

**A SURVEY OF PARENT OPINIONS REGARDING
ROBERTSON COUNTY SCHOOLS**

BY

COLEY TIDWELL CARL

A SURVEY OF PARENT OPINIONS REGARDING
ROBERTSON COUNTY SCHOOLS



A Research Paper
Presented to
the Graduate Council of
Austin Peay State University



In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in Education



by
Coley Tidwell Carl

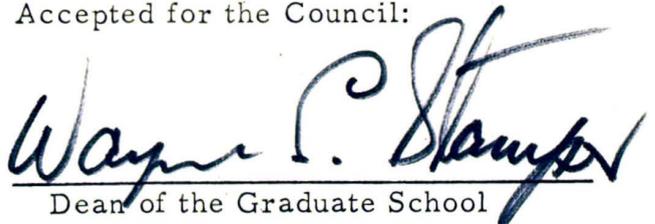
April, 1970

To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a Research Paper written by Coley Tidwell Carl entitled "A Survey of Parent Opinions Regarding Robertson County Schools." I recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, with a major in administration and supervision.


Major Professor

Accepted for the Council:


Dean of the Graduate School

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author wishes to express sincere appreciation to Dr. Fred A. Bungler, Chairman, Department of Education, Austin Peay State University, who aided and encouraged him throughout the course of his research.

Appreciation is extended to Mr. J. B. Whitman, Superintendent, Robertson County Schools, for his continuous support and assistance in this endeavor.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. THE PROBLEM	1
Importance of the Study.	2
Delimitations of the Study.	2
Definitions of Terms Used.	3
Review of Related Literature and Research.	3
Methods and Procedures.	6
Organization of the Study.	7
II. PRESENTING THE DATA.	9
Data from Questionnaire.	13
III. ANALYSIS OF SELECTED ITEMS OF THE PARENT OPINION SURVEY.	23
IV. CONCLUSIONS.	31
BIBLIOGRAPHY.	33
APPENDIX.	34

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE		PAGE
I.	Response Frequencies of Parents of Children Enrolled in Robertson County Schools as to School, Enrollment, Distribution, and Response.	9
II.	Comparison of Percentage of Responses of Parents from the Five Schools with the Smallest Enrollments. .	11
III.	Comparison of Percentage of Responses of Parents from the Five Schools with the Largest Enrollments. .	12
IV.	Frequency Distribution of Parents' Response to the Question: <u>All Things Considered, How much do you Think your Children are Getting out of Their School-work?</u>	13
V.	Frequency Distribution of Parents' Response to the Question: <u>Which, if any, of the Following Things Would you Like to see the School Increase?</u>	14
VI.	Response Frequencies of Parents to the Question: <u>With Rising Costs, the only way Schools can keep up the Services They are Giving is Through Increased Funds. In View of this Fact Should Taxes be Increased or School Services cut?</u>	25

VII. Response Frequencies of Parents to the Question:
All of us Want our Children to have a Good Education
in the Basic Subjects. Beyond This, on What Would
you Insist and be Willing to Support even if it Should
add to Your School Tax Bill? 26

VIII. Response Frequencies of Parents to the Question:
Do you Think That Your Children's School is Over-
crowded? 28

IX. Response Frequencies of Parents to the Question:
Select Five of These School Subjects that you Think
are Most Important. 29

CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

In recent years the trend in educational thinking has been to involve, more and more, the thoughts and opinions of parents when determining the policies and organization of the schools to which parents send their children. When this procedure was followed, it was found that stronger cooperation was forthcoming from parents and that the lines of communication were vastly improved.

Opinion surveys have proved to be satisfactory instruments to secure the thoughts and opinions of parents concerning the policies and organization of the schools.

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the Problem. It was the purpose of this study (1) to determine, from the responses of the parents whose children attended the schools of Robertson County, Tennessee, the extent to which they felt the school was meeting the needs of their children academically; (2) to determine the extent to which the school was meeting the needs of their children socially; (3) to determine parents' reaction to increased taxes to support higher quality education for

their children; (4) to determine what parents were willing to finance, in addition to the present curriculum, for their children; (5) to determine if present classrooms were overcrowded; and (6) to determine what parents valued most and least in regard to education for their children.

Importance of the Study. Harold Howe II, Former U.S. Commissioner of Education, said in 1966, "The ideas of the educator can prevail only if they win the approval of the layman. . . . We must welcome and encourage a responsible interest in the schools by laymen who hold no official position except that of citizen."¹

This study will help Mr. J. B. Whitman, Superintendent of Robertson County Schools to: (1) show the parents of Robertson County school children that he valued their opinions on school issues; (2) determine his success in communicating with the public on some recent issues; (3) secure statistical data to support his request for educational programs when approaching the Board of Education and County Court; and, (4) design educational goals and programs in line with public sentiment where practical.

