

AFTERMATH OF EVALUATION
A CASE STUDY OF CERTAIN TYPICAL
VIRGINIA HIGH SCHOOLS FOLLOWING EVALUATION

by

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Thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
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APPROVED:



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Acknowledgments

Dr. M'Ledge Moffett, Dean, Radford College, has directed this survey from its very beginning and has guided its development through to whatever success it may attain.

The writer has been employed, as a school principal while trying to gather and assimilate material for this paper, and either task in itself seemed to be a full-time job. Without the encouragement and assistance of Dr. Moffett, this thesis would not have been written.

Dr. Howard, also of Radford College, offered many helpful suggestions which contributed in a very real way to the writer's approach to the subject.

The response of principals to the interview was most gratifying. It is believed that they were sincerely interested in improving the evaluation program through their comments and suggestions.

SECTION I
Introduction

The effort of national and state agencies for the improvements of secondary education attaches much importance to the evaluation of high schools according to certain evaluative criteria.

Virginia is increasing its emphasis upon this form of evaluation and has projected a state wide program for the evaluation of all of its high schools within the next few years. Many of the schools have been evaluated, some of them for a long enough time to be able to show some of the effects of the evaluation upon the on-going development of the school.

The purpose of this study is, therefore, to examine the effects of the evaluation program as expressed by principals of a group of eleven secondary schools in Southwestern Virginia. These schools are considered typical of the types of high schools throughout the State.

The study is expected to reveal:

(1) The extent and nature of improvements planned by the principal and faculty in view of the recommendations made by the visiting evaluation committee.

(2) To focus attention upon the attitudes of local boards of control which may show the degree of their willingness to act upon the findings and recommendations of the visiting committee.

(3) To discover to what extent the situation is normal in the schools during evaluation.

(4) To bring together some evidence to aid in determining the value of the evaluation procedures for all the secondary schools of Virginia.

Method of the Study

The study is limited to the reaction of the principals of eleven high schools located in Southwestern Virginia. These schools and their principals are considered typical of the various kinds of high schools of the State. They were selected on a basis of wealth of county, type of environment, enrollment, physical facilities, faculty, and general program.

Visitation of the school and interview techniques were used, supplemented by a study of the reports of the evaluation committees. A set of guide questions was devised for use in the interview. These were used according to the judgment of the investigator. In some situations the ideas were developed through general conversation, with the data received being compiled later, in other situations the principal gave his answers directly to the question as propounded.

The history of evaluation was developed from a study of literature dealing with the national movement. The history of the movement in Virginia is based upon a study made by Dr. W. R. Smithey, of the University of Virginia, supplemented by conversations with various principals, directors of instruction, state officials, and other individuals who have been identified with the development of the evaluative criteria and the program in Virginia.

Interview Instrument

The questions were drawn largely from the experience of the investigator as a member of several evaluating committees and from his experience in having his own school evaluated. These questions were used as a guide for the interviews. They were phrased and grouped so as to establish:

- (1) The experiences of the faculty in its pre-study of the evaluative criteria.
- (2) The reactions of all school personnel during the visit of the evaluative committee.
- (3) The after-effects of the evaluation upon the school in all of its functions.

There is no limitation or significance to the division, nor to the order of the questions as they were used informally and were directed to develop uniformity in the type of data being collected. The questions are listed below:

The evaluation of a school seems to fall into three parts, namely, preparation, visit of the committee and its report, and the aftermath of evaluation in your school. Which part do you consider most valuable to you? 1,2,3.

Were you influenced by the B form in writing your philosophy?

Did the faculty cooperate well in the study of criteria prior to evaluation?

Did students participate in any way?

Did the teachers rate themselves too high or too low on the M blanks?

Was this self-evaluation of specific value to teachers? If so, cite cases.

Were you pleased with the committee personnel?

Were all members well qualified for the job?

Do you consider three days sufficient time to evaluate a school?

How did pupils react to the presence of these observers in the school?

How did teachers react to the presence of committee members in the classroom?

Was the report made public?

Was the report released to the press?

Upon conclusion of the evaluation, did school board members come to the reading of the report?

Have they borrowed copies of the report for study?

Has the school board or superintendent reacted to correct or defend any weaknesses found by the committee?

Would you care to make a statement as to the board's reaction?

Were there any personal reactions by the board as a result of the report?

Are any plans underway by principal or school board to correct any of the weaknesses as a result of the study?

Were there any recommendations which you consider invalid?

Was there anything in the report contrary to school or school board policy?

What do you frankly think of the program?

The Criteria and Its Use in Evaluation

The Evaluative Criteria are composed of eleven areas of the average secondary school program. They are sufficiently comprehensive to cover every educational activity and facility of any public secondary school, large or small. These areas are listed below:

Philosophy and Objectives

Pupil Population and School Community

Curriculum and Courses of Study

Pupil Activity Program

Library Service

Guidance Service

Instruction

Outcomes

School Staff

School Plant

School Administration

The criteria for each of the above areas are printed in separate booklets and designated by letters of the alphabet, eg. B-Philosophy and Objectives. D-Curriculum and Courses of Study. X-Summary Forms.

Each of these forms contain checklists covering each phase of the area under consideration. The checklist is marked, according to the judgment of the committee by the following symbols: N-Condition or provision does not apply;

0-Condition or provision not present or not satisfactory;
-Condition or provision is present to some extent or only
fairly well made; + -Condition or provision is present or
made to a very satisfactory degree.

Now, in consideration of the number of any one of the
above symbols found on the checklist the area being studied
is evaluated according to the following code:

- N Does not apply
- 1 Very inferior
- 2 Inferior
- 3 Average
- 4 Superior
- 5 Very Superior

These scores are carried to the conversion table in
Summary Form X and given a numerical value. The numerical
value is graphically represented on an educational ther-
mometer which also shows the National Norms for the area
under study. However, there is no total score established
from these numerical values which can be used for com-
parison of schools. Such a score would not be consistent
with the purposes of evaluation. The entire purpose of the
evaluation is to guide the individual school to study its
own strength and weaknesses.

The reports are subjective in nature and do not attempt
to rate or compare one school with another. Nor can the
data be reduced to statistical treatment or interpretation.

History of the Movement

The history of evaluation as a national movement is taken from the study, Reliability of Secondary School Evaluations, by Hawkins¹ and is used with the author's permission.

Movement for Evaluation in the United States

On August 18, 1933, the Cooperative Study of Secondary School Standards was formally organized with George A. Corrothers of the University of Michigan as Chairman and Carl H. Jensen of the United States Office of Education as Secretary. At this meeting deliberation resulted in ten proposals, of which one is listed:

That the Regional Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools shall enter into a cooperative study of standards and procedures for evaluating secondary schools.

Under the direction of this commission the ground work was laid for the formulation of the criteria and some 2500 research studies and deliberation reports were abstracted.

After the completion of the abstracting, the study of various parts of the developing criteria was made in graduate schools of education.

Before this there was no organized criteria by which a secondary school could measure the value of its services, or to compare itself to any other school.

In February, 1932, the National Association of Officers of Regional Associations at the fifth annual meeting of their group, held in Washington, D. C., adopted a resolution recommending that each regional

¹Hawkins, E. T., Reliability of Secondary School Evaluations, unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Yale University, 1942. pp.10-15.

association appoint representatives to meet as a commission for the discussion of secondary standards. The following year, representatives of the three largest associations, the North Central, the Mid Eastern States, and the Southern, came together in a preliminary meeting in Chicago in July, at the time of the National Education Association Convention, to consider the possibility of working together. Dr. George M. Zosk, then U. S. Commissioner of Education, met with the group and agreed to call a meeting in Washington of representatives of all regional associations. The material was ready for experimentation in 1936. Two hundred schools throughout the United States were chosen for evaluation by the Evaluative Criteria.

The results of these 200 evaluations revealed the necessity of further refining and developing materials contained in the Evaluative Criteria, and an entirely new edition was ready for use in 1938-1939 school sessions. Again 200 schools were evaluated. The summer of 1939 saw the last revision of the criteria, and it was published as the 1940 edition.

Since that time, it has once more been revised into the 1950 edition. However, there are no major changes in the criteria, or in the method of its use.

Beginning of Program in Virginia

The account of the movement in Virginia is found in the pamphlet entitled The Evaluative Criteria in Virginia Secondary Schools written by Dr. W. R. Smithey,² Professor of Secondary Education, University of Virginia.

Early in 1937, the Virginia Committee of the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools became interested in the Evaluative Criteria as significant new measure for judging the worth of secondary schools.

The inception, history, and general procedures of the Cooperative Study of Secondary School Standards

²Smithey, Dr. W. R., Professor of Secondary Education, University of Virginia, The Evaluative Criteria in Virginia Secondary Schools.

were presented to the principals and teachers of the State at the University of Virginia's annual High School Conference in July 1937.

The Virginia High School Conference of 1938 devoted its attention to the Evaluative Criteria, and, as a result, arrangements were made with the Washington Staff of the Cooperative Study to evaluate the George Washington High School at Alexandria in such fashion that it might serve as a demonstration of how a visiting committee should evaluate a secondary school by means of the Evaluative Criteria.

The High School Conferences of 1939, 1940, and 1941 were also devoted to the study of the various phases of evaluation and the Criteria. These conferences established the worth of the program in Virginia, and the State Board of Education is now committed to the evaluation of each secondary school in the state.

The Virginia Program for the use of the Evaluative Criteria is under the control of the State Committee of the Southern Association. The plan, worked out by the Cooperative Study is used for evaluation and stimulation purposes pending the formulation of a plan for the use of these measures for accrediting purposes. The State Committee requires new schools (applying for accreditation in the Southern Association) to be evaluated as the first step in the process of application. The State Department of Public Instruction in Virginia has evinced much interest in the Evaluative Criteria, and the members of this Department have served on many evaluative committees. The State Supervisor of Secondary Education is recommending that non-Southern Association schools use the Evaluative Criteria for self-evaluation. Several such schools have been evaluated by State Committees and interest is growing in the State for a program whereby non-Southern Association schools may have the benefit of evaluations by competent outside committees.....It is the opinion of the secondary school people of Virginia that the Evaluative Criteria are effective instruments for evaluative and stimulative purposes. The principal whose school has been evaluated states in the main that as a result of the evaluation, the school has become conscious of the necessity of a philosophy of secondary education made specific in a statement of objectives, and adapted to the specific purposes of its own community and to the larger communities of

which it is a part; of improving its pupil activity program as a phase of its curriculum program; of establishing a guidance service designed to "give systematic aid to pupils in making adjustments to various types of problems which they must meet;" of working out more effective means for measuring the outcomes of the educational program; and of regarding supervision as a phase of school administration concerned with the effective integration and direction of the entire educational program.

As a result of the work of the Virginia Committee of the Southern Association with reference to the Evaluative Criteria, the secondary school people of the State have become more conscious of the modern program of secondary education as shadowed forth in these new measures, the college folk of Virginia have become more interested in this program of the secondary school because they are now better informed concerning it, and the general public has become more enlightened as to the necessity for providing better secondary school facilities for the boys and girls of the State.

Over one hundred schools in Virginia have been evaluated to date, and the value of the program has been definitely established in the minds of school authorities.

