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A SURVEY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE VISITING TEACHER
SERVICES IN TEXAS WITH EMPHASIS ON MAJOR
PROGRAMS AND IMPLICATIONS

McGEE

1954

A SURVEY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE VISITING TEACHER
SERVICES IN TEXAS WITH EMPHASIS ON MAJOR PROGRAMS
AND IMPLICATIONS

By

Lenora Rome McGee

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Science

In The

Graduate Division

of

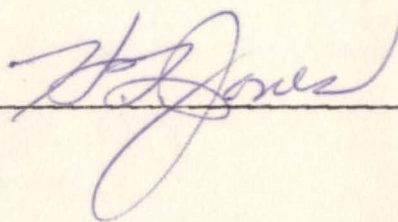
Prairie View Agricultural and Mechanical College
Prairie View, Texas

August 1954

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DEDICATION

To my mother and father,
Mr. and Mrs. Henry Rome of
Huntsville, Texas and to my
sister, Mrs. Vivian Tosten,
this thesis is affectionate-
ly dedicated.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The writer wishes to express sincere appreciation to her advisor, Mr. H. T. Jones for the guidance and inspiration in the selection and preparation of this thesis. She also wishes to express gratitude to Dr. J. M. Drew for much cooperation and understanding.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The visiting teacher's role as a special service to the public schools is a diverting subject for study. It leads its students to consider one phase, then another, to find one clear fact only to discover that the new obliterates the old and that much confusion follows. However, one point of interest which seems to have persisted since the early beginning of the program is the study of the relationship of the visiting teacher and the classroom teacher in the total growth and development of the child.

The Problem of the Visiting Teacher Services and Its Scope. The major purpose of this study is: (1) to determine internal changes in the organization and administrative practices in visiting teacher services as revealed in the literature from 1906 to 1947, and to point out newer trends in the Texas Program for Visiting Teachers, (2) to clarify the objectives of the program, and to cite evidences of their flexibilities, (3) to show implications for further expansion in the field of visitingteacher services.

Four major questions govern this study: (1) On the basis of data obtained, is it the assumption that the visiting teacher represents services whose program is flexible so long as it is conditioned by the total program of the school and

community? (2) What are the research findings indicating the development of some newer trends in the visiting teacher program? (3) What generalizations can be arrived at based upon the limited research presented that can be used by public school personnel to overcome deficiencies in this special field of service? (4) What are some of the practical means whereby teachers and administrators may utilize this special service, the visiting teacher, to improve the pupil's development - physically, mentally, socially and emotionally - proportionately, so that he may grow and develop into a well rounded personality?

Need for the Study. The writer feels there is a need for a preliminary evaluation of visiting teacher services. This study was made for the interpretation of the program to school personnel so that any conflicting ideas about the duties and functions of the visiting teachers on the part of administrators concerning their duties or confusion on the part of the visiting teachers themselves will be interpreted. This leads the writer to feel that there is a need for preliminary data for those who are interested in establishing criteria in the evaluation of conceptions of the role of the visiting teacher services.

Method of Procedure: Data collected for the period of 1906 - 1949 included pamphlets, books and letters were sources of information for the development of historical

background for the study and for data concerning newer trends in Texas visiting teacher service since the coming of the Gilmer-Aiken Act of 1949.

In order to obtain a cross section of current practices and descriptions of programs existing in Texas, some selected communities were requested to execute a questionnaire. Personal visits were made to interview directors of visiting teacher programs in five cities of Texas. A total of forty-two questionnaires were directed to administrators, supervisors, visiting teachers and principals. Replies from twenty-five furnished data for this study. Among other authoritative sources of data are the Texas Education Agency, Austin, Texas; State Department of Health, Austin, Texas; Texas State College for Women, Denton, Texas. Another pertinent resource has been the perusal of the Teamwork Project, Harlingen, Texas.¹

When data were obtained from all sources mentioned above those materials which were significant to this study because of their historical value will be presented in Chapter two entitled "The Historical Review."

Because of the heterogeneity expressed in the program of five major cities of Texas, it is apparent that

¹
The Teamwork Project, A Progress Report of the Harlingen Project, Austin: 1950-51, Mr. Charles F. Mitchell, State Department of Health, Austin, Texas.

full descriptions of each program, accompanied by charts representing their status would be useful also in a review of related literature. The findings, most relevant to the purpose of the study, which lend themselves to scientific treatment were analyzed statistically and the compilations assigned to the chapter entitled Interpretation of Data.

Delimitations: This study will limit itself to a review of changes and trends in the visiting teacher services. Further it will deal indirectly with educational, emotional and social adjustment problems of children. There was no attempt made to ascertain the attitudes of administrators or of any other school personnel toward the visiting teacher program.

Definition of Terms:

Conceptions: - The placing of inadequate or conflicting ideas into one group that will be harmonious and acceptable to all persons concerned.

Role: - The function or duty designated in different areas according to the policies or expectations of the administrators.

Visiting teacher: - A combined teacher and social worker whose chief functions are: 1. The removal of the existing handicaps of school children that have resulted from their social environment, 2. The prevention of the development of other such handicaps, 3. The enforcement of attendance regulations.

CHAPTER II

HISTORICAL REVIEW

Visiting teacher work was developed independently and simultaneously in three different cities: New York, Boston, and Hartford, Connecticut, during the years 1906-1907.