Delimitations of the Study. The scope of this study was limited to the responses, secured by the questionnaire, of the parents of

¹ Harold Howe, II., Address to Congress in 1966.

school children enrolled in the Robertson County public school system. The respondents were requested to return their responses to each respective principal, (to prohibit the high degree of control possible when conducting a personal interview).

II. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

In the reporting of this study, it was apparent that some terms were used in a unique or restricted sense. The following definitions were presented:

Parent Opinion Inventory will be interpreted as the survey instrument used to gather data on opinion of parents concerning twenty specific questions. "Parent Opinion Inventory" and "Questionnaire" are used synonymously.

Parent shall mean the parents of children enrolled in the public school of Robertson County.

Children refer to the children enrolled in grades one through twelve in the public schools of Robertson County.

III. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND RESEARCH

A comprehensive survey of the related studies on the many facets of the problem had been made with representative sample of the research summarized here.

MacGregor found, in a study of public attitudes toward education, that the interpersonal relationship between teacher and child was of

primary importance in the formation of the parents' attitudes toward the school. His study also revealed that the physical facilities of the school in terms of space, comfort, safety, and the promotion of good health were influential in establishing parental concepts of the school.² In addition, he found widespread ignorance of what was being taught. MacGregor discovered many "citizens who, when asked to describe a specific, real school that they should know about, were unable to do so."³

Jones in an analysis of public opinion in the school district of Gentry, Arkansas, had a message for those, who ask for increased financial support for public education. He found that the people based their judgments on school matters on utilitarian philosophy, that the general population appreciated only those portions of the school programs which contact the community, and that the information and influence pattern in the community indicated a lack of harmonious understanding between the schools and the public.⁴

²Archie MacGregor, "An Assay of Public Attitudes Toward Education" (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1959).

³Ibid., p. 33.

⁴Guy D. Jones, "An Analysis of Public Opinion in a School District with Respect to Selected Aspects of Public Education," Dissertation Abstracts (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1956), p. 2075.

Parental attitudes toward the schools have been studied in terms of the distance the parent lived from the school, the occupation of the parent, and the religious beliefs and social class of the parent.

King found, in a study of Negro parents in Florida, that distance from school, socio-economic status, sex of parent, length of residence in the community, and other selected variables made no significant difference in the attitude of the parent toward the school.⁵

Bray reported that there were differences in the amount of information held by certain occupational groups and that there was a direct relationship between the amount of information held by a person and his satisfaction with the school. This investigation also revealed a direct relationship between citizen's satisfactions with the schools and their expressed willingness to pay increased local taxes. Farmers and housewives were found to know the least about the schools of the district and tended to be reluctant to pay increased local taxes for their support.⁶

⁵Maxwell Clark King, "The Relationship Between Parental Attitudes Toward the School and Distance Lived from the School," Dissertation Abstracts (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1956), p. 290.

⁶William Isiah Bray, "A Study of the Extent of School Information Held by Various Occupational Groups in Arkansas and the Attitudes of These Groups Regarding Certain School Services and Expenses," Dissertation Abstracts (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1957), p. 1496.

Hulser did a comprehensive study of religious affiliation and social class as these factors influenced the support of the public schools of Rutland, Vermont. He concluded: In financial support, it was found that Catholics in Rutland indicated little desire to increase the school tax, holding that the budget was ample. Protestants however, indicated a desire to increase the school tax in the belief that the school budget was not adequate.

While the following results were not significant due to the level of confidence required for the study, it was also noted that the upper social classes of both religious groups tended to indicate a desire for increased tax support while the lower social classes felt the school budget was ample in its present form.

In interest support, it was found that the upper social classes of both religious groups gave responses that indicated they knew significantly more about the curriculum and the problems of the public schools than did the lower social classes. This factor was found despite the significantly smaller family size of the upper social classes.⁷

IV. METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Discussions with members of the Education Department of

⁷John V. Hulser, "Factors of Religion and Social Class in the Support of Public Schools" (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Connecticut, 1959).

Austin Peay State University, led to a tentative list of items to be surveyed in Robertson County to determine parents' opinion of the schools in the county. A meeting with Mr. J. B. Whitman, Superintendent of Robertson County Schools, in Springfield, Tennessee, led to a decision on the feasibility of the survey, the commitment of the superintendent to assist in any way possible, and the final adoption of twenty items to be surveyed by use of a questionnaire.

The method being determined, the procedures were as follows:

- (1) submitting the questionnaire to the printer; (2) distributing the printed instrument, in numbers according to the enrollment of the school, to the principals of each school in Robertson County with specific instruction that he place one copy in the hands of the oldest child in each family enrolled in school (the questionnaire was to be returned to the principal by the child or his parent, and when returned all instruments were to be sent by the principal to the central office);
- (3) securing all completed questionnaires and tabulating the responses;
- (4) preparing the information into meaningful tables; and, (5) interpreting and summarizing all data secured.

V. ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

The study was divided into three chapters. Chapter I contained the statement of the problem, importance of study, definition of terms, review of related literature, and methods and procedures. In Chapter

II the data gathered on the survey was presented in table form with statements concerning each parent's responses. A summary of the findings was presented in Chapter III. The conclusions drawn from this study were presented in Chapter IV. The appendix followed Chapter IV.

CHAPTER II

PRESENTING THE DATA

Of the approximately three thousand five hundred questionnaires distributed in twenty-one schools in the Robertson County School System 1,238 were returned. This 35.4 percent returned provided a foundation for the study. Table I shows the names of the schools, the number of students enrolled in each school, the number of questionnaires given to the oldest child in each family, and the number of parents who responded.

TABLE I

RESPONSE FREQUENCIES OF PARENTS OF CHILDREN ENROLLED IN ROBERTSON COUNTY SCHOOLS AS TO SCHOOL, ENROLLMENT, DISTRIBUTION, AND RESPONSE

SCHOOL	ENROLLMENT	NUMBER OF PARENTS CONTACTED	NUMBER OF PARENTS RESPONDING
Barren Plains	76	51	26
Bell	164	101	39
Bransford Elementary	520	246	31
Bransford High	503	304	86
Cedar Hill	217	180	81

TABLE I (continued)

SCHOOL	ENROLLMENT	NUMBER OF PARENTS CONTACTED	NUMBER OF PARENTS RESPONDING
Cheatham Park	596	301	122
Coopertown	169	70	35
Cross Plains	230	137	45
East Robertson	168	121	84
Green Brier Elementary	633	349	126
Green Brier High	416	243	121
Jo Byrns High	193	106	55
Krisle	180	97	49
North Robertson	129	80	41
Oakland Bethlehem	70	31	19
Orlinda	236	167	93
Springfield High	659	256	59
Springfield Jr. High	475	200	50
Watauga	278	132	31
White House	286	121	26
Woodland Street	210	<u>107</u>	<u>19</u>
TOTAL		3,500	1,238

The number of parents responding to the instrument revealed some interesting data concerning the parents of the children attending the schools in Robertson County. The writer compared the percent of the responses by parents from the five smallest schools, Oakland Bethlehem, Barren Plains, North Robertson, Bell, and East Robertson, with the response by parents from the largest schools, Springfield High, Green Brier Elementary, Cheatham Park, Bransford Elementary, and Bransford High.

TABLE II

COMPARISON OF PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES OF PARENTS FROM THE FIVE SCHOOLS WITH THE SMALLEST ENROLLMENTS

SCHOOL	ENROLLMENT	NUMBER OF PARENTS CONTACTED	NUMBER OF PARENTS RESPONDING	PERCENT OF RESPONSE
Oakland Bethlehem	70	31	19	61
Barren Plains	76	51	26	58
North Robertson	129	80	41	50
Bell	164	101	39	38
East Robertson	168	121	84	69

TABLE III

COMPARISON OF PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES OF PARENTS FROM THE FIVE SCHOOLS WITH THE LARGEST ENROLLMENTS

SCHOOL	ENROLLMENT	NUMBER OF PARENTS CONTACTED	NUMBER OF PARENTS RESPONDING	PERCENT OF RESPONSE
Springfield High	659	256	59	23
Green Brier Elementary	633	349	126	36
Cheatham Park	596	301	122	40
Bransford High	503	304	86	28
Bransford Elementary	520	246	31	12

From examining Table II one will see that with the exception of Bell School, the percentage of responses from the parents in the schools with the lowest enrollment exceeded fifty percent. In Table III the responses of parents from the schools with the highest enrollment had a range of twelve percent to forty percent.

One could surmise from these figures that parents whose children attend the smaller schools feel closer, manifest more interest, and cooperate better, than parents whose children attend the schools with the larger enrollment. Further data on the parents would have to be secured before this could become a positive conclusion.

DATA FROM QUESTIONNAIRE

The following section was concerned with presenting the data from the questionnaire, item by item. This presentation permitted a more concise method for presentation.

1. a. All things considered, how much do you think your child is getting out of his schoolwork?

Response to this item is presented in Table IV.

TABLE IV

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF PARENTS' RESPONSE TO THE QUESTION: ALL THINGS CONSIDERED, HOW MUCH DO YOU THINK YOUR CHILDREN ARE GETTING OUT OF THEIR SCHOOL-
WORK?

1.	About all that he should get	492
2.	Somewhat less than he should get	479
3.	Considerably less than he should get	97
4.	A great deal less than he should get	49
5.	I have no opinion	78

In response to Item 1. a., 492 parents listed "about all that he should get;" 479 parents listed "less than he should get;" ninety-seven parents listed "a great deal less than he should get;" and seventy-eight parents listed "no opinion."

- b. Tell any kinds of requests for money in the schools which should be eliminated.

In response to the second item, parents responded with nineteen "eliminating sales;" fifteen responded "selling pictures;" nine listed "lunches," "teacher aids," etc.

TABLE V

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF PARENTS' RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION: WHICH, IF ANY, OF THE FOLLOWING THINGS WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE THE SCHOOL INCREASE? (YOU MAY CHECK MORE THAN ONE.)

1. More emphasis on teaching children how to get along with others.	<u>624</u>
2. More chances for all children to learn sports and recreational activities.	<u>300</u>
3. More attention to sex education.	<u>169</u>
4. More attention to the problems of family life.	<u>216</u>
5. More attention to the problems of city, state, and national government.	<u>352</u>
6. More study of the methods of propaganda.	<u>118</u>
7. More study of how to use money wisely.	<u>409</u>
8. More attention to reading.	<u>611</u>
9. More attention to arithmetic.	<u>549</u>
10. More attention to public and social speaking.	<u>431</u>
11. Other (specify)	<u> </u>
12. Other (specify)	<u> </u>

2. Do you think your child's school is overcrowded?

Second item response was 298, "no, it is not overcrowded;" 552, "is somewhat overcrowded;" and 126, "no opinion."

3. With rising costs, the only way schools can keep up the services they are now giving is through increased funds. In view of this fact should taxes be increased or school services cut?

For item number three, 132 indicated "they strongly felt taxes should be increased;" 255 parents listed "they were inclined to feel that taxes should be increased;" 639 parents listed "I am not sure;" fifty-five parents listed "I am inclined to feel that school services should be cut;" and twenty-seven parents listed "I strongly feel that school services should be cut."

4. Which, if any, of the following things would you like to see the school increase? (You may check more than one)

The fourth item responses were 626 for "more emphasis on teaching children to get along with others;" 300, "more chances for all children to learn sports and recreational activities;" 169, "more attention to sex education;" 216, "more attention to the problems of family life;" 353, "more attention to the problems of city, state, and national government;" 118, "more study of the methods of propaganda;" 409, "more study of how to use money wisely;" 611, "more attention to reading;" 549, "more attention to arithmetic;" 431, "more attention to public and social speaking;" and one each of "more

physical education, more art, more guidance, and more attention to students."

5. My child is learning in school to meet his future needs.

Parents reacted favorably to this item with 391 parents responding, "very well;" 509, "fairly well;" 261, "to some extent;" sixty-four, "very little;" and three, "not at all."

6. Our school program is:

The response to item six was seventy-three, "exactly right;" 530, "about right;" 479, "needs much improvement;" twenty-six, "too modern;" and thirty-eight, "too old fashioned."

7. I rate the total program of our school as:

Parents reacted to the seventh item as follows: 127 parents listed, "very good;" 506, "good;" 481, "fair;" forty-five, "poor;" and five, "very poor."

8. All of us want our children to have a good education in the basic subjects. Beyond this, on what would you insist and be willing to support even if it should add to your school tax bill?

In response to item eight, 308 parents listed, "understanding of the history and geography of our country;" 253 parents listed, "appreciation of and participation in music and art;" 695 parents listed, "instruction in a vocation (job skill) of the student's choice;" 334 parents listed, "preparing for home and family living (budgeting, buying, family relationships, child care, food and clothing);" 172

parents listed, "learning to drive a car;" ninety parents listed, "providing opportunity for activity in school clubs;" 204 parents listed, "public speaking;" 246 parents listed, "learning to speak a foreign language;" 130 parents listed, "competitive athletics;" others, three parents listed, "religious studies and technical subjects;" two parents listed, "science, counseling, and math;" one parent listed, "data processing, wider curriculum, advanced courses in science and math, arts, trades, attention to slower children, R. O. T. C., humanities, phonics, debate, a physical education instructor, and retain small schools."

9. Do you believe that schools are doing a satisfactory job in teaching about such matters as:

For item nine there was a choice of "yes," "no," or "uncertain" and the following statistics are based on the "no" answers only: "importance of voting," was selected by 275 parents; 347 parents selected, "understanding the source of money to operate the government;" 202 parents selected, "respect for the rights of others;" 321 parents selected, "assessing property for taxation purposes;" 264 parents selected, "methods of how business and industry are established and financed;" 224 parents selected, "the place of profits in business;" 242 parents listed, "the purpose and workings of organized labor;" 214 parents selected, "appreciation of our American Heritage;" one other parent added, "value of

money," "respect for rights and property of all," and "vast opportunities of today."

10. All of us have friends of whom we consider as being well educated and some who are not. How do you decide whether a person is well educated or not? (check three you think most important)

"The things he talks about," were listed by 427 parents; 676 parents listed, "his grammar, pronunciation, etc.;" 311 parents listed, "the friends he keeps;" 231 parents listed, "accuracy in figuring a problem;" 709 parents listed, "ability to meet people--poise, manners, ease of conversation, etc.;" 182 parents listed, "appreciation of 'good' literature and 'good' music;" eighty-two parents listed, "his 'at homeness' with new friends;" seventy-four parents listed, "the amount of money he makes;" 305 parents listed, "personality;" 274 parents listed, "the way he acts;" 589 parents listed, "ability to say what he means." In others three parents listed, "interest in world affairs, sincerity, and tact;" two parents listed, "common sense;" one parent listed, "personal goals and stability to face problems."

11. Select five of these school subjects that you think are most important. (Circle your choice)

Six hundred parents selected homemaking; 704 parents selected social studies; 106 parents selected English; 1,020 parents selected mathematics; 602 parents selected health; 135 parents selected arts;

720 parents selected business and trade; 520 parents selected sciences; and 243 parents selected languages.

12. a. Would you prefer that your child attend a school that would give him more educational advantages even if it means riding the bus for a longer period of time?

The responses were to be answered either "yes" or "no."

Seven hundred sixteen answered "yes;" and three hundred twenty-nine answered "no."

- b. If you answer "yes" please indicate the maximum length of time that a child should ride a bus to school.

Two hundred three parents indicated fifteen minutes; 314 parents indicated thirty minutes; 332 parents indicated forty-five minutes; and 106 parents indicated sixty minutes.

13. I would like to see a more flexible high school program so my child could move faster or slower through high school according to his or her ability.

The responses of parents to item thirteen were "yes" or "no."

Seven hundred twenty-three answered "yes" and 191 answered "no."

14. If money could be saved to improve classroom instruction, I would be willing for my child to walk to the bus stop a distance up to:

Three hundred twenty-six parents listed, "one-eighth mile;" 263 parents listed, "one-fourth mile;" and 208 parents listed, "one-half mile."

15. Since sixteen units are required for graduation, I think the total number of courses that all children should be able to choose from is:

Responses to this item were as follows: "Twenty" was listed by 104 parents; "twenty-five courses" were listed by eighty-seven parents; "thirty courses" were listed by ninety-three parents; "thirty-five courses" were listed by 107 parents; "forty courses" were listed by 258 parents; "forty-five courses" were listed by forty-six parents; "fifty courses" were listed by thirty parents; "fifty-five courses" were listed by twenty-eight parents; "sixty courses" were listed by 114 parents; and "eighty courses" were listed by fifty-nine parents.

16. The most helpful subject my child has taken in school is:

Parents responses to item sixteen included 262 for "mathematics;" 223 for "reading;" 193 for "English;" thirty for "spelling;" thirty-two for "social studies;" thirty for "science;" fourteen for "health;" twelve for "writing;" nineteen for "home economics;" eight for "history;" six for "biology;" five for "business;" four for "agriculture and speech;" three for "physical education, language, and trade;" two for "industrial arts;" and one each for "geography, Latin, band, geometry, arts, and SRA."

17. The least valuable subject my child has taken in school is:

In responses to this item seventy-one parents listed "art;" sixty parents listed "sciences;" forty-eight parents listed "music;"

thirty-two parents listed "mathematics;" twenty-seven parents listed "social studies," and "history;" twenty-three parents listed "physical education;" twenty-two parents listed "health;" fourteen parents listed "geography and reading;" twelve parents listed "modern math;" ten parents listed "language;" nine parents listed "spelling;" six parents listed "biology;" five parents listed "English;" four parents listed "Spanish;" three parents listed "Latin, algebra, trade, and writing;" two parents listed "library, mechanical arts, literature, and advanced mathematics."

18. The most important course which should be added to the present school program is:

The responses to item eighteen included eighty-one for "languages;" sixty-eight, "vocational training;" seventeen, "art;" ten, "trade;" thirteen, "sex education;" ten, "reading;" twelve, "Bible;" nine, "business math;" seven, "speech and health;" six, "music;" five, "science;" four, "social studies, mathematics, and forensic;" three, "phonics, government, world affairs, and driver education;" two listed "drama, physical education, home economics, and astronomy;" one, "more athletics, typewriting, civics, better teachers, physics, geography, Communism, writing, how to study, flexible program, English, and sociology."

19. The purpose of high schools is to prepare students for college.
How well do you think our schools are doing this?

The answers from parents showed two hundred seventy-five felt "very well;" six hundred eighty-five felt "fairly well;" and one hundred twenty-two answered "poorly."

20. Another purpose of the high schools is to prepare students to get and keep good jobs. How well are our high schools doing this?

From the responses, the opinions of the parents were 262, "very well;" 679 reported "fairly well;" and 207 reported "poorly."

CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS OF SELECTED ITEMS OF THE PARENT OPINION SURVEY

In Chapter II, the tabulation of all responses of the parents of the children attending the schools in Robertson County was given in detail. Careful consideration of the data revealed that all of it could not be emphasized in this study. Six of the items in the Parent Opinion Survey were considered more pertinent to the purpose of the problem than were the other fourteen. Therefore, it was determined to analyze more thoroughly the response to each of these six questions.

1. All things considered, how much do you think your children are getting out of their schoolwork?

This question seemed best to answer the main concern of this study which was to determine from the responses of the parents, the extent to which they felt the school was meeting the academic needs of their children. Table IV of Chapter II showed the responses of the parents.

Eight-one percent of the responses in Table IV revealed that the parents were satisfied or nearly satisfied with the academic progress of their children. Since all schools exist primarily for the purpose of

teaching children the basic facts of subject matter, these results should be gratifying to all concerned with the schools of Robertson County.

2. QUESTION NUMBER FOUR OF THE SURVEY

Which if any, of the following things would you like to see the school increase? (You may check more than one) Refer to Appendix.

The responses of parents to this question related to the second purpose of the problem which was to determine how well parents felt their children were succeeding socially. Table V showed the responses of the parents.

Ten items (see Table V in Chapter II) were listed with two lines left blank for parents to complete if they thought other items should have been included. Of the ten items listed, item number one was the one which was checked most often. This item was that more emphasis be on teaching children how to get along with others. The next items in number of responses were more attention to reading and arithmetic.

Other items checked in descending order were more attention to public and social speaking; how to use money wisely; problems of city, state, and world government; more chance for all children to learn sports and recreational activities; problems of family living; sex education; and more study of the methods of propaganda.

In addition to the things enumerated on the survey, parents added other things as religious studies, data processing, ROTC, technical

subjects, counseling, humanities, a physical education instructor, and retain small schools.

QUESTION NUMBER THREE OF THE SURVEY

Down through the ages, the question of increased taxes has always produced heated debate and many and various reactions. Question number three in the survey came directly to the point.

3. With rising costs, the only way schools can keep up the services they are now giving is through increased funds. In view of this fact should taxes be increased or school services cut?

The responses to the question gave the writer insight to the third purpose of the problem which was to determine parents' reaction to increased taxes to support higher quality education for their children.

Table VI showed the reaction of the parents to the question.

TABLE VI

RESPONSE FREQUENCIES OF PARENTS TO THE QUESTION: WITH RISING COSTS, THE ONLY WAY SCHOOLS CAN KEEP UP THE SERVICES THEY ARE GIVING IS THROUGH INCREASED FUNDS. IN VIEW OF THIS FACT SHOULD TAXES BE INCREASED OR SCHOOL SERVICES CUT?

1.	I strongly feel that taxes should be increased.	<u>132</u>
2.	I am strongly inclined to feel that taxes should be increased.	<u>255</u>
3.	I am not sure.	<u>639</u>
4.	I am inclined to feel that school services should be cut.	<u>55</u>
5.	I strongly feel that school services should be cut.	<u>27</u>

Of the 1,108 responses, 132 strongly felt that taxes should be increased. Two hundred fifty-five were inclined to feel that taxes should be increased. Six hundred thirty-nine parents were not sure. Eighty-two parents preferred that services should be cut.

An analysis of the total responses led one to conclude that the reaction of the parents was more favorable to increasing taxes rather than cutting present services.

QUESTION EIGHT OF THE SURVEY

The fourth purpose of the problem was to determine what parents were willing to finance, in addition to the present curriculum, for their children. Question eight in this survey was:

8. All of us want our children to have a good education in the basic subjects. Beyond this, on what would you insist and be willing to support even if it should add to your school tax burden?

Table VII gives the responses of the parents to nine listings with a blank to add others of their own choosing.

By far the largest number of responses, 695, chose item three which was "instruction in a vocation (job skill) of the student's choice."

TABLE VII

RESPONSE FREQUENCIES OF PARENTS TO THE QUESTION: ALL OF US WANT OUR CHILDREN TO HAVE A GOOD EDUCATION IN THE BASIC SUBJECTS. BEYOND THIS, ON WHAT WOULD YOU INSIST AND BE WILLING TO SUPPORT EVEN IF IT SHOULD ADD TO YOUR SCHOOL TAX BILL?

1. Understanding of the history and geography of our country and the world.

TABLE VII (continued)

2.	Appreciating and participating in music and art.	<u>253</u>
3.	Instruction in a vocation (job skill) of the student's choice.	<u>695</u>
4.	Preparing for home and family living (budgeting, buying, family relationships, child care, food and clothing).	<u>334</u>
5.	Learning to drive a car.	<u>172</u>
6.	Providing opportunity for activity in school clubs	<u>90</u>
7.	Speaking in public.	<u>240</u>
8.	Learning to speak a foreign language.	<u>246</u>
9.	Competing in athletics.	<u>130</u>
10.	Other	<u> </u>

Item six, "providing opportunity for activity in school clubs," received the lowest number of responses with athletics next lowest.

"Understanding of the history and geography of our country and the world," and "preparing for home and family living" received nearly the same number of responses, and "appreciating and participating in music and art" ranked fourth in the number of responses. "Learning to speak a foreign language," "speaking in public," and "learning to drive a car," also, were checked fairly frequently.

Parents were very definite in their responses to this question

and when courses are added to the curriculum of the schools, this data would prove very valuable as to the opinions and desires of the parents.

QUESTION NUMBER TWO IN THE SURVEY

The responses of parents to question number two in the survey helped to answer the fifth purpose in the problem which was to determine if parents perceived present classrooms as overcrowded.

Table VIII shows the tabulated data.

TABLE VIII

RESPONSE FREQUENCIES OF PARENTS TO THE QUESTION: DO YOU THINK THAT YOUR CHILDREN'S SCHOOL IS OVERCROWDED?

1. No, it is not overcrowded.	<u>298</u>
2. Yes, it is somewhat overcrowded.	<u>552</u>
3. Yes, it is seriously overcrowded.	<u>299</u>
4. I have no opinion.	<u>126</u>

Two hundred ninety-eight replied, "no." Five hundred fifty-two replied, "yes, they are somewhat overcrowded." Two hundred ninety replied, "yes, they are seriously overcrowded," and, one hundred twenty-six had no opinion.

One could determine from the responses of the parents that the schools of Robertson County had no serious problem of overcrowded classrooms.

QUESTION NUMBER ELEVEN IN THE SURVEY

Of the twenty questions asked of parents in the survey, the answers from question eleven applied best to the sixth purpose in the problem which was to determine what parents valued most and least in regard to education for their children. The question was:

11. Select five of these subjects that you think are most helpful.
(Circle your choice.)

Table IX showed the responses.

TABLE IX

RESPONSE FREQUENCIES OF PARENTS TO THE QUESTION: SELECT FIVE OF THESE SCHOOL SUBJECTS THAT YOU THINK ARE MOST IMPORTANT. (CIRCLE YOUR CHOICE.)

1.	Homemaking: (food, clothing, child care)	<u>600</u>
2.	Social Studies: (history, geography, government)	<u>704</u>
3.	English: (reading, spelling, speech, literature)	<u>1,069</u>
4.	Mathematics: (arithmetic, algebra, geometry)	<u>1,028</u>
5.	Health: (physical and mental health, gymnasium)	<u>602</u>
6.	Arts: (music, painting, drawing)	<u>135</u>
7.	Business and trade: (typing, selling, mechanics)	<u>720</u>
8.	Sciences: (chemistry, nature study, physics)	<u>520</u>
9.	Languages: (Spanish, Latin, French)	<u>243</u>

One thousand sixty-nine parents marked English which included reading, spelling, speech, and literature. One thousand twenty-eight parents checked mathematics which included arithmetic, algebra, and geometry. Seven hundred twenty parents checked business and trade which included typing, selling, and mechanics. Seven hundred and four parents checked social studies which included history, geography, and government. Six hundred parents checked homemaking which included food, clothing, and child care.

In descending order, six hundred and two parents checked health which included physical and mental health, and gymnasium. Five hundred twenty parents checked sciences which included chemistry, nature study, and physics. Two hundred forty-three parents checked language which included Spanish, Latin, and French. One hundred thirty-five parents checked the arts which included music, painting, and drawing.

Thus English, mathematics, business and trade, social studies, and homemaking were valued most important by parents, and health, science, languages, and arts were valued least important.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS

On the basis of the data collected in conducting this survey it was evident from the responses of the parents that a majority was satisfied with the progress of their children both academically and socially.

In regard to social progress, parents felt that more emphasis should be placed on teaching children how to get along with others.

Slightly over half of the parents preferred to increase taxes rather than to decrease present services. Further, from the listings, parents knew what they wanted in subjects and services added to the curriculum even if it meant increased taxes. By far the largest number of responses indicated a desire for instruction in a vocation (job skill) of the student's choice. Since parents were very definite in their responses to this question, when courses are added to the curriculum of the schools, this data would prove valuable in making any curricular choices of this nature.

It was also obvious from this study that parents did not feel the present classrooms in Robertson County are overcrowded.

Parents valued English, mathematics, business and trade, social studies, and homemaking as the most important subjects in school. They felt the least valuable subjects were health, science, languages, and the arts.

In conclusion, the opinions of parents gathered by this study should be of valuable assistance to the superintendent of Robertson County Schools in planning future programs.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. UNPUBLISHED MATERIALS

1. Archib. "A Study of the Extent of School Information Held by Various Occupational Groups in Arkansas and the Attitudes of These Groups Regarding Certain School Services and Expenses," Dissertation Abstracts, Ann Arbor, University Microfilms, 1957, p. 292.

2. Clark, W. H. Address to Congress, 1966.

3. Clark, W. H. "Factors of Religion and Social Class in the Support of Public Schools," Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Arkansas, 1959.

4. Clark, W. H. "An Analysis of Public Attitudes in a School District with Reference to Selected Aspects of Public Education," Dissertation Abstracts, Ann Arbor, University Microfilms, 1956, p. 2075.

5. Clark, W. H. "The Relationship Between Parental Attitudes Toward the School and Distance Lived from the School," Dissertation Abstracts, Ann Arbor, University Microfilms, 1956, p. 292.

6. Clark, W. H. "An Assay of Public Attitudes Toward Education," Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1959.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. UNPUBLISHED MATERIALS

- Bray, William Isiah. "A Study of the Extent of School Information Held by Various Occupational Groups in Arkansas and the Attitudes of These Groups Regarding Certain School Services and Expenses," Dissertation Abstracts, Ann Arbor, University Microfilms, 1957, p. 1496.
- Howe, Harold, II. Address to Congress, 1966.
- Hulser, John V. "Factors of Religion and Social Class in the Support of Public Schools," Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Connecticut, 1959.
- Jones, Guy D. "An Analysis of Public Opinion in a School District with Respect to Selected Aspects of Public Education," Dissertation Abstracts, Ann Arbor, University Microfilms, 1956, p. 2075.
- King, Maxwell Clark. "The Relationship Between Parental Attitudes Toward the School and Distance Lived from the School," Dissertation Abstracts, Ann Arbor, University Microfilms, 1956, p. 290.
- MacGregor, Archie. "An Assay of Public Attitudes Toward Education," Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1959.

ROBERTSON COUNTY SCHOOLS

PARENT OPINION INVENTORY

APPENDIX

The best answers to this Questionnaire can be very
valuable in future educational planning for your child.

J. B. Whitman, Superintendent

INTRODUCTION

ROBERTSON COUNTY SCHOOLS

...were in charge of the public schools of this

...to determine what you think of your
...that is exactly what we've decided to do.
...efficiently
...of even greater importance, your frank
...whether you have children in school, will
...and of education that the majority feels
...community should have. Please answer
...as you can. Your cooperation will be

PARENT OPINION INVENTORY

Your best answers to this Questionnaire can be very
valuable in future educational planning for your child.

...to plan a school improvement program,
...to the following questions.

...only if you wish to do so.

J. B. Whitman, Superintendent

...principal as soon as possible.

Superintendent of Schools

INTRODUCTION

What would you do if you were in charge of the public schools of this community?

The only way we know of for us to determine what you think of your school is to ask you, and that is exactly what we've decided to do. Here are some questions which we hope you'll find sufficiently interesting to answer. Of even greater importance, your frank opinions, regardless of whether you have children in school, will help us to provide the kind of education that the majority feels that the children of this community should have. Please answer as many of the questions as you can. Your cooperation will be greatly appreciated.

Your school wants to serve you and your children in the best possible way. In order to plan a school improvement program, we need your answers to the following questions.

Write your name on this only if you wish to do so.

Please return to your principal as soon as possible.

Superintendent of Schools

1. a. All things considered, how much do you think your child is getting out of his schoolwork?

1. About all that he should get.
2. Somewhat less than he should get.
3. Considerable less than he should get.
4. A great deal less than he should get.
5. I have no opinion.

b. Tell any kinds of requests for money in the school which should be eliminated. _____

2. Do you think that your child's school is overcrowded?

1. No, it is not overcrowded.
2. Yes, it is somewhat overcrowded?
3. Yes, it is seriously overcrowded.
4. I have no opinion.

3. With rising costs, the only way schools can keep up the services they are now giving is through increased funds. In view of this fact should taxes be increased or school services cut?

1. I strongly feel that taxes should be increased.
2. I am inclined to feel that taxes should be increased.
3. I am not sure.
4. I am inclined to feel that school services should be cut.
5. I strongly feel that school services should be cut.

4. Which, if any, of the following things would you like to see the school increase? (You may check more than one)
1. More emphasis on teaching children to get along with others.
 2. More chances for all children to learn sports and recreational activities.
 3. More attention to sex education.
 4. More attention to the problems of family life.
 5. More attention to the problems of city, state, and national government.
 6. More study of the methods of propaganda.
 7. More study of how to use money wisely.
 8. More attention to reading.
 9. More attention to arithmetic.
 10. More attention to public and social speaking.
 11. Other (specify). _____
 12. Other (specify). _____
5. My child is learning in school to meet his future needs:
1. