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AUTHOR Tippin, Mary N.
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ABSTRACT

The speaker describes the El Paso approach to grade reports. The district has several different methods of reporting student progress. They include report cards every six weeks, an interim progress report for students who are doing unsatisfactory work or work that is not as good as could be expected, and parent conferences. (IRT)

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A review of the history of grading and reporting practices will reveal that this has been a topic discussed in education circles for many years. There were few report cards in the one-room schoolhouse where almost no formal records were needed. To inquiring parents, a pupil's progress was reported precisely; he is in McGuffey's Third Reader at the tenth story. Over the years a multitude of practices have been used in schools. Pressure to change the present practices used in a district, and almost every district does its own thing, comes from teachers, parents, administrators, and those specialists in child growth and development who have sensitivity to the ways children learn, and to the reasons children fail.

Resistance to changes in grading and reporting comes from an almost identical list-- teachers, parents, administrators, and those specialists in child growth and development who believe that children should learn how to take both failure and success in their stride as they advance toward adulthood. Add to this list those college admissions officers who prefer to continue using traditional grading methods for assessing applicants.

In the El Paso Independent School District, several different methods of grade reporting are being used. Our most comprehensive report is probably our Kindergarten Progress Report. This report is sent home every twelve weeks. The report has the following two major categories: 1) Growth in Knowledge, Skills, and Understanding, and 2) Personal and Social Growth. The Growth in Knowledge, Skills, and Understanding category has the following sub-headings: Language Development, Writing Readiness, Science, Art, Reading Readiness, Number Readiness, Social Studies, and Music. An example of the specific items under the Language Development heading are: 1) speaks distinctly so others can understand, 2) relates ideas and experiences in complete sentences, and 3) takes part in informal conversation. Since this is a progress report only, letter grades and/or percentages are not used. Instead the teacher checks the item when appropriate.

Beginning in Grade One and continuing through Grade Twelve, report cards are issued every six weeks and letter grades of A, B, C, D, and F are used. However, the Grade One and Grade Two card has a check-off method where the teacher places a check mark indicating the pupil's reading level at the end of the reporting period: this section includes a listing from Readiness through Pre-primer I, II, III; Primer; First Reader; Second Reader, Book 1; and Second Reader, Book 2. In addition to on the Basic Skills, additional reporting reporting is done in the areas of Enrichment and Character Development. Since El Paso is a bilingual city, all of the grade reporting forms from Kindergarten through Grade Eight are in both English and Spanish. High school students receive their reports on a data processing form and are in English only.

In addition to issuing report cards every six weeks, the teachers also use a Student Progress Report as an interim means of communicating with parents. This report is sent if a student is doing unsatisfactory work during the grading period or, if in the judgement of the teacher, the student is not achieving as well as could be expected. Since this is a progress report, letter grades are not used. Instead there are two columns, satisfactory and unsatisfactory. The teacher places a check mark in the appropriate column beside the heading: Achievement, Attention in Class, Classwork, Homework, Makeup Work, Test Scores, Laboratory Work, Attendance, and Attitude.

A third means of reporting to parents in addition to the report card and progress report is the parent conference. We consider this to be the most effective means of communication and encourage teachers to schedule conferences as often as needed.

I believe we have incorporated many worthwhile features into our reporting practices. They may not be all that the more progressive educators think they should be, but they do seem to meet the needs of our community, and that's what is most important to us.

EL PASO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Department of Curriculum and Staff Development

Bulletin No. 2

August 9, 1976

Reporting to Parents

Procedures set forth in this bulletin should be considered as the minimum procedures during the periods between issuing report cards.

Kindergarten. At least one parent conference should be held between the opening of school and the Christmas holidays. During the remainder of the school year, teachers should hold parent conferences as needed. Teachers should encourage parents to visit their classroom. Throughout the year, teachers should send home student papers to be signed and returned by the parents. A folder should be maintained of each child's work.

Grades 1-6. Parent conferences are strongly urged as often as needed. A telephone call should be made when parents are not available for conference. Send papers home for parents to see; maintain a folder of each child's work. The Student Progress Report slip may be used for pupils whose work is unsatisfactory or whose work has changed greatly. Homework and test papers should routinely be returned to the pupil. A sample letter for informing parents of the procedure for sending papers home to be signed appears on the back of this bulletin. These are not printed for school orders, but are provided by each school.

Grades 7 and 8. Parent conferences should be held as often as needed and telephone calls made when parents are not available for conference. Homework and test papers are to be returned to pupils; papers may be sent home for parent's signature. Teachers should maintain folders of the children's work. Student Progress Report slips are to be sent at specific times designated by the principal. A follow-up procedure for checking on the return of the signed report slips should be established by the principal and/or counselor.

Grades 9-12. Parent conferences should be held as often as needed and telephone calls made to parents who are not available for a conference. Teachers should maintain folders on the students' work. Homework and test papers are to be returned to students; evaluation of other work (term papers, book reports) not to be returned to the student are to be shared with the student. Student Progress Report slips are to be sent to parents when necessary or on a regularly scheduled basis as established at each high school. A follow-up procedure for checking on the return of the progress reports should be worked out and followed.

K. Allen Johnson
Assistant Superintendent
Curriculum and Staff Development



Assistant Superintendent

Dear Parents:

Report cards are issued six times each year. During the grading interval it is very important that you, as parents, be informed as to your child's progress in school. For that purpose, papers are sent home periodically and we urge you to go over these papers with your child, sign the papers, and have the child return them to his teacher promptly. Your signature does not necessarily mean approval; only that you have seen the papers.

It is felt that this reporting, combined with conference as requested by either the teacher or the parent will, along with the report card, add up to an effective evaluation of your child's school work. We appreciate your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Principal

School

(NOTE: These letters are not furnished, but are printed by each school.)