Otto² advises that it was not until after 1913 that boards of education undertook to sponsor the work. Rochester, New York was the first city in which the board of education was responsible for the inception of visiting teacher services. The period from 1914 to 1921 is characterized by the general adoption of this type of service by other cities. The period from 1921 to the present has been called the period of national expansion in visiting teacher work.

Oppenheimer³ relates, "At first, the worker was known as a "special teacher" who assisted the psychologist by gathering case histories and later by carrying out recommendations."

The conditions which led to a broader development of the visiting teacher program were mainly:

² Henry J. Otto, Elementary School Organization and Administration (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1944), p. 338.

³ J. J. Oppenheimer, The Visiting Teacher (New York: Public Education Association, 1924), p. 1.

1. An increasing school preparation due to a rising total population
2. An increasing measure of compulsory school attendance which was stressing the attendance of all children
3. A beginning awareness on the part of psychologists, and social workers of the nature of the effect of environment on individual differences.

Our machine-powered society with its inconsistent regulations relative to child labor; the increased demand for agrarian products, together with parents who hold indifferent attitudes toward absenteeism make the services of the attendance officer mandatory.

Finally, the role of the classroom teacher is of such magnitude that the responsibilities assigned to the special school personnel under a visiting teacher program makes significant contributions toward the educative process in each incidence.

Obviously the assignment of the visiting teacher involves the school, the home and the overall community. It becomes evident that cooperative and coordinate relationships must exist between the visiting teacher and the school personnel, if a full realization of the objectives of the program are to be met.

The underlying philosophy of the visiting teacher program is that the services of the average classroom teacher may well be supplemented by one official whose

preparation provides for the effectual guidance of the child.

Recent Development. The movement spread.⁴

Rochester in 1920 created a department of visiting teachers. In November, 1921, the Commonwealth Fund undertook a program to prevent delinquency and proposed the development of the work and training of visiting teachers in New York City. Through the Public Education Association of New York, it organized a National Committee of Visiting Teachers, whose purpose it was to establish demonstrations in thirty communities throughout the United States, communities which presented a wide variety of geographical, social, and educational situations. These demonstrations were continued by the Commonwealth Fund until June, 1927, when they were turned over to local boards of education. It was reported by the Commonwealth Fund that at the close of the demonstration period, twenty-five of the thirty projects were continued by the local boards. Returns from a recent survey reveal that out of twenty of the above communities reporting, only five now have the visiting teacher service. The chief reason advanced for its discontinuance was lack of funds. Despite the fact that so many communities have been forced to give up this service,

⁴Frank M. Miller, Development, Present Status, and Administrative Relationship of the Visiting Teacher in the United States, Doctor's Dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, 1942.

the years from 1927 to 1939 saw its inauguration in twenty-five new communities; in thirteen it was established in the period from 1934 to 1939. Today the visiting teacher service is scattered over virtually the entire United States, the southern states having the smallest representation. The size of the school district employing the service ranges from approximately 2500 population to our largest cities. In over ninety per cent of the communities using it the service was inaugurated and is financially supported by the local school board.

Administration: The administration of the visiting teacher service varies with the community. In the smaller districts the visiting teacher is directly responsible to the superintendent of schools. In the larger cities of one hundred thousand or over, the visiting teacher service is usually located in the attendance department, psychological clinic or guidance department, or is under the direction of a coordinator of all the child welfare departments. The latter type of organization gives every indication of being particularly effective. The coordinator usually acts as a clearinghouse for information gathered by the various departments on all pupil cases. In all communities the superintendent of schools outlines the policies and gives general initiative to the visiting teacher work. The relationship between the visiting teacher and school staff

is unique. The success of her efforts depends upon the degree of cooperation given by principals, teachers, and the other members of the school staff. Her position is that of a specialist assisting in the prevention and solution of pupil maladjustment. As a social case worker, she supplements the school personnel and offers another point of view on the problems of the child. As an intermediary between home and school she becomes a coordinator of the efforts of all in the interest of the individual child. Yet in the performance of these duties she has no authority over any of the staff with which she works. Superintendents having the visiting teacher service declare themselves in favor of some training in social case work for the classroom teacher in order to establish a more effective coordination of effort between the two.

Education. The educational training of the visiting teacher (1942) ranges from graduation from normal school to a master's degree, the median being a bachelor's degree. Training in social work ranges from occasional, part-time, or summer school courses to completion of a two-year graduate course, the majority of visiting teachers having a one year graduate course in a school of social work. Visiting teachers are professionally organized in the American Association of Visiting Teachers. This organization began in 1919 and at the present time is active in dispensing information to

develop standards for the training of visiting teachers, improving working conditions and aiding local boards of education in establishing the service.

Qualifications. A visiting teacher should, first of all, have completed the education of a teacher and have had some experience in that capacity. Preferably a college-trained person, she should have had courses in sociology, social service, and related fields. Personal qualifications are of prime importance and should include good health, sincerity, patience, tact in dealing with people, maturity and judgment, trustworthiness, and leadership in community life. She should possess right attitudes toward children and home life, believing in the school and its work; she should be unprejudiced, and have respect for the judgment of others, a cooperative nature, and a willingness to accept irregular hours of work.