A Typical Evaluation Procedure in a Virginia High School

The division superintendent requested the assistant supervisor of secondary education to send an evaluating committee to X High School.

The principal was advised that the school would be evaluated, the date was given, and the principal requested to state whether or not the date was suitable. The principal conferred with his faculty who agreed to accept the date suggested by the supervisor of secondary education.

The principal then went over the evaluation criteria with the faculty. These criteria are printed separately and are designated by letters of the alphabet. For example, section B is entitled Philosophy and Objectives. Section C is entitled Pupil Population and School Community.

Committees were set up to study each section and evaluate the school according to the system shown in the criteria. Several night sessions were necessary to get this task completed.

The ratings in the various sections were then converted into scores and the scores shown as temperatures on thermometers in the booklet of temperature charts.

In the meantime the janitor had been required to give the building a thorough cleaning. The maintenance crew was called out to repair the road around the building, and home room groups cleaned up the room and made tasteful and timely exhibits on the bulletin boards. The various school clubs wrote up their constitutions and objectives for the year. The entire school was on the alert for anything which could be done to improve the school.

The committee arrived on Sunday afternoon and held its first meeting that evening with the principal and director of instruction. The committee endeavored at this time to get an overview of the school and the community.

On Monday the committee spent most of the day visiting classes. They did not become involved in any discussions

and sat in on classes merely as observers.

Teachers were rather nervous and pupils did not respond as well as they ordinarily did. However, as class visitation continued a condition more nearly normal prevailed.

The committee members asked any questions which occurred to them of the principal, teachers, and pupils, which would give them a better idea of the operation of the school. At night the evaluators checked their findings against the school's self-evaluation and began to write their reports.

The second and third days were very much like the first, except that by noon on Wednesday fewer observations were made and the committee was busy with its report. At two o'clock the committee was ready to read its report. School was dismissed, the faculty were assembled in the library. The superintendent and local board members, who had been invited to participate, sent word that they would be unable to attend the reading of the report. However, the director of instruction and the elementary supervisor were there. Soft drinks were served all assembled there, and the reading of the committee's report began. The report was read as a whole, with the understanding that questions could be raised at any time.

After the section on philosophy was read, one teacher objected to the statement that the philosophy was rather vague in places.

In one other instance, issue was taken with the statement that there was no vertical file in the library. The librarian said that she did have a vertical file, and this statement was stricken from the report.

The principal later stated that he had asked that certain statements be stricken from the report, but the committee had not done so.

The report being read and no further comments being offered, the committee prepared to leave.

One member told the principal that the pupils interviewed were unanimous in their support of the administration. Other members who had probably looked into the background and the previous condition of the school offered congratulations upon the evidences of progress being made.

The principal stated that he found so much work to do in the pursuit of school activities that a real study of the report would be put off until the following school year. However, the report has been discussed with the local school board members with a view to strengthening the school in whatever manner seemed practical.

Gathering Material for the Study

The interview is a pleasant method of gathering material, for it combines travel with purposeful conversation.

On one trip, the first principal interviewed was apparently glad of the opportunity to discuss the evaluation

program. He, however, was willing to accept the program in its entirety, without any criticism of any kind. He was told that any criticism he had to offer would not be identified with him or his school, but he remained completely satisfied with the evaluation, and did not offer criticism.

The next principal called upon had not been well pleased with the evaluation of his school. He had not had time to prepare he said. He felt some dissatisfaction with the committee personnel, the report was not accurate, and the report had had some unpleasant effects upon his school. This principal was very critical, very outspoken. He seemed to approve the idea of the program as a whole, but not as it was applied to his school.

While the study was not searching for principals who were disgruntled, or unfairly critical, it was encouraging to find men who held strong opinions upon the subject.

The writer wishes to express his gratitude to the principals interviewed for their time, patience, and the fine spirit with which they assisted in this survey.

SECTION II

The Investigation and Findings

The section entitled "Findings" sums up the reactions, by principals, to each of the questions asked concerning the various phases of the evaluation in their schools. Some direct quotations are given from principal's statements to show the type of reply and indicate the emphasis attached to the various phases of the problem.

The reactions of principals could not, of course, be predicted with any degree of accuracy. Some questions brought forth pronounced reactions and information while others produced only meagre results.

The question is stated at the top of the page, and a brief summarizing statement concludes the treatment of material based upon that question.

Which do you consider of greater value, the self-evaluation, the visit of the committee, or the period after evaluation?

Nine principals thought preparation most valuable.
Two principals thought visit of Committee most valuable.

Six principals thought the visit of the Committee second most valuable.

Five principals thought the aftermath of evaluation second most valuable.

Six principals thought aftermath of evaluation of least value.

Three principals thought the visit of the committee of least value.

Two principals thought preparation of least value.

Summary:

The majority of principals were of the opinion that the preparation for evaluation was of greater value to the school than the actual visit of the committee or the study of the report made by that group.

Were you influenced by the B Form in writing your philosophy?

The B form of the evaluative criteria makes suggestions for the formulation of statements of philosophy and objectives for secondary schools. This form also embodies the criteria by which these statements are evaluated.

Six of the eleven principals reported that they were influenced by the B form in writing their philosophy.

Comments by Principals

"B form was used to considerable extent by the faculty in developing its philosophy, but not in special preparation for evaluation."

"Philosophy was modified to agree with B form. This was done in preparation for evaluation. Objectives were changed and some additions made."

"No, philosophy was written before B form came out, and no changes were made. Indicates that the philosophy has not been revised for several years."

"No, philosophy was written according to requirements in the Report of Progress."

"No, indicates that philosophy has not changed for several years."

"Yes, this was done in preparation for evaluation."

