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THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

AN ANALYSIS OF PUBLIC SCHOOL NEWS CONTENT IN OKLAHOMA NEWSPAPERS

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

BY

MARY SUE HAUGHT

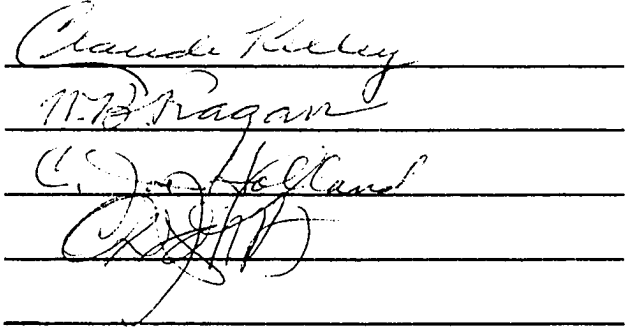
Norman, Oklahoma

1965

AN ANALYSIS OF PUBLIC SCHOOL NEWS

CONTENT IN OKLAHOMA NEWSPAPERS

APPROVED BY



DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

Mary Sue Haught An Abstract

The problem of providing information about the public schools to citizens in order to promote understanding and public support was the basis for this study. It involved an analysis of the school content in six daily and twelve weekly newspapers in the state of Oklahoma for the period August 21, 1964 through May 21, 1965. The purposes of the study were (1) to determine the quantity of various classifications of school news appearing in Oklahoma daily and weekly newspapers; (2) to identify trends in educational programs and practices as indicated by press coverage; and (3) to ascertain methods for improving relations between the school and the public through the media of newspapers.

School content was categorized into twenty classifications, the same classifications used in two Michigan studies conducted by Luck in 1952-53 and Monahan in 1959. Athletics and athletic illustrations comprised 48.4 per cent of all the school content among daily newspapers in the study and 27.4 per cent among weekly papers. Of the remaining school news space in dailies, 33.9 per cent fell into the categories of miscellaneous, student activities, student activity illustrations, and other illustrations. The four categories accounted for 57.4 per cent of the remaining space in weeklies. Low content categories for both dailies and weeklies were social news and illustrations, transportation and safety.

A qualitative analysis disclosed that in terms of impact and reader interest, feature articles on the schools represented the highest quality of writing. Editorial comment constituted only a fractional amount of the total content and the leading subject was school finance.

Controversy over financing Oklahoma's schools dominated the education news during the period of this study. Newspapers as a group were generally sympathetic to the plight of the schools, but found some of the methods employed to obtain improvements highly objectionable. Newspapers were especially critical of the imposition of sanctions against the state of Oklahoma by the National Education Association.

Among the more significant conclusions of the study were:

1. Newspapers in Oklahoma publish news about the public schools in sufficient quantity and variety that readers can be well informed about the operations and activities of local schools, as well as national, state and local issues affecting education.

2. There are many opportunities for interesting features and other articles about the schools which are not used to good advantage, although some newspapers do an outstanding job in this regard.

3. While editorial comment and other interpretive writings may at times be critical of the schools, the greater percentage of total school news content is favorable rather than unfavorable.

4. Considering daily and weekly newspapers as separate classes, there are no significant differences among Oklahoma newspapers when ranked and compared on the amount of space given to each topic of school news.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The efforts of many people, from varying fields of endeavor, went into the preparation of this dissertation.

A special expression of appreciation must go to Dr. William G. Monahan, the person most responsible for my selection of a subject of study. While serving as my major professor, he contributed many hours of advice and assistance. His help in the initial and successive stages of the study was immeasurable.

Also most deserving of thanks are the members of my committee: Dr. Claude Kelley, the chairman, who gave unselfishly of his time to insure a timely completion of the project; Dr. William B. Ragan, whose constructive criticism in the writing of the thesis was most beneficial; Dr. O. D. Johns, who tolerated a female in the predominantly masculine field of educational administration; and Dr. C. Joe Holland, whose friendly counsel provided impetus for a grueling task. I am also grateful to many other faculty members for their advice and encouragement, particularly Dr. David P. Bergin and Prof. Robert V. Peterson.

This thesis would not have been possible without the cooperation of many editors throughout the state of Oklahoma.

Without question, this thesis could not have been done had it not been for the understanding and support from my family. My heartfelt

gratitude goes to my sons, Steve, Gary and Randall, for their patience with a student mother; to my parents, for favors too numerous to mention; and to my husband, Bob, who assisted in obtaining newspapers for the study, served as assistant in measuring and classifying the content, and contributed much professional journalistic guidance in the preparation of the thesis.

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AN ANALYSIS OF PUBLIC SCHOOL NEWS CONTENT IN OKLAHOMA NEWSPAPERS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Education in the United States has never been without problems and the situation which currently exists in our public schools is no exception. The rapid rate at which the world has progressed through technological developments has placed new demands on our school systems, and increases in the number of school-age children have imposed additional burdens.

Enrolments have risen to record levels, and this growth has been accompanied by steadily rising expenditures. Since 1930, spending for education has climbed from 3.1 per cent to 5.8 per cent of the gross national product.[1] The federal government has placed increasingly greater emphasis on education as a subject of national concern, as evidenced by recent legislation passed by the Congress.

As the scope of education grows and as educational programs become larger and more complex, it is more necessary than ever that the citizens who support our public school system have a thorough

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[1]John Teal Bobbitt, "Education," Britannica Book of the Year 1965 (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc. 1965), pp. 304-305.

understanding of the job that schools are trying to do. The realization by educators that an informed public is essential to the proper support of the schools is borne out by statements of school leaders and discussions of problems faced by the schools. Reeder draws a comparison between schools and business, stating:

> In school affairs all the people are the stockholders, and they have the same right to have accurate, complete and continuous information regarding the aims, progress, plans and needs of the school as do the stockholders of private businesses. The welfare and progress of the school are determined largely by how the people regard the school. How the people regard the school is determined largely by what they know about it.[1]

This theme was an underlying component of the deliberations by delegates to a meeting of the National Committee for Support of the Public Schools in 1963, attended by 295 members and observers from over the nation. Among six basic convictions adopted by the conferees was this policy statement:

> More fully informed as to the facts, the American people will provide the funds needed to finance excellent schools for all children and youth throughout the nation.[2]

A Kansas newspaperman, John H. Colburn, expressed the same idea in pointing out that education and journalism have mutual goals --a better informed people. He stated:

> As a communicator, journalism must provide a bridge between the educators and the people to explain the tremendous changes under way in our educational process and why still more are needed. Once the needs and goals are explained comprehensively, the public will be more willing to underwrite the costs of better education.[3]

---

[1]Ward G. Reeder, A First Course in Education (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1954), p. 528.

[2]National Committee for Support of the Public Schools, Light a Fire (Washington: National Committee for Support of the Public Schools, 1963), 96 pp.

[3]John H. Colburn, "Journalism's Stake in the Knowledge Industry," The Quill (May, 1965), 8-9.

The greatest obstacle in the path of public understanding appears to be public apathy. Addressing the 1963 conference, Francis Keppel, U. S. Commissioner of Education, gave this concise explanation of why it is hard to arouse the public over schools: "Nobody ever died of a split infinitive." The challenge, according to Keppel, was to find some way to alert citizens to the fact that education is a "key to life--to the kind of life our children and grandchildren will have, and the kind of life our nation will have."[1]

Working to counteract both apathy and criticism is the National School Public Relations Association, a department of the National Education Association. This organization has been most active during the past decade.

The various media of mass communications have been instrumental in carrying education's message to the public, although opinions emanating from the field indicate that educators do not recognize the potential which exists. These comments by Charles S. Steinberg, Vice President in charge of public information for the Columbia Television Network, are an example:

> Mass media have been the subject of abysmal neglect or misunderstanding by the educator.
>
> . . . those who are most articulately critical of the effects of mass media are least exposed to these influences, or simply not exposed at all.
>
> If mass media are remote phenomena to educators, they are close to the people.[2]

In the opinion of most communications researchers, the newspaper

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[1]National Committee for Support of the Public Schools, op. cit.

[2]Charles S. Steinberg, "Mass Media and the Educator," The Educational Forum (May, 1965), 393-98.

is accepted as the best all-around vehicle for conveying information about the schools to the public. This opinion was expressed by educators in the 29th Yearbook of the American Association of School Administrators. The report stated that many people ". . . get most of what they know about their schools from what they read in the newspaper . . . (it) is the chief medium of information in practically every community."[1]

Evidence that the newspaper is a high exposure medium may be found in current circulation figures. In 1964 the number of U. S. dailies stood at 1,754, with a combined daily copy circulation of 58,905,251. The 550 Sunday papers circulated 46,830,039 copies. These figures represented a slight decline from the previous year--a drop of six dailies, eight Sunday papers, nearly a million in daily circulation, and two million in Sunday circulation.[2]

Journalism researchers are quick to point out, however, that the decline is limited to the metropolitan dailies and is not the case for newspapers generally. Instead, daily newspaper circulation, except in larger cities, is growing at a faster pace than the nation's population. In the words of one authority:

> The American press is not "fading" as some claim and many believe. It is just getting closer to the people in that the nation's smaller city and suburban dailies are chalking up big circulation gains.[3]

---

[1]American Association of School Administrators, The Superintendent, The Board, and The Press, Twenty-ninth Yearbook (Washington: National Education Association, 1951), p. 4.

[2]Edwin Emery, "Publishing," Britannica Book of the Year 1965 (Chicago: Encylopedia Britannica, Inc., 1965), p. 690.

[3]Kenneth R. Byerly, "Daily Newspaper Circulation Growing Faster Than Population," The Quill (April, 1965), 20-21.

With this vast potential for communicating with the public available, it behooves educators to cooperate with those in the newspaper business in making the best possible use of the media. Colburn describes the role which journalism can play in achieving this end:

> The relationship between the press and our educational system is a vital one. For our future, it is essential that the relationship be closer and better understood.
>
> The vast majority of parents are interested in new trends, but they don't want to display their own ignorance. Thus the press must bridge the gap and explain new teaching techniques, illustrate the uses of language laboratories, stress the new vital roles of physics and chemistry, explain what new math concepts mean in an era of computer programming, and tell something about the sociological role of the individual in an automated society.
>
> In most areas, parents cannot obtain this information at hasty parent-teacher conferences, at PTA meetings, at school board hearings or at school budget sessions before county or city administrators.[1]

In the light of these widely-held beliefs, it is reasonable to conclude that studies of school news content in newspapers can be of considerable value to school administrators in interpreting the schools to citizens within a community.

Nature of the Study

The Problem and Its Background

The basis for this study was the problem of providing information about the public schools to citizens in order to promote understanding and public support. This is a problem which is deeply rooted in our educational system, a system which has been characterized by change.

This statement is substantiated by a study of the development

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[1]Colburn, op. cit., 9.

of America's schools. Marshall, writing in a publication entitled, The Story of Our Schools, points out:

> Our schools have had to grow and change along with the nation and the times. There has been a constant interplay between challenge and response, new needs and new ideas to meet them.[1]

Recording the fluctuations of public interest as reflected in the type of school news published by newspapers was one of the objectives of two studies performed in the state of Michigan. The organization of the Michigan Communications Study, a joint effort of the Michigan Association of School Administrators, the Michigan Press Association and the University of Michigan, resulted from a desire for more cooperation between schools and newspapers. One phase of the study, conducted in 1952-53, was a content analysis to determine the nature and handling of school news in Michigan newspapers.

A similar content analysis in 1959 by William G. Monahan produced evidences of changes, the most significant of which was a sizeable increase in the amount of space given to items pertaining to curriculum.[2]

Research disclosed no evidence that such a study has been made in the state of Oklahoma. The need for a study of this type appeared highly justifiable, in view of the rapid developments in the field of education in Oklahoma, especially during the 1964-65 school year.

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[1]Robert A. Marshall, The Story of Our Schools (Washington: The Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges and the National Council for the Social Studies and the National School Public Relations Association, 1962), p. 4.

[2]William G. Monahan, An Analysis of the School Content in Michigan Newspapers (unpublished Doctor's thesis, Michigan State University, 1960), 165 pp.

Oklahoma continues to make consistent numerical gains in enrolment. The total number of children of school age (6-18) increased 20,030 between the 1962-63 school year and the 1963-64 period. The number of teachers increased 1,221 during the same period.

While enrolments have been constantly rising, the number of school districts in Oklahoma continues to decrease each year. On August 14, 1964, there were 1,118 districts in the state. There has been an average annual decrease of approximately 80 districts during the past 10 years.

Oklahoma has maintained high standards of qualification for teachers. The number of teachers holding degrees has risen from 73.56 per cent in 1946-47 to 99.67 per cent in 1963-64.

Many advances in curriculum have been made in recent years in Oklahoma, through the efforts of the Oklahoma Curriculum Improvement Commission and other groups, notably in the fields of guidance and counseling, foreign languages, science and mathematics.[1]

These changes add to the importance of promoting a better understanding of the schools by school patrons and other citizens.

Purposes of the Study

It is the problem of this study to examine the nature and handling of school news in Oklahoma newspapers. More specifically, this study has the following purposes:

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[1]State Board of Education of Oklahoma, The Thirtieth Biennial Report, (Oklahoma City: State Board of Education of Oklahoma, 1964) 318 pp.

1. To determine the quantity of various classifications of school news appearing in Oklahoma daily and weekly newspapers.

2. To identify trends in educational programs and practices as indicated by press coverage.

3. To ascertain methods for improving relations between the school and the public through the media of newspapers.

Hypotheses

In pursuing the above purposes, the following hypotheses were examined in this study:

1. That newspapers devote a sizeable amount of space to the reporting of school programs and activities.

2. That current trends of interest in the educational field will be reflected in the number of newspaper items concerning them.

3. That the greater percentage of total school news content is favorable rather than unfavorable.

4. That over the course of a school year, news coverage follows a cycle of certain predictable patterns.

5. That there are no significant differences among Oklahoma newspapers (treating daily and weekly newspapers as separate classes) when ranked and compared on the amount of space given to each topic of school news.

6. That there are no significant differences between Oklahoma newspapers and newspapers of another state in the amount of space given to comparable school news items.

Organization of the Remainder of the Thesis

This study has been divided into seven chapters. Chapter I has included an introduction to the problem and its background. Chapter II contains a review of literature relevant to the general area under investigation. Chapter III presents the research design and the general methodology of the study. Chapter IV is a report on the analysis of quantitative data. Chapter V contains an evaluative, or qualitative analysis of the school content in the sample of newspapers used in this study. Chapter VI presents a review and analysis of the school financing controversy which prevailed in Oklahoma during the course of the study. Chapter VII is the final chapter of the thesis and contains a summary, certain conclusions derived from the findings and recommendations for improving school-press relations.

CHAPTER II

RELATED LITERATURE

School-press relationships occupy a relatively minor position on the broad spectrum of educational research. Although the importance of communication between the schools and the public by means of mass media is generally recognized by educators, comparatively little research has been done regarding the subject. This is more evident in the case of newspapers than certain other media, such as television.

Monahan, whose analysis of school news in Michigan newspapers is one of few studies which have been made, states:

> Compared to many aspects of the school-community complex, inquiry into the relationships between school and press is neither extensive nor intensive.
>
> We assume that these relationships are exceedingly important; yet this very assumption has not been subjected to rigorous inquiry.[1]

A chronological review of the related literature bears out these contentions. It was only in the latter part of the 1920's that any noticeable attention was given to the matter of relations between schools and press. One exception was a 1922 study by Reynolds which concluded, among other things, that newspapers place too great an

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[1] William G. Monahan, "School and Press: Research Dimensions," Theory Into Practice (October, 1964), 140.

emphasis on athletics.[1] The dominant position occupied by athletics has prevailed through the years, as revealed by the present study and other studies.

One of the most widely quoted studies was conducted by Belmont Farley in 1929. Farley, former chief of press and radio for the National Education Association, sought to determine what citizens wanted to know about schools and how much space newspapers devote to these areas. His study disclosed the following percentages of news space devoted to 13 topics of school news:

	Topic	Per cent
1.	Extra curricular activities	47.1
2.	Teachers and school officers	9.2
3.	Parent-Teacher Association	8.2
4.	Pupil progress and achievement	5.6
5.	Board of education and administration	5.2
6.	Course of study	5.0
7.	Business management and finance	4.8
8.	Buildings	4.1
9.	Health	3.3
10.	Methods of instruction	2.9
11.	Discipline	1.7
12.	Value of education	1.5
13.	Attendance	1.3
	Total	99.9

In terms of reader interest, the situation was almost reversed. The study found that 5,608 patrons in 13 cities rated their interest as follows:

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[1] Rollo G. Reynolds, Newspaper Publicity for the Public Schools (New York: Published by the author, Columbia University Press, 1922), 126 pp.

1. Pupil progress and achievement
2. Method of instruction
3. Health of pupils
4. Courses of study
5. Value of education
6. Discipline and behavior of pupils
7. Teachers and school officers
8. Attendance
9. Buildings and building program
10. Business management and finance
11. Board of education and administration
12. Parent-Teacher Association
13. Extra curricular activities

The most significant finding was that newspapers, at that time, were giving extra curricular activities almost half of the school news space, although it was rated the lowest in reader interest.[1]

Consideration should be given to the fact that many changes in public attitudes have taken place since the study was made. Also it should be noted that validity is difficult to establish in a reader interest study. As Steinberg points out:

> Surveys have shown that people simply do not read what they say they would like to read, nor do they watch what they say they would like to watch.[2]

Kindred reports on a similar opinion poll conducted at Duluth, Minnesota during American Education Week, 1958, in which 5,761 parents attending an open house at the schools were asked to check the first three topics about which they would like to have more information. The poll resulted in these answers:

---

[1]Belmont M. Farley, "What To Tell the People About the Public Schools," Contributions to Education, No. 355, (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1929), 136 pp.

[2]Steinberg, op. cit., 394-95.

	Topic	Number	Per cent
1.	Pupil progress and achievement	3742	25
2.	Methods of teaching	3092	21
3.	What pupils study	2810	19
4.	Special services	1815	12
5.	Discipline	1276	8
6.	The activity program	802	3
7.	Buildings	444	3
8.	Board of education proceedings	371	2.5
9.	Textbooks	357	2.3
10.	School costs	328	2.1

Kindred noted that the ratings in this study did not differ greatly with those in the Farley study, in that the items ranked first and second were the same and that Duluth's third in interest is ranked fourth in Farley's study.[1]

Again the question of validity should be taken into account.

Two studies, by Todd in 1927[2] and Fowlkes in 1929,[3] produced conclusions that school patrons are poorly informed on issues pertaining to the schools.

At this point in the development of our educational system, school public relations had not yet assumed an important role. The flow of information about the schools gained momentum during the early 1930's, and has been increasing since that time.

Much of the progress has resulted from the recognition by administrators of the vital role of public relations in administrative

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[1]Leslie W. Kindred, How To Tell the School Story (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1960), pp. 23-25.

[2]William H. Todd, What Citizens Know About Their Schools (New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1927), 87 pp.

[3]John G. Fowlkes, "What Does the Layman Know About the Schools?" The Nation's Schools (October, 1929), 86-90.

activities. The American Association of School Administrators (AASA) defines school public relations as, "the cooperative development and maintenance of efficient two-way channels of information and understanding between the school, its personnel and the community."

The association has set down these definite objectives of educational publicity:

1) To inform the public about the work of the schools.
2) To establish confidence in the schools.
3) To rally support for proper maintenance of the educational program.
4) To develop awareness of the importance of education in a democracy.
5) To improve the partnership concept by the uniting of parents and teachers in meeting the educational problems of children.
6) To integrate the home, the school and the community in meeting the needs of the children.
7) To correct misunderstandings as to the aims and objectives of the schools.[1]

Coincidental with the change in attitude toward school public relations, and possibly a contributing factor, was a study by Walker in 1932 of demands and pressures on the schools, which included recommendations for structured, formal public relations programs.[2]

Following the pattern of Farley's investigation, a more recent study by Jelinek indicated that educators and laymen tend to agree on the type of information which is important and interesting to school patrons.[3]

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[1]Muriel Kent, "The Public Relations Value of the School Newspaper," School Activities (March, 1963), 209-12.

[2]J. Flint Walker, Demands on the Schools (unpublished Doctor's thesis, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1932), 151 pp.

[3]James J. Jelinek, The Relative Importance of Topics of High School News (unpublished Doctor's thesis, School of Education, Indiana University, 1951), 287 pp.

Opinions of newsmen were not sampled in the Jelinek study, but Gross, in an investigation of relationships between school superintendents and editors, discovered several differences of opinion. He listed the major complaints of the schools as: (a) a tendency for the press to overemphasize 'bad' news; (b) reporters assigned to the school 'beat' spend little time on educational news; and (c) the press does not work to make significant facts about education interesting. Complaints of the newspapers were: (a) school people are evasive in interviews; (b) educators have no real idea of what news is; and (c) school press releases are poorly written.[1]

An analysis by Snider of school photographs published by twelve evening daily newspapers in Indiana stands out as a research work and has an important bearing on the present study. During a 10-month period in 1952-53, Snider examined 2,428 photographs and classified them in 36 subject-matter categories. Of the total, 37.2 per cent were devoted to athletics and 26.2 per cent to graduation.