Functions. The primary function of the visiting teacher is to bring about a healthier, happier relationship among the child, his home, and his school. Her work is concerned with the adjustment of the child and his problems, information about and interpretation of the school to the home, and, wherever possible, an adjustment in the home as well as in the child. To accomplish these purposes, contacts must often be made with, and assistance secured from the courts, social service agencies, relatives

and other groups. Oppenheimer lists a total of thirty-two different functions, which include a study of the child and his environment; study of the home and of the parents, information and adjustment of each to the other aiding the child in his health, physical, and social needs; bringing information secured to the school; helping the family secure assistance through employment, hospital service, and with food and clothing; securing cooperation of necessary social agencies and the courts or the churches; and lending a hand in any manner which will secure the adjustment needed. The worth of this service to the school is invaluable. It is not difficult to perceive its great superiority over the usual administration of attendance.

Recent trends in visiting teacher work are indicated in the Schultz's⁵ study published in 1938. Schultz found seventy-eight visiting teachers in eleven of the sixteen cities included in his study. The qualifications of these seventy-eight teachers reflect the administrative viewpoint as to the type of service they are able to render; 65.4 per cent of them were normal school graduates, and an additional 32.7 per cent of them were college graduates, 65.4 per cent of the group had had specialized professional training; 84.6 per cent of the group had entered the visiting teacher work

⁵ J. L. Schultz, An Analysis of Present Practices in City Attendance Work, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1938) pp. 55-57.

with experience which should serve to advantage in pupil adjustment work, the majority having had classroom teaching experience.

The scope of the work of the visiting teacher is almost as broad as the entire educational environment of the child. For the cases referred to the department, the visiting teacher attempts to discover and to effect a correction of the factors in the child's personal make-up in his home life, and in his community contacts which are contributing to or actually causing his maladjustment.

Otto⁶ discusses Culbert's presentation of statistical data showing the nature of the referred cases and the pressures that visiting teachers have found helpful. Although deficient scholarship seems to be the most frequently recorded index whereby teachers recognize problem cases, there are many other reasons for referring pupils to the visiting teacher. There are numerous cases in which several difficulties have been noted for the same child.

The scope and nature of the visiting teacher's work suggest the variety of duties and responsibilities which are left to this department. In minor details the exact nature of her activities depends upon the extent

⁶ Henry J. Otto, Elementary School Organization, (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc. 1944) p. 338

and type of personnel work done in the local school units to which she is assigned and upon the policies regarding visiting teacher service which prevail in a given city. There are some functions, however, which appear to be more or less general.⁷

Oppenheimer⁸ prepared a list of "core" functions, each item of which was approved by seventy-five per cent of all judges, by seventy-five per cent of visiting teachers, and was actually performed by seventy-five per cent of the visiting teachers reporting.

The manner in which the visiting teacher functions in a school system brings her into contact with many departments, types of professional workers, and out-of-school agencies. Staff relationships are therefore very important, and cooperation of a high type is essential if the work is to be effective. Since the most desirable practice is to assign a visiting teacher to a specific building or a few conveniently situated buildings, rather than on a city-wide basis, she will work most intimately with the principal and the classroom teachers of a designated area. The principal and the director of the visiting teacher service generally supervise the work as it applies to the local school. To avoid delay and to obtain the most immediate information regarding cases, it is recommended that cases be referred

⁷Otto, op. cit., p. 339

⁸Oppenheimer, op cit., p. 95

to the visiting teaching directly from the classroom teachers and that reports be made directly to the teachers. Through the use of appropriate record forms and conferences teachers may be supplied continuously with information regarding a case, and the principal may be kept in close touch with the work.

The visiting teacher will have constant need for the cooperative attitude of various specialists and special departments. The psychologist as a member of the child-study department or the bureau of research and measurement, may furnish data regarding the mental, emotional, or academic status of pupils referred to the visiting teacher may use the information gathered by the health clinic and supplementary facts obtained from outside organizations, such as health agencies, recreation centers, employment agencies, social welfare bureaus, and children's courts. As the visiting teacher may use to advantage the assistance from these various groups; so in turn these special departments and organizations may find the visiting teacher a source of enlightenment for some of their problems.⁹

Weins¹⁰ suggests an assistant superintendent in charge of pupil personnel service with attendance, health, and guid-

⁹Oppenheimer, op. cit., p. 95.

¹⁰D. J. Weins, "Organization of Pupil Personnel Service in the City School Systems," (Unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, Department of Education, Western Reserve University, 1941), p. 227.

ance services, psychological service, and child accounting service. These five pupil personnel services were to include attendance officers, visiting teachers, physicians, dentists, consulting medical specialists, nurses, dental hygienist, vocational and educational counselors, placement and follow-up workers, dean of boys and girls, psychiatrists, social workers, specialists, census enumeration persons, census clerks, employment-certificate clerks, and clerks handling pupil records.

Oppenheimer¹¹ recommends an almost identical organization; he makes directly responsible to an assistant superintendent in charge of personnel services the (1) Director of the Department of School Census and Attendance, (2) Director of the Department of Mental Hygiene, (3) Director of the Department of Pupil Accounting, and (4) Director of the Educational and Vocational Placement Bureau.

Weins, Schultz, and Hech¹² gathered data in large school systems which showed the extent to which visiting teacher service, health service and psychiatric service had developed along with attendance service. The development of such services as a means of better solving problems of attendance and other problems of school children has defeated a problem of how best to organize them as a part of the public school program.

¹¹ Oppenheimer, op. cit., p. 146.

¹² A. O. Hech, "The Administration of Public School Policies," Journal of Educational Research, June, 1933, p. 186.

A review of some selected programs will reveal extensive flexibility in the organization. For example in Illinois there exists a position known as Visiting Adjustment Counselor¹³. A person who holds such a position must be a trained school social worker. The value of such work, of course, depends on the individual who has the position.

