next regular meeting.¹

December

At this meeting the administration presented a strong case for the securing of a teacher aide to assist in the primary division. The administration based its presentation on four main areas of consideration. First and foremost was the value of the new program which the Board had unanimously endorsed.² It was explained that the new program would probably suffer if some relief could not be gained for the teaching staff. Second was the Board's stated opinion that they have an excellent staff of hard-working and enthusiastic teachers.³ The administration pointed out that tired and discouraged teachers seldom stay enthusiastic. Third was the necessity of securing some relief for the Assistant Principal at the primary school. The Board

¹Minutes of the regular monthly meeting of the Exshaw School Board, November 24, 1968.

²Minutes of the regular monthly meeting of the Exshaw School Board, December 10, 1968.

³Ibid.
considered this person to be of excellent calibre and doing an excellent job. The fact was mentioned that the Assistant Principal at the Primary school had very little time for administrative duties due to teaching responsibilities at the primary level, the formulation of the new primary school library facilities, and the lack of teaching specialists in the small school system. The fourth point dealt with the fact that teaching aides are becoming more common and several larger school districts in the area have secured such services. Therefore, the Board would not be under pressure from their provincial association for "breaking ice" in this matter.

A list of possible duties compiled by the primary teachers was then presented. It was suggested that a teacher aide might perform the following duties:

1. The checking of workbooks, exercise books and work sheets.
2. The marking of tests.
3. Assisting in the preparation of art materials.

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4Minutes of the regular monthly meeting of the Exshaw School Board held on November 24, 1968.

5Stated by M. W. S. Korek, Superintendent of Schools, Calgary, Calgary Unorganized District, October 23, 1968.

6Minutes of the regular monthly meeting of the Exshaw School Board held on December 10, 1968.
4. Duplicating, punching holes in papers, preparing and stapling booklets.

5. Lunch supervision.

6. Assisting the teacher in the room by listening to oral reading, helping to prepare enterprises, assisting in individual and group work.

7. Assisting in the setting up and maintaining of the primary library.

8. Working with children in routine library matters such as stamping out books, checking cards, filing, etc.

9. Repairing of text and library books.

10. Assistance in drill exercises in arithmetic and reading.

11. Assistance in art classes.

12. Helping with boots and coats for the younger group.

The Board approved the project on the basis of an experimental project to extend from January 1969 until June 1969 and to be evaluated by the principal at that time.7

III. INSTITUTION OF PROGRAM

The Teacher Aide Program came into operation on

7Ibid.
January 15, 1969. It was decided that each teacher would have the services of the teacher aide on the basis of one-fifth of the available teacher aide time and the Assistant Principal, two-fifths. The teachers would be completely free to use the aide in any capacity they wished so long as this did not involve the aide in the actual operation of teaching, which is the area of responsibility of the teacher. All tasks closest to the instructioned tasks would continue as the teachers' domain. The more residual tasks, especially the clerical and administrative, could be allocated to the aide.

To establish a guide line that would delineate general areas of such tasks, the following list was used as a reference point. 8

Administrative tasks:

- housekeeping
- controlling
- record-keeping
- typing
- operating equipment
- supervising halls and playground

Social and professional tasks:

- public relations
- professional duties
- student activities

Team tasks:

planning
coordinating
leading
cooperating as a member

Instructional tasks:

planning
motivating
evaluating
acting as resource person
counselling
acting as group leader

It is apparent that as one moves from the administrative tasks to the instructional tasks it becomes increasingly difficult for anyone but a teacher to assume the responsibility for their operation. The teacher equipped with professional competence and guided by ethical principles would act as the director of learning using these competencies to guide decisions relating to the allocation of tasks to her aide.⁹

⁹Ibid.
CHAPTER XIII

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

In accord with the philosophy of good school-community public relations and in line with current administrative theory, a program was set up to interpret the proposed continuous progress system to the community.

It is not essential to this discussion to explain the theory behind the necessity for a program of community involvement in the new program. However, it may be stated that the degree of understanding and support that comes from the community will determine, to a considerable degree, the success or failure of a new program. This proposition is visualized in Figure 26. Therefore, community support is essential. This is further exemplified by Kenezevich in reviewing the development of education in the United States.

1 R. F. Campbell, John E. Corbally, Jr., and John A. Ramseyer, Introduction to Educational Administration (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1963), pp. 91-96.


4 Ibid.
Figure 2C. Steps to the School Community.
after World War II. He states that:

What the public did not know about school problems could hurt the school system . . . and . . . that public education had to be based on public sympathy and support for its continuance and expansion.5

I. PRE-OPERATIONAL MEETING

For the above reasons a community public meeting was set up to explain the program. This meeting was scheduled to occur after the staff workshop, and all teachers agreed to attend. The meeting was well publicized at several different times in advance of the meeting date.

At the meeting, the principal presented the proposed program, which was followed by a question and answer discussion period. A coffee period was planned to follow as part of the evening program. This "coffee session" was structured on the "buzz group" system6 with each staff member presiding as a resource person in a group.7 The principal circulated from group to group.

A few days after, the staff met to consider the


results; all agreed that if those attending the meeting were reasonably representative of the community, then there would be a great deal of community support for the program.

II. FIRST YEAR OPERATIONAL MEETINGS

A number of meetings were held with the parents, both individually and collectively, throughout the school year. Of these only the four parent-teacher interview days will be mentioned here.

The first major information program was held in November and was intended to contact and familiarize as many parents as possible with the new program. A series of short interviews were set up and parents were scheduled for a fifteen-minute session with their child's classroom teacher. A letter was then sent inviting parents to be present at an interview to be held at a certain scheduled time. Also enclosed was a short letter of information regarding continuous progress and a copy of the new report card. It was hoped that if parents had questions on the new program they would bring them up at the interview. Those parents who could not come at the assigned time were re-scheduled to more mutually agreeable time.

During the interviews the teachers attempted to explain and clarify those aspects of the program that were not clear to the parent. The new report card was also
explained and teachers attempted to emphasize that the new card was strictly an attempt to compare the child to his own ability to cope with a certain kind and amount of curriculum materials rather than comparing one child to another or to the group in general.

Following the interviews parents were invited to have coffee and discuss the new program in an informal group situation. An attempt was made to always have one staff member having coffee to act as an informal resource person in the group. However, this was not always possible due to the time-consuming nature of individual interviews and the resulting overlapping of the interview times.

In a brief subjective analysis, teachers seemed to agree that parents generally reflected a favorable attitude toward the new program, especially in regard to the emphasis placed on the individual and the program of individualization of instruction. All teachers stated that they felt the parent-teacher interviews were definitely of value in attempting to dispel incorrect assumptions on the part of parents as well as increasing communications between the school and the community.

The second major parent-teacher conference session was held in January 1969 upon completion of the first third of the school year. At this time report cards were filled in and sent to the parents along with a letter inviting
them to come in for a brief consultation regarding their child's particular program. Again an interview schedule was established and the procedures of the previous meeting were followed. All staff stated that they were quite pleased with the general attitude of the parents toward the new program.

The third parent-teacher conference held in April was patterned after the previous two interviews. There were few questions about the organizational nature of the program. Again the teachers stated that they were satisfied with the results of the conference.

The fourth meeting was held in June as an open meeting in which all parents were invited to attend. The principal gave a brief resume of the program and its operation to date. Following this a brief question period was held and then the parents were divided into eight groups for discussion. Each group was assigned a teacher to act as a resource person. Coffee was served and the discussion ensued. Each group was asked to prepare five questions or opinions regarding the program that could be presented to a panel of teachers.

After approximately twenty minutes the total body was re-assembled, the principal introduced the panel and invited questions from the groups.

Questions from the small group discussions as well
as those of particular individuals were discussed. Although there were many questions and problems probably still left unanswered, a considerable number of the parents expressed their support for school-community meetings of this sort. In fact, many parents expressed a desire for future meetings to take place the next term and to include various aspects of the program of particular concern to parents.
CHAPTER XIV

REPORTING STUDENT PROGRESS

Very early in the development of the continuous progress program, the Exshaw staff recognized the need for a more adequate means of reporting pupil progress to the parents. They felt that an individualized program needed to have a specially designed instrument for reporting the student progress related to that program to the parents. Therefore, some type of report form was needed which would depict the child's progress throughout the vertical aspects of the organization, while at the same time individualizing to the point where the child would only be compared to development along the lines of his capabilities; in other words, as to how he was performing in terms of his capabilities within the horizontal aspects of the organization. As within the rest of the program, articulation between and within these various aspects was considered to be essential to the formation of an efficient instrument. All teachers concurred that the two essential points of consideration for change fell within two main areas: emphasis on individual performance in terms of the child's own capabilities, and the need to adequately and efficiently inform parents as to the progress their child is making within the new program.

The next step was the consideration of the actual
form the progress report should take. The teachers urged that the old form should be completely abandoned and a new form developed which should include the following basic ideas:

1. The form should be made as individual as possible and only relate the student's progress in terms of his own capabilities.

2. The form should be designed to show pupil progress without the use of marks, grades, or percentages. It was suggested that a pupil profile might be used to depict vertical progress.

3. The degree of progress should be based on the professional evaluation of the child's teacher rather than a series of tests or average of marks. The subjective professional evaluation by the child's teacher was to be stressed and testing and grading of tests was to be deemphasized.

4. There should be some means of identifying the child's performance on the horizontal level as to attitude, effort, work habits, interest, and enthusiasm in regard to his school work.

Out of this evolved a profile type of student progress chart (Figure 27) depicting in graph form the child's level of progress within the entire elementary program. A section
## EXSHAW SCHOOL Continuous Progress Report

### NAME

### GENERAL LEVEL

**Teacher**

**Students Age**  
In years & months

### AREAS OF STUDY

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11/2
on student performance in regard to attitude and industry within the program (Figure 28), and sections regarding attendance (Figure 29), teacher comments (Figure 30), and parent comments (Figure 31).

The teachers felt that this type of report form, being radically different from the previous graded report card, would serve as a tangible change agent within the parent community. It was felt that this form would reinforce the reality that the elementary school program was now operating under a new philosophy and that there was a real change in the operation of a continuous progress type of program and the graded structure. The form would also serve to remind parents, by the absence of comparative marks, that the child was being treated as an individual and not merely as one of a large group.

To accommodate problems that might be encountered in deciphering the new progress form, the parent-teacher conference program was expanded from two parent-teacher conferences a year to one per level of time (three per school year). However, the program was to remain flexible enough to accommodate any necessary increase in this number for the school as a whole or for any individual teacher. In addition to the major conference times, teachers were encouraged to hold individual conferences with parents and children on as frequent a basis as possible. There was a general
This is the Progress Report of

**STUDENT - PERSONAL**

1. Listens carefully
2. Follows directions
3. Exercises care in work
4. Works well by himself (herself)
5. Uses time wisely
6. Completes assignments
7. Works well with others
8. Takes care of materials, books, and equipment
9. Does his/her best
10. Is truthful (usually)
11. Is obedient (usually)
12. Accepts correction
13. Takes a balanced view of his/her own work
14. Follows school rules
15. Keeps himself/herself clean
16. Is polite (usually)
17. Participates in sports and games
18. Is developing muscular co-ordination in sports and games

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<th>A — Very Good</th>
<th>B — Normal Progress</th>
<th>C — Below Standard</th>
<th>D — Unsatisfactory</th>
</tr>
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Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
Teacher's Remarks:
(Conduct, Personal Growth, Work Habits, Attitude Toward School, Ability to Get Along with Others)
To the Parents:

This report is designed for the purpose of informing the parents of the progress the child is making in all-around development. Please feel free to visit the teacher to discuss any matters relating to the development of your child. Regular, punctual attendance, good health and sufficient hours of sleep are necessary for satisfactory progress. You are requested to encourage your child in the reading of good wholesome books, because extensive reading aids achievement.

Parent's Comments

Parent's Signature
recognition that parent-teacher conferences add considerably to the efficiency of reporting pupil progress by providing:

1. An opportunity for a closer working relationship and better understanding between the parent and teacher.

2. Improved communications over the written form in the face-to-face situation.

3. An opportunity for parents to feel that they are playing an integral part in their child's education.

4. An opportunity for the teacher to place emphasis on the total growth of the child rather than limited areas in the report form.

5. Teachers with an opportunity to develop better perspective in regard to the child's home environment.

However, during the course of the first term of operation, several important inadequacies were found to exist in reporting student progress. Although the profile chart has served the purpose in regard to teacher evaluation of student progress and has also whet the interest of the parents, it was reported to be vastly inadequate in terms of parent understanding. Most parents felt that the idea of a chart for overall progress was good, but that it was
quite inadequate for the purpose of telling them how the child was performing. Therefore, the teachers decided to devise their own means of reporting pupil progress, use these within their own rooms, solicit parent reaction, and attempt to combine the best features into a general report form.

In a meeting held in March, the staff decided upon an open response written type of form to report pupil progress (Figure 32). This form was to list the subject areas individually on a separate sheet and leave the page blank for the teacher's written analysis of that particular child's progress in each of the areas of study. Figure 33 depicts the page used to describe the child's progress in reading. On this page the teacher would describe to the parent how the child was performing compared to his capabilities. The other subject areas listed on the profile section of the pupil progress report form (Figure 17) were treated in the same manner, each to a separate page. In addition, two separate pages were also designated at the end, one for additional teacher comment and one for parent comment. All teachers included a note at the end encouraging parents to make some comment or notation in the progress report.

In a later meeting, teachers deemed the new report form to be a success and made three significant suggestions for improvement in pupil progress reporting for the next
Figure 33. Table name of revised Progress Report Form.

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1. That parent education nights be held where parents would be invited to the school to view a program designed to inform them as to the kinds of things that are going on in the school program. In addition to a purely informational function, these meetings could also serve as a means for informing parents as to how they can assist their children in their education. For example, lectures could be given, films, filmstrips, and slides shown, discussions and buzz groups held, and parent education courses given.

2. A program of frequent or regular parent visitation to the classrooms such as on a weekly basis. During such visits, the parents could see their child at work and look over his papers, listen to him read, view projects he was working on or actually take part in some activity that the child was experiencing.

In general it may be said that teachers reporting student progress to parents must exert great care to avoid the pitfalls encountered in reporting pupil progress if they are to provide an effective means of communication between the parent and the teacher while fulfilling the basis elements of the philosophy of individualized instruction and continuous pupil progress.
CHAPTER XV

EVALUATION OF THE PROGRAM

Evaluation of the Exshaw Continuous Progress Plan Through Levels will be considered in three basic phases:

1. An analysis of the practical application of the staff designed conceptual framework and the general plan.

2. An analysis of teacher opinion as to the practicality and efficiency of the program.

3. An analysis of parent response to the program.

A fourth phase, not included in this section and extremely important to the evaluation of any school program is the opinion of the students. However, due to the young ages of the students involved and to the lack of an adequate instrument of measurement no questionnaire was administered to this group. The only evaluative criteria that may be used in this case must be derived from the responses of the teachers and parents since they are continually involved in subjective evaluation of the children under their care. It appears that in cases of this nature it is the professional evaluation of the teacher that will best reflect the attitude of the children toward the program.
I. AN ANALYSIS OF THE GENERAL PLAN

The general plan is based on the theoretical constructs contained in Chapter VII and developed through the conceptual framework designed in Chapter X. The theoretical framework (Figure 23) depicts the two main levels of school organization that this program was based on: the vertical and the horizontal.

**Vertical Organization**

**Placement decisions**

1. The three major placement decision times must be kept completely flexible so that changes can be made accordingly as circumstances arise. It was found that the first level of time was insufficient to complete orientation of teachers and students, review after the summer vacation, and complete the material contained within a level prior to the middle of January. The teachers for the most part attributed this delay to their inexperience in the new program and the great amount of work that each teacher was attempting to do. However, the teacher aide program seems to have made some difference in alleviating the time delay by freeing teachers from routine work.
This factor was evidenced in the March and June periods which ended approximately on time.

2. It was found that the average group could cover three levels of material per year, as set out in the curriculum guide. However, teachers found that as more emphasis was placed on inquiry, less was placed on content.

3. Minor placement decisions were not made at any particular time but at those times, in the teacher's opinion, when the child was ready for advancement to the next level of work.

Rate of progress

1. Generally, students seemed to cover content at a pace which was sufficient to challenge but not to frustrate.

2. The five, six, and seven-year elementary programs were not generally followed. All students were evaluated on an individual basis. Streaming into set programs was not adhered to.

3. Students will begin school in September at approximately the same place they left off the previous June. No student "failed" and no student "skipped."
Curriculum content

The content was arranged according to major content areas and a curriculum guide was formulated which set guide lines for the various subject areas in each content level.

Throughout the program, marks or grades were not used in attempting to assess the students' progress except in the case of standardized tests. On all progress reports only line graphs or written comments appeared.

Horizontal Organization

Curriculum organization. The program varied according to the content level and type of subject level.

