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ABSTRACT

As part of the objective-based component of the Statewide Evaluation and Assessment Program, New Mexico school districts have selected local priority objectives for the past 3 years. As a means of assessing the districts' progress toward achieving these objectives, objective-based measures for the most frequently chosen objectives are administered in each district in the spring semester of the school year. In a continuing effort to keep the public informed of the current activities within the Statewide evaluation effort, this document has been prepared to explain the manner in which school districts select and rate specific basic cognitive skill objectives, describe any Statewide trends relating to the objectives being selected as priorities, and provide the reader with a summary of this year's priority goals as compared to those of the previous year. (Author/JF)

In a continued effort to keep the public informed of the current activities within the statewide evaluation effort, this document has been prepared with several purposes in mind:

- (a) to explain the manner in which school districts select and rate specific basic cognitive skill objectives,
- (b) to describe any statewide trends relating to the objectives being selected as priorities,
- (c) to provide the reader with a summary of this year's priority goals as compared to previous year's priorities.

Should you have comments or questions regarding this, or other aspects of the New Mexico Statewide evaluation program, please contact:

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SECTION I

OBJECTIVE-BASED TESTING COMPONENT

COMPARISON OF PRIORITY OBJECTIVES SELECTED BY LOCAL DISTRICTS

INTRODUCTION

As a part of the objective-based component of the State-wide Evaluation and Assessment Program, New Mexico school districts have selected local priority objectives for the past three years. As a means of assessing the districts' progress toward achieving these objectives, objective-based measures for the most frequently chosen objectives are administered in each district in the spring semester of the school year. It is planned that the priority objectives selected by a district will be measured over a three-year cycle period.

The three-year cycle period was established in 1969 by Senate Bill I which mandated that one-third of the schools in New Mexico be evaluated each year. Operationally, this has been interpreted to mean that each district must reconsider its priority objectives at least once every three years.

BACKGROUND:

As of 1972-73, all New Mexico school districts had selected priority objectives at least one time. It should be noted that districts are not required to wait the three-year period before re-ranking priority basic skill objectives. Within the objective-based process, districts have the option of

re-ranking their priority objectives any year; this design affords the program a responsiveness to changing needs at the local level as perceived by each district for its students.

This flexibility is further increased by the nature of the objective banks. These objectives were developed by a representative sample of 26 districts in the first year of the program (1970-71). The objective banks consisted of broad skill objectives in four cognitive skill areas: math, science, communication skills and social studies. The banks in each area have been reviewed and revised each year to incorporate the suggestions and recommendations received during the course of the objective-ranking workshops, as well as those received from the State Department of Education specialists in each area. Career education objectives were added as a fifth area in 1972-73.

The procedure for ranking objectives in each school district is as follows: a committee composed of about 30 people (including teachers, students, parents, community representatives, curriculum directors and school administrators) is appointed by the superintendent or his designate. This group is then divided into approximately five teams of six people each. Each team is selected to be representative of the entire group, that is, it is composed of one teacher, one student, one parent, and so forth.

Each of the five teams is given objective decks for one area, such as science. Each member of the team then sorts his deck into three decks of cards, one for objectives that he feels

are above average in importance for students graduating from that particular district, another for objectives that he feels are average in importance, and a third for objectives that are below average in importance. After each team member completes the sorting process, a weight is assigned to each deck of objectives; a weight of three is assigned for those individual objectives above average in importance, two for those of average importance and one for the below average deck. These individual ratings are then recorded for each team member. It should be emphasized that each team member's ratings carry equal weight, whether that person be a student, superintendent, etc.

At this point in the rating workshop, the process of consensus begins. The members of each team agree on a minimum of five to a maximum of fifteen objectives which they perceive to be the most important in that particular objective deck. When all five teams reach this consensus on the skill area they are rating, the objective decks are exchanged and each team begins the process anew with another deck. In this manner, each team rates all five objective decks (science, social studies, etc.). When all five areas have been rated by all five teams, each team selects a representative to form a group of five people. This final team compiles a list of the priority objectives for the district, using the five team consensus for each skill area. The end product is a minimum of five to a maximum of 15 priority objectives in each of the five skill areas for the school district.

Thus, by utilizing this established procedure, 59 districts selected their priority objectives in 1971-72, the remaining 32 districts selected objectives in 1972-73 and, finally, the original 26 districts re-ranked priority objectives in 1973-74. It should be noted that although there are 88 New Mexico school districts, the Albuquerque Public School District - due to size and geographic variance of population, is divided into three separate rating groups (one for each of the north, south and east areas).

Each year results of the objective-based workshops from around the State are tabulated and analyzed. The fifteen most frequently selected objectives in each of the five skill areas form the base of a "common core." It is from this "common core" that the objective-based measures are developed. The results of the tabulations for the three-year cycle are contained in the graphs presented in the attachments. Changes and revisions in the objective banks add a measure of complexity in the comparability of results from year to year. For example, some 1971-72 objectives were found to be redundant and were, therefore, combined within a single objective for 1972-73. In other cases, a few 1971-72 objectives were regarded as being too broad, and were broken down into two or more different objectives for 1972-73. In several instances, objectives that were not selected by any district for several years were deleted, while new objectives were added to the banks in 1972-73 and 1973-74. These changes (subsuming and deleting objectives) are made infrequently, and only when sufficient justification

warrants such a change in the statewide basic skills objective bank. As all districts have now rated objectives, a process of stabilization will be more likely to occur in the objective bank, although the banks will be reviewed yearly for adequacy.