Snider concluded that newspaper readers do not get an accurate picture of the schools from photos published, because papers do not cover a wide range of school activities. He also pointed out that despite the fact that editors are anxious to publish good pictures of children, photographs of children engaged in school activities were surprisingly rare in his study.[2]

---

[1]Neil Gross, The School and The Press (Cambridge: The New England School Development Council, 1954), 56 pp.

[2]Robert C. Snider, "How Do We Picture Schools?" Michigan Education Journal (March 1, 1958), 285-86.

Independent studies by two researchers, Irons in 1942[1] and Jones in 1956,[2] were at least partially concerned with the effectiveness of the various forms of mass media and the techniques being used by school public relations personnel to obtain the maximum results.

Although mentioned frequently elsewhere in this thesis, it is pertinent to a review of literature on the subject to discuss in detail at this point the two aforementioned studies performed in the state of Michigan. The Michigan Communications Study, which grew out of meetings of the Michigan Association of School Administrators and the Michigan Press Association, was an ambitious undertaking in the realm of investigation of school-community relations. The study was organized into three specific areas--a content analysis of state newspapers, a community survey, and the development of a series of effective-procedures handbooks. Comments on this study will be confined to the first area, since the present study is limited to an analysis of newspaper content.

This 1952-53 Michigan study involved a sample of 42 weekly newspapers, 8 daily newspapers and one metropolitan daily which were analyzed over a period of one year. The findings, as reported by David J. Luck, were:

1) Average daily paper devotes 36.8 inches to school news, and average weekly, 45.7 inches.

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[1]H. S. Irons, The Development of Characteristics in Superintendents' Annual Reports to the Board and to the Public (unpublished Doctor's thesis, University of Pittsburgh, 1942), 214 pp.

[2]James J. Jones, An Analysis and Summary of Significant Research Findings Concerning Some Problems and Issues of School-Community Relations (unpublished Doctor's thesis, School of Education, Indiana University, 1956), 342 pp.

2) Highest paper among dailies averaged 110 inches per issue; the lowest averaged only 12 inches.

3) Of all school news, 48 per cent was devoted to athletics; 18 per cent to student activities, and less than .1 per cent to curriculum and teaching method.

4) The outstate towns over 2,500 population seem to be the most successful in school space, averaging 63 inches per issue which is almost a half more than the state average.

5) Greatest average school content is found among papers with larger circulation rather than with 'thickness' of paper.

6) Treatment of schools in newspapers is less adequate than is desired.[1]

Five years after Luck's findings were published, Monahan conducted a similar content analysis, utilizing the same categories of classification for school news. His was a three-months study of eight daily and fifteen weekly newspapers. Compared to the previous study, the most striking difference was the increase in the amount of space devoted to curriculum, from .1 per cent of all school content to 7.5 per cent.

Other findings and conclusions of the Monahan study were:

1) Though there are great variations in amounts of space given to school functions and activities, newspapers in Michigan provide adequate information about the schools and persons who have access to

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[1]David J. Luck, What Michigan Newspapers Tell About the Schools (East Lansing: Bureau of Business Research, Michigan State College, 1954), 26 pp.

newspapers can profitably utilize them to become better informed about the schools.

2) Both daily and weekly newspapers give notable and disproportionate emphasis to athletics but whether this is harmful to the general image and interpretation of schools must be decided by additional research.

3) There is an apparent trend toward increased newspaper content dealing with the classroom activities and learning experiences of children as well as greater emphasis on academic matters.

4) Newspapers through editorial and reportorial content reflect a concern for the effect on education of the present disquieting financial problems in the state of Michigan.

5) Among various kinds of school content, the least informative were items dealing with Parent-Teacher organizations, a majority of which were reports of meetings in the form of mere listings of names. In many cases, the subjects of, and guests at these meetings deserved better coverage.

6) Though some newspapers do an outstanding job of feature reporting on many aspects of the schools, a greater number do not take advantage of numerous opportunities for feature articles on a variety of school-related occurrences.

7) American Education Week receives wide and competent coverage by both daily and weekly newspapers.

8) Newspapers often miss opportunities for good material by failing to follow up certain professional activities of teachers in connection with conferences and institutes.

9) There is indication that newspapers were not critical of the schools following the launching of Sputnik in 1957; however, the nature and scope of the investigation of this suggests that a more penetrating research would be both needed and valuable.[1]

Additional comment on the Monahan and Luck studies will be found in Chapter IV.

These two studies, together with Snider's analysis of photographs published by newspapers, represent the most recent approaches to research in the school-community relations area.

The value of the newspaper as a source of research was demonstrated as long ago as 1916 by Thomas R. Garth, who sought a means to show his classes in principles of education at the State Normal School of Farmville, Virginia that there are such things as social interests and that they are real things.

In reporting on the experiment, Garth presents a sound argument for the newspaper as a research tool. He stated:

> . . . the newspaper tells us where society is directing her attention and what will be her habits in the future provided the reaction is continued. If we examine by measurement the contents of newspapers and classify these measurements, we have a record indicating the quality and quantity of this attention.[2]

Thus it may be seen that measuring the contents of newspapers and other types of communication devices is not a recent innovation.

Among the earliest studies of this type were those pertaining

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[1]Monahan, An Analysis of the School Content in Michigan Newspapers, loc. cit.

[2]Thomas R. Garth, "University Research and Statistics, A Statistical Study of the Contents of Newspapers," School and Society (January 22, 1916), 140-44.

to the development of scholarship. The changing interests of scholars in particular fields and the growth and decline of particular emphases were shown by analysis of scientific writings produced at different times in the past.

Those in the field of journalism and communications research made several studies in the last decade of the nineteenth century for the purpose of determining the reading habits of subscribers, measuring the influence of the press and showing the extent to which particular newspapers gave coverage of the news. These early attempts were somewhat awkward and inaccurate.[1]

Outstanding in the area of research done by those actually engaged in the newspaper business is the Continuing Study of Newspaper Reading, a project of the Advertising Research Foundation in cooperation with the American Newspaper Publishers Association. This 11-year study, completed in 1942, laid the foundation for further studies of readership.

Significant findings of the continuing study included:

1) The median readership for all types of pages is 60 per cent for men and 70 per cent for women.

2) There is very little difference in the average readership for the first and second sections of a newspaper.

3) Front pages obtain the highest readership from all readers, and picture pages rank second. Sports pages rank third among men and society pages rank third among women.

4) There is no significant difference in the attention paid

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[1]George L. Bird and Frederick E. Merwin (eds.), The Newspaper and Society (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1942), p. 102.

to left and right hand pages and the very slight differences that exist are in favor of left-hand pages.[1]

Appropriate to the subject under discussion and of primary importance to the value of the present study are two studies performed at the University of Oklahoma. In one instance, a high school journalism teacher interviewed Oklahoma newspaper editors regarding the publication of school news in gathering material for a master's thesis. An appendix to the thesis, listing more than 100 monthly news story possibilities, is recommended as a useful reference for school administrators and public relations directors.[2]

The other study, conducted by a team of journalism students, concerned accuracy. The method used was to submit clippings of newspaper stories to the sources of the news with the request that they indicate whether or not the item accurately reported the facts. Replies to the survey indicated 60 per cent of the items had no errors, and 40 per cent did have errors.

Misleading headlines were a common complaint, as pointed out by this observation from the team report:

> The head, "County Teachers Say They're Not Bluffing," was described as an "attractive headline" by a respondent, but, he said, "OEA Has Teachers Confused" would have been more accurate.
>
> The head, "Local Teachers Okay Demand for Pay Hike," was considered perhaps as misleading as it might imply only the teachers in the city where the paper was published were concerned whereas the story referred to teachers throughout the county.

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[1]The Advertising Research Foundation, The Continuing Study of Newspaper Reading: 138-Study Summary (New York: The Advertising Research Foundation, 1951), 58 pp.

[2]Ruth Campbell-Smith Ferris, Public Education Is the Public's Business (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Oklahoma, 1964), 126 pp.

"Perhaps for this newspaper the county is considered local," the respondent said.[1]

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[1]"Interviews Source of Many Newspaper Errors," The Oklahoma Publisher (February, 1965) pp. 6-7.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

Since one of the objectives of this study was to find out whether states follow similar patterns in the publication of news about the public schools, it was decided to adopt as a model for comparison purposes Monahan's 1959 Michigan study.

Among the guidelines for scientific investigation set out by Berelson and Steiner is that the findings of any researcher must be replicable. That is, another scholar must be able to reproduce the finding in order to test it.[1] This is essentially what has taken place in this study.

In order to establish as nearly as possible the same set of circumstances, the methodology and procedures followed in the current study are the same as those used in the Michigan study. There are, admittedly, some variations, notably in size of the sample and the period of time covered. But with few exceptions the two studies closely parallel each other.

There was no basis for comparison within Oklahoma, because no study such as this one had been conducted in the state heretofore.

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[1]Bernard Berelson and Gary A. Steiner, Human Behavior: An Inventory of Scientific Findings (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1964), pp. 16-17.

Therefore it was impossible to establish trends over any period of time other than that covered by the study.

The Research Method

The method of research used in this study, as well as in the Monahan study, was content analysis. It is a method which has been used frequently by communication researchers. Berelson, who is recognized as the leading authority on this method, uses this definition:

> Content analysis is a research technique for the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication.[1]

The key words in Berelson's definition are "objective, systematic and quantitative."

Berelson lists three important assumptions implied by the definition: (1) that inferences about the relationship between intent and content, or between content and effect, can validly be made, or that actual relationships can be established; (2) that the study of the manifest content is meaningful, i.e., that what it means to the analyst is what it was intended to mean by the communicator; (3) that descriptions in terms of quantities is also meaningful.

The definition also implies certain qualitative generalizations which, in contrast, arise from perceptions of the communicator. The relative importance of certain items could form the basis of such generalizations. The location--front page, inside page, top of page or bottom, left or right; and treatment--direction or position of the communicator on an issue, are examples of such considerations.

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[1]Bernard Berelson, Content Analysis in Communication Research (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1952), p. 18.

While content analysis has been in use for many years, many of its aspects have not yet been well standardized, however, and each research worker must to some extent establish his own pattern of procedure.

Berelson has identified seventeen uses, applications or functions of content analysis. These may be condensed into three broad approaches to the analysis of symbolic materials. In the first, the researcher is interested primarily in the characteristics of the content itself. In the second, he tries to make valid inferences from the nature of the content to characteristics of the producers of the content or of its causes. In the third, he interprets the content so as to reveal something about the nature of its audience or of its effects. Any single study may or may not adopt more than one of these approaches.

The first approach is concerned with both the substance and the form of the content.[1] This thesis is based on a study following the first approach.

A more detailed examination of the process by which qualitative materials are converted into scientifically acceptable data is to be found in a paper by Cartwright. He also examines some of the principles that should govern this operation.

According to this authority, the objective of content analysis is to convert recorded "raw" phenomena, or symbolic behavior of people, into data which can be treated in essentially a scientific manner so that a body of knowledge may be built up. More specifically, content analysis must be conducted, according to Cartwright, so as (1) to create reproducible or "objective" data, which (2) are susceptible to measurement

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[1]Berelson, op. cit., pp. 27-29.

and quantitative treatment, (3) have significance for some systematic theory, and (4) may be generalized beyond the specific set of material analyzed.[1]

Methodology

Assumptions of the Study

In undertaking this study, certain basic assumptions had to be made:

1. Newspapers publish a quantity of school news and school-related photographs which are measurable.

2. Newspapers rank high among the mass media as a source of information about schools, and it may be assumed that the manifest content is meaningful.

3. It is possible to establish factors, or criteria, for the purpose of evaluation of the quality of school news.

4. The effectiveness of the newspaper and the quality of school news are related factors in the formation of public opinion about schools.

Definitions

Following are definitions of terms used in reporting on data throughout the study:

Category.--A device into which observed classes of phenomena were coded.

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[1]Dorwin P. Cartwright, "Analysis of Qualitative Material," Research Methods in the Behavioral Sciences, ed. Leon Festinger and Daniel Katz (New York: Dryden Press, 1953), p. 435.

Classification.--The most often mentioned type of category in this study into which all school news was coded. Twenty classifications of school news were used.

Column-inch.--The unit of enumeration used in this study, which consists of one vertical inch of news space one column in width.

Item.--The recording unit used in the study. Items included news stories, features, editorials, columns and other forms of content.

"News hole."--That portion of a newspaper's total space which does not include advertising.

School content.--The news of public schools, the type of news being analyzed; the term school news is used synonymously with school content.

Type-space.--That portion of a newspaper page on which type appears; thus the total type-space on a page may be 160 column-inches though the total space may be 330 square inches.

Limitations of the Study

In addition to the limitations defined by the nature of the study, the scope of the investigation was limited further:

1. The analysis was confined to a sample of eighteen daily and weekly newspapers published in the state of Oklahoma.

2. Content was limited to items and photographs related to the public schools, including adult education, but not including higher education.

3. Photographic content was restricted to halftones used as news and feature materials, not including photographs which appeared as paid advertising.

4. The period for which newspapers were examined was August 21, 1964, through May 21, 1965, coinciding with a normal school term.

5. Sources of data used in this study consisted of information obtained from (a) the papers studied; (b) a panel of judges for tests of reliability; and (c) a survey of literature in the fields of school administration, public relations, communication, and social psychology.

6. No attempt was made either to determine or to measure the effects of newspaper content on a public.

Selecting the Sample

The sample for this study consisted of six daily newspapers and twelve weekly newspapers published in Oklahoma. The universe that this sample represented included all of those in the state of Oklahoma.

This study used a smaller number of total papers than Monahan's study. The selection was made in view of the expenditure of time and effort required in handling and in terms of Berelson's statement regarding the validity of smaller samples in content analysis:

> In the large majority of cases it is possible to devise a representative and adequate sample which is economical of administration. For most purposes, analysis of a small, carefully chosen sample of the relevant content will produce as valid results as the analysis of a great deal more--and with expenditure of much less time and effort.[1]

Newspapers for the sample were chosen on the basis of the following factors:

1. Geographical location. As the map contained in the appendix illustrates, papers used in the study represent all major geographical sections of the state, excluding the heavily populated metropolitan

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[1]Berelson, op. cit., pp. 174-75.

areas. Both suburban and rural communities (school districts) were represented.

2. Circulation. The daily papers in the sample had a circulation range from 3,468 for the lowest paper to 17,125 for the highest; among the weekly papers, the circulation range was 1,994 to 6,165.

3. Time of publication. Among the daily papers, three morning and three afternoon publications were used. All six published Sunday editions. Of the twelve weeklies, all but one had a Thursday publication date. The sole exception was a weekly published on Monday.

4. Method of printing and format. The predominance among Oklahoma newspapers of the letterpress method of printing was evidenced by the fact that sixteen of the papers in the sample used this method, but the trend toward offset printing also was indicated. Two of the weekly papers used the offset method. This fact is significant because of the superior photographic reproduction which is possible through offset. Two of the papers, both weeklies, were five-column tabloids. The others were standard size, ranging from seven to nine columns in width.

5. Other characteristics. Wire service representation among the dailies was as follows: one had only Associated Press, two had only United Press International, and three had both AP and UPI. One daily had special coverage by state capitol and Washington, D. C. correspondents. Papers represented variations in size and assessed valuation of school districts.

Berelson lists three methods of sampling--random, rotated and stratified. The sample used in this study most closely fits the latter

type, about which Berelson states:

> Stratified Sampling: Finally, it is possible to select content for analysis by stratifying the universe according to important correlates of the problem under study. It may thus be possible not only to assure the inclusion of important characteristics of the universe in the sample but also, if desirable, to provide for their inclusion in their correct proportion. For example, a study of the treatment of education in newspaper editorials was based upon a sample of newspapers selected by geographical distribution, circulation, and type of control or ownership.[1]

The Oklahoma Newspaper Directory, published annually by the Oklahoma Press Association, served as the sampling frame in this case.[2]

Tables 1 and 2 show the sample of daily and weekly newspapers as selected by the above sampling procedures. Circulation data and average thickness of a single issue also are shown.

TABLE 1

CIRCULATION AND AVERAGE PAGES PER ISSUE FOR DAILY NEWSPAPERS IN SAMPLE

Paper	Circulation	Average pages per issue
A	17,125	27.2
B	16,851	19.6
C	12,654	22.9
D	12,053	30.2
E	11,456	16.7
F	3,468	7.2
Total	73,607	123.8

[1]Berelson, op. cit., pp. 174-83.

[2]Oklahoma Press Association, Oklahoma Newspaper Directory and Advertising Rate Book, 1964 Edition (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Press Association, 1964).

TABLE 2

CIRCULATION AND AVERAGE PAGES PER ISSUE
FOR WEEKLY NEWSPAPERS IN SAMPLE

Paper	Circulation	Average pages per issue
a	6,165	8.
b	3,989	9.9
c	3,778	13.1
d	3,680	17.
e	3,598	18.5
f	3,100	11.7
g	3,081	10.2
h	2,800	7.9
i	2,607	9.3
j	2,258	7.6
k	2,241	15.6
l	1,994	8.7
Total	39,291	137.5

Taking into consideration the fact that Oklahoma City and Tulsa metropolitan dailies with circulations above 100,000 are excluded, the daily newspapers in the sample appear to be sufficiently representative of daily newspapers in Oklahoma. The same is also true of weekly newspapers.

The newspapers in the present study also appear to be comparable to those used by Monahan in his study. Table 3 presents a comparison of the two samples.

TABLE 3

COMPARISON BY CIRCULATION OF PAPERS IN THE TWO STUDIES

Circulation	Number of papers in Monahan's study	Number of papers in current study
600- 1,000	1	0
1,001- 2,000	7	1
2,001- 3,000	3	4
3,001- 5,000	3	7
5,001- 7,500	2	1
7,500-10,000	2	0
10,000-12,500	1	2
12,500-15,000	2	1
15,000-17,500	0	2
Over 17,500	2	0
Total	23	18

Handling the Sample

This study involved reading, measuring and analyzing the school content in 1,868 newspapers with a total of 35,295 pages. Therefore it was necessary before beginning the study to decide on a procedure for handling the large volume of material.

The decision was made to clip all school items contained in a single issue of a paper and identify them with the name of the paper and the date. Page one items were specially marked for identification purposes.

Clippings were placed in envelopes, appropriately marked, and filed in two drawers of a metal filing cabinet.

Measuring the Content

It was also necessary to adopt certain measuring procedures, which are outlined below:

1. The column-inch unit (one column wide and one inch vertically) was used to record measurements.

2. Measurement was made to the nearest half-inch; that is, if an item measured four and one-half inches, it was thus recorded, but if it measured four and three-quarter inches, it was recorded as five inches.

3. Every item of school news bearing a headline was measured and classified. The same rule applied to every illustration with a caption. Sports columns were excepted for the reason that content tended to duplicate general items of athletics news. Also it was found that news in columns about public school athletics was interspersed with comments about other kinds of sports, making an accurate measurement virtually impossible to obtain.

4. All newspaper content (except advertising and comics) that pertained to public schools, excluding institutions of higher learning, was measured.

In order that direct comparisons could be made, the same classifications of content used by Monahan were used in the present study. The classifications are defined as follows:

1. Adult education. Those educational experiences and programs conducted either for credit or non-credit designed for adults and conducted, administered, and otherwise organized through the auspices of the local public school system. This does not include higher education.

2. Illustrations, other. General illustrations with captions relating to the schools and not classifiable under social, student, or athletic illustrations as elsewhere defined among these classifications.

3. Editorial comment. Those items of content that can be

distinctly classified as editorials wherein the opinions of the newspaper's personnel are stated regarding the schools.

4. Social news. Those items relating to the social activities of students when it is apparent that the behaviors reported are patently related to the schools such that "student behaviors" would be distinguishable from personal behaviors.

5. Social illustrations. Those illustrations with captions which depict students behaving in social situations compatible with the kinds of situations that might be classified under four (4) above.[1]

6. Student activities. Those school-connected but extra curricular activities of students usually of an informal nature including such experiences as clubs, dramatics, student government and others of similar nature.

7. Student activity illustrations. Photographs of extra curricular activities as described above and including the illustration of preparations of class or organizational projects, campaigns, and similar activities.

8. Honor roll. Listings of pupils who have achieved certain scholastic standards as defined by the schools and which are usually referred to as "honor roll." Also included in this category for purposes of this study are items that point out other scholastic honors accruing to pupils.

9. Finance. Items having to do with matters of a fiscal nature

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[1]Social is used here and in the preceding classification in its more pedestrian sense; i.e., having to do with entertainment, recreation, popularity contests, and similar activities of students under the auspices of schools.

are included in this category and in which finance is the principal factor being reported.