Horizontal enrichment programs were set up in some areas; however, as teachers became more confident in their attitude toward the new program, independent study, reading, and research became more common. In addition, rather than keeping a child within the confines of one class group (or room) the students often went to another room (and teacher) to work in a certain subject area at a level which was in keeping with their range of ability.

A highly individualized program was established for those students who completed level eighteen prior to June.

Student organization. This phase of the program
began with relatively little change from the previous year. However, the program became more and more individualized as the term progressed until several teachers were conducting their programs on a completely individualized basis.

**Teacher organization.** The primary rooms were conducted mainly on an individual basis, but there were several instances of cooperative teaching between teachers. The upper elementary experienced some departmentalization and team teaching.

**Placement Decisions**

Generally the staff adhered to the program and made a genuine attempt to make placement decisions on the basis of individual progress. However, teachers did have to be continually reminded that placement decision times were not meant to be times of promotion-non-promotion, but merely a time of teacher evaluation and re-evaluation of the student as a unique individual.

For the most part, the teacher designed plan did seem to function quite well in its first year of operation and with certain minor alteration should be able to do so again next term.

II. TEACHER OPINION QUESTIONNAIRE

Toward the end of the term, the teachers involved in
the elementary continuous progress program were asked to anonymously fill in a questionnaire (see Appendix) regarding the new program. The results of the questionnaire are depicted in Table I in terms of percentages based on a total population of ten teachers or 100 per cent of the teachers involved.

Questions 1 through 5 are related to the basic philosophy of the program and showed an extremely high degree of support for nongrading and individualized instruction.

Questions 6 through 20 are related to the instructional program and again indicated a relatively high degree of support.

Questions 21 through 30 related to the teachers' concept of how the administration was performing its role in the operation of the program. The results indicate that the teachers felt, in most instances, that they were getting the support of the administration in the operation of the program.

Questions 31 through 40 pertain to the facilities of the plant. Generally, it could be stated that even though the physical facilities of the school are in need of a great deal of improvement, there is general consensus that audiovisual, library, and instructional materials are quite good. The greatest problem experienced is the rigidity of the
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<th>Question Number</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Percent answering</th>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>Teachers who felt that the staff as a whole made a genuine attempt to implement a program of individualized instruction.</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>Teachers who felt that the goal of individualization of instruction is desirable.</td>
<td>100 0 0</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>Teachers who felt that it was difficult for them to change from the graded to the non-graded philosophy.</td>
<td>20 80 0</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Teachers who felt that the change in the philosophy of the school program was for the better.</td>
<td>100 0 0</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Teachers who felt that there was an attempt to make the school learner centered, designed to develop the learner as an individual.</td>
<td>100 0 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Teachers who felt that there was a recognition that there are many differences in many aspects of child development.</td>
<td>100 0 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers who felt that some provision was made in the program to account for the differences among children.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Teachers who felt that there were some highly individualized programs planned and implemented.</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Teachers who felt that there was provision made for differentiated rates of progress according to individual needs.</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Teachers who felt that there was provision made for variation in the kinds of programs according to individual needs.</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Teachers who felt that decisions about placement in a group took place throughout the school year.</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Teachers who felt that individual standards were based on the physical, mental, social, and emotional status of the child.</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Teachers who felt that there was provision for the child to continue on to the next step when they were ready.</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Teachers who felt that the subject matter and content were the exclusive property of the teacher of next year's work.</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### TABLE I (Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question Number</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Percent answering:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Teachers who felt that the focus was on ways of knowing, thinking, and understanding.</td>
<td>70 0 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Teachers who felt that the child would be able to carry on next term (approximately) from where they left off at the end of this one.</td>
<td>90 0 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Teachers who felt that there was a definite plan set up outlining the organizational structure of the program.</td>
<td>100 0 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>Teachers who felt that the organizational plan was workable.</td>
<td>80 0 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Teachers who felt that the administration supported the continuous progress concept.</td>
<td>100 0 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>Teachers who felt that the organizational plan was flexible.</td>
<td>100 0 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>Teachers who felt that the administration assisted teachers in securing needed instructional materials and aids.</td>
<td>100 0 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>Teachers who felt that the administration encouraged and supported flexibility in the program.</td>
<td>100 0 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question Number</td>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Percent answering:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>Teachers who felt that the administration facilitated the operation of the program.</td>
<td>100 0 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>Teachers who felt that the administration attempted to further professionalism of teachers.</td>
<td>90 0 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.</td>
<td>Teachers who felt that the administration encouraged the implementation of new instructional methods.</td>
<td>100 0 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27.</td>
<td>Teachers who felt that the administration encouraged curriculum development by individual teachers.</td>
<td>100 0 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28.</td>
<td>Teachers who felt that the administration encouraged the expression of new ideas for the revision of the program by the teachers.</td>
<td>100 0 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29.</td>
<td>Teachers who felt that the administration acted on and supported these new ideas.</td>
<td>80 0 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.</td>
<td>Teachers who felt that the administration actively supported a program of attempting to improve the physical facilities of the school.</td>
<td>100 0 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question Number</td>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31.</td>
<td>How teachers rated the physical facilities of School #1 for the operation of this year's program.</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32.</td>
<td>How teachers rated the physical facilities of School #2 for the operation of this year's program.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33.</td>
<td>How teachers rated the number of audiovisual aids available for use in this program.</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34.</td>
<td>How teachers rated the library facilities at School #1.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35.</td>
<td>How teachers rated the library facilities at School #2.</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36.</td>
<td>How teachers rated the library facilities generally for a school district of this size.</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37.</td>
<td>How teachers rated their own classroom in regard to the new program.</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38.</td>
<td>How teachers rated the school facilities generally in regard to their flexibility.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE I (Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question Number</th>
<th>Percent Answering:</th>
<th>Excel­lent</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Very Poor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>39. How teachers rated the situation of having the elementary school on two separate sites in regard to the operation of the program.</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40. How teachers rated the amount of instructional materials available at present.</td>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
building and the school operating on two separate sites.

In addition to the limited choice questions of the first four parts of the teacher questionnaire, an additional section of general open-ended or free response questions were included. In this section teachers were asked to respond to ten general questions regarding the operation of the program. Since the questionnaires were anonymous and judging from the frankness of the responses it could be assumed that honest and sincere answers were given to the questions asked. The following is a summary of the teacher responses given and listed in relation to the general question.

**Question:**

What do you consider to be the greatest problem area involved in the new program? --Solutions?

**Summary of Responses:**

1. A general lack of communication between the two schools, both interpersonal and administrative.

2. A feeling of segregation, by some of the teachers of School #1, from the rest of the school.

3. A need for more discussion of the new program.

4. A need for frequent administrative visitation of classrooms, particularly in regard to advice, constructive criticism, and discussion. Several teachers indicated
weekly visitations.

5. Problems created by irregular and erratic attendance of Indian children.

6. Increased knowledge regarding all aspects of the program for incoming teachers.

7. Problems created in the operation of the program due to the large number of groups created in the level system.

8. Inadequate physical facilities to house the program. A need for a new building of non-traditional design consisting of flexible space which would be learner centered and teacher designed.

Question:

What do you consider to be other major problem areas in the new program? Possible solutions?

Summary of Responses:

1. A need for modern facilities. There was a general feeling of a lack of space (instructional, storage, specialty areas, etc.) and lack of flexibility in the buildings. Emphasis was placed on a teacher designed facility.

2. Areas of difficulty in instructional methods and materials in coping with the question of general education for Indian students. A need was expressed for special
media and facilities to assist teachers in handling this section of the program.

3. Problems experienced in handling all subjects on the level system by one classroom teacher.

4. Difficulties in handling the new arithmetic program.

5. Some felt that there was a personnel shortage and that additional staff are needed.

6. Problems experienced in the evaluation of students and placement in levels.

7. An ever present need for more and better instructional supplies.

Question:

What would you consider to be the one thing that was of greatest value to you in carrying out the program?

Summary of Responses:

1. Assistance from other teachers.

2. The instructional resources and materials available.

3. The library resources available (reference materials, encyclopedias, vertical file materials, books, etc.).

4. The experience of participating in this type of program.

5. The freedom of individual teachers to operate
and introduce new ideas into the program.

6. The assistance and cooperation of other teachers and the administration.

Question:
What would you consider to be the one most valuable thing in the program as a whole?

Summary of Responses:
1. Flexibility of the program and recognition of individual differences allows greater scope and ease of operation for all students—slow, average, or superior. The child is able to progress at his own rate.

2. A keen staff and lots of discussion, excellent teachers.

3. The teacher aide program.

4. The enthusiasm of the administration.

Question:
What would you consider to be necessary changes in the program to improve it for next year?