As previously mentioned, career education was added as a fifth skill area for 1972-73. Only eight objectives were in this deck in 1972-73, and two objectives became additions to the deck in 1973-74. Due to the small number of objectives, many schools selected all of these objectives as priorities. Therefore, in order to determine some priorities in the career education area on a statewide basis, each district was requested to list their final selection of career education objectives in rank order; that is, the most important first, the second most important objective second, and so on. In this way, a weight could be assigned to each objective in this area, and a determination of the importance of each objective could be made on a statewide basis.

SKILL AREA PRIORITIES:

The following five sections of this document elaborate on the types of basic skills selected statewide as important goals for New Mexico's children.

Mathematics Priorities

Of top priority in the area of mathematics for all three years were the objectives emphasizing the ability to perform numerical operations of addition, subtraction, multiplication

and division with the set of natural numbers, real numbers and with fractions, decimals and percents. Selections for 1972-73 and 1973-74 strongly favored an objective emphasizing the ability to use fundamental mathematical operations in every day situations. Of equal importance was an objective concerned with understanding the place value of numerical figures. In the 1973-74 priority selections, districts were concerned with the use of arithmetic in solving work problems. Although the mathematical selections for the three-year period were basically consistent, some movement can be observed from the emphasis on mathematical concepts to the practical application of mathematical concepts. The 1973-74 selections included more objectives emphasizing the pragmatic usage of mathematical skills.

Communication Skills Priorities

Priority selections have remained reasonably constant over the three-year period in the communication skills area. Objectives emphasizing the understanding of oral communication, the ability to use the library to locate materials and, finally, effective usage of reference materials, were of top priority for all three years. Selections in both 1972-73 and 1973-74 also favored abilities in utilizing the standard mechanics of writing, and skills required to understand and use parts of books and textbooks aides to locate information. It is interesting to note that priority objectives for all three years emphasized practical

skills (particularly in the area of writing and research). Although the objectives concerned with reading appreciation and reading skills were included in the top fifteen objectives for all three years, these objectives were apparently of secondary importance. In the communication skills area, the selection of priority objectives indicated that skills were favored over content knowledge.

Science Priorities

Much of the variance evident in the selection of priority science objectives over the three-year period may be attributed to the revision within the objective banks, and to the number of additions to the science bank. Two objectives emerged as top priorities for the three years. These objectives are concerned with the need for understanding graphs, tables, charts and diagrams, and with the understanding of the concepts of growth, development and life cycles of living things. In the 1972-73 and 1973-74 selections, an objective emphasizing knowledge of the basic concepts of ecology was stressed. The objective selections in the science area demonstrated a marked emphasis on understanding broad concepts and theories. For example, the scientific objectives selected as priorities range from a broad understanding of the universe to an understanding of the smallest life system. With the addition of two new objectives in 1973-74 dealing with the basic anatomy and physiology of the human body and the basic concepts of nutrition, the trend is moving to a practical understanding of the immediate

world as it applies daily. Thus, within the science area, content and theoretical knowledge is emphasized as being more important for New Mexico children than is the mastery of specific scientific skills.

Social Studies Priorities

Although many common objectives appeared in the top fifteen category for the three-year period in the social studies area, no single objective was favored as a top priority. Three objectives were favored in the last several years as important concepts for children in this State; one is in the area of understanding the differences and likenesses among various economic systems, the other emphasizes the ability to locate and organize information, and finally, a third is concerned with the understanding of the nature and function of state government in New Mexico. Priority objectives for 1971-72 were concerned with understanding the cultural development of New Mexico and how territorial acquisition affected the makeup of New Mexico, the ability to recognize bias and other emotional factors which influence language, and with understanding the effects of geography on national development, international relations and the distribution of power.

1972-73 priorities emphasized understanding the contributions of important historical documents and understanding the rights and responsibilities of consumers. Finally, the selection of priorities in 1973-74 demonstrated a concern with understanding how individual value systems change as conditions change,

understanding the political structure of the United States, and finally, the ability to analyze an argument and evaluate its component parts. The variance in objective selections over the three-year period is evident; objective choices in the first year demonstrated a somewhat locally-oriented attitude with primary emphasis on New Mexico. Although 1972-73 and 1973-74 priorities indicated a need for understanding the local influences and situations, the trend is beginning to favor less specialization and more emphasis on general concepts in the area of politics, economics and sociology.