"Yes, some not much. Indicates that B form was used several years ago, and that philosophy was pretty well in line with present standard."

"No, indicates that philosophy needed some work."

"B form was used as a guide in making the philosophy long before we were stated for evaluation."

Summary:

The prestudy of the criteria resulted in the rewriting of the schools' statements of philosophy in six of the eleven schools studied. It is to be concluded that these statements were found to be inadequate in the light of the B form, and as a result these schools have a more satisfactory statement of their philosophy and objectives.

Without the B form as a guide it is reasonable to assume that no school faculty could formulate a statement of its philosophy which would be satisfactory to a committee using the B form as a criterion. Therefore, many schools still have statements that have not been approved in accordance with this form.

Did the faculty cooperate well in the study of criteria prior to evaluation?

In every case, principals reported that the faculties worked diligently on the criteria and were very anxious to make a good showing. In some instances there was a lack of interest at the beginning, probably due to a lack of understanding as to the purpose of the evaluation. In one case, there were several teachers from another state, and they knew nothing of the program.

Comments by Principals

"Some teachers were not sold on the idea of evaluation. They were from out of the state. They felt that the work was not justified, but they worked well later on."

"Excellent cooperation. Brought the group together. Nice work throughout. Desire for improvement manifested."

"Good cooperation from all teachers. There was an increase of the mutual good will and help-each-other attitude."

"Very cooperative. There was a search for facts and a desire to learn the job never manifested to such a degree before. There was a keener insight into school problems and procedure as a result. There were a few who didn't work, but the eyes of complacent teachers were opened as never before."

"Excellent cooperation."

"There was some fussing at first because they thought it was something the principal had foisted upon them. They were not enthusiastic at first, but worked well later."

"Teachers worked well together."

"Very cooperative. They did most of the work. Principal just assigned it."

Summary:

Teachers of the schools studied exhibited a fine spirit of cooperation throughout the self-evaluation process.

Did the teachers rate themselves too high or too low on the M blanks?

Only one principal reported that the entire group of teachers rated themselves correctly as judged by the ratings of the committee.

There was a tendency among the better teachers to under-rate themselves, and a tendency among the poorer teachers to rate themselves too high. However, most principals believed that when the scores were averaged, a fairly accurate balance was established.

Comments by Principals

"The new, inexperienced teachers tended to rate themselves too high. The older established teachers rated themselves too low."

"Poor teachers too high, others about right."

"Better, more experienced teachers underrated themselves. Their general rating was low."

"Good, too low. The poor, too high. Average, about right."

"All rated themselves too high."

"There was a tendency to underrate themselves. As a whole the rating was about right."

"Just about as the evaluation."

"Most of us rated ourselves too high."

Summary:

It is interesting to note that the less experienced teachers rated themselves too high on the individual rating sheet while the older, more experienced teachers rated themselves too low according to those ratings made by the committee.

Did students participate in any way?

All principals praised their students for their cooperation in preparation for evaluation. They participated by helping to clean up the building and grounds.

However, in only two schools was there evidence that students contributed anything except physical labor.

In one school, the philosophy was discussed with students and some changes were made in accordance with their suggestions.

The students of one school also made changes in student organizations and pupil activity program.

Comments by Principals

"Yes, cleaned rooms and saw that the entire plant was clean. They had a notion that it may mean a new building. Deflated afterward."

"The student council recommended some changes. They had the stage drapes repaired. Cleaned the building and grounds, and improved the appearance of the entire school."

"The philosophy was discussed with the students and they suggested changes in it. These were made. They made changes in the organization of the pupil activity program and wrote descriptions of the activities and accomplishments. The home room council coordinated the activities by schedule."

"To a slight degree. Certain items were discussed with them such as extra curricular activities."

"Yes."

"The evaluation was discussed with them and they helped the librarian and homeroom teachers to clean and brighten up the room."

"Yes."

"They helped clean building and grounds, wrote up objectives for clubs and cooperated in every way possible."

"They helped to some extent. Not much."

"It was discussed in assembly and they helped clean up."

Summary:

Pupils cooperated whole heartedly in preparation for evaluation.

Pupils were asked only to perform physical tasks, such as cleaning, dusting, raking grounds, etc.

Was this self-evaluation of specific value to teachers? If so, cite cases.

Judging from the answers obtained to this question, the writer feels that specific values were difficult to identify, since practically all answers were general in their nature. However, these generalities are worthy of note.

All principals reported that the M blank gave the teacher her first opportunity to really measure her proficiency and training. Many teachers were shocked when they saw themselves reflected by this score sheet.

Comments by Principals

"It had a good effect on all teachers. Teachers were more conscious of their obligation to the school. They were deeply concerned with their own efforts to obtain professional concepts."

"The M blanks were so revealing that the grade teachers requested some for their own use."

"Teachers realized that they would have to work harder, but that teaching became less a mental strain."

Summary:

All principals reported a general improvement in the professional attitude of teachers, as well as in the quality of classroom performance.

Were you pleased with the committee personnel?

Six principals out of eleven interviewed had no adverse criticism of the committee.

Two principals of small schools objected to committee members who came from larger, urban schools because they believed that these people were inclined to find fault, since the principal felt that such persons could find no word of commendation for even those phases of work which the home principals considered unusually good in light of their situation.

Comments by Principals

"Yes, except that two members of the committee were from larger schools, and did not have the proper perspective in a small country school. They were unjustly critical and expected too much."

"Yes, no criticism toward any, and no antagonism (he was hesitant here)."

"Well pleased with all."

"Yes, complete harmony."

"No better committee could have been found in the state."

"Yes, they were good fellows. (There were some he resented because they did not understand or try to understand his situation.)"

"All but one. (There seemed to be something personal here, growing out of a previous relationship.)"

"All but one, and he seemed to be too officious, acted too much of a self-styled expert."

Summary:

There was considerable objection to members of the evaluating committee. No serious problems however, seem to have arisen from these objections.

Were all members well qualified for the job?

Of the eleven principals interviewed, nine believed that the committee members were well qualified for the task of evaluating a school. Of these nine, eight would go no further than answer "yes" to the question, and one amplified his answer with words of praise.

Of the remaining two, one was not pleased with the chairman, saying that he was too exacting. The other of these two reported that one man was not qualified because he could not understand local conditions. After having certain practices explained to him, he incorporated his continued criticism into the report. The principal then stated that this committee member had later lost his position.

Summary:

The members of the committee are well qualified for the job of evaluation. Principals are not expected to be very enthusiastic in their comments upon this.

Do you consider three days sufficient time to evaluate a school?

Only one principal believed that a thorough and complete evaluation could be made in three days.

Classroom observation was said to be very hurriedly and incompletely done. The pupils and teachers did not have time to adjust to the presence of the observer. Projects begun on Monday morning were not followed to their conclusion by the

observer, and hence he had insufficient basis for his evaluation of the teacher, or to see the outcome of any project begun on Monday.

These principals also felt that the committee was rushed in the writing of the reports, and consequently did not give due consideration to local conditions. Some mistakes were made in the report which could have been avoided if more time had been available.

However, it was well understood that it was not the fault of the committee that no more time was available, and they did not censure the committee for this lack of time.

Comments by Principals

"The committee should have five days."

"There were too many mistakes. The committee can't see the whole picture. They disrupt the school schedule when many of its activities are set up on a weekly basis."

"Time is the greatest weakness. They should have made more visits."

Summary:

The principals, with one exception, state that no school can be evaluated in three days by methods now being practiced. The committees themselves usually preface their report by a statement to this effect. The observation of classroom work and the consequent report was the chief reason for complaint.

How did pupils react to the presence of these observers in the school?

Two principals said that their pupils were perfectly

normal during the evaluation. Being normal, it is to be understood that they were no better prepared in their class-work, their behavior, or conduct was as usual, and they were no better dressed.

In nine of the evaluated schools visited by the writer, the evaluation was not regarded as an everyday occurrence. They were extremely careful not to cause any unpleasantness.

Several members of one committee were favorably impressed by one boy who usually caused a great deal of trouble in school.

The reasonably well regulated and well administered high school is the object of the devotion and loyalty of its pupils. There is usually a genuine affection existing between teachers and pupils. For this reason pupils may be expected to feel that during an evaluation, the faculty and administration are under fire and that it is their duty to show the school and its administrator and faculty to the best advantage possible. Hence the normal reaction of pupils is to do their part by appearing neat, well prepared for their classes, and to conduct themselves in a manner commendable by the evaluators.

The principals reporting that their pupils did not respond in any way to the evaluation have good reason to be concerned about the loyalty of their pupils.

Summary:

Pupils were somewhat abnormal during the evaluation. Hence, observers did not get a completely true picture of the everyday activities of pupils in their normal setting.

How did teachers react to the presence of committee members in their classrooms?

Evaluation was a new experience for teachers, and their reactions, although varied somewhat, followed a consistent pattern.

They were frightened, ill at ease, and uncertain of themselves at the beginning. Their study of the criteria had revealed to them the standards by which they would be measured, and many teachers felt that they could not measure up to such standards. One teacher worried so much that she became physically ill and could not meet her classes the first day of the evaluation.

In every case principals reported unusual preparation on the part of teachers.

Comments by Principals

"Teachers put forth an unusual effort. They tried to do a good job to please the evaluators."

"Teachers worked hard to try to make a good showing."

"They were better prepared and very conscious of the blank."

"One teacher who had been partially unsatisfactory proved to herself that she could do good work."

Summary:

Teachers came to their classes unusually well prepared and conducted their classes with an obvious desire to receive a good rating.

Was the report made public or released to the press?

One school invited lay people to the reading of the report.

Only two principals made no effort to give to the school community the findings of the evaluation committee.

All other principals gave the reports some form of publicity. Reports were made to Parent-Teacher Associations, Kiwanis Clubs, or some civic organizations interested in schools. However, in no case was a report turned over to any civic group for study.

The report was not released to the press by any of the eleven principals.

In one instance a reporter attended a meeting at which the evaluation report was discussed, but no effort was made to obtain a copy of the report.

One county paper editor asked permission to print the report, but was refused.

A Director of Instruction wrote a brief summary of the report and this was printed in the local paper.

Explanatory Note: It is the policy of the State Department of Education to place the reports in the hands of local school authorities with the instructions that any publicity of the report be handled by the Division Superintendent. Such a policy prevents unwise or indiscriminate publicity which may result in misinterpretation or misuse of statements to the detriment of the school. The whole program is designed for

the use of school authorities for the improvement of the individual school.

Summary:

Principals did not include statements of controversial or critical issues from their reports when discussing the evaluation program before civic groups, and restricted their comments to matters from which no issue could arise.

Upon conclusion of the evaluation, did School Board members come to the reading of the report?

In two schools the entire Board attended, and in two other schools no Board Member was present.

In all other cases one and two members of the School Board were present.

Summary:

According to principals, school boards took no great notice of the evaluations and those who did attend the reading of the reports were not greatly impressed. They did very little to make improvements in line with the recommendations.

Have they borrowed copies of the report for study?

In two schools all Board Members received copies of the report.

Three principals of other schools reported that one Board member received a copy of the report.

Six principals reported that copies of the evaluating committees' report were left with the Superintendent for use of Board members. However, they did not know what use had been made of them.

Has the School Board or Superintendent reacted to correct or defend any weaknesses found by the committee?

Four principals reported that the School Board had done nothing to correct or defend any of the weaknesses found by the committee.

Five principals reported that some or all of the weaknesses would be corrected. However, nothing had been done at the time of the interview.

One principal made the following statement: "The Board won't do anything. They defended the school's objectives and the discrepancy between the school's objectives and its philosophy.

Summary:

The principals had no way of knowing whether the entire board had studied the reports except that there had been few improvements made. The principals, in responding to this part of the interview, voiced the opinion that some minor matters would probably be taken care of, but that no great amount of money would be spent. The principals interviewed did not entertain much hope of accomplishing a great deal as a result of the evaluation. Some principals complained that board members did not understand school problems and made no effort to do so.

Would you care to make a statement as to the Board's reaction?

Nine school boards were said to have little or no interest in the evaluation program after they discovered that it carried

no actual force. When they realized that the evaluation report was merely suggestive or advisory in nature, these Boards were only mildly interested.

A new building was under consideration in one community, and the Board was of the opinion that evaluation was worthless at the time it was made.

One School Board will study the report among themselves.

Comments of Principals

"There was no reaction. The Board is very slow to act and is disinterested in all phases of school work."

"The Board's reaction was favorable. It is willing to help correct defects to a limited extent."

"They just piddle in school affairs. They don't have much interest in their jobs."

Summary:

School Boards showed no great interest in the evaluation of their schools and showed little indication that they would act upon recommendations made in the reports.

Were there any personal reactions by the board as a result of the report?

Ten schools report no personal reactions by the board as a result of the report.

One principal reported to the superintendent that two teachers would not cooperate in the study. These two teachers were not given contracts for re-employment for the coming year.

Then the board held up the principal's contract because they said that he did not make the teachers work. Later all were reconciled and all rehired.

Summary:

In isolated cases, where some conflict already existed the evaluation caused further dissension or brought it into the open. On the other hand, principals believed that the evaluation report strengthened their position in the community and with the School Board.

Are any plans underway by principal or School Board to correct any of the weaknesses as a result of the study?

Comments by Principals

- a. A study of the student activity program is underway.
- b. Minor repairs are being made. The teachers will improve their classroom work by a study of better techniques and procedures.
- c. A new building is being erected. Many of the defects found by the committee will be corrected by more comprehensive program throughout.
- d. A new building is under consideration. The faculty will continue to study the report and meet all recommendations.
- e. A curriculum study will be carried out to improve the content rather than to add to it. There are some departments that are weak.
- f. The school plans to extend its commercial course. The principal will teach only one class instead of three as he did last year.

g. There are some hopes for a new building or enlargement of the present structure. The principal also hopes that he will be given greater authority in the employment and dismissal of teachers. The principal says that he may consolidate all financial accounts.

h. Plans are underway to institute a study of the report, but we have not had time to really determine what we want to do.

i. One extra teacher has been employed, and we shall study the report for further improvements.

j. The statement of the philosophy will be rewritten to conform to the recommendation of the committee.

k. No plans have been formulated as yet because the evaluation was made too late in the school year to permit any action.

Summary:

All principals reported some activity, planned or in progress to meet the recommendations of the evaluating committee.

Were there any recommendations which the principal considered invalid?

Six principals reported that invalid recommendations were made.

Comments by Principals

a. The committee reported insufficient student activity. The principal says there is already so much that it interferes with normal school work.

- b. The committee did not get a clear picture of the situation. They were misinformed as to the librarian's book inventory and the recency of the books. The report also showed a lack of knowledge of number of pupils going to college.
- c. The committee had made two statements which did not apply. It also had the incorrect opinion that many of the students' school activities were carried on out of school.
- d. The committee did recommend some things the school can get along without. In most of its report, however, the committee was very down to earth.
- e. No
- f. No
- g. There were some misinterpretations of information especially concerning the library. The committee also recommended the employment of qualified Physical Education teachers when both were well qualified by training.
- h. There were several statements made which we did not consider valid, but we did not challenge any of the statements made.
- i. No, except one mistake which was stricken out.
- j. No.
- k. The committee made unjust criticism of the way the doors are locked, when this matter had already been carefully explained by the principal.

Summary:

According to the principals, the majority of reports contain statements which do not apply, or are inappropriate, in view of the local situation.

Was there anything in the report contrary to School Board Policy?

Only two principals answered "yes" to this question. Their statements follow:

"The committee recommended a full-time secretary for the principal. This may be said to be against School Board Policy as it has never been done."

"The committee recommended that the principal be relieved of all duties in the grade school. The Board makes the principal responsible for all the white schools in his community and took issue with the committee on this point."

Summary:

There is seldom any statement or recommendation made in evaluation reports contrary to school board policy.

Were teachers stimulated to greater effort or thoroughness by the report of the evaluation as a whole?

Comments of the Principals

- a. Generally speaking, yes. There was a good carry over, or after effect which continues to exist among teachers.
- b. Yes, teachers have shown more interest in their work and have more professional attitudes.
- c. They wanted a more personal evaluation of their work. They were disappointed when they found the report so general.
- d. There has been a very wholesome reaction to evaluation. The teachers have a better attitude toward work.
- e. The teachers became more conscious of what a good school is, and how it ought to function.
- f. The teachers had the first glimpse of their work as a profession. The report was the weakest part of the whole experience.

- g. Yes, some thought it was too much work until they got into the study. Then they became very active.
- h. They have come to a realization of the responsibility of their jobs.
- i. Yes, our teachers worked harder to achieve greater professional attitudes.
- j. To some extent. (The principal of this school had already resigned and possibly took less note of teacher reaction.)
- k. Yes. The teachers took a more professional view of their work. They are studying to improve themselves in their profession.

Summary:

The evaluation has had great beneficial effect upon teachers. This is reflected in greater enthusiasm for their work, more professional attitude, and a greater quest for guidance in their work.

SECTION III

Conclusions

The majority of principals were of the opinion that the preparation for evaluation was of greater value to the school than the actual visit of the committee or the study of the report made by that group.

This is understandable. None of these schools had been previously evaluated. They naturally were apprehensive of such a searching examination. Therefore they attacked the job of pre-evaluation with an energy born of desperation. They found upon examination of the criteria, that many phases of their work could be improved, that many of their policies and practices would be condemned by the committee. It is obvious that many improvements were accomplished before the arrival of the committee.

The pre-study of the criteria resulted in the rewriting of the school's statements of philosophy and objectives in six of the eleven schools studied. It is to be concluded that the previous statements were inadequate in the light of the B form.

Without the B form as a guide, it is reasonable to assume that no school could formulate a statement of its philosophy and objectives which would be satisfactory to a committee using such a form as a criterion. Many schools, however, have statements of their philosophy that have not been stated

in accordance with this form of the criteria. The fact that no modification in statements of philosophy raises these questions: Did the school have a better statement which it was prepared to defend; or does it show an attitude of indifference to the importance of having a clearly defined philosophy; or does it indicate that the B form of the criteria is not stimulating as an aid in formulating this important statement.

Teachers of the schools studied exhibited a fine spirit of cooperation throughout the evaluation process. They felt that their individual professional attitudes were being examined by both local authorities and an official body appointed by the State Department of Education. However, the predominant motivating force seems to be, in the opinions of the principals, a real desire to improve their schools and to receive as favorable a report for the school as possible through their individual and cooperative effort.

It appears that teachers profited greatly from their experience of self-evaluation using the Individual Data Sheet. They achieved a better perspective of their role in the development of youth, since they used objectively a medium by which they could evaluate their work.

The classroom teachers realized from the self-evaluation a new devotion to their work. This reawakening to the responsibilities of the teaching profession is, in itself, of tremendous value to Virginia's schools.

It is interesting to note that the less experienced teachers rated themselves high on the individual rating sheet while the older, more experienced teachers rated themselves low compared with the ratings of them by the committee.

As teachers grow, in a professional sense, they seem to become more humble, or less secure or less sure of the contribution they are making in view of their understanding of the great responsibility they bear.

It is the observation of the writer that no matter how poor or how inadequate their schools are, pupils will come to their defense whenever they think they are being attacked by an outside agency. It is this spirit of loyalty which prompted pupils to cooperate so wholeheartedly in preparation for evaluation. It is regrettable that principals did not take greater advantage of this loyalty by asking pupils to participate in the study of the criteria prior to evaluation. This could have been done without offense to the faculty or administration. The opinions of pupils would have been of utmost importance, since it is for them that the school is established. The loyalty and faith of pupils should inspire more confidence among faculty members for more cooperative planning of the school program.

The prospect of approaching evaluation inspires the principal to feverish activity. He corrects whatever faults

he can of those discovered in preparation for the ordeal. He may take a defensive attitude toward those weaknesses which he fears will be uncovered by the committee. During the evaluation, he may be super-sensitive from his long-sustained work of self-evaluation and is easily offended by the probing questions of the committee.

The principals state emphatically that no school can be evaluated in three days by methods now being practiced. The committee themselves usually preface their report by a statement to this effect. The limited time for observation of classroom work leaves the impression with the teacher that hasty judgment has been rendered. This, according to the principal, is most unfair and cannot be justified, as a real basis of evaluation of a teacher's work.

Principals who reported that their pupils were perfectly normal went right on to say that pupils were better dressed, better behaved, and better prepared for classes than usual. To this extent, at least, pupils were not normal. However, it cannot be gainsaid that they were responding normally to the situation as they saw it.

The attitude of indifference of school board members toward the evaluation report should be a matter of concern to the State Department of Education.

Principals reported that school board members lost much interest in the evaluation after finding that it was merely advisory in nature. Local control of schools is considered of utmost importance in our democracy, yet, according to principals' statements, local school boards are not well informed on school affairs, or progressive in their outlook.

Principals had no way of knowing whether all members of the boards had studied the reports except that there had been few improvements made or planned as a result of the evaluation. The principals, in responding to this part of the interview, voiced the opinion that no great outlay of money could be expected in carrying out suggestions coming from the evaluation committee. Some principals complained that in some instances school board members did not understand school problems, and made no effort to do so. They often look back with nostalgia upon their own school days, spent in small rural schools and wonder why modern school problems have become so complex, technical, and diversified in nature. They are, therefore, reluctant to invest huge sums of money to meet the ever-increasing demands for a more comprehensive program of education.

The question then arises as to how the evaluation program can be revised so as to bring the school board into a more active participation in evaluation of the local school.

It is gratifying to report that evaluation reports have been so well received. Only in isolated cases were there statements contained in the reports which reopened old issues. All principals were of the opinion that the report improved their professional stature in their own communities.

Principals indicated that they did not intend to begin a study of the report for a month or so after evaluation. It was their feeling that they had worked long enough on the project and would get better results from the faculty if the teachers were allowed to resume their normal routine for a while before returning to the subject of evaluation.

All principals reported some activity, planned or underway, to meet the recommendations of the evaluating committee. Actually, no more desirable outcome of the evaluation could be hoped for. No matter how adequate the plant and physical equipment, the classroom activity, with its relation to real life experience, is the reason for the existence of any school.

Principals and their faculties are busy with the study of their reports and making the improvements recommended. The session of 1950-51 will probably be peak years for these schools insofar as principal and faculty are able to affect improvements.

According to principals, the majority of reports contain statements which do not apply, or are inappropriate, in view of the local situation.

Some of the principals were rather bitter in their criticism of committees on this account. There were some principals who had asked that these statements be stricken from the reports, but the committees had refused to do so.

Evaluation reports seldom include recommendations which are contrary to school board policy. One possible reason for this apparent agreement to school board policy is the strong indication on the part of the principals, that school board policies are so weak, or so vacillating, that a contrary statement would be difficult to achieve. School board policies, it was inferred, are made for the exigencies of the moment and do not become part of an instrument for future reference.

Teachers were stimulated to greater effort by the report of the evaluating committee. This was reflected in greater enthusiasm for their work, a more professional attitude, and a greater quest for guidance in their work.

Principals personal reactions to evaluation

Comments by Principals

- a. It is always difficult to keep personalities out of an evaluation. It is a good program, but has some bad features. It should be continued. Studies of this kind will help to strengthen the program.
- b. It is apparent that personal feelings go into the report. It is not quite consistent. It gives the State Department a better idea of Virginia's Secondary Schools. The reports are buttered too much with "we commend" or "we look upon with favor." The principal should have a chance to set the date and to pick the committee.
- c. It is a very fine program. Much is learned by teachers.
- d. It is a fine program if not too artificial. Very stimulating. Members of the committee should work in their own field. The school should be rechecked later to determine how the school has profited by the evaluation.
- e. The best piece of work done in secondary education in the last 25 years.
- f. Good preparation is more valuable than all the rest of the evaluation. The evaluation helped greatly by making all personnel more interested in their jobs. It helped to give the proper perspective. The evaluators should quit trying to soft soap the school and make the report sound more complimentary than it is. It should be stricter, more critical, and less given to flattery. The evaluators feel that they are experts when they really are not.

- g. It is good to have outside people inspect the school and give their opinions. However, they should try to get correct information and base their report on it. This principal said that he knew 98% of the weaknesses found. It is better to tell the weaknesses of the school through an outside committee than through the principal. The members of the committee don't ask enough questions.
- h. Excellent program, but it needs a great deal of improvement in two categories. The committee should stay longer, and should be composed of better qualified personnel.
- i. The visiting committee should be very careful not to include in its reports suggestions which will cause trouble in the school. This they have been known to do. If anything is in the report which the principal has good reason to object to, it should be stricken out. It is the finest method yet devised for acquainting school personnel with a set of criteria by which to judge themselves.
- j. It is a fine program, but it needs a restudy. The committee should try to become better acquainted with the school before attempting an evaluation. The members go blundering into the job, and do not go back to the principal for additional information or views of the principal.
- k. The principal was disappointed with some of the ratings. One man was not a good school man. They should be more careful in their selection of committee members. Schools would get better ratings from men working in schools similar to their own.

Recommendations

The State Department of Education, recognizing that the self-evaluation, prior to the visit of the committee, is the most important phase of the program, should give more assistance to the school in its effort to evaluate itself. A complete set of instructions should be developed and an experienced person should be assigned to the principal to assist him in carrying out this phase of the work.

The principal also should be assigned to an evaluation committee prior to the visit of a committee to his school.

Greater emphasis should be placed upon the statement of philosophy and objectives, so that schools would feel more keenly the necessity of formulating their statements according to the specifications in the B form.

Schools to be evaluated should be advised as to the importance of student participation in the self-evaluation. It is believed that the value of the entire program could be increased in this manner.

The use of the M blank should become a continuing process after evaluation, in the belief that professional growth should be continuous.

It may be well to state here that an evaluation should be epochal in its effect upon a school. Both the Evaluative

Criteria and the report should become guide books for stimulating growth. Steps should be taken now to follow up the evaluation by calling for a restudy of the evaluation committee's report with a view to correcting the weaknesses found.

Of course the cooperation of the local school board would be necessary in the implementation of a follow-up program. However, such a plan would reveal just how far the board would go toward correcting weaknesses found and determine whether or not it is worthwhile to make such recommendations as only the board could carry out. Such a plan may have a far-reaching effect throughout Virginia in the improvement of schools.

Greater care should be exercised in the selection of committee members for particular schools.

The State Department should re-examine its policy of limiting the evaluation to three days time. Either the scope of the evaluation should be limited to what can be reasonably expected of a committee in three days, or the time should be extended.

It may be possible and desirable to ask school board members to participate in the self-evaluation of the school, working with the principal in the planning and supervision of this work.

At least some method should be devised to bring the school board members in closer contact with the problems of the schools over which they have control.

Bibliography

Of the limited amount of material extant at this time on this relatively new movement, the following references were used:

How to Evaluate a Secondary School
Cooperative Study of Secondary School Standards

Evaluative Criteria
Cooperative Study of Secondary School Standards

The Validity of Secondary School Evaluations
Unpublished - Hawkins, E. T.

The Evaluation of Secondary Schools in Virginia
Smithey, Dr. W. R.

Evaluation Reports of the eleven schools surveyed

Appendix

The list of schools visited:

Pearisburg High School, Pearisburg, Virginia
Pembroke High School, Pembroke, Virginia
Narrows High School, Narrows, Virginia
Floyd High School, Floyd, Virginia
Hillsville High School, Hillsville, Virginia
Bland High School, Bland, Virginia
Honaker High School, Honaker, Virginia
Pulaski High School, Pulaski, Virginia
Andrew Lewis High School, Salem, Virginia
Colored Industrial Institute, Christiansburg, Virginia
Pocahontas High School, Pocahontas, Virginia