10. School board. Those items having to do with the deliberations, responsibilities, reported activities, and meetings of the Board of Education.

11. School operation and construction. Items having to do with the care, maintenance, and operation of the school plant.

12. Teaching methods. Items primarily concerned with the techniques of teaching either as direct reports or as reports of research, ideas, opinions, or other statements of persons; also included in this category are items that discuss human growth and development in terms of application to learning.

13. Conferences and institutes. Items reporting on professional meetings of teachers and/or pupils when the latter attend such meetings under the authorization and sponsorship of the schools or as representatives of scholastic organizations.

14. Curriculum. Items that concern content-related experiences of pupils under the direction and guidance of the teacher and in which the emphasis is directed to <u>what</u> is being learned, taught, planned, and programmed rather than <u>how</u> such things are, or will be done. The latter would be classified under "teaching methods."

15. Athletics. All items having to do with school athletics of an inter-scholastic nature or that aim toward the development, purposefully, of physical skills in connection with inter-scholastic competition.

16. Athletic illustrations. All illustrations with captions having to do with athletics, athletic coaches, and athletic teams in the public schools.

17. PTA. All items having to do with parent and teacher organizations in the public schools whether or not these organizations are labelled as PTA, Mother's Clubs, or by some other designation.

18. Transportation. Items having to do with school transportation and school buses.

19. Safety. Items having to do with safety and safety education, such items being oriented to school activities or to school children.

20. Miscellaneous. Any item that cannot properly be classified elsewhere among these classification categories.

Items about school athletics were further broken down according to the type of sports involved. This made it possible to compare the amount of coverage given to different kinds of sports at various seasons throughout the school year.

In the process of classifying items, there were numerous instances in which more than one category appeared to be suitable. As an example, a story about a school board meeting concerning a bond election to be held for construction of a school building would contain elements of three of the categories. In determining the actual classification, consideration was given to headline treatment, relative emphasis in the body of the story, and the principal reason for the item being published.

Reliability in Measurement

Special care was given to measurement of news items in order to maintain consistency throughout the course of the nine months during which newspapers were analyzed.

The process for checking measurement was pursued by measuring all items in the presence of an assistant (sometimes the procedure was

reversed) and any errors or differences in judgment were resolved immediately. In this manner, consistency was more than adequately achieved.

Reliability in Classification

The obvious difficulty presented in classification of items made it mandatory to establish some proof of reliability of the ability to place various school news items in the proper categories.

The use of an assistant who was equally as familiar with the classifications eliminated the situation wherein there was a sole judge. In addition to the double check system afforded by this method, however, a panel procedure was followed to further test the reliability of the classification process.

Three persons of varying backgrounds and interests--a newspaper editor, a professor of journalism and a school superintendent--served as the panel. Background information on the panel may be found in Appendix B.

Each of these three persons was presented a list of written definitions of the classifications, together with copies of clippings comprising a representative sample of school items. Under each clipping was a blank. After studying the classifications, each panel member exercised his own judgment and classified the sample of items by placing the number of the category in the blank for the item in which it was to be classified.

One of the sheets of clippings used in the reliability test is shown as Illustration 1, page 39.

Results of this test are presented in Table 4.

TABLE 4

CLASSIFICATION OF ITEMS BY PANEL OF JUDGES

Agreement among judges	Number of items
All agreed	28
Two of three agreed	2
All disagreed	0
Total	30

New Approach Offered To School Financing

OKLAHOMA CITY (UPI) — A bill offering a broad new approach to Oklahoma school financing was being prepared Thursday for possible introduction in the legislature.

Additional cost of the financing system, which would raise teachers' salaries, was estimated at $37 million a year in state aid.

Backers said a key feature would be incentive for local school boards to secure maximum financing to get additional state funds.

The plan was unveiled Wednesday in a meeting of education and government leaders. Gov. Henry Bellmon, host for the meeting, offered no method of paying for the plan.

Education leaders said they believed teachers would go for the plan if guaranteed increments for experienced teachers were protected.

Basically, the plan is designed to return public education control to local school boards, its backers said. State money for public schools would be divided on a per pupil basis.

Under the program presented Wednesday, teacher salary scales and the guaranteed increments for exerienced teachers would be eliminated.

The state would match money from local permissive levies above 15 mills, up to $75 per child in addition to the regular appropriation.

Bellmon said such a system was being used by "31 of the nation's most progressive states."

Ferman Phillips, executive secretary of the Oklahoma Education Association, said Bellmon did not try to "sell" the plan, which was presented by Clarence Dewees, director of the finance division of the state education department, and Dr. J. Win Payne of Ponca City.

Phillips said he thought the proposal had enough merit to ask that it be outlined in a bill for possible legislative consideration.

Dr. Raymond Knight of Tulsa, president of the OEA, said, "I'd like to be optimistic, but nothing I've heard has made me so. I think they would give us the money if they had it. I don't think the money's in sight."

Knight said OEA leaders generally believe "there would be a reaction to vote down anything that has a possibility of new taxes."

9 (1)

Enrolment In Schools Shows Decline

Enrolment on the first day of the school year, Tuesday, slipped a little from last year's count for the same day.

The total enrolment in the 21 schools of the Muskogee school district was an even 9,000 this year. It was 9,029 last year.

Eleven of the 21 schools showed losses and the others gains.

The largest gains were 40, at the Wheatley school; 48 at Sadler Junior High School; 38 at Manual Training High School; 22 at Grant Foreman school, 24 at Central High School. 26 at Edison school, and 48 at Longfellow.

The largest losses were 44 at Alice Robertson Junior High School; 41 at West Junior High School; 25 at Jefferson School and 26 at Washington School.

The enrolments, with last year's first-day shown first, follow:

Central High School 1,760 and 1,785; Manual Training High School 570 and 608; Sadler Junior High School 342 and 390; West Junior High School 761 and 720; Douglass 301 and 294; Dunbar 317 and 333; Edison 195 and 169; Franklin 232 and 222; Grant Foreman 171 and 194; Houston 295 and 298; Irving 345 and 333; Jefferson 173 and 148; Langston 121 and 99; Longfellow 502 and 444; Pershing 373 and 389; Sequoyah 183 and 185; Tony Goetz 367 and 363; Washington 76 and 50; Wheatley 163 and 203, and Whittier 517 and 514. (1)

20

Board To Discuss School Boundaries

Members of the Enid Board of Education are slated to discuss boundaries of Hoover, Hayes, Eisenhower and Glenwood elementary schools at a 7:30 p.m. session Monday.

Also on the agenda will be employment for vacancies in the central office, teacher replacement and a principal.

Other business includes action on the junior high school curriculum, approval of claims and activity fund transfers.

1

ADULT EDUCATION OFF TO SLOW START

Lots of folks are interested ir adult education but more persons are needed to start classes, Director Bryce Wilde of Woodward high school reports. He asks any persons interested in any adult education classes to contact him at the high school.

A class in welding will be started early in December, after some new equipment arrives, he reports.

The sewing and tailoring class started last Monday and more students will be taken if they can enroll at next Monday's class.

10

SCHOOL BUS DRIVERS ATTEND WEEK'S SCHOOL

Three members of the transportation staff of the Woodward school system attended a five-day school held at Seiling last week. Going to the sessions Monday through Friday were Bus Bernard, Oliver Knabe and Pete Miller.

The school was conducted by the Oklahoma Department of Public Safety for school bus drivers of northwest Oklahoma.

18 WK

ILLUSTRATION 1.

CHAPTER IV

QUANTITATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS

General Analysis of the Content

During the course of this study, 1,868 newspapers were read, measured and their contents analyzed. These newspapers contained 35,295 pages, on which were printed 18,056 items of school news measuring a total of 160,381 column-inches.

In assembling this data for purposes of analysis, the following assumptions were made:

1. By means of collective data the amount of newspaper space given to school news can be measured and classified.

2. A record of the quantity of items about specific subjects will denote trends.

3. Unless the writer is obviously critical, school news can be adjudged favorable.

4. A comparison of the volume of one classification of news against another will produce definite seasonal patterns.

Variations Among Newspapers

As in the case of circulation, there were distinct variations in size among daily and weekly newspapers in this study. This correlation was determined by finding the total column-inches per total page

of each paper, then multiplying by the total number of pages for each paper for the nine-month period to determine column-inches of total space.

If, for example, the page size was 8 columns wide and 21 inches long, each page would contain 168 column-inches. A 20-page issue, then, would contain 3,360 column-inches.

It can readily be seen that a paper of 50 pages certainly has the opportunity to carry more inches of school content than one of 12 pages. However, only a certain amount of space can be devoted to schools as one area of news. Therefore consideration must be given to the total amount of school news published by the respective papers for the nine-month period. The same steps used in arriving at total type-space were followed in determining the total school content.

Tables 5 and 6 show both the amount of total type-space and the total space devoted to school news content for the period of the study. Also shown is the percentage of school news to total space in comparisons of daily and weekly newspapers.

Summarizing briefly, four of the twelve newspapers in the weekly class devoted more than 4,000 column-inches of space to the schools; seven others devoted between 2,000 and 4,000 column-inches; and one paper devoted less than 2,000 inches to the schools. The range in total volume of school content was from 1,017 column-inches for the lowest paper, to 6,553 column-inches for the highest paper.

The range among daily newspapers was from 4,082 column-inches of school news for the lowest paper to 36,578 column-inches for the highest.

TABLE 5

SCHOOL CONTENT IN DAILY NEWSPAPERS
AUGUST 21, 1964 TO MAY 21, 1965

Paper	Column-inches of total space	Column-inches of school news	School news as a % of total space
A[1]	1,063,440	20,941½	2.0%
B	802,014½	19,568	2.4
C	894,432	20,377	2.3
D	1,181,376	36,578	3.1
E	658,224	19,791½	3.0
F	255,717	4,082	1.6
Total	4,855,203	121,338	2.4

TABLE 6

SCHOOL CONTENT IN WEEKLY NEWSPAPERS
AUGUST 21, 1964 TO MAY 21, 1965

Paper	Column-inches of total space	Column-inches of school news	School news as a % of total space
a[1]	51,025	2,456½	4.8%
b	56,742	3,218½	5.7
c	94,464	2,877½	3.0
d	111,216	4,488	4.0
e	120,960	6,553	5.4
f	88,236	2,752	3.1
g	63,680	2,239	3.5
h	49,280	4,049	8.2
i	64,064	2,269½	3.5
j	40,095	1,017	2.5
k	102,144	4,907½	4.8
l	57,120	2,215½	3.9
Total	899,026	39,043	4.4

[1]Papers are identified by circulation throughout this study; see Tables 1 and 2, pages 30-31.

Table 7 presents these findings in terms of rank--by circulation, total school content, and school content as a percentage of total space.

TABLE 7

COMPARISONS OF NEWSPAPERS RANKED BY CIRCULATION, TOTAL SCHOOL CONTENT AND SCHOOL NEWS AS A PERCENT OF TOTAL SPACE

Paper	Rank by circulation	Rank by total school content	Rank by school content as a % of total type space
		Daily Newspapers	
A	1	2	5
B	2	5	3
C	3	3	4
D	4	1	1
E	5	4	2
F	6	6	6
		Weekly Newspapers	
a	1	8	4
b	2	5	2
c	3	6	9
d	4	3	5
e	5	1	3
f	6	7	8
g	7	10	7
h	8	4	1
i	9	9	7
j	10	12	10
k	11	2	4
l	12	11	6

These figures indicate that high circulation does not necessarily denote high percentage of school news content, although the relationship is stronger for dailies than weeklies.

Among dailies, the fourth ranking paper (D) in circulation was the first ranking paper in per cent of its total space devoted to school news, while the first ranking paper in circulation was fifth in per cent of space given to school news. Among weeklies, the eighth ranking paper (h) in circulation was first in per cent of space given to school news, while the first ranking weekly in circulation was fourth in school news space.

A positive relationship is indicated for both dailies and weeklies between thickness and school news content, at both upper and lower ends of the scale, leading to the conclusion that the more pages in an issue of a paper, the more likelihood there is that the schools will receive a greater proportion of space.

School Content As a Per Cent of the "News Hole"

The total type-space of a newspaper includes advertising as well as news and photographs, and for that reason the percentage of school news appears to be quite low. A more meaningful figure is the per cent of total news space devoted to school news.

Newspapers have long followed a rule of thumb ratio of 60:40 per cent between advertising and news. Assuming this to be a fairly reliable ratio, the writer estimated the "news hole" to be 40 per cent of the total type-space, then computed school content as a percentage of total news space. Tables 8 and 9 show these percentages for daily and weekly newspapers.

TABLE 8

SCHOOL CONTENT IN THE "NEWS HOLE" - DAILY NEWSPAPERS

Paper	School content as % of total space	School content as % of "news hole"
D	3.1%	7.7%
E	3.0	7.5
B	2.4	6.1
C	2.3	5.7
A	2.0	4.9
F	1.6	4.0
Average for all daily papers	2.4%	6.0%

TABLE 9

SCHOOL CONTENT IN THE "NEWS HOLE" - WEEKLY NEWSPAPERS

Paper	School content as % of total space	School content as % of "news hole"
h	8.2%	20.5%
b	5.7	14.2
e	5.4	13.5
a	4.8	12.0
k	4.8	12.0
d	4.0	10.1
l	3.9	9.7
g	3.5	8.8
i	3.5	8.8
f	3.1	7.8
c	3.0	7.6
j	2.5	6.3
Average for all weekly papers	4.4%	10.9%

These tables clearly illustrate that school content accounts for a greater portion of space than might be inferred from a comparison of school news as a per cent of total type-space.

In the case of weekly paper "h", for example, it can be seen that more than one-fifth of this paper's news is related to schools.

Topics of School News

The major portion of this study involved the classification of all school-related news items and illustrations into twenty categories. Totals for each category from the six daily and twelve weekly newspapers were computed for the nine-month period. The data are shown in Tables 10 and 11.

TABLE 10

TOTAL CONTENT BY CLASSIFICATIONS IN DAILY PAPERS
AUGUST 21, 1964 TO MAY 21, 1965

Classification	Column-inches of school news	Per cent of total	Cumulative percentage
Athletics	46,890	38.6%	38.6%
Student activities	12,931½	10.6	49.2
Athletic illustrations	11,884½	9.8	59.0
Student activities illustrations	10,991	9.1	68.1
Miscellaneous	9,964½	8.2	76.3
Finance	9,050	7.4	83.7
Illustrations, other	7,266½	6.0	89.7
Honor roll	2,997½	2.5	92.2
PTA	2,103	1.7	93.9
School board	1,433½	1.2	95.1
Editorial comment	1,205½	1.0	96.1
Conferences and institutes	1,080½	.9	97.0
Curriculum	1,043	.8	97.8
Teaching methods	729½	.6	98.4
School operation/construction	699	.6	99.0
Safety	331½	.3	99.3
Social news	276	.2	99.5
Transportation	212	.2	99.7
Adult education	162	.1	99.8
Social illustrations	87	.1	99.9

TABLE 11

TOTAL CONTENT BY CLASSIFICATIONS IN WEEKLY PAPERS
AUGUST 21, 1964 TO MAY 21, 1965

Classification	Column-inches of school news	Per cent of total	Cumulative percentage
Miscellaneous	8,808	22.6%	22.6%
Athletics	8,261½	21.2	43.8
Student activities	6,893	17.7	61.5
Student activities illustrations	4,183	10.7	72.2
Illustrations, other	2,503	6.4	78.6
Athletic illustrations	2,421½	6.2	84.8
Finance	1,334	3.4	88.2
Honor roll	1,190½	3.0	91.2
School board	891	2.3	93.5
PTA	577½	1.5	95.0
Conferences and institutes	556	1.4	96.4
Editorial comment	450	1.2	97.6
Curriculum	399	1.0	98.6
School operation/construction	168	.4	99.0
Adult education	118½	.3	99.3
Social news	101	.2	99.5
Safety	94	.2	99.7
Teaching methods	65½	.2	99.9
Transportation	28	.0	
Social illustrations	0	-	

In examining these tables, several findings may be noted. As a group, both daily and weekly newspapers gave comparable emphasis to some of the same types of items. Although not following the same order, four types of content were among the first five categories in both daily and weekly papers. Again this was true for the last five categories.

No outstanding variations in emphasis were noted among the various categories by dailies and weeklies respectively.

Daily newspapers devoted almost half of all school content to athletics and athletic illustrations, while weekly newspapers devoted slightly more than one-fourth of the total school content to these

two categories.

The percentage of school news in the finance classification published by dailies was greater than the percentage in weeklies, but this can be traced to the large amount of state or national news emanating from government and other sources as a result of the school finance controversy. Finance news in weeklies was largely of a local nature.

Both daily and weekly newspapers devoted similar percentages of the total school content to editorial comment, curriculum and PTA.

Quantitative Analysis of Athletics

On the basis of Monahan's study and other content analyses which illustrated the high percentage of school news devoted to athletics, it was anticipated that the present study would yield a similar conclusion. In order to analyze this category of school news even further, it was decided to subclassify the different types of athletic activities in which Oklahoma schools are engaged. The results are shown in Tables 12, 13, 14, 15, and 16.

Athletics in daily papers fell into fifteen different categories, indicating the wide variety of sports programs offered by Oklahoma schools. Only eleven classifications were used for weeklies, reflecting the fewer types of athletic activity in the smaller school systems represented by the weeklies in the study.

As might be expected, football accounted for the most space, in both dailies and weeklies. Approximately one-half of the total athletics news content in the weeklies was devoted to football, and the percentage for dailies was only slightly less.

TABLE 12

ATHLETICS IN DAILY PAPERS

(column-inches)

Activity	A	B	C	D	E	F	Total
Football	4291	2444½	2818½	7271	3534	448	20807
Basketball	2816½	2772½	1514	6924	2777	203	17007
Baseball	935	370½	143	887	614½	102½	3052½
Track	482½	355	220½	827½	379	63	2327½
Combination Sports	263½	417	286½	38½	256	52	1313½
Wrestling	11½	216	255	0	304	0	786½
Swimming	74½	105	340	0	0	0	519½
Tennis	23½	208	72½	192½	2½	0	499
Golf	58½	71	51	102½	110½	18½	412
Phys. Ed.	4½	13	0	65	0	0	82½
Rifle	25	1½	0	0	0	0	26½
Boxing	0	9	0	17	0	0	26
Volleyball	14½	0	4½	0	0	0	19
Softball	0	1½	0	8	0	0	9½
Table Tennis	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
Total	9000½	6984½	5705½	16335	7977½	887	46890

(number of articles)

Football	367	291	161	489	334	60	1702
Basketball	453	524	152	507	245	31	1912
Baseball	144	91	22	165	53	17	492
Track	45	50	21	63	24	9	212
Combination Sports	11	41	19	9	25	5	110
Wrestling	2	49	20	0	14	0	85
Swimming	12	21	16	0	0	0	49
Tennis	5	39	11	28	1	0	84
Golf	14	17	9	22	9	5	76
Phys. Ed.	1	2	0	4	0	0	7
Rifle	3	1	0	0	0	0	4
Boxing	0	2	0	2	0	0	4
Volleyball	6	0	2	0	0	0	8
Softball	0	1	0	1	0	0	2
Table Tennis	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Total	1063	1129	433	1291	705	127	4748

TABLE 13

ATHLETIC ILLUSTRATIONS IN DAILY PAPERS

(column-inches)

Activity	A	B	C	D	E	F	Total
Football	1065	424½	1344½	1471½	1477½	141	5924
Basketball	500½	558½	763	1172	615½	35	3644½
Baseball	251	0	0	355½	33	0	639½
Track	204	83	261	279	37½	0	864½
Combination Sports	31	43½	29½	25	20	3½	152½
Wrestling	0	30½	103½	0	102½	0	236½
Swimming	26½	0	226	0	0	0	252½
Tennis	0	13½	15	35½	0	0	64
Golf	10½	20½	18	0	10	0	59
Rifle	29	0	0	0	0	0	29
Volleyball	0	0	13½	0	0	0	13½
Weight Lifting	0	5	0	0	0	0	5
Total	2117½	1179	2774	3338½	2296	179½	11884½

(number of photos)

Football	89	67	111	107	195	14	583
Basketball	46	64	50	87	58	2	307
Baseball	17	0	0	21	4	0	42
Track	14	8	16	15	3	0	56
Combination Sports	4	9	3	2	2	1	21
Wrestling	0	4	8	0	8	0	20
Swimming	3	0	32	0	0	0	35
Tennis	0	1	1	3	0	0	5
Golf	1	2	1	0	1	0	5
Rifle	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
Volleyball	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Weight Lifting	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Total	176	156	223	235	271	17	1078

TABLE 14

ATHLETICS IN WEEKLY PAPERS
(column-inches)

Activity	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	Total
Football	74	598	407	427	618	136½	18½	331	354½	209	492	440½	4106
Basketball	136½	396	253½	604	404½	44	65½	522½	278½	29½	290	64	3088½
Baseball	0	111½	16½	27	0	0	24½	86½	0	0	102½	2	370½
Track	10½	4	22	124	42½	5½	49½	4	2	0	77	0	341
Combination Sports	0	10½	27½	0	47½	6	0	44½	0	0	28½	5	169½
Wrestling	73	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	6½	0	85½
Golf	0	2½	0	0	14	14½	0	2½	0	0	0	0	33½
Volleyball	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	19½	0	0	0	0	19½
Tennis	0	17½	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	17½
Swimming	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	15
Phys. Ed.	0	0	0	0	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	15
Total	309	1140	726½	1182	1147½	206½	158	1010½	635	238½	996½	511½	8261½

TABLE 15

ATHLETICS IN WEEKLY PAPERS
(number of articles)

Activity	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	Total
Football	8	81	41	50	42	16	5	34	38	14	66	34	429
Basketball	10	73	35	101	51	7	16	110	27	4	43	19	496
Baseball	0	19	5	8	0	0	7	15	0	0	20	1	75
Track	1	1	2	16	5	1	5	1	1	0	17	0	50
Combination Sports	0	1	0	6	2	1	0	3	0	0	2	1	16
Wrestling	8	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	10
Golf	0	1	0	0	3	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	8
Volleyball	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	3
Tennis	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Swimming	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Phys. Ed.	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total	30	180	83	181	105	28	33	167	66	18	149	55	1095

TABLE 16

ATHLETIC ILLUSTRATIONS IN WEEKLY PAPERS
(column-inches)

Activity	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	Total
Football	98½	19	129½	55½	564½	142½	31	82	69	78	54	92	1415½
Basketball	83	18½	155	57	190	0	51½	83	10½	107½	12	10	778
Baseball	0	0	0	0	13½	0	41½	0	0	0	14	0	69
Track	0	0	0	21	0	20	30	0	0	0	0	0	71
Combination Sports	0	0	0	3½	11½	0	0	32½	0	0	0	0	47½
Wrestling	0	25½	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	25½
Phys. Ed.	0	0	0	0	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	15
Total	181½	63	284½	137	794½	162½	154	197½	79½	185½	80	102	2421½

(number of photos)

Football	9	2	7	6	41	10	1	9	7	7	5	12	116
Basketball	5	3	8	3	12	0	4	5	1	8	1	1	51
Baseball	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	4
Track	0	0	0	2	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	5
Combination Sports	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	3
Wrestling	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Phys. Ed.	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total	14	8	15	12	56	11	9	15	8	15	7	13	183

Although football led in the amount of space, basketball ranked first in the number of items. The explanation lies in the larger number of basketball games played during a season, compared with a normal football schedule.

It should be pointed out that some of the schools represented in the sample had teams which were successful enough to win berths in district and state playoffs, thereby extending the regular playing season. One of the schools won the state class AAA football championship.

In terms of column-inches, football, basketball, baseball, track, combination sports (i.e. items pertaining to more than one type of sports activity), and wrestling followed the same rank order for both dailies and weeklies. Beyond that point, variations were minor.

Athletic illustrations generally paralleled news content in the amount of type-space, except that track ranked third ahead of baseball. This indicates that high school track and field events are better subjects for newspaper photographs than baseball games.

Quantitative Analysis of Photographs

Four of the twenty classifications used in the present study dealt with pictorial school news content. These classifications were included as a means of making a determination as to the number of items and relative amount of type-space occupied by photographs and other types of illustrations.

Tables 17 and 18 show the results of this portion of the study.

TABLE 17

SCHOOL PHOTOGRAPHS IN DAILY PAPERS
AUGUST 21, 1964 TO MAY 21, 1965

Class.[1]	(Column-inches) A	B	C	D	E	F	Total	% of Total
7.	1691½	1235	2278½	3580½	1815½	390	10991	40.4%
16.	2117½	1179	2774	338½	2296	179½	8884½	32.6
2.	883	854	1976	2116	1240½	197	7266½	26.7
5.	15	19½	0	11	41½	0	87	.3
Total	4707	3287½	7028½	6046	5393½	766½	27229	100.0%
	(Number of photos)							
16.	176	156	223	235	271	17	1078	37.3%
7.	160	129	165	336	158	54	1002	34.7
2.	123	128	173	223	116	38	801	27.7
5.	1	2	0	1	3	0	7	.2
Total	460	415	561	795	548	109	2888	99.9%

[1]Classifications:

2. Illustrations, other.

5. Social illustrations.

7. Student activity illustrations.

16. Athletic illustrations.

TABLE 18

SCHOOL PHOTOGRAPHS IN WEEKLY PAPERS
AUGUST 21, 1964 TO MAY 21, 1965

Class.[1]	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	Total	% of Total
						(Column-inches)								
7.	104	167	460½	383½	914	275½	530	659	215½	78	202	188	4177	45.9%
2.	134½	265½	199½	66½	710	195½	64	205	74	121	423½	44	2503	27.5
16.	181½	63	284½	137	794½	162½	154	197½	79½	185½	80	102	2421½	26.6
5.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	6	.1
						(Number of photos)								
7.	9	27	32	42	83	17	46	99	36	6	23	21	441	43.4%
2.	16	52	37	10	129	23	12	31	17	8	50	7	392	38.5
16.	14	8	15	12	56	11	9	15	8	15	7	13	183	18.0
5.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	.1
Total	39	87	84	64	268	51	67	145	61	30	80	41	1017	

[1]For classifications, see page 55.

No attempt was made to measure the total pictorial news content of the papers studied, and therefore it is impossible to arrive at a conclusion as to the position of school photographs in comparison with other types of photographs published by newspapers.

Taking school photographs as a group, however, it is possible to draw some inferences which could be beneficial to the reader.

With all factors considered, the leading category was student activities illustrations, representing 40.4 per cent of the pictorial school news content among dailies and 45.9 per cent among weeklies.

Athletic illustrations occupied a secondary position, and social illustrations were extremely rare.

The prominence of student activities illustrations can be laid to definite factors. Perhaps the principal reason is the overall importance given to 4-H and FFA activities. Because of this emphasis, it was not uncommon to see a photograph of a fat sow bearing a prize ribbon and all but concealing the owner spread over three or four columns of a front page.

Another reason is that stock photos of students and teachers are usually available from the schools, thereby saving the newspaper the expense of taking its own pictures. This also could explain why athletic illustrations were used less frequently, since these require equipment and skill not always available through the local newspaper.

Emphasis on School Topics

The total quantity of space given to certain topics of school items is one means of determining the amount of emphasis which they rate in newspapers. Another means is to study the location in the paper where items are printed.

Front Page Topics

A good indicator of the importance of schools as a source of news is the amount of front page space given to school news.

In measuring newspaper clippings for this study, special notation was made of front page items, and a separate tally was kept. From this examination, it was found that among daily newspapers, 15.8 per cent of all school news appeared on page one, and among weeklies 27 per cent was found on the front page.

Results of the tabulation on front page news are shown in Tables 19 and 20.

Wide variations among dailies, and to a lesser degree among weeklies, are immediately apparent. Also there appears to be some relation to the thickness of a paper. In the case of both dailies and weeklies, the paper with the largest percentage of school news on page one was the lowest or among the lowest in average pages per issue. However, this relationship did not remain constant for the other papers.

In connection with these observations, an aspect of newspaper publishing must be taken into consideration. In the case of weeklies and small dailies, the front page often contains the bulk of the news, with inside pages filled largely with advertising and "canned" releases that would hardly qualify as news content. The reasons for this are obvious. Weeklies as a rule have no wire service coverage and depend on news from the community and the surrounding area served by the paper. Add to this the fact that the weekly is published only once a week while dailies publish six or more issues a week. As a result, articles that are of enough importance to the weekly paper to rate front page treatment are frequently placed on inside pages in dailies, and page one is given

TABLE 19

FRONT PAGE SPACE DEVOTED TO SCHOOLS IN DAILY NEWSPAPERS

Paper	Average page per issue	Total column-inches of school content	Column-inches of school news on page 1	Per cent of school news on page 1
F	7.2	4,082	2,019	49.5%
E	16.7	19,791½	1,949	9.8
B	19.6	19,568	1,631	8.3
C	22.9	20,377	2,782½	13.6
A	27.2	20,941½	2,051	9.8
D	30.2	36,578	1,509½	4.1
Total		121,338	11,942	15.8%

TABLE 20

FRONT PAGE SPACE DEVOTED TO SCHOOLS IN WEEKLY NEWSPAPERS

Paper	Average page per issue	Total column-inches of school content	Column-inches of school news on page 1	Per cent of school news on page 1
j	7.6	1,017	190½	18.7%
h	7.9	4,049	1,305½	32.2
a	8.0	2,456½	203½	8.3
l	8.7	2,215½	824	37.2
i	9.3	2,269½	1,052	46.4
b	9.9	3,218½	876	27.2
g	10.2	2,239	741½	33.1
f	11.7	2,752	876½	31.8
c	13.1	2,877½	1,146	39.8
k	15.6	4,907½	698	14.2
d	17.0	4,488	1,058½	23.6
e	18.5	6,553	745	11.4
Total		39,043	9,717	27.0%

over to state, national and international news reports.

Another analysis of front page space devoted to various school news topics is presented in Table 21.

TABLE 21

SCHOOL TOPICS ON THE FRONT PAGES OF DAILY AND WEEKLY NEWSPAPERS

Classification	Number of items		Total
	Dailies	Weeklies	
Student activities	209	279	488
Miscellaneous	211	240	451
Finance	360	65	425
Athletics	29	219	248
Illustrations, other	125	118	243
Student activities illustrations	120	120	240
School board	58	76	134
PTA	6	63	69
Honor roll	22	39	61
Conferences and institutes	28	28	56
Athletic illustrations	6	48	54
School operation/construction	32	16	48
Curriculum	5	7	12
Adult education	3	8	11
Safety	7	3	10
Transportation	5	3	8
Editorial comment	2	3	5
Social illustrations	0	1	1
Teaching methods	1	0	1
Social news	0	0	0
Total	1,229	1,336	2,565

The figures show that student activities accounted for the greatest total number of items on front pages. Although ranked third in the combined total of items from dailies and weeklies, finance was by far the most frequent front page topic in dailies. This is directly related to the school finance situation which rated almost daily news coverage.

Miscellaneous was the second leading topic by number of front page articles. Weekly newspapers printed a greater number of miscellaneous items on front pages.

It is interesting to note that weeklies used about seven times as many items about athletics on the front page as did dailies.

As a final note in this discussion, one of the daily papers used in the study, paper "B", was unique in that it had a "second" front page. That is, the first page of its second section had the distinctive makeup of a front page. However, it was decided that items on this page could not be classified as front page news without creating an imbalance in the tabulations for this portion of the study.

The School Page

Only one of the newspapers in the study had a special page set aside for school news, this being weekly paper "k". It took the form of a student newspaper, complete with masthead. Space on the page varied from week to week, but not to a great degree. High school pupils themselves wrote the page. Items included were generally about student and social affairs, but there also were some good features about academic activities.

While it is difficult to tell whether anyone other than students read a school page, a well-prepared school page can be a source of information about schools not otherwise provided in general news coverage.

Another type of specialized school news reporting that was more common consisted of columns written by student journalists and published on a regular basis. Weekly papers "a" and "e" each used two such columns per week, and one of the dailies, paper "E", carried a weekly

report written by a student.

Comparisons With a Similar Study

One of the aims of this study was to determine whether the treatment given school news by Oklahoma newspapers was similar to that type of news coverage in another state.

Assuming that public schools and newspapers both operate in basically the same manner in all states, it appeared to be a logical hypothesis that no significant differences exist between Oklahoma newspapers and newspapers of another state in the amount of space given to comparable school news items.

For the purposes of a comparison, a study by William G. Monahan, done at Michigan State University in 1959, was selected to serve as a model.

Monahan's study involved an analysis of the school content in eight daily and fifteen weekly newspapers in the state of Michigan for the period of September 1, 1959, through November 30, 1959. Metropolitan daily newspapers were excluded from the sample. The school content was categorized into twenty classifications, the same classifications used in the present study. Front pages were quantified separately.

A portion of his study was a comparison with a school content analysis prepared by David J. Luck as part of the Michigan Communications Study in 1952 and 1953.

Research for this thesis indicated that the Monahan and Luck studies are the only ones of this type which have been conducted and

for which reports are available for comparative purposes.[1]

Findings of the Monahan study in Michigan compared with the findings of the present study in Oklahoma are shown in Tables 22 and 23.

While it would be erroneous to conclude, on the basis of similar studies in these two states, that the same general pattern of school news is followed in all the states, several striking similarities are readily apparent, which could serve as reliable indicators.

It will be noted in comparing these two sets of data that athletics was the leading type of news among dailies in both studies, and represented an almost identical percentage of total content in both instances.

Although not in precisely the same order, the first six ranking categories included four of the same types of content. The same was true of weeklies in both studies.

Four of the classifications occupied the same position in order of rank in both studies, among dailies; three were ranked the same among weeklies.

Percentages were close--varying less than 1 per cent--in five of the categories for dailies, and four categories for weeklies.

Two major differences were noted in comparing the two sets of data. Curriculum received more attention among newspapers in the Michigan study, while student activities and illustrations ranked much higher in the Oklahoma study.

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[1]Summaries of these two studies may be found in Chapter II, pp. 16-19.

TABLE 22

COMPARISONS OF SCHOOL TOPICS AS PERCENTAGES OF TOTAL SCHOOL CONTENT IN DAILY PAPERS

Classification	Monahan study		Present study	
	Per cent of total space	Cumulative per cent	Per cent of total space	Cumulative per cent
Athletics	38.2%	38.2%	38.6%	38.6%
Athletic illustrations	15.0	53.2	9.8	48.4
Miscellaneous	7.4	60.6	8.2	56.6
Illustrations, other	6.3	66.9	6.0	62.6
Curriculum	6.0	72.9	.8	63.4
Finance	5.7	78.6	7.4	70.8
PTA	4.4	83.0	1.7	72.5
Student activities	3.3	86.3	10.6	83.1
Student activities illustrations	3.0	89.3	9.1	92.2
School board	2.0	91.3	1.2	93.4
Teaching methods	1.6	92.9	.6	94.0
Social illustrations	1.4	94.3	.1	94.1
Conferences and institutes	1.2	95.5	.9	95.0
Social news	1.1	96.6	.2	95.2
Safety	.8	97.4	.3	95.5
Editorial comment	.7	98.1	1.0	96.5
Honor roll	.4	98.5	2.5	99.0
School-operation (and construction)	.4	98.9	.6	99.6
Adult education	.4	99.3	.1	99.7
Transportation	.3	99.6	.2	99.9

TABLE 23

COMPARISONS OF SCHOOL TOPICS AS PERCENTAGES OF TOTAL SCHOOL CONTENT IN WEEKLY PAPERS

Classification	Monahan study		Present study	
	Per cent of total space	Cumulative per cent	Per cent of total space	Cumulative per cent
Athletics	28.9%	28.9%	21.2%	21.2%
Miscellaneous	13.2	42.1	22.6	43.8
Illustrations, other	8.0	50.1	6.4	50.2
Athletic illustrations	7.8	57.9	6.2	56.4
Curriculum	7.5	65.4	1.0	57.4
Finance	7.2	72.6	3.4	60.8
Student activities	6.0	78.6	17.7	78.5
PTA	4.5	83.1	1.5	80.0
School board	2.4	85.5	2.3	82.3
Social illustrations	2.0	87.5	.0	82.3
Teaching methods	1.7	89.2	.2	82.5
Editorial comment	1.6	90.8	1.2	83.7
Social news	1.6	92.4	.2	83.9
Student activities illustrations	1.4	93.8	10.7	94.6
Conferences and institutes	1.4	95.2	1.4	96.0
Safety	1.3	96.5	.2	96.2
Adult education	1.0	97.5	.3	96.5
Honor roll	.9	98.4	3.0	99.5
Transportation	.8	99.2	.0	99.5
School operation (and construction)	.7	99.9	.4	99.9

There is a plausible explanation for each of these variations.

At the time Monahan's study was made, the world's first successful launching of a manmade earth satellite had been accomplished by the Soviet Union. This and subsequent events connected with space exploration led to an awakening of interest throughout the nation in matters relating to what was being taught in the schools. As Monahan stated, "it was felt that this increased interest is traceable to the priority being placed on education primarily as a result of events during the last few years which have seen increased intellectual and cultural competition between this nation and the Soviet Union."[1]

This emphasis on curriculum is not as prevalent today.

The principal contributing factor to the large volume of student activities news in the Oklahoma study is the fact that Oklahoma has an extensive 4-H and FFA program for boys and girls in school. Both organizations have chapters in counties throughout the state, and are active in urban as well as rural areas.

Thousands of news releases and photographic mats are mailed each year from the state headquarters of each organization and are widely used by state newspapers.

Accomplishments by Oklahoma youth in 4-H and FFA projects have built a national reputation for the state. For several years, Oklahoma led all other states in the number of national honors won at the annual 4-H convention in Chicago. In 1964, Oklahoma students won 19 national 4-H scholarships, equaling a record set by the state in 1963 and second only to New York with 20. At the FFA national convention later, Oklahoma

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[1]Monahan, op. cit., p. 146.

likewise received prominent recognition.

These school-sponsored clubs produced by far the largest volume of news about student activities during the course of the present study.

During the early autumn months, newspapers devoted a great amount of space to long lists of results of 4-H and FFA exhibits in county fairs and stock shows. National 4-H Week in September and National FFA Week in February again produced large quantities of news about these two organizations.

In sharp contrast to the Michigan study, only a minute amount of social news is printed in Oklahoma. This also can be attributed to a degree to the predominance of 4-H and FFA. In many Oklahoma communities, these clubs are the means by which students socialize. Students work together on projects, hold awards banquets, elect queens and kings and in many other ways bring youths of a community together for fun as well as work and learning.

Among the other categories, honor roll content was much higher in the Oklahoma study, for both dailies and weeklies. Not being familiar with general tendencies of Michigan newspapers in this regard, it would be unwise to speculate as to the reasons for this difference. However, it should be noted that several of the papers from the Oklahoma study printed complete honor roll lists and did so with regularity.

Editorial comment was slightly higher for dailies in the Oklahoma study, probably because of the prevailing public interest in school finances, which was the subject of most of the editorials.

An Analysis of Trends in Timing of School Content

Another aspect of the present study concerned the matter of distribution of newspaper space in relation to the time of the year. The study sought to establish whether school news coverage, over the course of a school year, follows a cycle of certain predictable patterns.

One would not expect that there would be an even flow of news from the schools over a given period, either in quantity or type of activity. Any follower of school sports knows, for example, that interest is high at the start of school because of the football season, continues on into early winter, but dwindles during the spring months. Newspaper content is geared to public interest.

In an effort to detect trends which might be useful to someone planning a school public relations program, an extensive analysis was made to determine the percentage of school content in each month of the study, and further to ascertain which months various categories of school news received the greatest emphasis.

The results are depicted in Tables 24, 25 and 26. They also are shown in two graphs, Illustrations 2 and 3.

The figures indicate that weeklies and dailies tend to fluctuate alike. April, March and October are high months for school content for both types of papers, and September, January and December are low months.

August and May could not be considered because only portions of each of those two months were included in the study. However, among weeklies, it should be noted that school news content for the first three

TABLE 24

HIGH THREE MONTH'S NEWSPAPER SPACE AND PER CENT
IN EACH MONTH-DAILY PAPERS

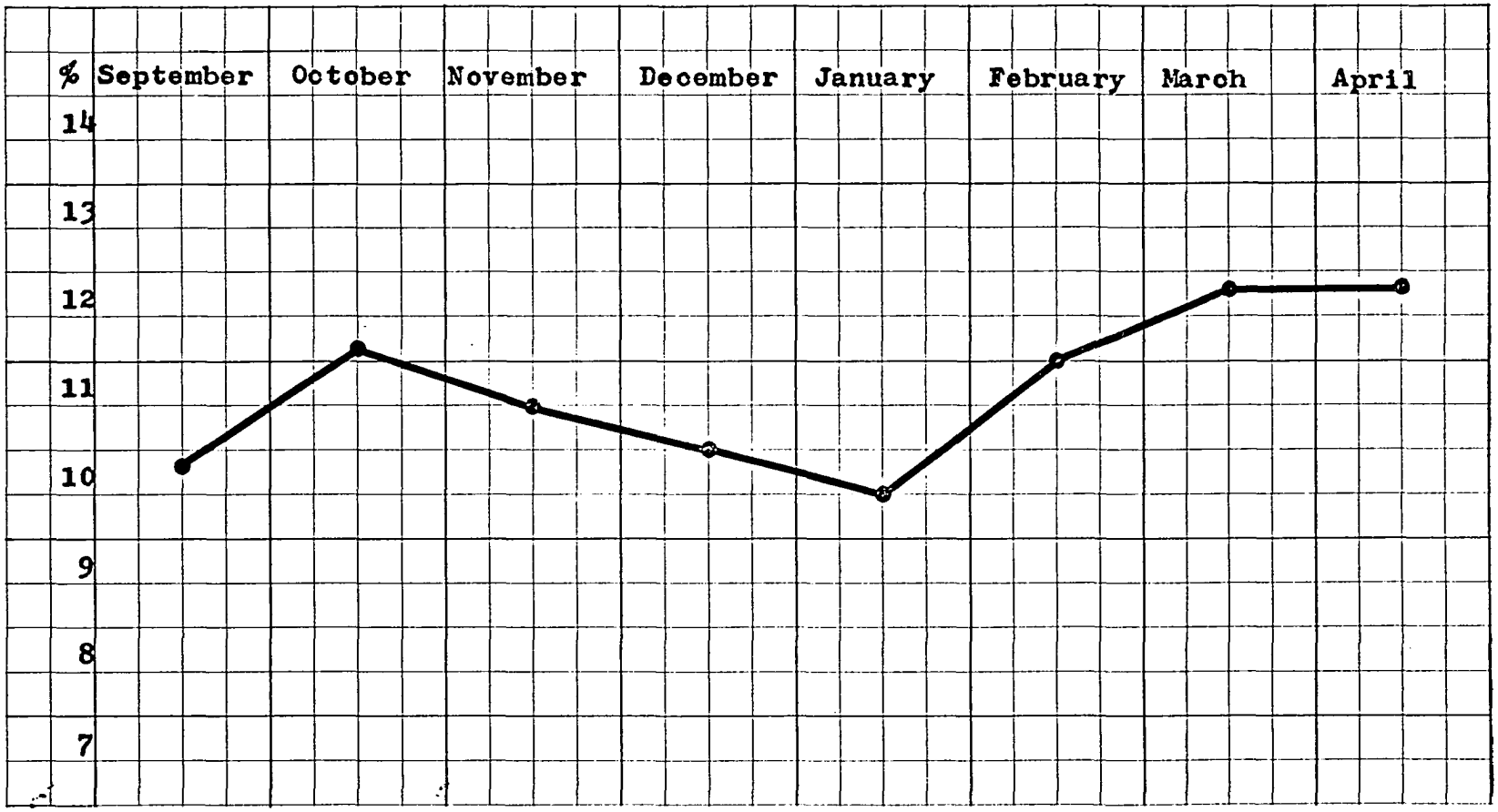
Classification	Highest month	% of year	Second highest	% of year	Third highest	% of year	% of Year's Total in 3 Months
Adult education	November	37%	September	34%	January	19%	90%
Illustrations, other	April	17	February	13	December	13	43
Editorial comment	November	15	January	14	March	13	42
Social news	May	30	December	19	November	15	64
Social illustrations	May	79	August	17	April	3	99
Student activities	May	18	April	18	March	17	53
Student activities illustrations	March	19	April	18	May	16	53
Honor roll	April	25	May	16	December	13	54
Finance	February	19	May	18	November	17	54
School board	March	29	April	15	May	15	59
School operation and construction	April	18	September	17	March	16	51
Teaching methods	September	32	October	22	March	19	73
Conferences and institutes	March	18	September	15	April	14	47
Curriculum	April	22	February	16	March	15	53
Athletics	October	15	January	13	February	12	40
Athletic illustrations	October	16	January	14	September	14	44
PTA	March	15	October	15	November	14	44
Transportation	April	28	August	28	September	15	71
Safety	September	27	October	26	August	18	71
Miscellaneous	April	16	December	12	November	11	39

TABLE 25

HIGH THREE MONTH'S NEWSPAPER SPACE AND PER CENT
IN EACH MONTH-WEEKLY PAPERS

Classification	Highest month	% of year	Second highest	% of year	Third highest	% of year	% of Year's Total in 3 Months
Adult education	September	20%	January	18%	April	14%	52%
Illustrations, other	May	17	November	13	December	11	41
Editorial comment	May	29	April	13	October	10	52
Social news	April	45	February	14	October	12	71
Social illustrations	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Student activities	April	22	May	22	March	15	59
Student activities illustrations	April	26	May	25	March	15	66
Honor roll	April	24	February	23	May	18	65
Finance	October	29	September	15	November	15	59
School board	March	31	September	17	October	10	58
School operation and construction	February	19	March	18	November	16	53
Teaching methods	November	44	September	31	April	24	99
Conferences and institutes	March	21	October	18	September	13	52
Curriculum	December	20	April	16	November	15	51
Athletics	October	17	November	15	September	15	47
Athletic illustrations	November	21	September	16	October	13	50
PTA	October	23	March	15	January	14	52
Transportation	April	54	September	18	October	14	86
Safety	February	31	August	30	September	16	77
Miscellaneous	April	16	December	12	October	11	39

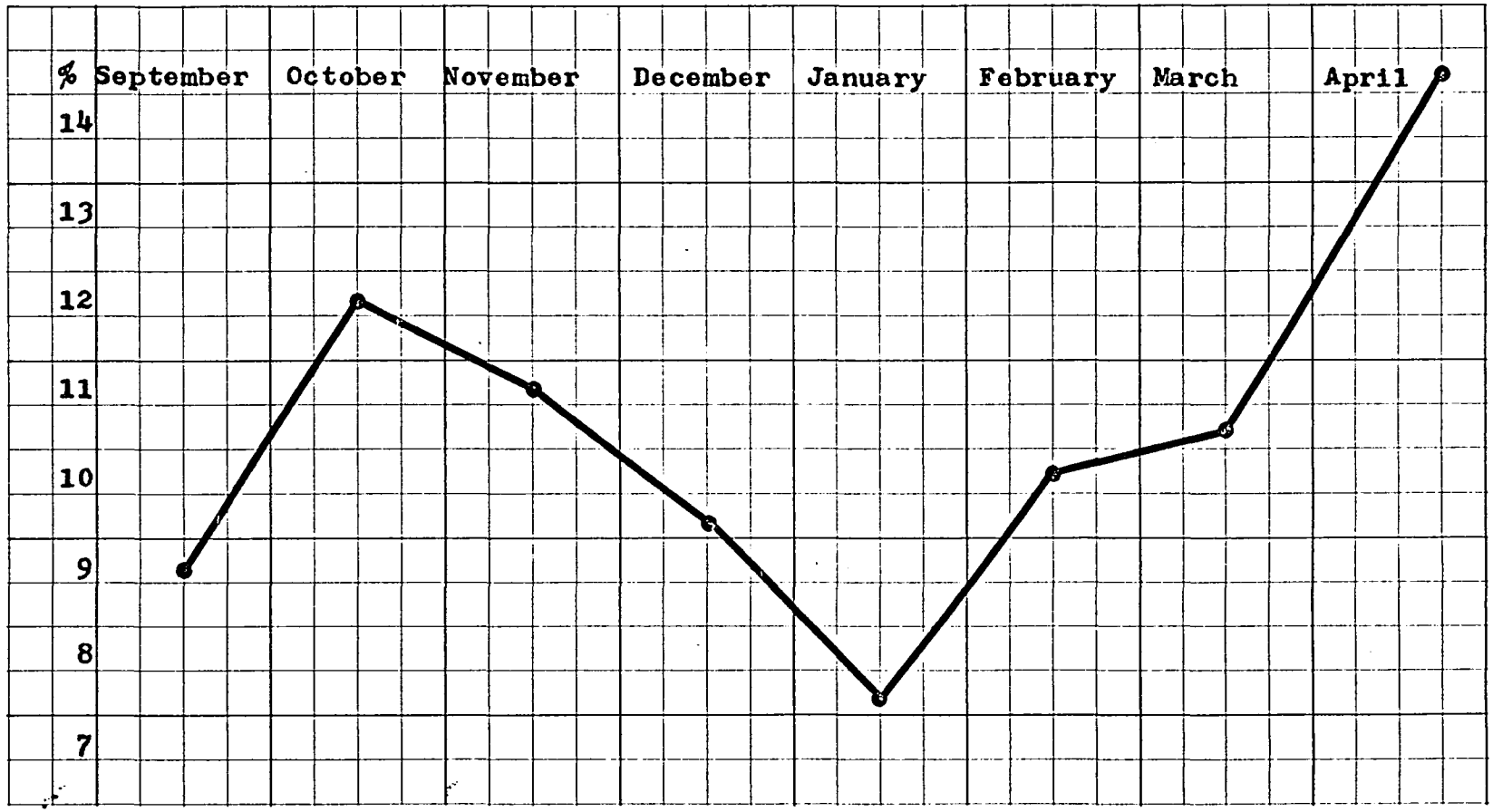
PERCENTAGE OF ANNUAL SCHOOL CONTENT IN EACH MONTH
AUGUST 21, 1964 THROUGH MAY 21, 1965



Daily Newspapers

ILLUSTRATION 2.

PERCENTAGE OF ANNUAL SCHOOL CONTENT IN EACH MONTH
AUGUST 21, 1964 THROUGH MAY 21, 1965



Weekly Newspapers

ILLUSTRATION 3.

TABLE 26

PERCENTAGE OF ANNUAL SCHOOL CONTENT IN EACH MONTH
AUGUST 21, 1964 THROUGH MAY 21, 1965

Month	Daily Papers	Weekly Papers
August (21-31)	1.9%	1.8%
September	10.3	9.1
October	11.6	12.2
November	11.0	11.2
December	9.5	9.7
January	10.0	7.7
February	11.5	10.3
March	12.4	10.9
April	12.4	14.8
May (1-21)	9.4	12.2
	100.0%	99.9%

weeks of May was exceeded by only one other month, April. This reflects the large amount of news associated with the end of school.

The fluctuations are more widespread among the weeklies, ranging from 7.7 per cent in January to 14.8 per cent in April.

The high point in October for both types of papers is due to the peak in athletic news at that time and a rise in student activities.

Dailies did not decline in January as did weeklies, possibly because of the convening of the Legislature and the accompanying heavy volume of news related to programs for financing of the schools.

It is interesting to note that Luck's 12-month study in Michigan in 1952 and 1953 produced a similar pattern. His study showed May and March to be the high points in school content for both dailies and weeklies. September and October were the low months in his study, a situation he termed "a curious thing," and commented that "there should

be material for interesting school articles and news stories from the opening of their doors in September into June."[1]

Luck also concluded that most of the classifications of school content tend to be concentrated in relatively few months. This conclusion was borne out in the present study.

Among weeklies, for example, in seventeen of the twenty categories, more than half of the content for the entire school year was contained in three months. Percentage of concentration was much higher in certain categories.

For instance, 99 per cent of the news about teaching methods carried by weeklies occurred during the months of November, September and April. In the dailies, 90 per cent of the adult education news was printed in the three months of November, September and January.

These are circumstances for which no logical reason was apparent.

A study of the figures does reveal, however, that certain predictable events occur at specific times during the course of a school year.

Taking dailies as a group, September was the highest month for news about safety and teaching methods. This is traceable to the stories about the beginning of school, in which these two subjects were given much emphasis. October was the highest month for athletics and athletic illustrations, a result of the peak of football activity.

Editorial comment was at its highest point in November, a direct result of the outcome of the November 3 election, at which four state

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[1]Luck, op. cit., p. 21.

questions related to schools were defeated.

March was the leading month for school board items, an understandable circumstance because it is the month for annual filings for school board elections in Oklahoma.

Student activities and social news reached a peak in May because of the rush of commencement activities and other events associated with the end of the school term.

While the reasons for such distribution of various types of news are evident, the question arises as to the necessity for a continuation of this pattern. Take the category of safety as an example. Although some newspapers did an excellent job of writing news about the need for extra caution with children going back to school, the fact remains that this is a year-round problem and should receive regular attention. This is an area of potential development for administrators and school public relations personnel. Oklahoma newspaper editors have demonstrated repeatedly their willingness to print items about safety, and schools need only supply material of sufficient news value.

Summary

In this chapter, data collected during a nine-month period of studying six daily and twelve weekly newspapers selected to represent newspapers in the state of Oklahoma have been analyzed quantitatively from a number of directions.

Comparisons among newspapers have been presented, together with comparisons of various topics of school news.

A special analysis was made of the different types of school athletics about which news was printed during the study.

Photographs appearing in both daily and weekly newspapers during the period of the study were discussed and quantified.

Emphasis placed on items by virtue of their location in the newspaper, such as on the front page or a special school page, was examined.

Comparisons were made between the present study and a similar study conducted by Monahan in 1959 in the state of Michigan.

An analysis of trends in the type of school news printed at different times during the year was presented.

CHAPTER V

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

In the preceding chapter, the matter of how much Oklahoma newspapers print about the schools was fully explored from many directions. The results of this quantitative analysis are unquestionably meaningful and beneficial.

For a more complete picture, however, it is necessary to go beyond these figures and analyze the quality of the news which is printed. In so doing, it is hoped that these questions may be answered: How "good" is the school content in newspapers? How effective are schools and newspapers in their joint effort of interpreting schools to the public?

Making a general evaluation of school content in terms of its characteristics and treatment by newspapers is no easy task. After examining more than 160,000 column-inches of school news, it is still difficult to draw a distinction between what was "good" and what was "bad."

The subjective evaluation presented in this chapter was influenced by a background of both educational and journalistic studies and teaching experiences, many years as a "typical" newspaper reader, and the interest of a parent with children now in public schools.

It was not possible to assume the specialized viewpoint of either the school administrator, whose chief concern is likely to be whether the paper deals accurately with the problems on which he feels the public should be informed, or the newspaper editor, whose judgment hinges largely on whether the school items are of sufficient news value to be read. The characteristics and treatment of school news can only be generalized on the basis of their ability to make clear certain facts and to arouse reader interest.

In terms of the event being reported and the total effort necessary to communicate it, school news items may be classified into three areas. Two are concerned with strictly objective reporting and may be labelled "news releases and announcements" and "staff written articles." The third may be classed as "interpretive."

It should be borne in mind that there is a certain amount of overlapping, as was the case with the various categories of school content.

News Releases and Announcements

The most frequent type of school news found in the sample studied was the routine announcement about an event which has occurred or which is forthcoming. Some typical examples are as follows: schedules of athletic events, meetings of PTA and other school-related organizations, honor rolls, dates of school holidays, participation of students in various types of inter-scholastic contests, and school bus information.

Examples are shown in Illustration 4, page 79.

Vocation Students Schedule Banquet

The annual Diversified Occupations and Distributive Education banquet will be held at 7:30 p.m., tonight, in the Youngblood Hotel. The DODE, made up of 98 students at Enid High School, is a vocational course in which the student goes to school in the morning and works at a job in the afternoon, according to Ray Farrant, assistant superintendent of Enid Public Schools.

Former Governor George Nigh will serve as principal speaker at the banquet. Parents and employers will be guests for the event.

According to Farrant, students enrolled in the special course get credit for their work on the job. They are closely supervised on the job, he explained.

SATURDAY

Ready Plans For 4-H Day

Plans are being completed in Enid Thursday for the annual Achievement Day program for the Garfield County 4-H club Council Saturday.

Officials said the event, to be held at the Hotel Youngblood, starting at 11:30 a.m. Saturday with a luncheon, will bring approximately 300 4-H'ers to the city for the event.

The outstanding feature is the presentation of county, state, district and national awards earned by the club members during the past year.

Tony Goetz P-TA Plans Open House Monday

Open house, sponsored by the Tony Goetz School Parent-Teacher Association, will begin at 7 p.m. Monday, Ronald Bowman, unit president, announced Saturday.

Other unit officers are Mrs. Bob Findley, vice-president; Mrs. Larry Bishop, secretary; Homer Murray, treasurer, and Mrs. George Lawson and Mrs. John Mayer, Council representatives.

FHA Chapter Has Speakers

The Lawton high school Future Homemakers of America met Monday afternoon in the school music department.

Mr. and Mrs. J. M. Dambold, guest speakers discussed the present problems of teenagers.

Sponsors present were Mrs. Donald McMahan, Mrs. Lloyd Merritt and Mrs. William Frawley.

A refreshment period followed the meeting.

Bulldogs Plan 17-Game Slate

A 17-game scheduled has been announced for the Davenport Bulldogs Basketball team.

The schedule begins Dec. 1 with a game at Milfay. The first home game is Dec. 4 when the Bulldogs host Wellston.

The complete schedule is as follows:

Dec. 1—Milfay, There.
Dec. 4—Wellston, Here.
Dec. 8—Agra, Here.
Dec. 11—Stroud, There.
Dec. 15—Milfay, Here.
Dec. 11—Stroud, There.
Dec. 18—Meeker, There.
Jan. 5—Harrah Inv. Tourney.
Jan. 8—Chandler, Here.
Jan. 12—Carney, Here.
Jan. 13—Luther, There.
Jan. 19 thru 23—Lincoln County Tourney, Stroud.
*Jan. 29—Wellston, There.
Feb. 2—Agra, There.
*Feb. 5—Stroud, Here.
*Feb. 9—Meeker, Here.
*Feb. 12—Chandler, There.
*Feb. 1..—Tryon, There.
*Feb. 19—Luther, Here.
*Feb. 22 thru 26—Dist. Tourney.
*Denotes Conference Games.
All Home Games Begin At 7:00 P.M.

Chandler School Lunch Menu

Monday, Nov. 16

Milk, hot dogs with chili sauce, tossed green salad, cherry cobbler.

Tuesday, Nov. 17

Milk, beef stew with mixed vegetables, fruit jello, chocolate cake, cheese slices, crackers.

Wednesday Nov. 18

Milk, goulash, English peas, mashed potatoes, peaches, hot rolls, peanut butter with honey.

Thursday, Nov. 19

Milk, pinto beans, scalloped potatoes, creamed corn, cookies, corn bread, butter.

Friday, Nov. 20

Milk, fish sticks, creamed potatoes, brown gravy, green beans, ice cream, hot rolls, butter and jelly.

ENID PUBLIC SCHOOLS CALENDAR

April 30—FRIDAY
Tri-State Music Festival—All schools dismissed
Golf Game—Longfellow vs. Waller—1:30 p.m.

May 1—SATURDAY
Golf Game—Longfellow vs. Perry—There—8 a.m.
Enid High School will have College Board Tests
Freehome 4-H will meet at 9:30 a.m.

May 3—MONDAY
4-H Meeting—at Glenwood at 3:30 p.m.
Longfellow — campaign for student body officers for next year will begin

May 4—TUESDAY
Cub Pack Meeting—7 p.m. at Hayes School
PTC—7:30 p.m. at Wilson School

May 5—WEDNESDAY
National Science Fair at St. Louis — also Thursday, Friday and Saturday

May 6—THURSDAY
Cub Pack Meeting—7:30 p.m. at Harrison School
Lincoln Open House for retiring Teacher, Miss Dorothy Nickerson, from 7-9 p.m.

May 7—FRIDAY
Grade Orchestra will have their string concert in Education Building at 7:30 p.m.
Golf Game—Longfellow vs Miller—Meadowlake Golf Course — 1:30 p.m.
Longfellow Assembly will consist of campaign speeches of candidates for next years student body officers.

ILLUSTRATION 4. News Releases and Announcements.

Two items of general interest distributed by many schools each week are a school calendar and a school lunch menu. The latter item is especially popular with parents of youngsters in school.

One editor, in explaining why school menus were printed, stated: "This is done in order that parents may know what their children have for lunch, so Mother won't hear that familiar, 'Oh, Mother, not for supper. I had that at the lunchroom today.'"

In this study, there was no attempt to determine what portion of school news originated as news releases, but the nature of the item usually makes such news easily identifiable. Most common source of releases is an association or organization, such as the Oklahoma Education Association. Governmental agencies of state and federal levels occasionally use this method. On the local level, a more informal approach is customarily followed, although school superintendents may issue periodic or special progress reports and other announcements in written form.

Stories in which statements by authorities in the field of education are quoted, either by means of a speech or a published work, fall into the same general category.

Staff Written Articles

Reports on various types of school activities obtained through the normal processes of news coverage accounted for a sizeable number of news items in the study. Virtually all of the athletics news resulted from staff reporting.

There are many persons connected with any school system who are potential sources of news. In addition to the superintendent, reporters

assigned to write school news may contact such people as coaches, principals, school board members, vocational agriculture teachers, leaders of teacher organizations, and occasionally individual teachers and students for features.

School board meetings are generally covered quite well in Oklahoma, as evidenced by the study. Under Oklahoma law, meetings are open to the public and boards may not meet in secret except to discuss personnel matters. Even then, any vote taken must be in open meeting.

These meetings produce a variety of news, such as changes in teaching personnel and assignments, decisions on school bond issues, construction and remodeling of school buildings, purchase of equipment, transportation regulations, and progress reports of one kind or another.

An alert and aggressive superintendent can do much to maintain favorable relations with the local newspaper by providing advance information on matters likely to be discussed at the monthly school board meeting.

Examples of staff written articles are shown in Illustration 5, page 82.

Interpretive Writing

Several forms of news content fall into this category, which differs from the first two named in that it goes beyond being informational and involves the elements of interpretation, judgment, opinion and, in some instances, persuasion.

An obvious inclusion in this class is the editorial, but other types are identifiable as well. These include certain news articles and features written by members of a local newspaper staff and usually

Eisenhower High Faces Key Accrediting 'Exam'

By JAN JACOBS

EISENHOWER High School faces a crucial "exam" this week when a visiting committee from the North Central Association considers accrediting the westside school.

The 36-member visiting committee, composed of Oklahoma college and high school educators and administrators, was scheduled to arrive today.

On Tuesday the committee will write its report, recommending that Eisenhower either be accredited or rejected by the association.

The recommendation will be made public at a meeting Feb. 9 in Oklahoma City.

The North Central Association is the largest of five accrediting associations in the United States, covering 19 states.

It was organized in 1890, and its purpose is to standardize secondary or high school courses for college entrance.

Lawton and Douglass High Schools and Cameron Junior College are members of the association.

This is the first time Eisenhower has been eligible for membership since it has a senior class for the first time this year.

Jake Smart, state chairman of the North Central Association, and assistant superintendent in charge of instruction

See EISENHOWER, Page 2, Col. 1

HIRE TEACHERS

School Board To Negotiate For Land Joining Schools

The Enid School board hired a part-time teacher for Glenwood and re-hired Delward Newsom as a high school instructor at a Monday evening session held in the Educational Building.

Newsom, ill for several months, following a heart attack last year, has now fully recovered and is back on the job at Enid High School, according to John Thorpe, president of the board.

Mrs. Carolyn Ort was approved for a half-time teaching position at the Genlwood School.

In other action the board authorized their attorney, Rolland Wilson to negotiate for land east of Adams School and also property adjacent to the Cleveland School.

The board also discussed the possibility of acquiring land adjacent to the Glenwood School.

The board also transacted routine business, including the approval of the general fund payroll, levy fund payroll and the kindergarten payroll for the month of October.

A telegram was received by the school board from the Bartlesville School board, in which the Bartlesville group commended the teachers there for their active discussion favoring a conference on education called by Governor Bellmon for Dec. 5, at Tulsa and Oklahoma City.

Chief Of OEA: $840 A Year 'Realistic'

TULSA (AP) — Governor Henry Bellmon has promised teachers a "substantial improvement" in salaries and $840 a year would be a realistic figure, the president of the Oklahoma Education Association said Wednesday.

Dr. Raymond Knight, who also is principal of Will Rogers High School here, mentioned the figure during an interview, saying that a $1,000 a year boost asked by teachers during a meeting in Midwest City Monday probably was not realistic.

Knight said Bellmon had written him that he would reveal the amount of improvement he proposes during a statewide teachers meeting the governor has called for December 5 in Oklahoma City.

Knight also said the OEA would not ask that two of four state questions defeated by voters November 3 be resubmited, but would seek new elections on two other measures—to permit local school districts to vote higher taxes and to raise the minimum teacher salary from $3,800 to $4,400.

The OEA's board of directors will be asked Saturday to take the first step toward imposing sanctions against state schools.

It was reported the OEA directors would be asked to request the National Education Association to investigate the school situation. Such an investigation must come before any sanctions are ordered.

Sanctions take several forms, but the one most discussed is for the NEA to notify schools that Oklahoma teachers will not sign contracts for the next year unless salaries are increased.

An NEA official speaking Monday at a protest meeting of 1,200 teachers in Midwest City said his organization was "ready, willing and able" to impose the sanctions if an investigation showed conditions "which may be detrimental to education" in Oklahoma.

ILLUSTRATION 5. Staff Written Articles.

carrying bylines; syndicated articles or columns dealing with subjects of broad scope but with individual application; and stories about statements made by authorities or public figures which put forth their views about educational matters.

Examples of this type of school news content are shown in Illustration 6, page 84.

It can easily be seen that this means of communicating school news to the reader is the most important in the final analysis of how well schools are treated in the press.

Readership surveys have offered evidence that local editorials are among the best-read items in a weekly newspaper, and that human interest stories, as features usually are, rank higher in readership value than general news.

Since the writing of both features and editorials requires a certain amount of creative effort on the part of the newspaper, as well as a degree of communication and cooperation between the school and the newspaper, it follows that the occurrence of these types of items is an indication of the school-press relationship which exists.

Editorials

Although the public schools and their related activities affect most readers in some way, and despite the fact that the teaching profession was propelled into the public eye because of the school finance controversy during the course of this study, only a fractional amount of the news about schools was in the form of editorial comment.

Only 1 per cent of the total news content among dailies was in the editorial category. The percentage was slightly higher, 1.2 per

Wagoner School Principal Has First Third Generation Student

By VERNON KOUTS
Phoenix Staff Writer

WAGONER — A. M. Callaway has achieved a milestone that not many in his profession can boost of.

Callaway, who is principal of the Ora Ellington Elementary School here, has his first third generation student in his school this

Blonde, blue-eyed Lea Semore, who is a first is the grranddaughter of Edwards, one of Callawa students when he starte ing vocational agricultur Wagoner City Schools in Edwards, then a fres

Callaway's vocational agriculture class, is now farming in the Wagoner area. Edwards' wife and Lea Anne's grandmother, the former Marie Cannon, was also attending Wagoner City Schools at the time.

The six-year-old Lea Anne's father and Mother, Larry and Janelle Semore, also went through school

Callaway brags about his school's physical fitness program, pointing out that Alph Stanphill, director of Muskogee City Schools' physical fitness program, worked with him one year at Wagoner and when Stanphill started the program in Muskogee, he (Callaway) talked with Stanphill and obtained some

n for Ora School.

YOU, YOUR CHILD, SCHOOL

Should Handicapped Child Be Placed In Normal Classroom?

By DAVID NYDICK
UPI Education Specialist

Handicapped children often need special provisions for their education. They may need special classes or schools. If they are in a normal class or school they may need supplementary instruction.

The public schools may have some difficult problems in providing a proper program. The schools are generally responsible for the education of all youngsters. Small school systems with limited facilities often have difficulties obtaining trained teachers. The variety of handicaps also presents problems. There is often the problem of not being able to obtain an adequate diagnosis and recommendations as to the proper procedure.

Is it better to place the handicapped child in a normal classroom or in a special class or school? The answer seems to depend upon the severity of the handicap and the level of development which the child has reached.

As examples of what might be done, let's look at two different cases of blind children.

Alan is a second grade student who has some sight but for practical purposes is blind. He can only see shadows. He has never learned the special skills which are helpful to blind people to any usable extent.

The child was placed in a regular classroom. He has been given individual instruction in the special skills, speech and the academic areas in order to supplement the classroom program.

Alan has progressed very slowly. The classroom teacher and other students have great difficulty communicating with him. The tutoring sessions are not adequate to really help him. He has been falling further and further behind in his development.

Probably this child should have been placed in a special class or school for blind children. He could then have developed the necessary skills to co...unicate with other individuals.

Edward is also a blind child but he was trained to communicate adequately before entering kindergarten. He is now a second grade student who receives the same program as Alan.

ILLUSTRATION 6. Interpretive Writing.

TABLE 27

EDITORIAL COMPARISONS FOR DAILY AND WEEKLY NEWSPAPERS

Papers	Column-inches of editorials	Percentage of total school news
Daily newspapers	1,205½	.01%
Weekly newspapers	450	.01
Total	1,655½	.01%

As shown in Table 27, taking school news content alone, the combined total for editorials was only .01 per cent.

Numerically speaking, a total of 118 editorials with a combined space of 1,655½ column-inches appeared in daily and weekly newspapers during the course of the study. The breakdown was 81 editorials and 1,205½ column-inches for dailies, 37 editorials and 450 column-inches for weeklies.

Only five of the editorials, two in dailies and three in weeklies, appeared on the front page. It is only fair to point out that the front page is not the customary location for editorials.

A somewhat surprising finding was that in six of the weeklies and one of the dailies, not a single editorial about the schools appeared throughout the entire school term. One other daily carried only one. In contrast, one of the weeklies, paper "d", carried 207½ column-inches in 15 editorials. Only two of the dailies exceeded that amount.

An analysis of the content of the editorials disclosed that by a wide margin the leading subject was school finance. Specifically,

editors expressed their viewpoints on local bond issues, federal aid to education, the Oklahoma Education Association petitions, the sales tax election, and the governor's legislative proposals pertaining to the financing of common schools.

Weekly paper "f" editorialized as part of a campaign for more free textbooks.

An editorial pointing out advantages of an area vocational and technical school was published, congruent with newspage copy on the same subject, by daily paper "E".

A type of editorial common to many of the newspapers was one complimenting athletic teams and coaches for outstanding season records and post-season accomplishments. This is consistent with the overall emphasis given to athletics by Oklahoma newspapers.

One editorial in particular stood out as an illustration of the apparent preoccupation of newspapers with athletics. The headline for the editorial was: "School Board To Be Congratulated."

What moved this editor to heap praise on the local school board--purchasing some new laboratory equipment, approving additional courses to be offered students, or improving facilities for teaching? The subject was none of these. The editorial congratulated the board for building new football and track dressing rooms.

Features

The reading of hundreds of Oklahoma newspapers during the nine months of the study was somewhat of a monotonous job, and for that reason a well-written feature was a most welcome sight. Many excellent features were found, although the total represented a minute portion of

the total content.

Some of the best examples of good feature writing occurred at the beginning of the school term. Three dailies, papers "A", "B" and "E", had informative articles about children starting to school, based on interviews with first grade teachers. Especially outstanding was paper "B", which published a layout with four pictures on its second front page.

These were all articles printed in advance of school opening. On the first day of school, paper "A" ran another article with the catchy headline, "A Stillness Came Over the House."

Another daily, paper "C", used two timely features on safety as part of its first-of-school coverage. One reported on the fleet of school buses being declared safe and in good mechanical condition for school. This feature was accompanied by photographs. The other warned motorists that schools would open soon and urged safe driving.

The same paper, serving a safety-conscious community, ran a fire safety feature in October.

The financial impact of a school on a growing community was the subject matter for a feature headlined, "Education is Big Business," printed by weekly paper "f".

Another of the September features was one written by a daily newspaper reporter on how local teachers had spent the summer.

The summer activities of six teen-aged boys supplied material for a novel feature in daily paper "D". Each of the students had been injured during the summer, and the story, played below a photo of the cripples on crutches and in wheelchairs, told how they were continuing

their studies despite being temporarily handicapped. The headline for the story was: "LHS 'Crip Brigade' Travels Slow and Easy."

Paper "D" exhibited another bit of enterprise by assigning a capable reporter to do a story on cheating in school as a local followup to the Air Force Academy scandal.

From the standpoint of describing to parents and other newspaper readers what goes on in the classroom, it was noted that music, art and science classes lend themselves more readily to feature treatment than other classes. These types of activities also invite photographic coverage.

Students' use of the school library was the topic of a feature in November by daily paper "C".

An attractive and interesting photographic feature was "The Little Red Schoolhouse--Then and Now", carried by weekly paper "j".

The school cafeteria was a popular subject for feature writers and a number of good articles were produced, particularly during School Lunch Week in October, 1964. A story about an unusual circumstance resulted from a banquet at which cafeteria cooks were presented with awards.

A frequent type of feature in many of the papers studied concerned the designation of a "Boy of the Month", "Girl of the Month" or "Teacher of the Month." Accompanied by a picture, this item related praiseworthy achievements which led to the selection of the person for the honor by local civic club or other sponsoring group. In some instances weekly selections were made, and in nearly all cases someone was chosen as outstanding for the year.

Another common feature which appeared from time to time throughout the study concerned exchange students. Too often, however, these were based primarily on the foreign visitor's impressions of the United States and general differences between the countries, rather than a comparison of schools.

Foremost among the syndicated features which appeared during the study period was one by Susan Light of Newspaper Enterprises Association (NEA), titled "What the 'New Math' Means for Your Children." As valuable to parents as the text of the article was an accompanying large-sized illustration showing the basic steps of the new teaching method.

The above are only a few examples. Others are mentioned elsewhere in this thesis.

In general, material distributed nationally, either by syndicates or wire services, took the form of advice to parents on their children's school problems, reports on new ideas in education, and opinions by authorities in the field.

Most of the articles of this type were written by these six persons: Leslie J. Nason, Ed D, University of Southern California; G. K. Hodenfield, Associated Press Education Writer; David Nydick, United Press International Education Specialist; Patricia McCormick of UPI; and Ray Cromley and Susan Light of NEA.

Nason's column was carried regularly by daily paper "B".

One of the most widely printed features was one by Hodenfield giving reasons why some youths quit school, steal and in some instances even commit suicide.

In addition to the "new math" piece, Susan Light also wrote a penetrating and timely article headline, "Teachers Want More Time to Teach."

The Associated Press supplied newspapers with an article written by Admiral Hyman G. Rickover on reforms in education.

One of the most original feature ideas noticed during the study was a five-part series published by daily paper "E". They were written by a 14-year-old girl and gave the student's viewpoint on the "new math." This interesting headline was used on one of the articles: "5 Plus 5 Not Always 10."

There were many items distributed by the wire services which reported unique events and occurrences in the public schools throughout the nation, or which summarized developments in school financing and other matters affecting education. The Oklahoma news items carried by the wire services were predominantly concerned with finances.

Specific Topics in the News

Since three topics of school news and illustrations accounted for more than three-fourths of the total school news content in the study, specific mention should be made of these items.

Athletics.--The quantity of news about various kinds of school athletics was discussed at length in Chapter IV. A few comments about the quality of such stories might be appropriate at this point.

Because of the nature of sports writing, these items were more sprightly and entertaining than other types of school news. Any sports item would naturally tend to rise above the routine treatment usually afforded coverage of school board meetings, for example, because of the

element of conflict. This is not to say that this element is not present at school board meetings on occasion.

Athletics is a specialized reporting field, whereas other types of school news are commonly handled by a general assignment reporter. The latter might very well be a competent writer, but nonetheless not a specialist and therefore unable to give run-of-the-mill school stories the distinctive treatment that sports stories command.

Newspapers have ample reason to give more space to athletics than to other kinds of school news. Editors, particularly those associated with newspapers which have sports pages, feel a strong responsibility to their readers to print all the news possible on the community's school athletic teams. This is especially true for Friday, Saturday and Sunday editions because of the vast number of sports events which take place the latter part of the week. Since most weeklies publish on Thursday, they publish a smaller volume of athletic news and it usually takes the form of the general performance of a team or contests which are coming up.

There has been much comment among educators and laymen alike about the so-called "negative" impact of athletic news coverage on educational programs. A recent poll of school administrators gave some substance to the charge that varsity sports get the publicity spotlight too much and too often.

The consensus was that schools should play down the importance of high school athletics and play up the need for a well-rounded physical education program for everybody.

The 1964 poll, based on a 4 per cent proportional sampling of

16,000 school administrators in 50 states, drew comments giving parents the blame for over-emphasis on athletics. A Minnesota school man said: "The tendency for adults to dictate academic policy to fit athletic endeavor can become too great. This affects employment of faculty personnel because judgments are determined by emotional rather than objective evaluations."

Among the educators defending organized sports was a Michigan school administrator who contended that "identification is important to high school boys and girls." He said athletics provide a means of assertion, and "until a better replacement comes along, let's compete in the athletic arena."

Sixty-two per cent of those polled opposed competitive sports for younger children. This represented a shift in opinion from five years ago when 50 per cent participating in a similar poll favored organized sports for elementary school children.[1]

Student activities.--Next to athletics, news about extra curricular activities of students occupied the most space in newspapers during the study. Covering a field of seemingly endless boundaries, the multitude of events occupying students' time could lead an older parent to wonder when, if ever, they attend class.

To mention only a few of the organizations to which students belong, most Oklahoma schools have 4-H and Future Farmers of America chapters, speech, art, science, civics, foreign language and press clubs, as well as Future Homemakers of America, Distributive Education, Trade and Industry, and student council groups. These are in addition

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[1]"Soft-Pedal the Accent on Sports, Schoolmen Urge," The Nation's Schools (November, 1964) p. 57.

to band, orchestra, choral and dramatic organizations, debating societies and pep clubs.

Typical projects are class plays, assembly programs, holiday displays and celebrations, homecoming parades and programs, interscholastic contests, field trips and fund drives for class trips or other causes.

This recitation of the many types of non-academic activities involving students is not intended to be critical. There are some authorities in the curriculum field who contend that all of a child's experiences in school-connected programs could be classified as part of the curriculum. For the purposes of this study, however, this theory was not followed. Otherwise the curriculum category would not have been so far down on the scale.

Curriculum and teaching methods.--While there was a noticeable scarcity of news about what is taught and how, the articles noted in the study were of generally high caliber. Many of the features pertained to matters of curriculum and teaching methods. This was especially true in the case of syndicated items, as shown by Illustration 7, page 94.

The most impressive bit of material in this category during the study was a series of articles on curriculum written by members of the high school journalism class and published by daily paper "E". The series covered the subjects of language arts, home economics, physical education, foreign languages, vocal music, band, mathematics, business education, art, industrial arts, and social studies. The paper ran one article each day for 11 days. This paper also did a feature on the importance of speech skills.

WORKINGS OF NEW MATH

5 Plus 5 Not Always 10

EDITOR'S NOTE — Well, as you thought when you flunked that math exam: 5 plus 5 isn't necessarily 10. Read on in the following last of five articles on the "new math" and you'll see why.

By KATIE MU
Written for Associa

Did you know that
equals 31?

It's true, although
number system we u
up to 28, of course,
tem "to the base 10.
use a base of 7, the
plus 14 would be 31.

I'll explain that in
but first let's have
ground.

When we write t
132, what we mean
100, plus 3 times 10,
1. Similarly, 17 is
times 10, plus 7 tim

Most people, of co
think this out when they write down a number. Mathematicians realized this, and developed the theory of "bases" to better explain place values.

As you know, we count in groups of 10 — we have a

"O" "O"
O O O
x x x x x xxxx

This would have meant he had 239 sheep — 2 groups of 100, 3 groups of 10, and 9 singles.

But suppose this shepherd

Is Pre-Kindergarten Needed For Youths?

By LESLIE J. NASON, ED. D.
University of Southern California

Should public education be extended to include two years of pre-kindergarten? During these years, many children need training and experiences that they are not now receiving. But extending formal education to these ages would not solve the problem. The same program for all is not the answer.

A child is supposed to learn to read in the first grade, yet many children enter the first grade with little background of experience and skill in the use of words.

This presents difficult problems for the first-grade teacher. Pupils who are passed on, still unable to read, only become problems to the second-grade teacher.

Some children appear at school who can already read the books of the first, and even the second grade, and who can talk a "blue streak." Others never use a full sentence; in fact, it is difficult to get them to speak at all.

React Differently

Some are self-assured, and have good coordination—accustomed to using pencil and paints and to playing games. Others have had no experience with the materials available to them and are ill at ease away from their homes.

Children who are disadvantaged by their previous experience need hours and hours of individual attention which cannot be given in school. Just consider that with a class of 30, a teacher who spent all her time with the class (which is, of course, impossible) would have only two minutes an hour with each pupil.

What young children need is not formal teaching but a chance to develop, a chance to learn words and to practice their use, a chance to use their hands, and a chance to see and to learn to understand the community around them. All this can be accomplished outside the schoolroom.

If we are to have a war on poverty and a war on ignorance, the two or three years preceding the first grade offer a wonderful opportunity.

Could Utilize Teen-Agers

There are many persons who have the time to help young children. For example, our teen-age population has the greatest percentage of unemployed. They could well afford to spend a year or two full-time or part - time as volunteers or for little pay, helping the children of the less fortunate. They, too, would benefit.

Such a program would eventually produce teachers with a clear understanding of the life and needs of the disadvantaged.

(You can get Professor Nason's helpful booklet for parents, "Help Your Child Succeed in School," by sending $1 to Help Your Child, Box 1277, General Post Office, New York, New York.)

ILLUSTRATION 7. Syndicated items.

Another interesting feature was one on "Curriculum Fairs" carried by daily paper "D", which also ran a series of two articles on special education services offered by the public schools.

Examples of teaching method stories were found in two dailies, papers "A" and "B". In the first instance, the story concerned team teaching being employed at a school during a building project. The other item had to do with pupils being aided by French lessons on film.

One of the most timely class projects, reported by daily paper "C" in March, was a study of Vietnam and Southeast Asia by students in a fifth grade class.

Items in this category were not confined entirely to the dailies, although the larger papers held a definite edge in this type of news content. Weekly paper "e", for example, ran a six-part series on vocational training.

Some curriculum items escaped classification as such because they were included as part of a school page or column, along with an assortment of other items. As an example, a high school in the coverage area of weekly paper "a" was selected as the first in Oklahoma to offer a new course in humanities. This announcement was part of a regular weekly column of news from that school, the entire content of which was classified as miscellaneous.

The relatively small number of items about curriculum and teaching methods appearing in newspapers should not be considered an indication that editors intentionally shun this type of news. On the contrary, it is more likely that they recognize the importance of news about teaching and learning and welcome the opportunity to print material

of this type if they have access to a proper amount of information.

Miscellaneous.--This was a high content category because of its "catch-all" nature. Even with 19 other opportunities for classification, certain items did not meet the definition for those specific categories and therefore could be classed no other way but miscellaneous.

For instance, while there was a category for student activities, there was none for extra curricular activities of teachers and other school personnel. Therefore items about superintendents speaking to civic clubs and other groups or teachers performing in some capacity outside the classroom were placed in this category. Many stories were printed about teachers winning recognition, contradicting a popular notion that teachers are forgotten and not appreciated within their communities.

A large portion of the school content that was labelled miscellaneous was "back-to-school" activities. Included were reports on enrollment and comparisons with the previous year, teaching assignments, school bus routes and the like.

Mention has been made previously about the special columns of school news and the one instance of a school page, all of which were carried as miscellaneous school news content.

Items of More Than Local Interest

It is pertinent to the discussion of the quality of the school news content collected during this study to mention a characteristic which was common to some of the items. There were numerous instances in which an occurrence was of such scope or impact that more

than one of the papers carried stories about it.

Perhaps the best way to explain this situation is to cite some examples:

One high school band in the state was chosen to represent Oklahoma in the presidential inauguration parade in Washington, D. C.

A unique underground school being constructed at an Oklahoma community attracted wide attention.

A State Honor Society meeting was held at one of the cities where a newspaper used in the study was published.

Accidents of an extraordinary nature occurred which were of more than local interest. These included an 11-year-old boy who fell while running on a school playground and a pencil stuck in his chest, piercing his heart. The pencil was successfully removed and the boy recovered. A school bus wreck killed two students and injured nine and the baseball coach. In another traffic mishap, two honor students who also were outstanding football players were killed.

There were three incidents in which internal school problems burst into the open. A dispute over a high school boy who insisted on wearing a "Beatle" haircut made news not only all over Oklahoma, but over the nation as well. In another community, students staged a walkout in protest to a school board's decision not to rehire a certain principal. A third situation involved the resignation of the entire coaching staff at one of the larger high schools because of disagreements over policies between the head coach and three assistant coaches.

The most dramatic and sensational story of this type was about the arrest of a 16-year-old high school junior accused of beating and

stabbing a pretty honor student and beauty queen, who was left paralyzed and barely able to speak by the attack. She identified the boy, whose father was a junior high coach and his mother a schoolteacher, by pointing to a picture in a school yearbook. This case is mentioned here because it concerned a challenging school-community relations situation.

Public Service Activities by Newspapers

Newspapers are targets of much criticism, some of which may be deserved. But in the long run, newspapers perform a vital public service for the schools.

This fact became increasingly apparent over the course of the study. There were many items which, if judged solely on their news value, would have no justifiable reason for being printed.

Two such items, the school calendar and the lunchroom menu, have been mentioned previously. In each instance, these provide a service to the school patrons of a district which they could not easily obtain otherwise.

A practice which weekly paper "f" follows regularly is to print in its news columns a complete list of claims paid by the school board.

Another weekly, paper "1", took such an active interest in a local adult education program that it printed a coupon for interested readers to mail in to find out more about the program.

Daily paper "E" ran several articles about the potential of an area vocational school.

It was found that papers devote considerable space to information about qualifications of school board candidates, in addition to paid

advertisements. They also carried many articles about the state questions pertaining to education which were on the November, 1964 ballot. Some papers printed the full text of the four questions.

Many favorable items about student achievements, such as scholarships received, awards presented and fund drives for charitable and medical research projects, were printed, thus discounting the common comment that newspapers never print anything good about teenagers.

On a few occasions, newspapers conducted "crusades" for various types of educational programs. One paper ran several articles and editorials on the state's free textbook program and the fact that it was not fully financed. Comment was noticeably lacking in this paper, however, the week the governor signed a bill fully funding this program for the first time in state history. Another paper had one or more articles each week for several weeks concerning the need for a kindergarten in the local school system.

One of the dailies assumed an active role in a community project to raise money to send the local high school band to the New York World's Fair.

These examples serve to illustrate that newspapers are willing and eager to use their resources as a publicity medium to give assistance to schools as part of their civic responsibility.

Some Critical Comments

Taking into consideration the limitations imposed on some of the papers in the study, primarily the smaller papers, certain basic faults were obvious, which could have been prevented with little

additional effort.

In the first place, most of the items were written in a rather routine style. This is understandable, since many of the stories follow the same pattern of reporting basic facts about an event. School administrators should be alert for possibilities to lift an announcement out of the realm of the ordinary.

Many opportunities for favorable publicity for schools are undoubtedly lost because administrators were content to see news written in the same old way time after time.

Arousing interest in a news item can usually be done with an attractive and inviting headline. Such a large number of stories read during the study carried dull headlines, that it might be well to list some of the better ones observed:

"Sophomore's a Whiz at Foreign Tongues"

"Oklahoma School Children Starved to Death" (a School Lunch Week story about children with diet deficiencies)

"Six Weeks Tests...Ugh!"

"Record Number of Twins Attending PHS"

"Calhoun Float 'Wasn't There' but Still Wins Parade Ribbon"

"Lay Teachers Enjoy Work" (about substitute teachers)

"School Levies Pass by Whoppin' Margins"

"Junior a Genius? Don't Push Him!"

Equally as important as a good headline is an interesting lead, because a story must be interesting all the way through if it is to be read, and it must be read if the public is to get information about the schools.

Harral put it this way:

> You must get the attention of your reader with the lead paragraph. Either you capture his attention there or he "walks out" on you.[1]

One important factor in arousing reader interest lies in the fact that most of the school news items published during the study concerned people rather than things. This finding substantiates to some degree an opinion held by school public relations experts that in order to win public support for schools, the emphasis must be placed on the students rather than on buildings and books.

Another fault in publication of school items was the poor display often given this type of news. The amount of front page space devoted to schools is discussed in Chapter IV. Even front-page articles varied greatly in the degree of prominence. One of the dailies had a distinctive identity in that it used banner headlines on items which received no more than normal headline treatment elsewhere. Most of the front page news dealt with the school finance controversy.

One advantage to a school page or a school column is that it stands out from other news in the paper.

Summary

An evaluation of the school content in six daily and twelve weekly newspapers supplements the quantitative study and gives a broader perspective to the overall treatment newspapers give to schools.

In this chapter, content was examined in terms of its characteristics and its potential effect. Three principal means of presenting the material--news releases and announcements, staff written articles,

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[1]Stewart Harral, Patterns of Publicity Copy, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1950) p. 4.

and interpretive writing--were outlined.

Because of their potentialities as items of greater influence on readers, editorials and features were discussed at some length and specific examples were mentioned.

Special reference was made to the three leading topics of school news and illustrations in the study, along with curriculum and teaching methods, which represented an important though small portion of the content in the study.

Items of more than local interest and some examples of public service for schools by newspapers were cited.

Finally, some faults of school news content were pointed out, along with suggestions for improvement.

CHAPTER VI

FINANCE

The 1964-65 school year, the period covered by this study, could be termed both the worst year and the best year for education in Oklahoma.

From a negative standpoint, it was the year in which the state was subjected to nationwide unfavorable publicity through the imposition of sanctions by the National Education Association.

It was also the year when the governor signed legislation providing the best program ever written for common schools in state history, a program which included substantial salary increases and sick leave benefits for teachers, maximum allowances for free textbooks, and a new system of financing.

The controversial issue of financing the public schools overshadowed all other events during the course of this study. The events which transpired have far-reaching implications for all concerned with the image of public schools and teachers, and to a lesser degree perhaps, for those involved in newspaper publishing and public relations.

Opinions have been expressed previously in this thesis, to the effect that public support of schools is related to public understanding of issues, which is in turn dependent on information made available

through the local newspaper. In the light of these opinions, a discussion of the so-called "school crisis" and the manner in which it was reported warrants separate attention.

Although the problem came to a head with the NEA sanctions, it had been in the making for many years.

With each legislative session, the NEA's state affiliate, the Oklahoma Education Association, had been overtly active in lobbying for higher teacher salaries and other increased expenditures for education. This practice appears to be a generally accepted one, according to Helen Rowan, who wrote in an issue of the Carnegie Corporation of New York Quarterly:

> Given, then, the supremacy of the state legislatures, the natural tactic employed by the various educational interest groups has been to exert pressure directly on the legislators. In the past this has often been done successfully by teachers' organizations and the schools and departments of education.[1]

With some 22,000 teachers as members, the OEA constituted a potent pressure group, and its influence was felt in gubernatorial campaigns as well as legislative sessions. The OEA's political dominance faltered in 1962, however, when Henry Bellmon, the Republican candidate whom the OEA opposed, won election as governor by a 77,000-vote majority.

Upon taking office, Bellmon proposed a budget including provisions to raise salaries of beginning teachers $600 to $4,200 a year and other teachers $100 a year up to a maximum of $5,900. The legislature, under pressure from the OEA, passed a school bill promising

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[1]Helen Rowan, "The Citizen and Public Education," Carnegie Corporation of New York Quarterly (October, 1963), p. 5.

$1,000 increases for all teachers. The bill contained no provisions for financing, however, and the governor vetoed it. The veto was sustained and the legislature proceeded to write a program which raised beginning teachers' salaries $400 and increased the amount of operational aid to school districts with the intention that local school boards could use this additional money to grant further salary increases according to local needs.

Unfortunately few boards exercised this form of local option and used the money for other purposes. Teachers were understandably disappointed and as a result became increasingly militant.

Coincidental with the rumblings of teacher unrest, the American Federation of Teachers (AFL-CIO) began to infiltrate the state. Apparently viewing the Oklahoma situation as a ripe opportunity, the union began to send in labor organizers to talk to groups of teachers.

The OEA's executive secretary, Ferman Phillips, took cognizance of the union's efforts, and warned in speeches around the state that unless great improvements were made, teachers were likely to be unionized.

Looking toward the next legislative session, Gov. Bellmon organized a 100-member citizens committee to make a thorough study of Oklahoma's common schools and make an advisory report. Appointed chairman of the committee was Dr. J. Win Payne, a school superintendent who also had been elected president of the American Association of School Administrators. The committee employed a team of experts headed by W. D. McClurkin, Director, Division of Surveys and Field Services, George Peabody College for Teachers, Nashville, Tennessee, to make an

extensive survey.

In December, 1963, the OEA held a meeting in Oklahoma City which produced recommendations for four proposals to be submitted to a vote of the people. Object of the proposals was to (1) increase teacher salaries an average of $833 per year and permit hiring of additional teachers, (2) increase the pay and duties of county superintendents, (3) permit school districts to vote an additional 10-mill levy, and (4) abolish all non-high school districts by making the high school transportation district the taxing unit.

OEA members circulated petitions and obtained more than 300,000 signatures for each of the four questions. The petitions were filed with the Secretary of State in May, 1964. The OEA executive committee requested the governor to call a special election on the four questions, but the governor said he was unable to do so because the 1963 legislature had provided no funds for such an election. Therefore, the questions were placed on the November 3 general election ballot.

The governor endorsed two of the questions, pertaining to increased local millage and reduction in the number of school districts. He opposed the other two on grounds that no provision was made for financing the $48 million a year salary increase , and that the need for county superintendents would diminish if elementary school districts were abolished as provided for in one of the proposals.

The campaign was a vigorous one. The OEA mobilized its local units over the state and employed an advertising agency to conduct a full-scale program which included newspaper ads, radio and television spots, a special half-hour TV program, special newspaper supplements,

billboards, brochures and bumper stickers.

Generally speaking, newspapers used in this study gave editorial support to at least some if not all of the school questions. Some papers printed the entire text of the questions, and there were countless stories about speeches made by school administrators and other officials soliciting support for the questions.

Daily paper "A" published lists of salaries paid to teachers in nine northwest counties, and some other papers did likewise for their own communities.

Organized opposition came primarily from rural teachers who objected to the school consolidation proposal. The Oklahoma Public Expenditures Council, a taxpayer organization, had circulated in June, 1964 a sheet of "pertinent facts regarding public school finance in Oklahoma" including the report that average teacher salaries in Oklahoma had increased 50.12 per cent from 1954 to 1963, and that total revenue for financing the schools had increased 79.20 per cent during the same period.

The campaign was complicated to some degree by a situation brought about by a federal court order on legislative reapportionment, which required legislative elections in virtually every county.

In addition to two of the school questions, the governor also supported two of three other proposals on the ballot, calling for increased pay for legislators and the creation of a court of the judiciary.

All seven questions were defeated by the voters on November 3, 1964. One of the school proposals received more "yes" votes than

"no" votes, but failed because of a provision in Oklahoma law which requires a majority of all votes cast for passage.

In analyzing the outcome of the election, more than one newspaper speculated that the teachers themselves might have been at fault. Daily paper "A" commented in an editorial:

> . . . it might be well for teachers to give some consideration as to why their efforts are failing. Surely, it is not because the public is opposed to either teachers or education. Then why? Is it misdirected planning in the higher echelons or is it a breakdown in public relations between the schools and patrons? We really don't know . . . but teachers should and then take necessary steps for correction.

Gov. Bellmon took immediate action to assure state teachers that their cause was not lost and that he was confident substantial improvements could be made in the 1965 legislative session. Despite these assurances, teachers chose to take drastic measures.

They staged one-day walkouts, terming them "professional holidays." This action prompted at least one irreverent headline: "Teachers Play Hooky Monday to Protest Pay."

Threats of "boycott" action were raised.

Some 1,200 teachers representing 79 Oklahoma communities held a meeting on the Monday following the election to consider possible routes of action. Two labor officials spoke at the meeting. An AFT organizer announced that locals were being formed in the state. The other labor representative told the teachers: "Frankly and candidly, this is an opportunity that we have been waiting for a number of years."

At a similar meeting of Oklahoma City teachers three days later, the union organizer announced: "The AFT is here to stay in Oklahoma." An NEA official was at this meeting and he urged teachers not to join

a labor union. He said teachers could accomplish the same goals through the use of sanctions warning of "deplorable conditions" in the state as they could through strikes.

OEA leaders urged Gov. Bellmon to call a special session of the legislature to raise teacher salaries, but the governor explained this was hardly feasible because the date for regular convening of the legislature was less than two months away. Also reapportionment had brought a large number of inexperienced legislators into office who would have been unfamiliar with legislative procedures.

In an unprecedented move, the governor invited the state's schoolteachers to attend meetings at Tulsa and Oklahoma City on December 5, 1964 to outline "an overall program to substantially improve Oklahoma's educational system."

His program, called "Operation Giant Stride," did indeed provide for vast improvements. It included a proposal for an $800 increase in teachers salaries and reduction in class size, as well as increased support for higher education, highways, mental health, public safety and other areas of governmental services, all to be accomplished without an increase in taxes. The governor proposed to obtain additional revenue by several methods. Included was a plan for refinancing Oklahoma's turnpikes and building new ones by selling general obligation bonds, thus saving money on interest and discounts. He also proposed further school district consolidation, elimination of the office of county superintendent, and making a portion of funds received by federally impacted areas chargeable against the minimum state equalization aid program, as some 30 other states do. He also urged more equalization of property tax assessments in and between

counties, which would have an effect on local school revenues. He presented the program to the legislature when it convened in January.

Newspapers gave "in depth" reporting to the governor's program, carrying detailed explanations and commentaries in addition to the main announcement.

Although some of the proposals were among the recommendations the Payne committee had made, the state's education leaders declined to support the Bellmon plan. The OEA's president responded by saying an $800 increase, larger than any raise ever before received by teachers, was "not enough."

Meanwhile, the OEA executive committee, on November 14, had requested the NEA to send a committee from its Professional Rights and Responsibilities Commission to make a study of the Oklahoma situation. The committee spent three days in the state interviewing OEA officials and representatives from other school groups. The special committee departed from the normal practice of PR&R investigations and on December 16 released a strongly-worded preliminary report which declared that "subminimal conditions" existed in almost every area of the school program in Oklahoma. It cited "gross deficiencies" in physical conditions of buildings, maintenance, health and safety standards, textbooks, teaching aids, libraries, special education, counseling, teacher load, and "other provisions basic to an effective educational program."

As an example of attention given the report, weekly paper "h" printed the text in full.

The commission issued its full report on February 26, 1965. It contained some of the same recommendations previously made by the

governor, including equalization of county property assessments, removal of mill levy limitations imposed on local school districts, and school district reorganization.

On March 6, 1965, the 195-member OEA Board of Directors met and after six hours of discussion behind closed doors announced it had invoked sanctions on the state's schools. In general terms, the sanctions served to inform members of the teaching profession nationwide of "unacceptable educational conditions" in Oklahoma and that accepting employment in Oklahoma schools would be unethical. State and national accrediting agencies were notified and the National Education Association, the National Congress of Parents and Teachers and other organizations were asked to publicize the sanctions.

There were reports that some teachers had advocated a statewide convention of indefinite length--in effect a strike--but the board only authorized a two-day weekend meeting.

The school bloc in the Oklahoma legislature had lost some of its strength because of a state attorney general's ruling that teachers, who are paid partially from appropriated funds, could not legally serve in the legislature. However, the strength was great enough that with the strong influence exerted by House Speaker J. D. McCarty the legislature chose to reject the governor's program of reform and elected instead to submit to the people a proposal to increase the state sales tax from two to three per cent.

Some state editors criticized the legislature for what they called its failure to meet its reponsibility by enacting legislation to raise the tax instead of asking the people to write the program.

Again a spirited campaign was conducted, although it was a

relatively short one. Despite his stand against unnecessary tax increases, Gov. Bellmon did not actively oppose the proposal because he favored the passage of two other questions on the ballot authorizing bond issues for highway construction and capital improvements, and he said he was fearful that any opposition by him would endanger the latter two proposals.

The sales tax increase proved to be so unpopular with the voters that it was overwhelmingly defeated at the April 27 special election, and the other two questions suffered the same fate.

An NEA spokesman later attributed the defeat to "the governor, organized labor and conservatives."

The election was interpreted by a number of writers as a repudiation of the OEA leadership for the third time in less than three years--the defeat of the OEA-supported candidate for governor in November, 1962; the failure of the four OEA state questions in November, 1964; and the rejection of the sales tax increase in April, 1965. It left the statewide teachers organization, already beset by internal disagreements, even more demoralized.

Gov. Bellmon again sought to assure teachers that both he and the legislature were aware of their problems and were working toward a solution, and attempted to discourage the use of "strongarm tactics." The governor went before the legislature in a joint session May 3 with a new set of proposals, which, among other things, would give teachers an $800 increase. The OEA president declared the governor's program was "too little--insufficient to meet the needs of education in Oklahoma."

The OEA Board of Directors, meeting right after the joint session, called on the National Education Association to invoke national sanctions

against Oklahoma and scheduled a one-day walkout by all state teachers for May 11. The board recommended that the teachers, at the May 11 meeting, agree to refuse to sign contracts for the 1965-66 school year unless an acceptable financing plan had been placed into effect, and to refuse to perform "non-instructional services" not specified in their contracts.

Meanwhile, the governor, legislative leaders and some educators were busy at work on a new school code which would place the emphasis in allocation of state aid on the number of pupils rather than a teacher salary schedule.

On the date of the statewide teachers meeting, May 11, the National Education Association's executive secretary, William G. Carr, called a news conference in Washington, D. C. and announced that the NEA had "blacklisted" the state of Oklahoma by imposing national sanctions. The sanctions included four types of action: (1) censure through public notice and reports to the mass media that Oklahoma, "despite ample resources, maintains a subminimal public education program"; (2) notification to professional agencies of "unsatisfactory conditions" in Oklahoma and cautioning graduating teachers against accepting jobs in Oklahoma; (3) warning NEA members in other states that acceptance of employment in Oklahoma is unethical; and (4) assistance to OEA-NEA members in Oklahoma who desire to leave the state for employment elsewhere, through relocation centers to be established by the NEA.

Although the concept of sanctions goes back to the NEA Code of Ethics adopted in 1929, only once before had national sanctions been invoked against an entire state. That was in Utah in May, 1964 and came

after the governor had refused to call a special election to consider school financing. NEA spokesmen said the Oklahoma sanctions were more severe than those imposed in Utah.

An immediate effect of the NEA's "blacklisting" was to create scorn for Oklahoma's schools in the nation's press. Time magazine termed the NEA action "a frankly hostile squeeze play" and referred to "Oklahoma's niggardly education outlays." Newsweek painted this bleak picture: "Classrooms using world maps printed in 1938. A science lab with no running water. Unheated buildings where pupils wear overcoats in class. Floors cleaned only twice a year. Teachers forced to drive school buses. A shortage of blackboards, textbooks, nurses, librarians, kindergartens. Low teachers' salaries . . ." For the most part, these were unsubstantiated reports based on complaints by classroom teachers solicited by the NEA's PR&R Commission and printed in its February, 1965 report.

The NEA's action evoked strong reaction from public officials and ordinary citizens alike. Gov. Bellmon branded the action as "black-jack tactics," called it "unwarranted, unjustified and untimely" and said it appeared to be deliberately aimed at damaging Oklahoma's reputation. Leaders of both houses of the legislature expressed disappointment at the move. Members of the Oklahoma congressional delegation in Washington were likewise resentful. One congressman was particularly vehement in his remarks. He called the NEA "a stupid outfit" and said the imposition of sanctions before the close of the session "pre-judged" the legislature.

Newspapers, which had supported educational improvements through editorials and news articles, were generally critical of the NEA sanctions.

Following are samples of some of the editorial criticism:

a) Sanctions by the NEA have done a grave disservice to every Oklahoman teacher and non-teacher alike. This unwarranted and malicious action will hurt the state's efforts to grow for a long time.

b) By "subminimal conditions" the NEA clearly means teachers salaries.

This raises the obvious question of why the NEA doesn't blacklist every state where teachers salaries fall below the national average, or at the very least, the dozen or so states that have lower salaries for teachers than does Oklahoma.

Teachers do make less in Oklahoma than in many other states. But, if a study were made, it would probably show that so do doctors, lawyers, plumbers, electricians, mechanics, laborers and a whole host of other people. Pay scales are simply lower here than in many more wealthy and industrialized states.

c) The untimely and ridiculous blast by the NEA Tuesday, condemning the State of Oklahoma and its citizens, certainly will not help the cause of state teachers.

Such action will definitely hinder any effort to find a solution to education problems. The teachers of Oklahoma better bury the NEA, if they now can, and get some public relations experts working on an attempt to repair the massive damage done to them, their neighbors, their friends, and their state by Tuesday's asinine action.

d) It is incredible that, in fact of the fact that the governor, the legislators, state officials and everyone you can name has been working and is working to improve Oklahoma's educational system, the OEA and NEA would deliberately ignore all of this and degenerate state schools nationally.

It simply is not true that Oklahoma does not have good schools, and these groups know this. Certainly school teachers deserve as much pay as can be given them, and no one has disagreed with this.

But to nationally and publicly point a finger of scorn at the state of Oklahoma was a disgraceful act.

A significant development occurred on the same day the sanctions were announced. More than 8,000 of the state's 22,000 teachers had assembled in a protest meeting in the capital city. They voted 5,383 to 1,275 (with 1,038 "not sure") in favor of withholding services during the next school term. They voted by an even larger margin to withhold non-instructional services not covered in contracts. However,

the OEA Board of Directors decided to take no action to implement the desires expressed by the teachers.

Having reached an explosive climax, the school financing controversy began to slowly subside. The legislature, as predicted by the governor and others, proceeded to write the best school program in state history, increasing state funds by 25 per cent over the previous biennium and providing for salary increases ranging from a minimum raise of $380 a year to $1,000 or more, depending on local conditions. The new school code passed by the 1965 legislature contained provisions for incentive payments to school districts voting the maximum millage for schools and laid a foundation for reduction of class sizes.

Even before final action had been taken on the appropriation, many school boards announced salary increases.

Gov. Bellmon signed into law an appropriation bill which fully financed the state's free textbook program for the first time since the legislation was enacted in 1947.

The legislature also voted to resubmit the proposal to allow local school districts to vote additional millage for the support of schools.

In a sidelight to the controversy, five teachers at one school were fired for attending the May 11 meeting without prior authorization. Both the OEA and the AFT came to the defense of the teachers, and the Board of Education rescinded its action.

Although the preceding discussion has been confined to Oklahoma, it was not the only state embroiled in educational disputes during the 1964-65 school year.

AP Education Writer G. K. Hodenfield wrote in an article published in November, 1964:

> Teacher rebellion is nothing new in this country, but never before has it been so bitter and so widespread.
>
> Only a few years ago, teachers confined their grumbling to the confines of the faculty lounge--if they had one--or the privacy of a professional meeting.
>
> Today they seem willing and able to challenge the local school board, as in Pawtucket, R. I.; protest a statewide election, as in Oklahoma; take on the governor and the legislature, as in Utah and Louisiana; or even go to the mat with a powerful branch of the federal government, as in the case of the overseas schools.
>
> In Catoosa County, Ga., teachers walked off the job when it appeared they might not receive their November pay checks. Local officials floated a $37,500 loan to keep the schools open.

The situation in Oklahoma never reached the point where any responsible person was convinced of an actual threat that the schools would be closed.

The controversy did bring to the surface the weaknesses of teachers as a group in winning approval of programs primarily aimed at improving their own welfare. It also revealed the disdain held by some newspapers for the tactics used by the teaching profession. This was symbolized by a headline, which appeared at the height of the controversy, when teachers were complaining about having to "moonlight" at second jobs in order to make a decent living. The headline read: "Former Area Teacher Purchases Controlling Interest in Bank."

If any doubt existed as to the need for solidly ingrained school-community relations, it vanished with the developments of the 1964-65 school year.

This observation is made because citizen support for schools, as reflected in newspaper coverage, is one of the major points of

this thesis.

Before dismissing the subject of school finance, some notice should be given to developments which took place in the nation's capital which affected Oklahoma education.

In December, 1964, it was announced that Oklahoma was the first state to get its plan submitted to the Department of Health, Education and Welfare and thus the first state to receive funds under the 1963 Vocational Education Act.

The President's billion-dollar plus program of federal aid to education attracted considerable attention in Oklahoma, although the funds allocated for Oklahoma were of such a nature as to provide little relief for the overall financing problem.

Several articles appeared on the question of federal funds being held up for compliance with civil rights regulations. Schools most seriously affected by the requirement were those allocated huge sums of Public Law 874 (impacted area) money.

Oklahoma had wide participation in "Project Head Start" for pre-school children under the Economic Opportunity Program. A statewide conference was held to inform local school administrators about aspects of the program.

Summary

Controversy over financing Oklahoma's schools dominated the education news during the period in which this study was made. Therefore, a chronological review of developments in this area appeared appropriate.

This chapter has presented the background and traced subsequent

actions, with special emphasis on reaction in the press.

A general conclusion which may be reached is that newspapers as a group were sympathetic to the plight of schoolteachers, but found their methods of obtaining improvements highly objectionable.

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Summary

This study was concerned with an analysis of the school content in Oklahoma newspapers. The purposes of the study were:

1. To determine the quantity of various classifications of school news appearing in Oklahoma daily and weekly newspapers.

2. To identify trends in educational programs and practices as indicated by press coverage.

3. To ascertain methods for improving relations between the school and the public through the media of newspapers.

In pursuing the purposes outlined above, the following hypotheses were developed and served as a basis for the research:

1. That newspapers devote a sizeable amount of space to the reporting of school programs and activities.

2. That current trends of interest in the educational field will be reflected in the number of newspaper items concerning them.

3. That the greater percentage of total school news content is favorable rather than unfavorable.

4. That over the course of a school year, news coverage follows a cycle of certain predictable patterns.

5. That there are no significant differences among Oklahoma newspapers (treating daily and weekly newspapers as separate classes) when ranked and compared on the amount of space given to each topic of school news.

6. That there are no significant differences between Oklahoma newspapers and newspapers of another state in the amount of space given to comparable school news items.

Literature and published research relevant to the general area under investigation were reviewed. References were found in such subject-matter fields as educational administration, journalism, public relations, communications, and educational and social psychology.

Comparatively little research has been done regarding school-press relationships. Literature pertaining to school public relations in particular was almost non-existent before 1920. A few studies in the 1920's were related to schools as a source of news. Some of these sought to examine how much school patrons knew about the schools, and what citizens wanted to learn about schools from reading the newspapers.

Out of a variety of conclusions that were drawn from these early studies emerged a fairly common contention that too much emphasis is given to such items as athletics and extra curricular activities, while other school functions get little attention in newspapers.

As school public relations became to be recognized as an important part of the educational process and began to gain momentum in the 1930's, more studies were made, originating in both the education and journalism fields.

Two studies of school news content in newspapers published in

the state of Michigan, by Luck in 1952-53 and Monahan in 1959, and Snider's analysis of photographs related to schools in Indiana in 1952-53, represent the most recent approaches to research in the school-community relations area.

The research method used in many of these studies, and which was used in the present study, was content analysis. Methodology and procedures followed in the study were discussed.

A stratified sampling of six daily and twelve weekly newspapers was selected to represent the universe of newspapers published in the state of Oklahoma. School news items were clipped, read and analyzed over a nine-month period--August 21, 1964 through May 21, 1965, or the 1964-65 school year.

School content was categorized into twenty classifications, the same classifications used in the two Michigan studies mentioned previously. In addition, the category of school athletics was further classified according to the various types of sports activities present in the schools. Special analyses of front-page items and photographic items were done. These procedures constituted what has been defined as quantitative analysis.

Reliability was established for both measurement and classification of school content. First, all items of school content were separately measured by two persons and the amounts compared; secondly, a panel of three judges classified a representative sample of items and their choices were compared with the original classifications.

Quantification was approached from several directions. These included the total amount of space in column-inches devoted to school

news, by newspapers and by each of the twenty classifications; the percentage of school news to total type-space and to the "news hole"; and comparisons of various topics of school news, and illustrations.

An analysis of trends in the type of school news printed at different times during the year was presented.

Comparisons were made between the present study and Monahan's 1959 Michigan study.

In the qualitative analysis, a broader perspective was derived by examining content in terms of its characteristics and its potential effect. Specific examples were mentioned, and illustrations were included to show different methods of presenting material as well as the various types of school news to be found in newspapers.

A separate chapter of the thesis was devoted to a review of developments in school financing during the school year covered by the study, because of the circumstances which made this subject particularly newsworthy.

Newspaper Space Given To the Schools

A total of 160,381 column-inches of school news was analyzed during the nine-month period of this study.

It was found that a stronger relationship between circulation and per cent of school news content exists for dailies than for weeklies, and a positive relationship was indicated for both dailies and weeklies between thickness and content.

A slightly smaller number of items about schools were printed on the front page by dailies than by weeklies. As for topics of front page school news, student activities accounted for the greatest number

of items among weekly newspapers, while finance accounted for the most among dailies. It must be remembered that in the case of most weeklies, the front page represents a large per cent of the total "news hole" of the entire paper. Because of the greater frequency of publication, dailies place many items on inside pages which are page one items for weeklies.

As a group, both daily and weekly newspapers give comparable emphasis to some of the same types of items. Athletics and athletic illustrations accounted for more space among daily newspapers than among weeklies, but weeklies did devote more space to athletics than to any other category except miscellaneous.

Among daily newspapers, athletics and athletic illustrations comprised 48.4 per cent of all the school content. These two categories accounted for 27.4 per cent of the content among weekly papers. Miscellaneous, student activities, student activity illustrations, and other illustrations accounted for another 57.4 per cent of the school content among weekly newspapers and for 33.9 per cent of the remaining school news space in daily newspapers.

The six categories named above constituted 84.8 per cent of all school content in weekly newspapers, and 82.3 per cent in dailies.

One reason for the dominating position held by school athletics is the regularity with which contests are held. Another is the competitive aspect which produces a need for information to be printed about the teams.

An explanation for the high percentage of student activities content is the active role of 4-H and FFA clubs in Oklahoma schools.

School board meetings are covered regularly and well, according to results of the study. There were a total of 134 items about school boards printed on the front pages of daily and weekly newspapers during the study. Only 4 other items, excluding photographs, appeared in this prominent location with greater frequency.

Variations were noted in the amounts of space different newspapers devote to schools, and also in the volume of each of the twenty categories, but these differences were not significant.

Several striking similarities were noted in comparing the present study with the 1959 Monahan study, the most notable of which was the fact that athletics represented an almost identical percentage of total content among dailies in both studies.

An extensive analysis of the distribution of newspaper space in relation to the time of the year established the inference that school news coverage follows a cycle of predictable patterns over the course of a school year.

In terms of impact and reader interest, feature articles on the schools represented the highest quality of writing. These included syndicated as well as locally-written articles.

Editorials accounted for only a minor portion of the total school news content--1.0 per cent in daily newspapers and 1.2 per cent in weeklies.

Conclusions

This study, based on an analysis of the school content in daily and weekly newspapers in the state of Oklahoma, produced findings which lead to these general conclusions:

1. Newspapers in Oklahoma publish news about the public schools in sufficient quantity and variety that readers can be well informed about the operations and activities of local schools, as well as national, state and local issues affecting education.

2. School athletics and student activities receive emphasis in both daily and weekly newspapers which is out of proportion to other types of school news. The reasons for this disparity are explainable, but whether this situation was potentially damaging to a school system was not a subject of inquiry in this study.

3. Oklahoma newspaper editors are generally sympathetic and responsive to the needs of education, but are critical of the methods used by school teachers, both as individuals and as a group, to achieve what they consider to be necessary goals.

4. There are many opportunities for interesting features and other articles about the schools which are not used to good advantage, although some newspapers do an outstanding job in this regard.

5. School activities follow a cycle of certain predictable patterns over the course of a school year.

6. While editorial comment and other interpretive writings may at times be critical of the schools, the greater percentage of total school news content is favorable rather than unfavorable.

7. Considering daily and weekly newspapers as separate classes, there are no significant differences among Oklahoma newspapers when ranked and compared on the amount of space given to each topic of school news.

8. Except for circumstances which are unique to the time

period and location of the study, no significant differences are apparent between Oklahoma newspapers and newspapers of another state in the amount of space given to comparable school news items.

Recommendations

Since one of the purposes of this study was to ascertain methods for improving relations between the school and the public through the media of newspapers, the following recommendations are offered as a possible means of bringing about such improvements:

1. The importance of a strong school-community relationship and the role which communications plays should be stressed to administrators, teachers and other school personnel, and also to those studying for jobs in school administration.

2. A mutual understanding is needed between newspaper personnel and school personnel to make each aware of the other's function in society and to promote closer cooperation with the end result being a better job in interpreting the schools to the public.

3. School public relations should occupy a prominent place in the curriculum of colleges of education in order that graduates will be better equipped to cope with problems in school-community relations and to develop a firm foundation of public support.

Implications for Further Research

A study of this type produces byproducts in the form of areas for additional investigation. Among the research possibilities emerging during this study were these:

1. Some updated studies on readership of school news would be

beneficial to those involved in planning school public relations programs.

2. More studies of this type, i.e. a content analysis of school news in a representative sample of newspapers, conducted in other states would help to answer the question of whether school content varies greatly from one state to another.

3. In view of the commanding position of finances in the overall picture of public schools and the dependence of educational institutions on public support, more "in depth" studies of fiscal programs of the schools as interpreted by the press would appear to be extremely valuable.

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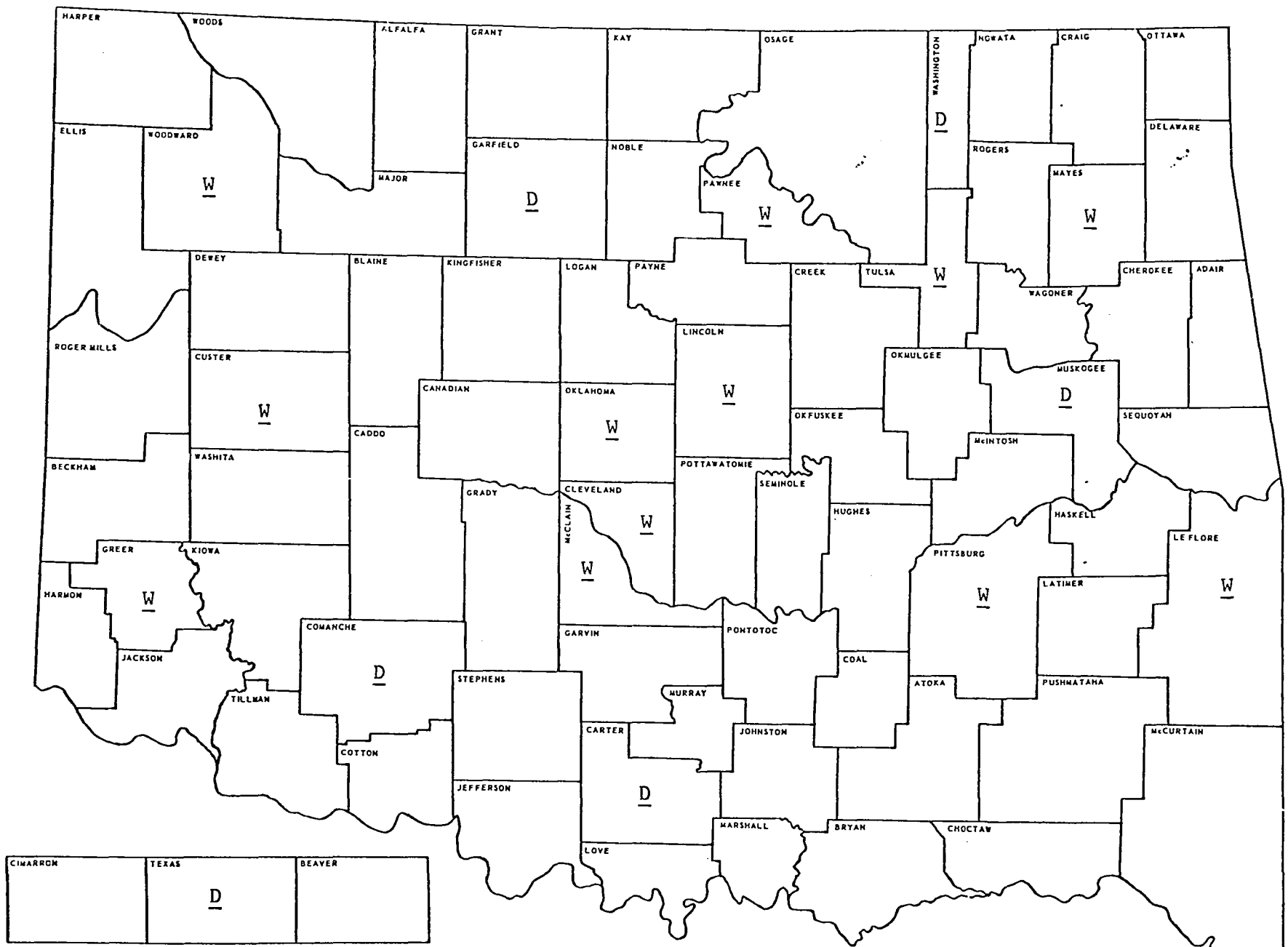
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APPENDIX A

MAP OF OKLAHOMA SHOWING LOCATION OF THE SAMPLE OF NEWSPAPERS

G-117 REVISED

OKLAHOMA



D - Daily Newspapers W - Weekly Newspapers

APPENDIX B

PANEL OF JUDGES USED FOR RELIABILITY OF CLASSIFICATION

Dr. David P. Bergin, Professor of Journalism, University of Oklahoma.

Dr. Leslie Fisher, Superintendent of Schools, Moore, Oklahoma, and president, Oklahoma Association of School Administrators.

Mr. Wallace Kidd, editor, Anadarko (Oklahoma) Daily News, and president, Oklahoma Press Association.

APPENDIX C

LETTER ATTESTING TO THE VALIDITY OF THE SAMPLE

H. H. HERBERT SCHOOL
OF JOURNALISM

THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

NORMAN, OKLAHOMA 73069

December 4, 1964

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Mrs. Sue Haught has shown me the list of newspapers she is using in making a quantitative analysis of news involving public school education in connection with her dissertation.

I have a personal, intimate knowledge of the daily and weekly newspaper situation in Oklahoma extending over a period of 35 years and the list she is using is an excellent representation. It is a good cross section as to geography, sizes of the communities in which published and the quality of the publications. I believe it is an excellent sample.

Yours very truly,

Robert V. Peterson

Robert V. Peterson
Professor of Journalism

RVP:pr

APPENDIX D

NEWSPAPERS USED IN THE STUDY WITH CIRCULATION DATA

DAILY NEWSPAPERS

Paper	Circulation
A - Enid Morning News	17,125
B - Muskogee Phoenix	16,851
C - Bartlesville Examiner-Enterprise	12,654
D - Lawton Morning Press	12,053
E - Ardmore Daily Ardmoreite	11,456
F - Guymon Daily Herald	3,468

WEEKLY NEWSPAPERS

a - Tulsa Southside Times	6,165
b - Bethany Tribune-Review	3,989
c - Poteau News	3,778
d - Purcell Register	3,680
e - Pryor Jeffersonian	3,598
f - Moore Monitor	3,100
g - Chandler Lincoln County News	3,081
h - Mangum Greer County News	2,800
i - Pawnee Chief	2,607
j - McAlester Democrat	2,258
k - Weatherford News	2,241
l - Woodward County Journal	1,994