Career Education Priorities

Priority selections in the area of career education were comparable for both 1972-73 and 1973-74. The top priority objective for both years emphasized an appreciation of the personal and social significance of work. 1972-73 second and third ranking priorities indicated school districts were concerned with the students' ability to make an occupational decision about possible careers and appreciating what is required to hold a job and be advanced in an occupation. These two latter objectives dropped to a rank of fourth and fifth in 1973-74, where the emphasis moved from the theoretical appreciation of the world of work to the practical knowledge of actually knowing how to apply for a job and making decisions on selecting and preparing for an occupation. Again, the trend of moving from the concept to the practical skill can be observed. It might be noted that the two new 1973-74 objectives in the areas

of awareness of the general occupational situation in New Mexico and nationwide were rated as 8th and 10th priorities respectively.

SUMMARY OF PRIORITY SELECTIONS:

The objective priority selections were generally comparable for the last three years in the areas of mathematics and communications skills. In both of these areas, practical skills are emphasized over the mastery of theory or concept knowledge. District selections demonstrate a concern for student ability and expertise in practical knowledge skills and solutions to problems common to daily living.

More variance can be noted in the science and social studies areas, but as previously mentioned, this may be due to the number of revisions in the objective banks. The selection trends in these two areas also demonstrate a concern for student understanding and ability to cope with everyday problems. However, the concept approach is emphasized more than the mastery of specialized skills.

Finally, the selections in the career education area were consistent for the two-year period. It appears as if the people of New Mexico are most concerned with their children receiving the skills necessary to actually secure a job, as well as attaining a personal appreciation for the value of work.

All of the objective priority selections appear to strive in the direction of a common goal - providing the student with the vital skills and necessary knowledge to adequately cope

with the contemporary world. Hopefully, educators in New Mexico will adhere to this goal, and having selected cognitive skill objectives on which to base an instructional program, education will be more oriented toward skills which are practical and meaningful for children in New Mexico.

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SECTION II

Results for Mathematics
as Shown in Graph 1.

In general, comparable choices of priority objectives appear to have been made for the three years. Fifteen objectives selected in 1972-73 were repeated in 1973-74 selections; thirteen objectives selected in 1971-72 were repeated in 12 objectives selected in 1972-73. (Two of the 1971-72 objectives were combined into one objective for 1972-73.) Four of the five most frequently chosen objectives in 1972-73 were repeated in the top five objective choices in 1973-74; in addition the top five objective choices for 1971-72 and 1972-73 were identical. One of the top 15 objectives for 1972-73 was chosen frequently enough in 1973-74 to advance into the top five category. This objective (1032) deals with solving word problems that require the use of arithmetic on whole numbers, fractions and decimals.

TOP FIVE OBJECTIVES IN MATHEMATICS

1973-74

- (1001) STUDENTS WILL PERFORM NUMERICAL OPERATIONS OF ADDITION, SUBTRACTION, MULTIPLICATION, AND DIVISION WITH THE SET OF NATURAL NUMBERS*.
- *NATURAL NUMBERS are numbers 1, 2, 3, etc.
- (1003) STUDENTS WILL PERFORM NUMERICAL OPERATIONS OF ADDITION, SUBTRACTION, MULTIPLICATION, AND DIVISION WITH FRACTIONS, DECIMALS, AND PERCENTS.
- (1020) STUDENTS WILL DEMONSTRATE ABILITY TO USE FUNDAMENTAL MATHEMATIC OPERATIONS IN EVERY DAY SITUATIONS; e.g., be able to solve consumer problems.
- (1019) STUDENTS WILL UNDERSTAND PLACE VALUE; e.g., in 123, the number 1 is in the place value of the hundreds, the digit 2 is in the place value of the tens, etc.
- (1032) STUDENTS WILL SOLVE WORD PROBLEMS THAT REQUIRE THE USE OF ARITHMETIC ON WHOLE NUMBERS, FRACTIONS, AND DECIMALS; e.g., if one tenth of the eighty-five member band is ill on the day of the ball game, and another tenth is ineligible because of their grades, how many members would be able to participate?

Results for Communication Skills
as Shown in Graph 2.

The top 15 objectives are comparable for all three years. Thirteen of the top 15 objectives selected in 1972-73 were repeated in 1973-74; twelve of the top 15 objectives selected in 1971-72 were repeated in 1973-74. The five most frequently chosen objectives in 1973-74 were identical to those top five objectives selected in 1972-73; these same objectives were also in the top five category in 1971-72, although the order of the priorities was somewhat different. Two 1972-73 and two 1971-72 objectives were no longer included in the fifteen most frequently selected objectives for 1973-74. Two other objectives, one emphasizing a knowledge of spelling, syllabication rules and word analysis skills, the other concerned with the multiple meanings of English words, were chosen frequently enough to advance into the top 15 category for the 1973-74 year.