The Texas Program.¹⁴ The people of Texas had been learning about this larger scope of education, and the Texas Legislature went into action. In 1945, grants were provided for special classes for exceptional children. In 1949, among other features, the Gilmer-Aiken Bills provided for special services and special services personnel -- counselors, school nurses, and visiting teachers.

Since roots of personality disturbances in adults often lie in childhood experiences in school and at home, these are key places for preventive work.

With this in mind, discussions were initiated between the Division of Mental Health of the Texas State Department of Health and the Hogg Foundation for Mental Hygiene of the University of Texas in the summer of 1950 as to how the mental health functions of the school might

¹³ Matthew P. Gafney, "Meeting the Needs of Youth", The Bulletin, National Association of School Social Workers, March 1954, p. 10.

¹⁴ The Teamwork Project, op. cit., p. 3

be strengthened through the development and co-ordination of the special services personnel. Special services personnel were considered along with classroom teachers as key staff members whom the school administrator could use in developing the school's preventive mental hygiene services as well as in enriching the school program generally.

"Special services" and "special services personnel", as used here, refer to three disciplines -- counselor, school nurse, and visiting teacher. Their work is closely inter-related because of their emphasis on the total well-being of the child--physical, intellectual, emotional, and social. Classroom teachers are vitally concerned with the mental health of the child, but as instructors their activities are primarily in the classroom setting and require special skill in teaching children as members of a group. Visiting teachers need to have specialized skills and training to supplement the work of the classroom teacher. Special services personnel work hand-in-hand with teachers of exceptional children, as they do with the regular classroom teachers.

A state-wide committee was formed after consultation with the State Commissioner of Education and the staff of the Texas Education Agency. The primary goal of this committee was to study what might be done to promote the best development of the special services in the schools.

Representatives from State agencies, from related professional organizations, and from training centers for the three special services make up the Committee. The imposing name of "The State Committee on Integration of Counseling, School Nursing, and Visiting Teacher Services" was adopted. The first meeting of the Committee was held in Austin in September 1950, and three other meetings were held during the school year.

Rapid increases in special services personnel followed the passage of the Gilmer-Aiken Bills in 1949. Between the school years 1948-49 and 1949-50, twenty-three school counselors, thirty-two school nurses, and one hundred visiting teachers were added in local schools, the Texas Education Agency reported. Further additions during 1950-51 were made so that about one hundred eighty counselors, nearly five hundred school nurses, and about one hundred seventy-five visiting teachers were employed by public schools in the state during that school year.

Local school districts may receive money from the Texas Education Agency for one special services staff member for each multiple of twenty classroom teaching units. The law groups school nurses and visiting teachers along with librarians, school physicians, and itinerant teachers. School districts are permitted to choose from the five, to the extent of the district's eligibility, the number of each desired.

Exact information as to how many visiting teachers lack full, appropriate professional training is not available. However, current opinion indicates that a considerable number need and desire further education.

Development of these services is new in many parts of the United States, as it is in Texas. Definitions of functions are incomplete. Some administrators have not had time to study the appropriate role of each of the special services and their interrelationships.

CHAPTER III
INTERPRETATION OF DATA

A questionnaire study by principals, administrators and visiting teachers in Texas was made. This study included the duties of the visiting teacher shown in table number three. These are duties which are performed by visiting teachers in small schools and in five cities of Texas. These figures which serve to show the fluctuation of different duties now in progress in the schools of Texas indicate that some of the visiting teachers are doing jobs designated by the superintendent or principal simply because a clarification of duties as yet has not been determined.

Table number one shows the qualifications of visiting teachers; the type of certificates they now have.

Table number two shows the qualifications of visiting teachers and the type of degrees they now hold. Eight of the visiting teachers or thirty-two per cent have a Bachelor of Science Degree. Nine of the visiting teachers or thirty-six per cent have a Bachelor of Arts Degree. Five of the visiting teachers or twenty per cent have a Master of Science Degree. Three, or twelve per cent, of the visiting teachers have a Master of Arts Degree and three or twelve per cent of the visiting teachers have a Master's Degree in Education.

Table number three summarizes the duties performed by twenty-five visiting teachers of Texas during the school term of 1953-54.

As pointed out, behavior problems take precedence over other types of duties. This is shown by the fact that twenty-five visiting teachers or one hundred per cent of the total number of teachers participating in the study were significantly concerned with maladjustments of pupils, frequently referred to as "behavior problems".

Nineteen of the visiting teachers or seventy-six per cent reported Home Visitations; a second in line of duties performed by visiting teachers.

Fifteen of the twenty-five visiting teachers or sixty per cent are Investigating Economic Needs and the same number, fifteen, are working with children from broken homes.

Eleven of the twenty-five visiting teachers or forty-four per cent are making referrals to Welfare Agencies.

Twelve of the twenty-five visiting teachers or forty-eight per cent are working with handicapped children while fourteen or fifty-six per cent are keeping records of average daily attendance.

Two of the twenty-five visiting teachers or eight per cent are doing Counseling and two or eight per cent are doing Guidance work.

Four of the twenty-five visiting teachers or sixteen per cent perform Student Personnel Services, while

five, or twenty per cent do part-time office work, and five or twenty per cent are taking census.

Two of the visiting teachers or eight per cent are verifying birth certificates, and two or eight per cent are working as book custodians.

One of the visiting teachers or four per cent are working as film coordinator, and one or four per cent are working with the librarian.