Summary of Responses:
1. More classroom teaching aids—audio-visual equipment and instructional supplies.

2. More interest by the administration in what (and why) the teacher is doing.
3. More flexible thinking among teachers and more staff cooperation and coordination in all phases of the program.

4. Suggestions made as pertaining to previous questions.

5. General improvement of existing facilities until new facilities can be constructed.

6. Enlarged library—more space.

7. Allowance for more individualization and flexibility of program.

8. A reorganization and re-evaluation of the curriculum.

9. Free time for (primary) teachers to devote to planning and preparation.

Question:

Generally, how do you feel about the continuous progress program?

Summary of Responses:

1. Great! But not just in theory; it must be used in practice. It must be correlated with individualized learning.

2. Ideal, but requires much time and effort in actual practice.

3. A very valuable program, certainly a progressive
step forward.

4. A better program for the individual child—but more work for the teacher.
5. Warm inside!
6. Time will prove it to be the only sensible educational philosophy.
7. Very enthusiastic! Is there any other program?
8. Heartily and enthusiastically approve.

Question:
How do you value the Teacher Aide Program? And, how would you evaluate the Teacher Aide Program in terms of its usefulness to you and to the program in general?

Summary of Responses:
1. An excellent program—extremely necessary and a great help.
2. Essential to this type of program.
3. It is super!
4. Of great value; very good; highly useful. Should be enlarged.
5. It eliminated many jobs for the teacher and provides extra time for individual assistance. Relieves the teacher of many menial tasks, thus providing more time for planning.
6. Do not know how we did without it before.
Question:
Generally, how would you evaluate the instructional materials and library resources that you are using?

Summary of Responses:
1. Generally very good, but there is always room for improvement in this phase of the program.
2. A need for more and better library facilities particularly in terms of space.
3. These facilities are excellent and even outstanding for a school of this size.

Question:
Any general comments or suggestions that you would like to make regarding the program?

Summary of Responses:
1. Glad to be in on the ground floor.
2. Enjoy having a say about the program and what I feel is needed.
3. A need for more and better communication.
4. An excellent first year—many problems exist but they are being identified and tackled.
5. Continuous work is needed on refining the curriculum and extension of the teacher aide program.
7. A continuing emphasis on improved facilities and teaching materials.
III. PARENT OPINION QUESTIONNAIRE

For the final phase of the evaluation of the new program, a questionnaire was devised to test the reaction and attitudes of the parents (see Appendix). For the purposes of this questionnaire, only parents who actually had children in the program were selected. From this group 110 names were selected by means of a random sample. For purposes of this paper, the first one-hundred questionnaires returned (N=100) were used to compute the percentages in Table II.

In general, most of the parents favored the continuous progress plan, individualized instruction, and students working at their own rate. Those parents not directly in support of the program are not so much against it as they are reserving judgment until the plan has been tried a little longer. One interesting point is the number that openly oppose the program must do so for varying reasons since they do not always agree to disagree. Since the tables are relatively self-explanatory, further discussion of them at this point would be repetitious.

It may be inferred that the results of the evaluation indicate rather general support for the program by both teachers and parents.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table II</th>
<th>Parent Evaluation of the Exshaw Continuous Progress Plan (N=100)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percent answering:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents who felt that the new program of continuous progress through levels is an improvement over the old graded system.</td>
<td>77 11 11 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents who felt that their child has more opportunity to express himself in the new program.</td>
<td>76 8 15 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents who felt that their child was placed at the proper level.</td>
<td>86 2 11 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents who felt that their child is learning less than under the graded system.</td>
<td>9 52 16 23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents who felt that their child is learning the school subjects as well as he (or she) did under the graded system.</td>
<td>78 5 13 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents who felt that their child has improved in his (or her) attitude toward school.</td>
<td>63 18 16 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents who felt that the school now provides more opportunities for learning than it did in the past.</td>
<td>72 7 20 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents who felt that a child should be able to progress in the elementary school at a level of work that he is able to handle and experience success.</td>
<td>91 2 6 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement</td>
<td>Percent answering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents who feel that the child should be able to continue on to the next level of work when he is ready.</td>
<td>Yes: 94, No: 2, Undecided: 3, No Answer: 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents who felt that children have different levels and areas of ability.</td>
<td>Yes: 89, No: 5, Undecided: 3, No Answer: 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents stating that children should be allowed to work at different rates of speed in different subject areas.</td>
<td>Yes: 83, No: 6, Undecided: 4, No Answer: 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents who felt that their child had progressed satisfactorily so far.</td>
<td>Yes: 85, No: 6, Undecided: 8, No Answer: 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents who felt that their child would have made more progress had he remained in the graded system.</td>
<td>Yes: 15, No: 63, Undecided: 20, No Answer: 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents who felt that there should be a clearer indicator of the level the child is working in.</td>
<td>Yes: 62, No: 26, Undecided: 10, No Answer: 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents who felt that their child was getting more individual attention now.</td>
<td>Yes: 54, No: 21, Undecided: 22, No Answer: 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents who felt that the explanation of the program at the meetings last spring, during the teacher interviews, and through the written notices to parents was adequate.</td>
<td>Yes: 74, No: 5, Undecided: 17, No Answer: 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percent answering:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents who felt that the new report card is an improvement over the old.</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents who felt that the parent-teacher conferences are helpful in understanding your child's progress in school.</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents who have noticed a change in their child's attitude toward school since the change in the program.*</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents who felt that the teacher is making a genuine attempt to teach children as individuals.</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents who felt that failure is good for young children.</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents who would vote in favor of the new elementary school program of continuous progress if given the opportunity.</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents who would vote in favor of the graded system.</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Of the 56%, 41% felt that the child's attitude had improved; 13%, that attitude was poorer; and 46% gave no answer either way.
CHAPTER XVI

SUMMATION AND CONCLUSIONS

I. SUMMATION

The present emphasis on varying types of continuous progress programs of elementary school organization, a pressing need for increased individualization of instruction, and a feeling of creeping reduction in the educational service being offered rural students led to the organization and operation of a type of continuous progress plan by the teaching staff of Exshaw School. The teachers felt that the graded system of school organization no longer adequately fulfilled the needs of the type of school that they wished to operate and became engaged in an active process of change which resulted in the continuous progress plan implemented in September of 1968. This paper has described the initiation, formulation, and first year of operation of this plan, as well as the basic theory and related research upon which the plan was based.

The study undertook the task of investigating eight major problem areas as they related to the Exshaw program. In the course of development of this paper, all of these factions were considered in some depth. However, if certain areas may have been given more extensive treatment than
others, it was not due to an increased degree of importance but to the more extensive nature of the topic.

1. The current trends and pertinent research were sought out and described in relation to the program.

2. An extensive description of the evolution and structure of the actual working plan was described in some detail.

3. The theoretical basis for the plan was described in relation to both curriculum and organizational constructs and was based, to a great extent, on the organizational model of the process of education.

4. The actual working model was structured directly from the components of the theoretical framework. The basic plan was devised by developing a definite plan along the three dimensions (horizontal, vertical, and articulation) of curriculum and organizational patterns described in the theoretical constructs depicted.

5. Several sections of the paper related to the degree of participation of staff, students, parents, and community were presented. The basic emphasis in these sections pertained to the degree of support necessary for the
successful operation of the program.

6. A brief summary of the problems peculiar to the development, implementation, and operation of new programs in rural school districts was presented early in the paper. However, further problems, such as the absence of specialist teachers, lack of special education, and the necessity of teacher aides were discussed in other sections.

7. Description of the problems that were encountered were, for the most part, described in the chapter on staff meetings and workshops although some problem areas were in evidence in the section on evaluation of the program.

8. Three basic means of evaluation were conducted at the end of the 1969 spring term in addition to constant staff and administrative evaluation throughout the year. These three major evaluations were made by the administration, the teachers, and the parents. For the most part, evaluation showed strong support for the program, especially among the teaching staff.

To date, the Exshaw plan has been in operation one full year and has met with general approval of both parents and teachers. The planning phase took place over three years.
and terminated in one year of extensive organization. Since
the inauguration of the plan, evaluation and re-evaluation
has been a continued process necessary to the efficient
operation of the program. It is absolutely essential to
the continuance of this type of program that the single
most important and crucial element must be its flexibility.
Without this, the program would become rigid in outlook and
mentality, stagnating within its own bureaucracy.

The Exshaw plan of continuous pupil progress in the
elementary school was designed and implemented by the entire
staff of the school. The thesis upon which this concept was
based is one of active teacher participation in the formation
of program development, organizational structure, and curri­
culum organization. The basic contention was that a program
of this type will work more effectively and efficiently if
it is designed by those teachers who will be involved in the
actual implementation of the program. In addition, there is
one other factor involved in this process; it is the felt
need for change, on the part of those directly involved, and
the development of more effective systems to improve the
present situation. Without this felt need for change and
improvement the teachers will merely continue in the pattern
that they deem to be satisfactory from their past point of
view. It is the contention of this writer that if the

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does not support the program then no degree of coercion or decree from the administrative level will really affect, to any great or permanent extent, the actual operation at the classroom level. If the teacher does not change, then the program does not change, regardless of what the administration chooses to label it. However, if the teacher understands and supports the new program then this program actually becomes operational at the teacher-student level. Moreover, if the teachers are intimately involved in the conception and birth of the new program their personal commitment and interest will be increased significantly by having become involved in a creative process.

Therefore, the one most essential element in the development of this, or for that matter any new or changed program, is the active involvement, clear understanding, and enthusiastic support of those who are involved in the implementation and operational phases of the program. Since it is the classroom teacher who is responsible for the operational phase of the program, then it stands to reason that the higher degree of teacher involvement in, and commitment to, the new program, the greater the possibility of success. It is the teacher who is the essential element; it is the teacher who is the master of the program.

The teacher, on the other hand, must assume the responsibility of professionalism and accept the challenge of creating new and varied structures to accommodate the
educational pattern of the schools of tomorrow. Only through involvement in such endeavor will teachers actually discover and discuss the "why" of what they are doing in the classroom. No longer will teachers be technicians carrying on a process of teaching without having ever really investigated the basic elements supporting their organizational structure and curriculum patterns.

In regard to the program of continuous progress and individualization of instruction, it is again the teacher who is the essential component. If the teacher continues to be graded-minded and is attempting to operate in a non-graded structure the program will, in all likelihood, be graded. However, if the teacher attempts to throw off the shackles of graded mindedness and releases his or her mentality to envision the needs of the future, then the program will change accordingly. Such a teacher becomes an analyst helping students understand their needs, helping the learner plan and carry out varying activities as well as evaluating the outcomes. Such teachers will assist students to draw on all media available to them and will guide, diagnose, and advise in response to needs as they appear. The teacher then becomes the user of knowledge rather than the dispenser of knowledge.
II. CONCLUSIONS

Although it is extremely difficult to draw specific conclusions from a study of this nature, an attempt will be made to extract certain factors that appear to be influential in the operation of the program described. These factors are clustered in four major and four minor areas.

Community Involvement

There seems to be some indication that the program of attempting to inform the parents and solicit their support was both important to the implementation and the operation of the program. This was evidenced by the general parent questionnaire which showed relatively high parent support for the program. This situation was further evidenced by the absence of community complaint about the new program during its first year of operation plus the strong support given to the program by the school board. Therefore, from the information gained in sections of the investigation pertaining to the community-school situation, the first general conclusion may be stated: Community understanding and involvement are not only necessary for the operation of a new program, but are an essential element contributing to its success or failure. The higher the degree of community understanding and support, the greater the likelihood of
success of the program.

**Teacher Involvement**

A second area of general conclusions involves the degree of staff participation in the planning, implementation, and operational stages of the program. It is evident that the early commitment and consideration of program development by the staff, as evidenced by the pre-operational meetings, contributed significantly to the implementation, operational, and evaluation phases of the program. This is further supported by the staff designed organizational plan of continuous pupil progress as well as the staff designed curriculum guide. In addition, the staff's concern for flexibility and continual change as well as the recognition of the availability of communication channels to serve this purpose were evidenced by the number of general and special meetings that were held to consider difficulties incurred in the operation of the new program. The above considerations plus the highly supportive attitude of the staff as evidenced in the teacher questionnaire indicate a second general conclusion: Teachers who have made a commitment to a program of curriculum and organizational change and who are involved in the planning stage will be highly supportive of the program in the operational stage.
Theory-Practice Construct

The organizational plan based on the theoretical model devised by the staff seemed to function adequately in this particular school-community situation. Although some phases of the operational detail had to be adjusted to circumstances occurring at a particular time, the plan operated with considerable efficiency. Therefore, the third general conclusion is: The practical plan as devised from the theoretical model seemed to function quite well during its first year of operation.

Flexibility

The fourth area concerns the necessity for flexibility both within the basic plan and in the socio-cultural milieu within which the plan operates. One of the major trends portrayed in teacher opinion, as evidenced by the questionnaire, was the continued need for flexibility in the operation of the program both on the level of organizational structure and interpersonal relations. This consideration was also evidenced in the number of grouping and individualizing problems that occurred and were discussed in the operational meetings. Other areas requiring such flexibility involved changes in the length of time needed to cover the three intervals of time between reporting periods; three major changes made in the method of reporting...
student progress to parents; changes made to include a
teacher aide program upon the development of circumstances
necessitating such a program; provision in the program for
each teacher to go beyond the original plan to individualize
instruction and introduce flexibility of program to a much
greater extent than originally envisioned when the program
plan was constructed; and many other changes that had to be
made to cope with the circumstances as they arose during
the operation of the program. Therefore, a fourth general
结论 would be: The necessity of including the oppor­
tunity for a high degree of flexibility for change and inno­
vation during the operational stage of the program.

Other Conclusions

Other conclusions that might possibly be drawn from
this study might include:

1. Good school board-staff understanding and rela­
tions enhanced the operation of the program and
made a great amount of the flexibility possible.

2. The teacher aide program greatly assisted in
the operation of the program and freed the tea­
cchers from many routine time-consuming duties.
This aspect was instrumental in relieving the
teachers from the pressure of the increased work
load necessitated by the program.
3. A fairly large amount of instructional materials (filmstrips, library resources, audiovisual materials, multiple tests, individualized programs, etc.) are necessary for the operation of a program of this type.

4. Although the program was operational in the physical facilities available, it was definitely restricted in scope by the lack of flexibility in the buildings and the operation of the school on separate sites.

Although there may be other conclusions that one may draw from various sections of this program, those stated in this chapter are of the greatest significance.
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A. BOOKS


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B. PUBLICATIONS OF THE GOVERNMENT, LEARNED SOCIETIES AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS


Department of Public Instruction. *Suggestions for Revising the Instructional Program of the Rural Elementary Schools of Wisconsin.* Edited by J. Callahan. Wisconsin: Department of Public Instruction, 1938.


C. PERIODICALS


"Design for Team Teaching," The Instructor, LXXVII, No. 9 (May, 1968), 65-76.


"Here Kids Learn Without Knowing It," School Progress (April, 1968), 17, 20.


"Innovation and Education," School Progress (Feb., 1968), 14-17, 49, 54.


"No Child is Failing in This School," Grade Teacher, LXXXVI, No. 5 (Jan., 1969), 70-71.


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D. ESSAYS AND ARTICLES IN COLLECTIONS


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E. UNPUBLISHED MATERIALS


F. NEWSPAPERS


G. DICTIONARIES

APPENDIX A

THE OBJECTIVES OF EDUCATION AS LISTED IN THE
PROGRAM OF STUDIES FOR ELEMENTARY
SCHOOLS OF ALBERTA
APPENDIX A

OBJECTIVES OF EDUCATION

The major purpose of elementary education is to foster the fullest development of each child's potentialities. Direction for this development is provided by the behavioral goals listed below.

Abilities and Skills

Each child should increase his capabilities to:
1. Communicate with others orally and in writing.
2. Listen.
3. Read.
4. Find, organize, and use information.
5. Use numbers and mathematical processes effectively.
6. Solve problems of a social and scientific nature.
7. Express himself through artistic media.
10. Maintain concentrated efforts in accordance

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1Department of Education, Program of Studies for Elementary Schools of Alberta (Edmonton: Department of Education, 1968), pp. 4-5.
with native ability and natural maturation.

**Understandings**

Each child should learn to recognize the significance of:

1. The social life of expanding communities.
2. The interdependence of all forms of life.
3. The effects of environment on human life.
4. Man's increasing knowledge of social development and social control.
5. Man's increasing control over nature.
6. The contributions of the past to the present.
7. Democracy as a way of life.
8. Responsibilities inherent in a democratic way of life.

**Attitudes**

Through suitable experiences each child should be helped to develop:

1. Self respect—marked control, discipline, and direction through his own initiative.
2. Creativeness—marked by personal expression that becomes unique and revealing.
3. Scientific viewpoint—marked by the power to delimit problems, search for data, weigh evidence, form conclusions, and above all to
evaluate his judgment in the light of subsequent events.

4. Cooperation—marked by consideration for the rights and feelings of others and a willingness to share.

5. Responsibility—marked by readiness to carry tasks to completion, to behave honestly with himself and with others, and to accept the consequences of his own actions.

6. Social concern—marked by the earnest effort to implement whatever desirable ends his group may seek.

7. Reverence—marked by a conviction of Deity, and a regard for His supreme handiwork, mankind.

Appreciations

Through suitable experiences each child should acquire an appreciation of:

1. The dignity, worth, and possibilities of the individual, reflected in a high standard of conduct for himself, and a high regard for other people and their values and beliefs.

2. The dignity, value, and achievements of work in science, in religion, in philosophy, in art, in literature, in craftsmanship, in honest
labor everywhere.

3. The manifestations and beauties of nature—both in the natural state and as revealed through science.
APPENDIX B

SCHEMA OF EXSHAW SCHOOL DISTRICT
ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION
The Division of labor

Line-and-staff organization

The "line" is the chain of authority along which orders are passed from general to private, and through which decisions are passed from the policy makers to those who must carry them out. The school board established a policy which the Administrative Principal must interpret to the Assistant Principals, who in turn inform the teachers and the teachers the pupils. The line is a direct and descending order of authority.

The "staff" is made up of those specialists who are not in the main chain of command, but who perform important services for those who are. The supervisory staff, guidance specialists, clerical assistants, and caretaking staff are in this category. It may be said, of course, that in actual fact these personnel are under someone's authority, and therefore in a line. This is true, but they are not in the main line of command nor do they exercise any authority over those in the line whom they assist.

The staff fulfills a service function for the line. It acts in an assistant consultant or advisory capacity.

Allocation and delegation of authority

Division of labor also involves the proper allocation and delegation of authority. In a line-and-staff organization, responsibilities and their accompanying authority must be clearly defined. In education this is done in part by provincial laws that specify the duties of the various positions in the organization and provide the authority to carry these out. When authority is assigned or delegated, whether by law or in some other way, it is carried only to the specified tasks, and must be used within these limitations. If the one to whom authority has been assigned delegates it to a subordinate, he is not relieved of the
responsibility for proper performance of the task, but is still accountable for the manner in which it is done. However, when the Board or the administrator gives responsibility for a task to another and delegates the requisite authority, he allows the subordinate to carry out his duties and refrains from interfering except in emergencies. The fact that he does delegate responsibility should indicate that he has confidence in the subordinate to perform the task satisfactorily.
APPENDIX C

SAMPLE LETTER SEEKING INFORMATION SENT TO OTHER SCHOOL SYSTEMS AND REPLIES
EXSHAW SCHOOL DISTRICT

A. F. McLean
Principal

EXSHAW, Alberta,

April 2, 1968

Superintendent of Schools,
Calgary Public School District
412 7th Street, S.W.,
Calgary, Alberta

Dear Sir:

May we secure your cooperation by forwarding this letter on to the appropriate personnel in your system.

We are presently attempting to devise a program on non-graded structure and curriculum for our school system. Since our school system is quite small and we are faced with the reality of limited facilities in personnel, we are finding it quite difficult to complete much of the categorization and reorganization on unit level structuring of curriculum necessary for the implementation of the non-graded program. We are finding that the individual classroom teachers are having a certain degree of difficulty in covering the vast amount of material which is included in many of the many subject areas. Therefore, we would greatly appreciate your cooperation in affording us any assistance possible. I know that your school system has been working on a continuous progress program for some time now and we would appreciate the benefit of any knowledge you have gained towards the development of non-graded programs.

If it is possible, we would like to have copies of any organizational charts, available forms, and continuous progress curriculum manuals that you may have available.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for any assistance that you may be able to give us and I would be pleased to send you a copy of our particular plan when we are finished. As I mentioned previously, our plan will be specifically for the small school situation where there is presently one grade per classroom. We hope that this plan will not only be of assistance to us but to other schools of similar circumstance.
Thank you for your consideration of this matter at your earliest possible convenience.

Yours truly,

A. F. McLean

AFMcL:mms
EXSHAW SCHOOL DISTRICT

A. F. McLean

Principal

PROVINCE OF ALBERTA

EXSHAW, Alberta,

April 2nd, 1968

Superintendent of Schools
Medicine Hat Public School District
Medicine Hat, Alberta

Dear Sir:

May we secure your cooperation by forwarding this letter on to the appropriate personnel in your system.

We are presently attempting to devise a program on non-graded structure and curriculum for our school system. Since our school system is quite small and we are faced with the reality of limited facilities in personnel, we are finding it quite difficult to complete much of the categorization and reorganization on unit level structuring of curriculum necessary for the implementation of the non-graded program. We are finding that the individual classroom teachers are having a certain degree of difficulty in covering the vast amount of material which is included in each of the many subject areas. Therefore, we would greatly appreciate your cooperation in affording us any assistance possible. I know that your school system has been working on a continuous progress program for some time now and we would appreciate the benefit of any knowledge you have gained towards the development of non-graded programs.

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Thank you for your consideration of this matter at your earliest convenience.

Yours truly,

A. F. McLean

AFMcL:mms
April 16, 1968

Mr. A.F. McLean
Principal
Exshaw School District No. 1699
Exshaw, Alberta

Dear Mr. McLean:

I am enclosing for your information a copy of our original guide for the non-graded schools together with one copy of one of the unit guides developed for this program. You will note in reading the program that although it is non-graded in nature we have, in initial stages, instituted a level system in the areas of Reading, Language, and Mathematics. The purpose for doing this is so that teachers would have something concrete to assist them in evaluating the pupil progress throughout the programs, and it is our hope that we will be able to drop the levels program in favor of a more flexible organization. As you will note there are twenty-four units in the non-graded program and for each of the units we have developed a curriculum of skills of which the one enclosed is a sample.

I trust the above will be of some assistance to you.

Sincerely yours,

E. McKenzie
Deputy Superintendent

EM:ear
EXSHAW SCHOOL DISTRICT
No. 1699
PROVINCE OF ALBERTA

A. F. McLean
Principal

EXSHAW, Alberta,

April 30, 1955

Mr. E. McKenzie, Deputy Superintendent
Medicine Hat School District No. 76
601 First Avenue S.
Medicine Hat, Alberta

Dear Sir:

I would like to express my appreciation for the excellent cooperation that you have shown in assisting us in the development of our Continuous Progress Program. I was extremely pleased to receive the materials that you sent regarding the Medicine Hat ungrading program for the elementary schools. This piece of material is excellent food for thought and was appreciated by all of our staff members.

The unit guide "THE MATHEMATICS PROGRAM" is of excellent quality and certainly a great assistance to a school district of our size. I would like to entreat your further cooperation by requesting one copy of each of the other such subject unit guides, as you have developed to date. Could you possibly send us any other guides similar to Mathematics in the areas of Reading, Language, and Science.

Our project in developing a Continuous Progress Program for small schools has been progressing at a very satisfactory rate and Mr. E. J. Korek, Provincial Superintendent of Schools, is extremely pleased at the progress we have made.

I would again like to express my appreciation for the excellent cooperation that you have shown and I hope that you will be able to accommodate us for the subject unit guides.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter at your earliest possible convenience.

Yours truly,

A. F. McLean

Principal
Mr. A. F. McLean, Principal  
Exshaw School  
Exshaw School District #1699  
Exshaw, Alberta  

Dear Mr. McLean:  

Your letter of April 2, 1958 has been referred to me for reply. First please accept my apologies for the delay in answering, however, since we are in the initial implementation stage of our Continuous Progress plan, my time is rather heavily booked with school staff meetings and public relations—leaving very limited time for the "paper war."

Enclosed please find a copy of our brochure which has been distributed to all teachers in the Calgary Elementary Schools. As such you would be well advised to keep in mind that many aspects are adapted to the particular demands of the Calgary system.

Unfortunately many aspects cannot be adequately covered in writing, as I have indicated to Mr. Kerek, if I may be of any assistance to you and your staff (or any other schools) please do not hesitate to contact me. (I shall attempt to answer sooner!) Ideally a meeting would enable me to clarify many points and to suggest to you some potential solutions to the problems you have raised re small schools.

Yours truly,

C. L. Strickland  
Supervisory Assistant Elementary  
Coordinator of Level-

Enclosure
April 8, 1968

Mr. A.F. McLean,
Principal,
Exshaw School District,
EXSHAW, Alberta.

Dear Mr. McLean:

Your letter addressed to the Superintendent has been referred to me for answering.

We are sending you, under separate cover, a manual which describes the Continuous Progress Plan in detail. Should you, after reading this manual feel that you would like more information, please do not hesitate to write to me again.

I might add that we have found the plan to be a successful one, even though it does not solve all the problems that exist in education.

Yours sincerely,

D.E. Coodey
A/Assistant Superintendent,
Elementary Education

aa/
You could put up a pretty convincing argument that Exshaw has one of the best school systems in the province.

Talking to the teaching staff, you would have quite a debate on your hands if you didn’t believe the Exshaw system was a top drawer operation.

Alf McLean the principal and friendly leader of the group is convinced he is surrounded by the most highly qualified, well balanced and hard working teaching staff in the country.

He gets support for this position from the chairman of the school board, Len Worrell. Says Mr. Worrell: “The kids in Exshaw talk to teachers like they talk to their dads . . . this tells me the teachers have things under control and a good communication with the students.”

Mr. McLean said the Exshaw School has become progressive because the teachers want it that way.

“When you introduce innovations in a school system,” he said, “you don’t just publish a dictum and expect it to work. You have to change the teachers, not the students, and if the teachers won’t buy innovation, then no power on earth will make it work.”

The “levels” system has been introduced recently into the Exshaw primary school. This means that the children are advanced when they complete certain units of material . . . a system which allows the fast students to proceed at a pace in keeping with their ability to learn, and the slower students can be given extra attention.

“This requires a lot of extra work on the part of the teachers,” said Mr. McLean, “but they are doing it, and doing it with zeal.”

“Almost any morning the entire staff is hard at it by 7:30 a.m. and there is always somebody working in the school at night.”
The teachers also have the unstinting support of the school board. This fruitful partnership has developed a library of educational aids which the teachers feel is one of the best in the country.

If the teachers want something and they feel it is in the best interests of educating the children of Exshaw . . . the board says buy it.

Exshaw, with a student body of about 280, has a well balanced and catalogued library of 10,000 volumes. Banff with a student population more than three times that many from grades one to 12 has a library with 3,000 volumes.

The question is bound to arise: "Does all this additional effort and expense pay off?"

The answer appears to be a resounding yes. At the annual awards night October 4th it was revealed for the assembled crowd that their school system had indeed produced some scholars of high calibre.

The top award for grade nine went to Lynne Day who was given straight H's in every subject on the Stanine scale. This means she is in the top four per cent in the province. A classmate, Karen Fraser was not far behind.

The Canadian Petroleum Association makes 18 awards in the province in grades nine, 10 and 11. Of about 50,000 students in Alberta eligible for the awards, two of the winners showed up in Exshaw.

And this is not an extraordinary year . . . the Exshaw system has been producing similar results for the past four or five years.

In addition to everything else, an aggressive physical education program compliments the academic excellence which the Exshaw staff has been able to achieve.

Nobody said so . . . but it is quite obvious that Exshaw would like to arrange a Bantam football game with either Banff or Canmore or both. But it won't happen this fall.

Dear Parent:

This letter is to remind you of the very important meeting in regard to the change in the Elementary School Program, that is being held on THURSDAY, MAY 16th, at the school auditorium.

I would urge all parents to attend this meeting, especially those with children in the elementary grades.

This meeting is being held to explain the change in elementary school structure from the present graded system to a type of non-graded continuous progress plan. As of next September there will no longer be grade designations in the elementary school. Children will move through the curriculum content at their own individual rate of progress and the program will be designed to better accommodate the individual student rather than the group, as it is at present.

I sincerely hope that you will be interested enough in your children to attend this meeting.

Remember: Thursday, May 16th, at 7:30 PM

Yours truly,

A. F. McLean
Dear Parent:

As you know, we have instituted a continuous progress system in our elementary school this year. This system is designed so that there will be continuous progress for each child throughout the elementary grades.

Continuous progress is based on the concept that each child is an individual, and as such has his own pattern and rate of growth. Therefore, no child is ever considered a failure. If he does not achieve in proportion to his ability, the program is adjusted to fit his needs and problems. One child may progress more slowly (or quickly) than others, but an attempt is made to keep his growth continuous.

In this system there is no set body of content or group of skills to be covered by each student within a prescribed period of time. Materials are selected to match the spread of individual differences in the class and the students' move upward according to their readiness to proceed.

The Report Card

The report card has been developed so that your child's teacher will be able to give you a better picture
as to how your child is progressing in school. The report card indicates your child's individual progress and growth in terms of the school's understanding of his abilities in different subject areas, and social adjustment, work and study habits. The entire emphasis of the report card is on the use the child makes of his abilities, rather than on his level of achievement as compared to others of greater or lesser ability.

The process of learning is continuous throughout the life of the individual. In this report we recognize that no two children are alike and that they mature physically, emotionally, socially, and intellectually at different rates. This report evaluates your child's growth in these areas as an individual and not in comparison as a group.

The Levels

The report card depicts a graph showing where your child is in relation to the total elementary school program. The bar shows the level at which your child is working. The "General Level Placement" shows the overall level your child is working at. Bar levels have been included for each of the major subject areas so that you may see the areas in which your child's strengths lie. Your child's progress in a given level is indicated by the corresponding amount of
the graph that is colored.

**The Personal Report**

This section of the report indicates by letters (at bottom of page) how your child is progressing as an individual and he is compared only to his own capabilities. At all times the report only indicates your child's progress according to his own abilities and not by comparing him to others.

**Parent-Teacher Conference**

It is realized that a written report cannot convey all of the information necessary to develop a full understanding between you and your child's teacher. Therefore, time for parent-teacher conferences has been scheduled at various times throughout the year. However, even though conference time has been scheduled, be sure and feel free to call upon your child's teacher at any time to arrange for a conference concerning your child's progress. These conferences will provide opportunities for you to examine your child's work and to discuss particular activities and problems relating to your child's development.

**REMEMBER**

Nothing succeeds like success. When a child is successful he usually works harder. Constant failure leads
to frustration and dislike for a subject, and may produce harmful results for the child. Teamwork is needed between parents and teachers. It is well known that when parents and teachers work together, it is the children who benefit.

PLEASE

If you have any questions or if there is anything that is not quite clear in regard to this new program or the new report cards, do not hesitate to phone your child's teacher to set up a conference.

I would sincerely like to thank all of the parents for the wonderful cooperation and support we have received thus far in the continuous progress program.

A. F. McLean
IMPORTANT

Please Read

Dear Parent:

Due to the fact that our elementary school year is now divided into thirds (an average of three levels a year) and the first third of a year is not over until January, there will not be any changes in the report card graph until that time.

**NOTE:** The report card only indicates what level your child was at the beginning in September.

**NOTE:** The report cards will be sent out in January and will at that time indicate level changes.

The elementary cards will be sent out three times a year: January, April, and June. Parent-Teacher interviews will be held regularly twice a year in November and April. Special Parent-Teacher conferences may be held in January.

The main purpose of the Parent-Teacher conference is to gain a better understanding of the child's abilities and problems for both the parent and the teacher.

Thank you for your cooperation.

A. F. McLean
EXSHAW SCHOOL DISTRICT
No. 1699
PROVINCE OF ALBERTA

EXSHAW, Alberta,

Dear .........................:

Parent-Teacher interviews will be held on Monday, November 25th, from 9:00 AM until 3:30 PM.

The following times have been scheduled for your interview.

Would you please indicate below whether or not you plan to attend.

If your scheduled time is not satisfactory, would you advise what time after 3:30 PM would be convenient.

Please bring the report card to the interview.

Yours truly

I plan to come as scheduled ......
I am unable to come at the scheduled time ......
I will not be present ......
APPENDIX F

TEACHER EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE
TEACHER EVALUATION

OF THE

EXSHAW ELEMENTARY PLAN

FOR

CONTINUOUS PROGRESS THROUGH LEVELS

DIRECTIONS

1. In each of the questions circle only one answer.

2. In PARTS A, B, and C, the choices are:
   "YES" "NO" "UNDECIDED" (?)

3. In PART D, the choices are listed at the top of "D" section.
PART A: PHILOSOPHY AND GOALS

1. Do you feel that the staff as a whole a genuine attempt to implement:
   (a) the non-graded philosophy? YES NO ?
   (b) a program of individualized instruction? YES NO ?

2. Do you feel that the goal of individualization of instruction is desirable? YES NO ?

3. Do you feel that it was difficult for you to change from the graded to the non-graded philosophy? YES NO ?

4. Do you feel that the stated change in the philosophy of the school program was for the better? YES NO ?

PART B: THE PROGRAM

1. Was there an attempt to make the school learner centered, designed to develop the learner as an individual? YES NO ?

2. Was there a recognition that there are many differences in many aspects of child development? YES NO ?
3. Was some provision made in the program to account for the differences among children?  
   YES  NO  ?

4. Were some highly individualized programs planned and implemented?  
   YES  NO  ?

5. Was provision made for differentiated rates of progress according to individual needs?  
   YES  NO  ?

6. Was provision made for a variation in the kinds of programs according to individual needs?  
   YES  NO  ?

7. Did decisions about placement in a group take place throughout the school term?  
   YES  NO  ?

8. Were individual standards based on the physical, mental, social, and emotional status of the child?  
   YES  NO  ?

9. When the child was ready for the next step was there provision for him (or her) to go on to it?  
   YES  NO  ?
10. Were subject matter and content considered the exclusive property of the teacher of next year's work? YES NO ?

11. Was the focus on ways of knowing, thinking, and understanding? YES NO ?

12. Shall the child be able to carry on next term (approximately) from where he (or she) left off this term? YES NO ?

13. Was there a definite plan set up outlining the organizational structure of the program? YES NO ?

14. Did this organizational plan seem to be workable? YES NO ?

15. Was it flexible? YES NO ?

PART C: ADMINISTRATION

DID THE ADMINISTRATION:

1. Support the continuous progress concept? YES NO ?

2. Assist teachers to secure needed instructional aids and materials? YES NO ?
3. Encourage and support flexibility in the program? YES NO ?

4. Facilitate operation of the program? YES NO ?

5. Attempt to further professionalization of teachers? YES NO ?

6. Encourage the implementation of new instructional methods? YES NO ?

7. Encourage curriculum development by individual teachers? YES NO ?

8. Encourage the expression of new ideas by the teachers for the revision of the program? YES NO ?

9. Act on and support these new ideas? YES NO ?

10. Actively support a program of attempting to improve the physical facilities of the school? YES NO ?

PART D: FACILITIES

The following code is used for the symbols at the right: EX G F P VP

EX = Excellent  G = Good  F = Fair  P = Poor  VP = Very Poor

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1. How would you rate the physical facilities of School #1 for the operation of this year's program? EX G F P VP

2. How would you rate the physical facilities of School #2 for the operation of this year's program? EX G F P VP

3. How would you rate the number of audio-visual aids available for use in this program? EX G F P VP

4. How would you rate the library facilities at:
   (a) School #1 EX G F P VP
   (b) School #2 EX G F P VP
   (c) Generally for a school district of this size. EX G F P VP

5. How would you rate your classroom in regards to utility in regard to the new program? EX G F P VP

6. How would you rate the school facilities generally in regard to their flexibility? EX G F P VP
7. How would you rate the situation of having the elementary school on two separate sites in regard to operation of the program? EX G F P VP

8. How would you rate the amount of instructional materials available at present? EX G F P VP

PART E: GENERAL QUESTIONS

PLEASE FEEL FREE TO EXPRESS YOUR HONEST OPINIONS. PLEASE ANSWER ON THE ATTACHED PAGE.

1. What do you consider to be the greatest problem areas involved in the new program? Solutions?
2. What do you consider to be other major problem areas in the new program? Possible solutions?
3. What would you consider to be the one thing that was of greatest value to you in carrying out the program?
4. What would you consider to be the one most valuable thing to the program as a whole?
5. What would you consider to be necessary changes in the program to improve it for next year?
6. Generally, how do you feel about the continuous progress program?
7. How do you value the teacher aide program?
8. How would you evaluate the teacher aide program in terms of its usefulness to you and to the program in general?
9. Generally, how would you evaluate the instructional materials and library resources that you are using? Suggestions for improvement?
10. Any general comments or suggestions that you would like to make regarding the new program?
APPENDIX G

PARENT EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE
Dear Parent:

We would like to ask your cooperation in assisting us to improve the Elementary School Program. We would like to know something about how you feel towards the new level system of Continuous Progress in the Elementary School. Would you please help us by filling in the enclosed question sheet and returning it to the school in the envelope provided; also feel free to express your opinions on the page provided for "Parent Comments and Opinions".

PLEASE ASSIST US BY RETURNING THE QUESTIONNAIRE.

Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Yours truly,

A.F. McLean

Encl.
Please assist the school by filling in the following Question and Opinion sheets.

**In Part A:**
Just place a check in the space next to the answer of your choice.

**In Part B:**
Express your written opinion regarding the new Elementary Program or any phase of the program.

Please **DO NOT** put your name on the paper.
CONTINUOUS PROGRESS QUESTIONNAIRE
FOR PARENTS

PART A

1. Do you feel that the new program of continuous progress through levels is an improvement over the old graded system?
   Yes ........ No .......... Undecided ..........

2. Do you feel that your child has more opportunity to express himself in the new program?
   Yes ........ No .......... Undecided ..........

3. Do you feel that your child was placed in the proper level?
   Yes ........ No .......... Undecided ..........

4. Do you feel that your child is learning the school subjects as well as he (or she) did under the graded system?
   Yes ........ No .......... Undecided ..........
   Less than under the graded system?
   Yes ........ No .......... Undecided ..........

5. Do you feel that your child has improved in his or her attitude toward school?
   Yes ......... No .......... Undecided ........
6. Do you feel that the school now provides more opportunities for learning than it did in the past?
   Yes ............. No ............ Undecided ............

7. Do you feel that a child should be able to progress in the elementary school at a level of work that he is able to handle and experience success?
   Yes ............. No ............ Undecided ............

8. Do you feel that the child should be able to continue on to the next level of work when he is ready?
   Yes ............. No ............ Undecided ............

9. Do you feel that children have different levels and areas of abilities from each other?
   Yes ............. No ............ Undecided ............

   If yes: should they be allowed to work at different rates of speed in the different subject areas.
   Yes ............. No ............ Undecided ............

10. Do you feel that your child has progressed satisfactorily so far?
    Yes ............. No ............ Undecided ............

11. Do you feel that your child would have made more progress had he, or she, remained in the graded system?
    Yes ............. No ............ Undecided ............

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12. Do you feel that there should be a clearer indication of the level the child is working in?
   Yes .......... No ........... Undecided ............

13. Do you feel that your child is getting more individual attention now?
   Yes .......... No ........... Undecided ............

14. Do you feel that the explanation of the program at the meetings last spring during the teacher interviews and through the written notices to parents was adequate?
   Yes .......... No ........... Undecided ............

15. Do you feel that the new report card is an improvement over the old?
   Yes .......... No ........... Undecided ............

16. Do you feel that the Parent-Teacher Conferences are helpful in understanding your child's progress in school?
   Yes .......... No ........... Undecided ............

17. Have you noticed a change in your child's attitude toward school since the change in the program?
   Yes .......... No ........... Undecided ............

   If your answer is yes, check one:
   Improved .......... Poorer ............
18. Do you feel that the teacher is making a genuine attempt to teach children as individuals?
   Yes ........... No ........... Undecided ...........

19. Do you feel that failure is good for young children?
   Yes ........... No ........... Undecided ...........

20. If you had the opportunity would you vote in favor of the new elementary school program of continuous progress?
   Yes ........... No ........... Undecided ...........

In favor of the old graded program?
   Yes ........... No ........... Undecided ...........

PART B: PARENT COMMENTS AND OPINIONS

Please express your opinion on the new elementary program or any part of it.
APPENDIX H

STUDENT PROGRESS REPORT FORMS
Exshaw School District
No. 1699

REPORT OF PROGRESS
DIVISION 1

Name _________________________________
EXSHAW SCHOOL

Continuous Progress Report

To the Parent:

This report is designed for the purpose of informing the parents of the progress the child is making in all-around development.

Please feel free to visit the teacher to discuss any matters relating to the development of your child. Regular, punctual attendance, good health and sufficient hours of sleep are necessary for satisfactory progress. You are requested to encourage your child in the reading of good wholesome books, because extensive reading aids achievement.
Dear Parent:

Please Note: This is not a report card for the entire year. It is a report card, reporting progress from the last report until this time. Remember, the school year is now divided into three levels of time: December, March and June. Next September your child will carry on from where he (or she) left off at the end of June this term. There is no complete failure and no skipping. The child will merely carry on at the level in which they are working. There will, of course, be some review next September, but the child will basically be placed in a level which will give continuous progress in his work.
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<th>Comprehension</th>
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<td>Communication</td>
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<td>Oral Fluency</td>
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<th>LANGUAGE</th>
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