JP

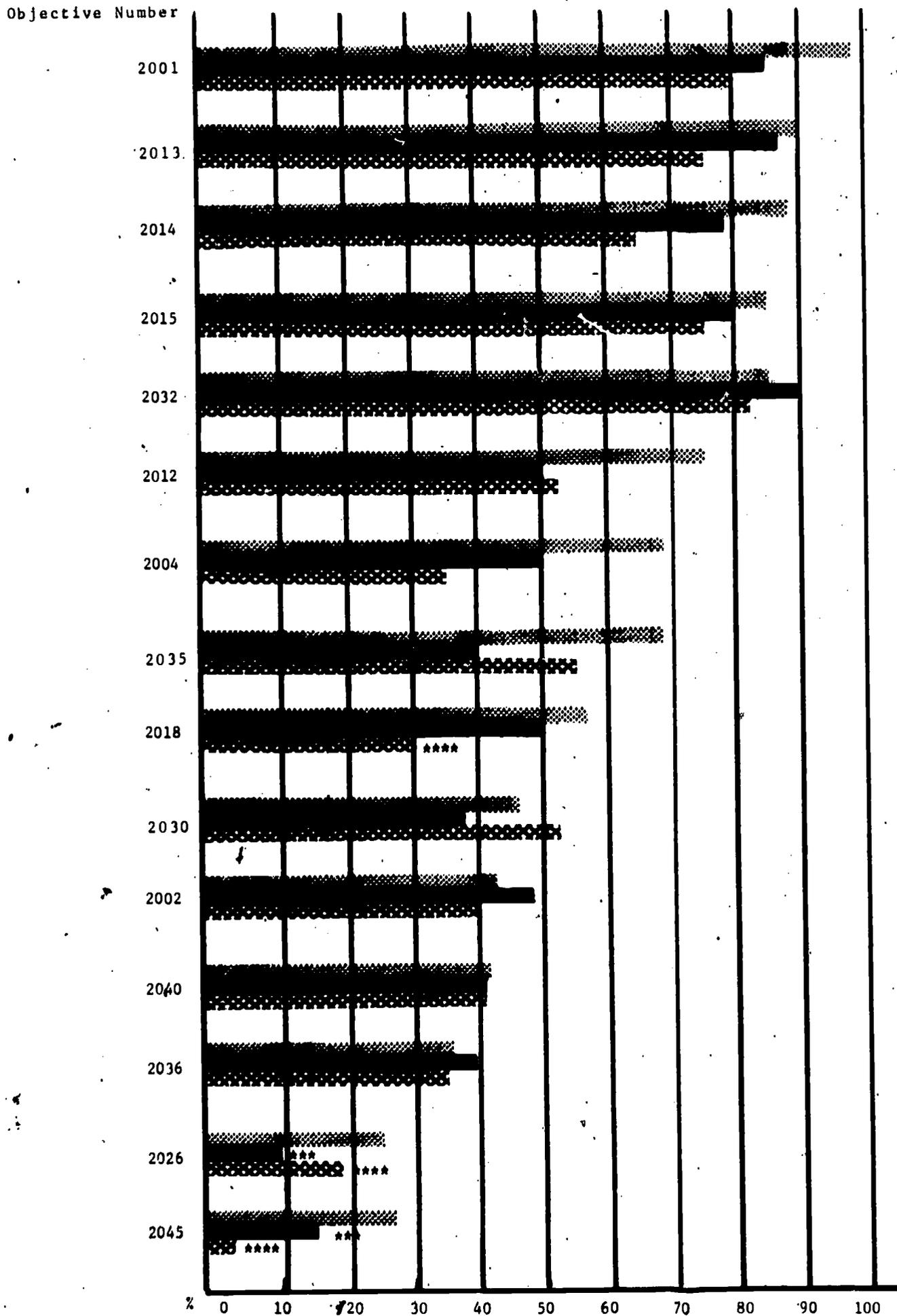
TOP FIVE OBJECTIVES IN COMMUNICATION SKILLS

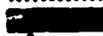
1973-74

- (2001) THE STUDENT WILL UNDERSTAND AN ORAL COMMUNICATION (LISTENING COMPREHENSION); e.g., grasp the main ideas; recognize sequence of ideas, supporting details; recognize assumptions and conclusions.
- (2013) THE STUDENT WILL UNDERSTAND AND USE PARTS OF BOOKS AND TEXTBOOKS AIDS TO LOCATE INFORMATION; e.g., table of contents, index, glossary, appendices, guide words, section headings, etc.
- (2014) THE STUDENT WILL BE ABLE TO USE THE LIBRARY (CATALOGING SYSTEM) TO LOCATE NEEDED MATERIALS.
- (2015) THE STUDENT WILL USE EFFICIENTLY APPROPRIATE REFERENCE MATERIALS TO LOCATE INFORMATION; e.g., selects a dictionary, encyclopedia, atlas, newspaper, etc., that would provide most efficiently the information desired.
- (2032) THE STUDENT WILL DEMONSTRATE ABILITY TO USE STANDARD MECHANICS OF WRITING; e.g., punctuation, capitalization.

COMPARISON OF THE 15 MOST FREQUENTLY CHOSEN OBJECTIVES
BY PERCENTAGE OF DISTRICTS

Graph #2, Communication Skills



 1973-74 (26 districts)
 1972-73 (32 districts)
 1971-72 (59 districts)

*New Objective in 1973-74
 **New Objective in 1972-73
 ***Objective not in top 15 in 1972-73
 ****Objective not in top 15 in 1971-72

Results for Science
as Shown in Graph 3.