Several visiting teachers returned the questionnaire after the tables had been compiled and reported the following duties not listed on the questionnaire: Verification of withdrawals, Medical Referrals and Follow-up, and Referrals to State Agencies.

It has been found that the visiting teacher service is unlike that of the attendance worker or the truant officer. Even though we remember that in 1916 there were no visiting teachers or special service workers in Texas; the visiting teacher referred to in this study, is a teacher and social worker. She deals with the emotional or social mal-adjustment problems of the school child.

There is no doubt in the writer's mind that a visiting teacher program would decrease the high cost of school failures, lessen the number of behavior problems and prevent early mal-adjustment leading to truancy.

Copies of questionnaire on the Conceptions of the Role of the Visiting Teacher in Texas were sent to forty-two administrators and school personnel. Twenty-five persons responded.

Eleven of the persons answering the questionnaire were principals. This is forty-four per cent of the total number. One, or four per cent, supervisors; and thirteen or fifty-two per cent were visiting teachers.

Twenty-five, one hundred per cent, of the school personnel answered yes when asked if their school had visiting teacher services.

TABLE I
QUALIFICATIONS OF VISITING TEACHERS
TYPE OF CERTIFICATE

Type of Certificate	Number	Per Cent
Elementary Permanent	2	8
High School Permanent	20	80
Social Science	1	4
Special Certificate	4	16
Six Year High School	1	4

Note: The total number of certificates recorded is greater than the total number of persons answering questionnaire due to the fact that some visiting teachers have more than one certificate.

Table I gives qualifications of visiting teachers in regard to certificates held. Two of the visiting teachers or eight per cent have an Elementary Permanent Certificate. Twenty of the twenty-five visiting teachers or eighty per cent have a High School Permanent Certificate. One of the twenty-five visiting teachers has a Social Science Certificate; and four, or sixteen per cent have a Special Certificate. One of the twenty-five visiting teachers has a Six Year High School Certificate.

TABLE II
 QUALIFICATIONS OF VISITING TEACHERS
 DEGREE

Degree	Number	Per Cent
Bachelor of Science	8	32
Bachelor of Arts	9	36
Master of Science	5	20
Master of Arts	3	12
Master in Education	3	12

Eight of the visiting teachers or thirty-two per cent have a Bachelor of Science Degree. Nine of the twenty-five visiting teachers or thirty-six per cent have Bachelor of Arts Degrees.

Five of the twenty-five visiting teachers or twenty per cent have a Master of Science Degree. Three of the twenty-five visiting teachers or twelve per cent have a Master of Arts Degree. Three of the twenty-five visiting teachers or twelve per cent have a Master's Degree in Education. The qualifications of the visiting teachers in regard to the type of college degrees held showed that twenty-five or one hundred per cent of the people answering the questionnaire have a college degree.

The experience, in years, in regard to classroom teaching for all twenty-five persons varied from three years to seventeen years.

Each of the twenty-five visiting teachers had had at least one of the special courses listed in the questionnaire.

On the basis of the data presented in Table number three, twenty-five or one hundred per cent handle Behavior Problems, while nineteen or seventy-six per cent make Home Visitations. Fifteen of the twenty-five visiting teachers or sixty per cent investigate economic needs. Fifteen of the twenty-five visiting teachers or sixty per cent work with children from broken homes. Eleven of the twenty-five visiting teachers or forty-four per cent make referrals to Welfare Agencies. Twelve of the visiting teachers or forty-eight per cent are working with handicapped children. Fourteen of the twenty-five visiting teachers or fifty-six per cent are keeping records of Average Daily Attendance.

TABLE III

DUTIES OF THE VISITING TEACHERS

Duties	Number	Percentage
Behavior Problems	25	100
Home Visitations	19	76
Investigating Economic Needs	15	60
Making Referrals to Welfare Agencies	11	44
Working with children from Broken Homes	15	60
Working with Handicapped Children	12	48
Keeping Records of Average Daily Attendance	14	56
Attendance Worker	2	8
Counselor	2	8
Guidance	2	8
Student Personnel Services	4	16
Part-time Office Worker	5	20
Taking Census	5	20
Verification of Birth Certificates	2	8
Book Custodian	2	8
Film Coordinator	1	4
Working with Librarian	1	4

Two of the twenty-five visiting teachers or eight per cent are doing attendance work. Two of the twenty-five visiting teachers or eight per cent are doing counseling and two or eight per cent are doing guidance work. Four of the twenty-five visiting teachers or sixteen per cent perform student personnel services, while five or twenty per cent do parttime office work. Five of the twenty-five visiting teachers or twenty per cent are taking census. Two of the twenty-five visiting teachers or eight per cent verify birth certificates, while two or eight per cent are working as book custodians. One of the visiting teachers, four per cent, is working as film coordinator. One of the visiting teachers, four per cent, is working with the librarian.

Descriptive Data Relative to Types of Visiting Teacher Programs in Five Cities of Texas: This section of the study proposes to reveal historical facts relative to the evolution of the program. Hence, a review of the visiting teacher services by cities will of necessity be presented chronologically with respect to their origins.

Houston, Texas: The first visiting teacher was employed by the Houston Independent School District in 1929.¹⁵

1

Chester L. Bower, "A Community's Concern for Its Children Brings a Visiting Teacher Program to the Schools," Texas Trends, January, 1946, pp. 2-9.

From 1934 to 1944, the District was without visiting teachers. The service was resumed in the school year 1945-46. The staff of the Visiting Teacher Department of the Houston Independent School District in eight years has grown from seven visiting teachers in the school year 1945-46 to twenty-two teachers as of 1952-53. After 1949 the salaries of visiting teachers were reimbursable under the provisions of the Gilmer-Aiken Act.

The Resources Used by Visiting Teachers : (1)

School Personnel, (2) Public Agencies, (3) United Fund Agencies, and (4) Other Resources. School Personnel includes, Psychologist, Reading Clinic, Attendance Department, Nurse or Doctor, Principal and teachers. Public Agencies include the Probation Department, State Department of Public Welfare, Board of Public Welfare, and Other public agencies.

The United Fund Agencies to which the visiting teachers make referrals are: The Family Service Bureau, The Red Cross, Faith Home, Neighborhood Centers, and Guidance Center. Other Resources are: Jefferson Davis Hospital, Hermann Hospital, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts.

The visiting teacher functions are: (1) Case Study, (2) At-Large Referrals, and (3) Consultative Service. Case Study is the prime function of visiting teacher service. Children are referred to visiting teachers usually by teachers and principals and, also, by nurses, parents,

children themselves, and social agencies, for assistance in gaining a better understanding of the child and his behavior.

Visiting teachers seek, through conference with the child, his home, and with teachers, to help the child utilize the school resource to his best advantage. Cooperative planning is done with social agencies if that is indicated.

Such work with individual children might continue for six months to a year or longer. Some studies for specific situations are of short duration.

At-Large referrals are frequently of short duration and refer to those situations brought to visiting teachers from schools not having regular visiting teacher service.

Consultative Service: - - Many principals, teachers, and parents seek direction regarding group situations (such as room conduct) or specific behavior to increase their general understanding of behavior dynamics and to assist in making adjustments in programs for children. The visiting teacher does not carry on a full case study in such instances. This is consultation only.

Other visiting teacher functions are: (1) Group discussions, (2) Visiting Teacher Advisory Council Meetings, (3) Pre-School Registrations, and (4) Junior High School Orientation.

Group Discussions - - These are meetings with parents and teachers to help in gaining a better understanding of

child's behavior. Work with groups of children to help their group understanding to bring modifications in individual behavior.

Advisory Council Meetings - - Regularly planned meetings composed of principals of schools in which visiting teachers work regularly, visiting teachers, lay members, and other interested school and agency individuals.

The Mental Health in Education Workshop was an outgrowth of the Visiting Teacher Advisory Council's desire to increase understanding of relationship of emotional development to school progress.

Visiting teachers have worked in the schools with these two programs:

Pre-School Registrations - - This refers to meetings with parents of pre-school children and with children themselves for the purpose of making entrance into school a happy as well as an educational experience.

Junior High School Orientation - - The meetings between sixth grade children, their sixth grade teachers, their elementary school principal, the junior high school principal and counselor regarding the transition from elementary to junior high school.

This refers to a variety of programs aimed at making the entrance into junior high school meaningful and pleasant. Some schools have meetings of sixth grade children with principal

and counselor of junior high. Counselors have assisted with adjusted programs for some children from sixth grade.

The Visiting Teacher Service in Houston, Texas is a preventive service based in elementary schools.

The major reasons for referral of pupils to the visiting teacher department were: (1) Personality, (2) Scholarship, (3) Behavior, and (4) Home Situation. Pupils were referred by: (1) Principal, (2) Classroom teacher, (3) Psychologist, (4) Attendance Officer, (5) Nurse or Doctor, (6) Family or relatives, (7) Child himself, (8) Social agencies, and Other individuals.¹⁶

Austin, Texas - - Authur Cunningham, Junior¹⁷ writes: Quite often when departments or agencies dealing with human relationships make their own reports and evaluations, these reports may become a succient series of success stories, but the evaluation of another agency more objectively gauges the work of the Austin Visiting Teacher Department. A report from the Juvenile Probation Department to the Juvenile Board in February, 1947, says:

It is gratifying to note that fewer cases are being referred by the public schools in following up cases and making satisfactory adjustments without bringing the Juvenile Court into the picture unnecessarily and prematurely.

¹⁶ Annual Report, Visiting Teacher Department, Houston Public Schools, September 1953 - June 1954.

¹⁷ Authur Cunningham, Junior, "Austin's Visiting Teachers", Texas Outlook, August, 1947, pp. 8, 26-31.

Objective - - Service is the first objective. The principal objective of the Visiting Teacher Department is service to the individual pupil, his family, his group, his school and his community.

The visiting teacher represents the school's varied interests in the pupil and attempts to render every possible service. He attempts to help the pupil and other members of the family solve their own difficulties. He suggests possibilities for consideration which may, and often do, result in a plan for solution. The visiting teacher offers a receptive ear to the discussion of the pupil's problem, and as the problem develops, mutual analysis is made, and with the consent of the individual or family, a solution attempted, mutually.

The visiting teachers have worked with nine hundred eighty two cases this school year. These presented a total of two thousand five hundred seventy nine problems. These problems involved (a) Aspects of Home Environment, (b) Economic Problems, (c) Cultural Patterns, (d) Health Problems, (e) School Difficulties, (f) Delinquencies, (g) Miscellaneous.

Education is the second objective. Education has been the second objective of this department. Absences and behavior are symptoms of other problems of the pupil, and

it is the function of this department to assist the pupil in his environment in working out a solution. It has been necessary to give an understanding of its function to the pupil and his parents, classroom teachers and principals, and to the administrators and case workers of other departments and social agencies.

Teacher Training is the third objective. In--Service training for visiting teachers has been another objective. The training was planned to develop each individual's cognizance of problems while working with pupils and their families. Growth is shown by increasing awareness of the vast number of problems and the improved quality of skills and techniques used.

In-Service training has taken the form of group discussions and case conferences. Many subjects have been considered during informal group study.

As an outgrowth of the in-service training, a closing case - analysis form was originated to serve as a means of evaluation on the quality of work being done. This form assists the visiting teacher to analyze the aspects of each particular case.

Connecting Link, is the fourth objective. Another important objective has been to serve as the connecting link for pupils and families with schools and social agencies.

Dallas, Texas - - On September 9, 1941, three visiting teachers, two white and one Negro, began working in the Dallas School System. The function of these teachers in 1941 was stated as follows: To help establish a better understanding and closer cooperation between the home and school; to investigate and interpret to parents causes which lead to maladjustment and delinquency and to assist in every possible way in getting children back to school who have stopped school because of discouragement, home difficulties, misunderstandings, or violations of school regulations.

In September 1945, one of the twelve recommendations of the American Public Welfare Association to the Dallas Citizen's Committee on Juvenile Welfare was: That the Visiting Teacher Department of the Public Schools of Dallas be strengthened and enlarged and the name changed to School Social Workers.¹⁸ It was further recommended that the Superintendent of Dallas schools carry out his plan of a check of the school Census before the end of the first term and that the reasons the non-enrollment of every child be ascertained. Mr. Leo Stadther, Census Director of the Dallas schools, had made this study in 1942-1943, but had made no analysis as to why the children had failed to enroll in school.

¹⁸ Letters to principals from the late L. V. Stockard, Assistant Superintendent of Schools, Dallas, Texas.

Prior to 1945, the visiting teacher staff had increased to four, and beginning in September, 1945, a staff of five underwent successive increases until it reached seven, serving under a visiting teacher in charge. On September 9, 1945, the Superintendent of Schools issued a mimeographed publication which stated that the visiting teacher program of the Dallas Public Schools has been expanded primarily to accomplish the following: (1) To account for all children with the compulsory school age, seven to fifteen years inclusive, living in the Dallas Independent School District, (2) to promote the highest possible enrollment in the school of this group of children, and (3) to assist the school in the improvement of the average daily attendance of the pupils enrolled.¹⁹

At the present time the visiting teachers serve as social workers with an educational approach, five white and two Negroes, and make an average of seven daily calls. They begin with the child and the teacher to find out the reason for irregular attendance then discuss the problem with the parent. When a child cannot afford to continue school, the visiting teacher enlists the support of welfare agencies and other relief funds to adjust the needs of the child and family.²⁰

¹⁹ Dr. W. T. White, Mimeographed Bulletin to Principals, Dallas Independent School District, September, 1945.

²⁰ F. H. Phelps, "Visiting Teacher Program in Dallas, Texas," (Unpublished Master's thesis, Dept. of Social Service, Atlanta School of Social Work, 1943), pp. 6-7, 15-16.

Harlingen, Texas - - The Teamwork Project.²¹

We are getting a different slant on education today. Facts and how to use them are important . But we are learning to educate students as a whole, as whole people. This means giving them a chance to learn how to get along with themselves and others. It means taking into account how slow or how fast they learn and that all students have different aptitudes and capacities.

The people of Texas had been learning about this larger scope of education, and the Texas legislature went into action. In 1945, grants were provided for special classes for exceptional children. In 1949, among other features, the Gilmer-Aiken Bills provided for special services and special services personnel - - counselors, school nurses, and visiting teachers.

Since roots of personality disturbances in adults often lie in childhood experiences in school and at home, these are key places for preventive work.

With this in mind, discussions were initiated between the Division of Mental Health of the Texas State Department of Health and the Hogg Foundation for Mental Hygiene of the University of Texas in the summer of 1950 as to how the mental health functions of the school might

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A Progress Report of the Harlingen Project after the first six months of operation, The Teamwork Project, Austin: 1950-51, pp. 83-91.

be strengthened through the development and co-ordination of the special services personnel. Special services personnel were considered along with classroom teachers as key staff members whom the school administrator could use in developing the school's preventive mental hygiene services as well as in enriching the school program generally.

"Special services" and "special services personnel", as used here, refer to three disciplines - - counselor, school nurse, and visiting teacher. Their work is closely inter-related because of their emphasis on the total well-being of the child - - physical, intellectual, emotional, and social. Classroom teachers are vitally concerned with the mental health of the child, but as instructors their activities are primarily in the classroom setting and require special skill in teaching children as members of a group. Visiting teachers need to have specialized skills and training to supplement the work of the classroom teacher. Special services personnel work hand-in-hand with teachers of exceptional children, as they do with the regular classroom teachers.

A state-wide committee was formed after consultation with the state Commissioner of Education and a staff of the Texas Education Agency. The primary goal of this committee was to study what might be done to promote the best develop-

ment of the special services in the schools. Representatives from state agencies, from related professional organizations, and from training centers for three special services make up the committee. The first meeting of the committee was held in Austin in September 1950, and three other meetings were held during the school year.

Rapid increases in special services personnel followed the passage of the Gilmer-Aiken Bills in 1949. Between the school years 1948-49, twenty-three school counselors, thirty-two school nurses, and one hundred visiting teachers were added in local schools, the Texas Education Agency reported. Further additions during 1950-51 were made, so that about one hundred eighty counselors, nearly five hundred school nurses, and about one hundred seventy-five visiting teachers were employed by public schools in the state during that school year.

Local school districts may receive money from the Texas Education Agency for special services staff members for each multiple of twenty classroom teaching units. The law groups school nurses and visiting teachers along with librarians, school physicians, and itinerant teachers. School districts are permitted to choose from the five, to the extent of the district's eligibility, the number of each desired.

Visiting Teacher's Contribution to the School - - As a member of the school staff, the visiting teacher is assigned to assist the principal and teachers with individual children whose inability to adapt to school seems to require an approach different from and supplementary to that of the classroom or school office.

The training of the visiting teacher has as its aim that of preparing her to understand the factors in family relationships and in other inter-personal relationships which may be affecting the pupil's behavior, and of teaching her to understand the various feelings and attitudes which may be interfering with the school adjustment of the pupil; also that of teaching her a method of helping children and families to attempt to resolve problems so children can adapt to and use fully what the school offers.

The skills which the visiting teacher brings to the school are those of social casework. The visiting teacher's work may be through direct casework service with the child and/or the family; through consultation with teacher, counselor, nurse special education personnel, or others; through referral to other community agency services.

Pupils are referred to the visiting teacher for the following reasons: (1) non-attendance problems, (2) some behavior problems, (3) other social and emotional symptoms

interfering with the child's adjustment, (4) need for free lunches, and (5) other economic needs.

The schools of Beaumont Independent School District have visiting teachers who do some functions of a visiting teacher under the Director of Pupil Personnel Services.

The three major responsibilities the school program for personnel work services carry are:

1. To understand the child's problems and help him work through his difficulty.
2. To help schools to have a special knowledge of the child who has difficulty adjusting in school.
3. To coordinate the many resources of the school and community in the child's behalf.

It is apparent that Beaumont is carrying out duties and functions in accordance with the trend of Dallas and Houston on a smaller scale. Because of a limited interview, the entire program was not surveyed.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

Summary: Through the use of questionnaires, it was found that the visiting teacher service is unlike that of the attendance worker or truant officer. A visiting teacher program decreases the high cost of school failure, lessens the number of behavior problems, and prevents early maladjustment problems of the school child.

The work of the visiting teacher is of great importance because it is concerned with the work of the total child -- physical, mental, intellectual, emotional, and social. Obviously the assignment of the visiting teacher involves the school, the home, and the overall community. It becomes evident that cooperative and coordinate relationships must exist between the visiting teacher and the school personnel, if a full realization of the objectives of the program are to be met.

Conclusions: The role of the classroom teacher is of such magnitude that the responsibilities assigned to the special school personnel under a visiting teacher program makes significant contributions toward the educative process in each incidence. The principal conclusions inferred from the over-all analysis of this study may be summarized to include the following: First, that the visiting teacher program is highly flexible; Second, that all the departments of the

educational programs in Texas schools are not in agreement as to the objectives of the visiting teacher services to the school and community; Third, that research findings indicate the development of significant trends; Fourth, that a considerable amount of inadequacies are currently existing in the public schools of Texas because the objectivity of the visiting teacher's role is obscure; Fifth, that visiting teachers need special training for effective service; Sixth, that there is positive need for the special services assigned to the visiting teacher.

Implications: Even though the correlations in this research are small, some are highly significant. It has been well established that the study of the role of the visiting teacher is a psychological problem. Teachers, administrators, parents and pupils should develop more appropriate attitudes toward the service in the Texas schools. The information should contribute to the development of basic knowledges of the objectivity of the program and simultaneously influence thinking on a program for the visiting teacher that has more objectivity. Probably visiting teachers themselves are not cognizant of objectivity. This would imply need for group relations improvement including a definite acquainting of all concerned with their respective duties.

Because many programs are already in operation that are seemingly insecure, there is need for improved in-service

programs for the visiting teacher; for administrators and school personnel. Such in-service programs could clarify objectives and at the same time outline procedures for attaining them.

Finally, with the advent of certification standards and including preparation requirements it is obvious that there is need for the development of those competencies that will enable the visiting teacher to serve effectively in a highly flexible program to meet needs of children.

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5. Present duties of the visiting teacher (Check):

- a. Keeping records of Average Daily Attendance ()
- b. Taking Census ()
- c. Part-time Office Worker ()
- d. Working with broken homes ()
- e. Investigating economic needs ()
- f. Assisting Welfare Agencies ()
- g. Being a Book Custodian ()
- h. Working with Handicapped Children ()
- i. Making Home Visitations ()
- j. Doing Child Accounting ()
- k. Supervising Pupil Personnel Services ()
- l. Other _____

6. Use the space below for additional comments:

LIST OF SCHOOLS PARTICIPATING IN THE STUDY

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Austin | 13. Houston |
| 2. Bryan | 14. Huntsville |
| 3. Beaumont | 15. Harlingen |
| 4. Conroe | 16. Longview |
| 5. Corpus Christi | 17. Mexia |
| 6. Caldwell | 18. Marshall |
| 7. Columbus | 19. Midland |
| 8. Dallas | 20. Navasota |
| 9. El Paso | 21. Orange |
| 10. Fairfield | 22. San Antonio |
| 11. Ft. Worth | 23. Seguin |
| 12. Galveston | 24. Taylor |