Twelve of the fifteen most frequently selected objectives for 1972-73 were repeated in 1973-74; nine of the fifteen most frequently selected objectives for 1971-72 were repeated in 1973-74. It should be noted that in 1972-73, fourteen 1971-72 objectives were combined into six broader objectives; fourteen objectives were thus subsumed into six objectives, and these six objectives were selected in the top 15 category in both 1972-73 and 1973-74.

Two of the top five objectives in 1972-73 were repeated in 1973-74. The three newly selected objectives in the top five category emphasize the contributions of scientists to society, the basic concepts of nutrition and the understanding of the basic anatomy and physiology of the human body. The latter two objectives were new additions to the objective bank in science. Another 1973-74 addition that appears in the top 15 category is concerned with the ability to change from English to metric units and vice versa.

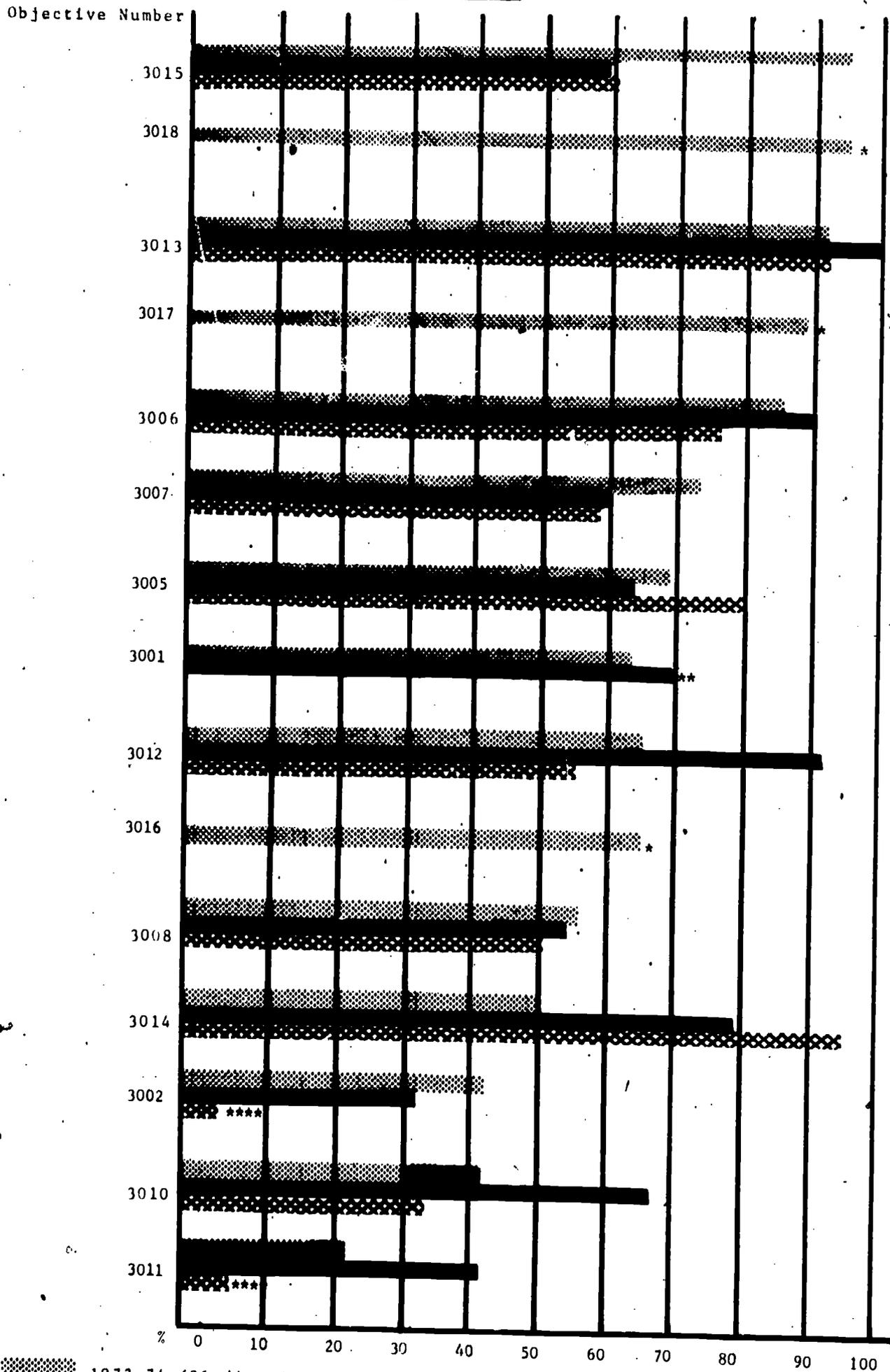
TOP FIVE OBJECTIVES IN SCIENCE

1973-74

- (3015) THE STUDENT WILL APPRECIATE THE CONTRIBUTIONS SCIENTISTS HAVE MADE TO SOCIETY; such as in medicine, health, industry, comfort, economics, and those areas where scientists have not made positive contributions.
- (3018) THE STUDENT WILL UNDERSTAND THE BASIC CONCEPTS OF NUTRITION.
- (3013) THE STUDENT WILL UNDERSTAND THE CONCEPTS OF GROWTH, DEVELOPMENT, AND LIFE CYCLES OF LIVING THINGS; e.g., the changes from seed to fullgrown plant, egg to adult, and the steps in between.
- (3017) THE STUDENT WILL UNDERSTAND THE BASIC ANATOMY AND PHYSIOLOGY OF THE HUMAN BODY.
- (3006) THE STUDENT WILL DEMONSTRATE AN UNDERSTANDING OF GRAPHS, TABLES, CHARTS, AND DIAGRAMS; e.g., reading from given information recorded, and possible stating the interpretations in mathematical sentences.

COMPARISON OF THE 15 MOST FREQUENTLY CHOSEN OBJECTIVES
BY PERCENTAGE OF DISTRICTS

Graph #3, Science



 1973-74 (26 districts)
 1972-73 (32 districts)
 1971-72 (59 districts)

*New Objective in 1973-74
 **New Objective in 1972-73
 ***Objective not in top 15 in 1972-73
 ****Objective not in top 15 in 1971-72

Results for Social Studies
as Shown in Graph 4.

Ten of the fifteen most frequently chosen objectives in 1971-72 and 1972-73 were repeated in the 1973-74 selections. However, only one of the top five objectives selected in 1972-73 and in 1971-72 was again chosen in 1973-74, and this objective was concerned with understanding the differences and likenesses among various economic systems.

The objective of first priority for the 1973-74 years emphasizes understanding the nature and function of state government in New Mexico. This objective was not included in the top 15 category for either 1972-73 or 1971-72. The objective second in priority for 1973-74 emphasizes understanding how individual value systems change as conditions change. This objective was not in the top 15 category for 1972-73, although it was included in the 1971-72 selections. Included in the 15 most frequently chosen objectives for 1972-73 and 1971-72 (but not included in the top five priority ratings) was an objective dealing with the ability to analyze and evaluate an argument; this objective was included in the top five selections for 1973-74.

Finally, a 1973-74 addition to the social studies objective bank was an objective in the area of demonstrating and understanding the political structure in the United States. This objective was ranked in the top five selections for 1973-74. A second addition to the 1973-74 objective bank which ranked in the top 15 category was an objective emphasizing the understanding of the historical development of the United States.

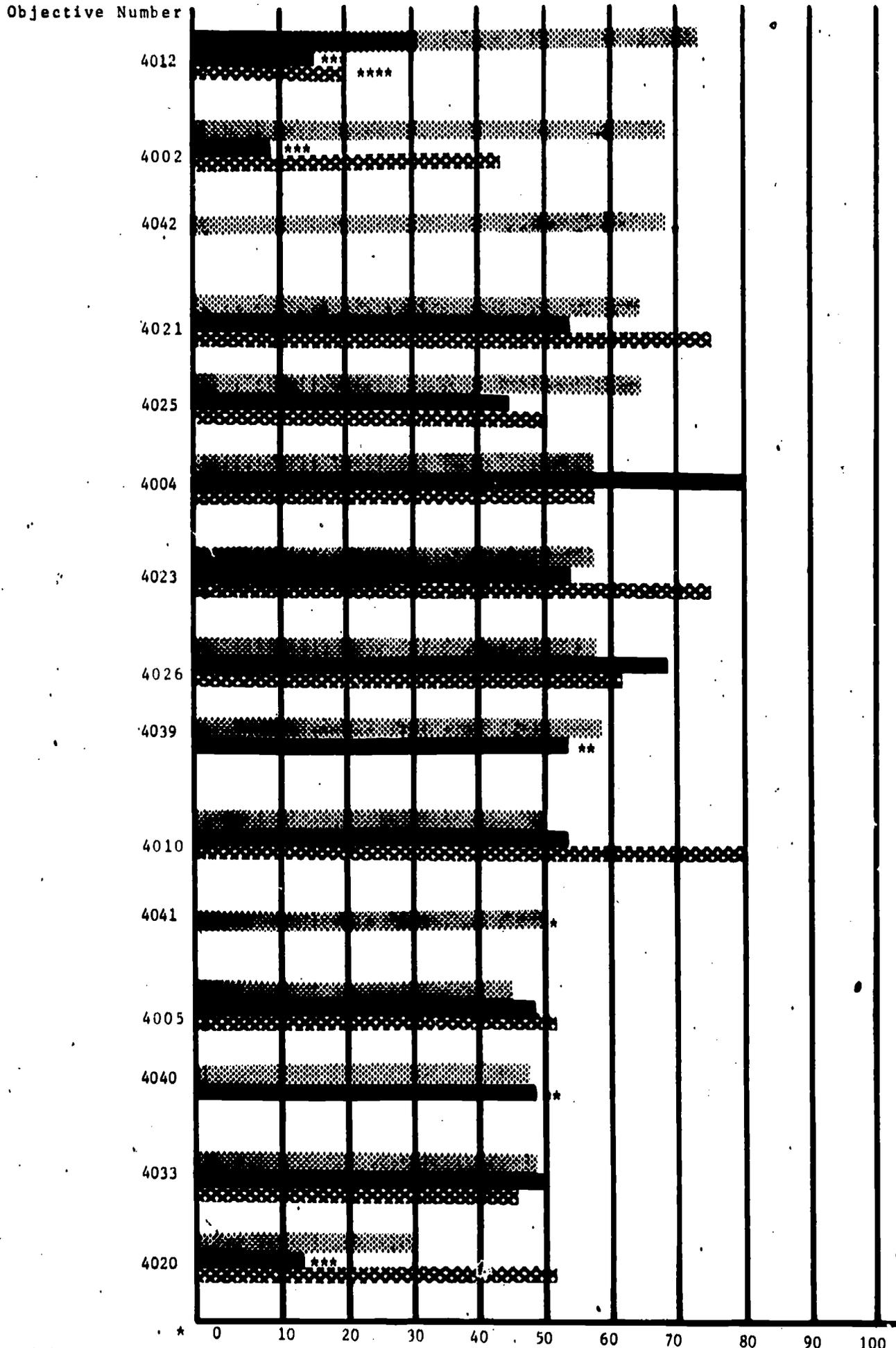
TOP FIVE OBJECTIVES IN SOCIAL STUDIES

1973-74

- (4012) STUDENTS WILL DEMONSTRATE AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE NATURE AND FUNCTION OF STATE GOVERNMENT IN NEW MEXICO, AS WELL AS OF THE ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL DIVISIONS OF THE STATE; e.g., the New Mexico Legislature consists of a Senate and a House of Representatives; the primary source of funding for education in New Mexico comes from state sources.
- (4002) STUDENTS WILL DEMONSTRATE AN UNDERSTANDING OF HOW INDIVIDUAL VALUE SYSTEMS CHANGE AS CONDITIONS CHANGE; e.g., the threat of overpopulation has changed society's attitude towards large families.
- (4042) STUDENTS WILL DEMONSTRATE AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE POLITICAL STRUCTURE OF THE UNITED STATES; e.g., two-party system, the Constitution, federalism, etc.
- (4021) STUDENTS WILL DEMONSTRATE AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE DIFFERENCES AND LIKENESSES AMONG VARIOUS ECONOMIC SYSTEMS; e.g., free enterprise, Socialism, Communism.
- (4025) STUDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO ANALYZE AN ARGUMENT AND EVALUATE ITS COMPONENT PARTS; e.g., distinguish between fact and opinion in a speech.

COMPARISON OF THE 15 MOST FREQUENTLY CHOSEN OBJECTIVES
BY PERCENTAGE OF DISTRICTS

Graph #4, Social Studies



1973-74 (26 districts)
 1972-73 (32 districts)
 1971-72 (59 districts)

* New Objective in 1973-74
 ** New Objective in 1972-73
 *** Objective not in top 15 in 1972-73
 **** Objective not in top 15 in 1971-72

Results for Career Education
as Shown in Graph 5.

Career Education was first included in the evaluation program in 1972-73; this was a "field-test" year for both the objectives and the test instruments. In 1973-74 these objectives were reviewed and revised based upon the reactions received in the 1972-73 year.

In 1972-73 there were only eight career education objectives and many districts selected all of them. Each district was requested to select the objectives in rank order. In the analysis of the selections, a weight was assigned to each objective according to its rank order, e.g., 8 for the first ranking, 7 for a second ranking, and so on. The total weight of each objective was then graphed. In 1973-74 two additional objectives were added to the career education objective bank; these objectives were concerned with an awareness of the general occupational situation in New Mexico and in the nation. Again, the districts were requested to select the objectives in rank order and the results were then assigned a weight and graphed.

In the 1973-74 selections, a weight of 10 was assigned for the first ranking, 9 for a second ranking, and so on. The ranking of the objectives was comparable for both years. The top 5 selected objectives for both 1972-73 and 1973-74 are identical, although the order of priority is different. The most highly ranked objective for both years was an objective emphasizing the appreciation of the personal and social significance of

work. The second and third ranking objectives for 1972-73, which are concerned with the student taking important steps during the high school career in order to help make an occupational decision about possible careers, and with the understanding of what is required to hold a job and be advanced in an occupation, were ranked fourth and fifth in 1973-74. Objectives emphasizing the knowledge of how to apply for a job and how to make appropriate decisions about preparing for and selecting an occupation were ranked second and third in the 1973-74 priority selections.

TOP FIVE OBJECTIVES IN CAREER EDUCATION

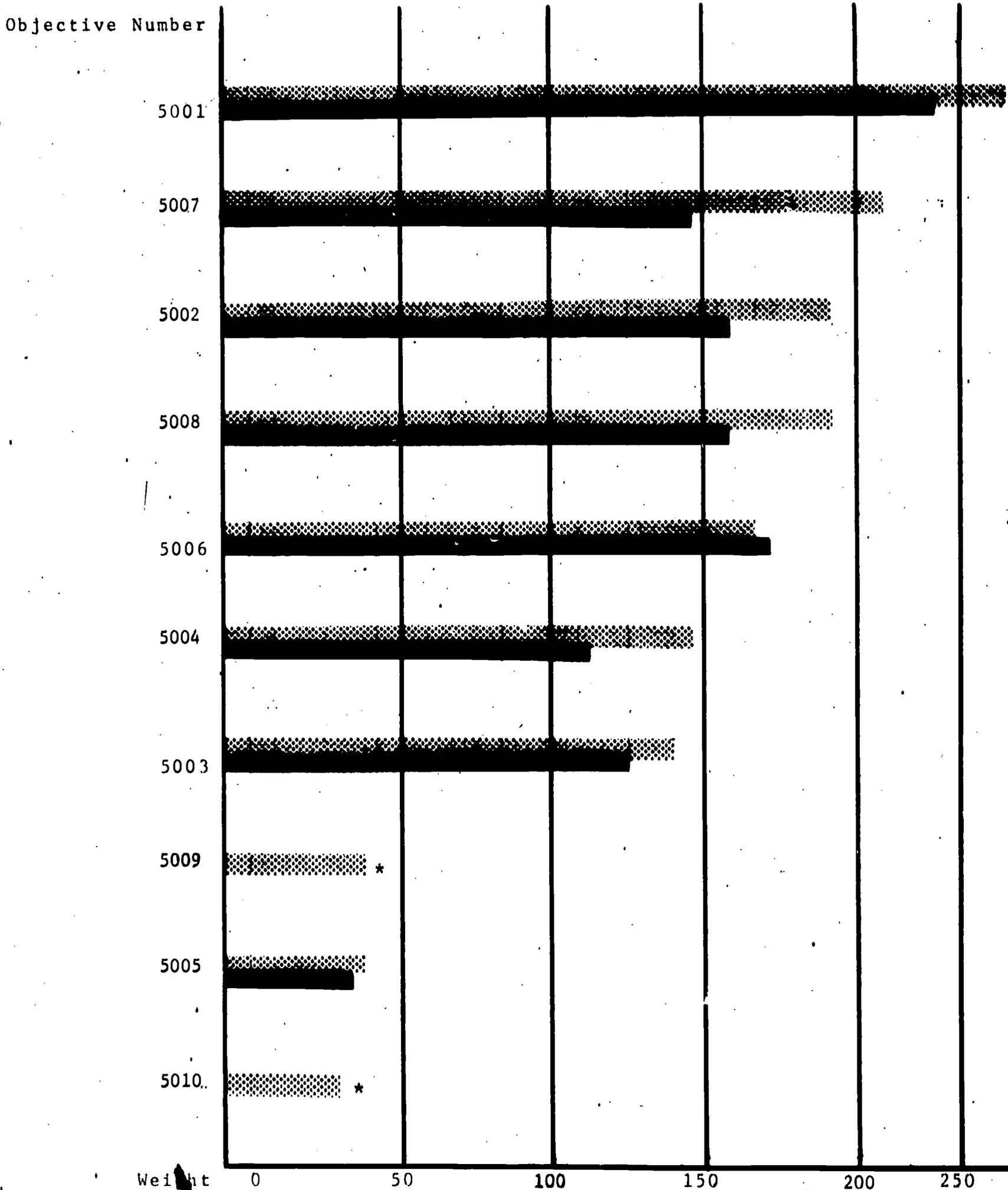
1973-74

- (5001) THE STUDENT APPRECIATES THE PERSONAL AND SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE OF WORK; e.g., has a positive attitude toward preparing for an occupation; believes that work leads to benefits for him such as security and interpersonal contacts; realizes the importance of work in our society.
- (5007) THE STUDENT KNOWS HOW TO APPLY FOR A JOB; e.g., makes inquiries, reads advertisements, completes job application forms, knows how to conduct himself during interview.
- (5002) THE STUDENT IS ABLE TO MAKE APPROPRIATE DECISIONS ABOUT PREPARING FOR AND SELECTING AN OCCUPATION; e.g., knows various kinds (and sources) of information; knows order in which various sources should be consulted; knows relative value of different sources - which sources are more important and reliable for different occupational planning activities.
- (5008) THE STUDENT KNOWS AND APPRECIATES WHAT IS REQUIRED TO HOLD A JOB AND BE ADVANCED IN AN OCCUPATION; e.g., doing the job well, seeking extra responsibilities, further training, punctuality, etc.

(5006) THE STUDENT HAS PURPOSEFULLY TAKEN IMPORTANT STEPS DURING HIS OR HER HIGH SCHOOL CAREER IN ORDER TO HELP MAKE AN OCCUPATIONAL DECISION ABOUT POSSIBLE CAREERS; e.g., consulted various sources of information, obtained available high school training for career he might be considering, possibly held part time jobs, etc.

WEIGHTED RANK ORDER OF OBJECTIVES

Graph #5, Career Education



Weight 0 50 100 150 200 250

 1973-74 (26 districts)
 1972-73 (32 districts)

*New Objective in 1973-74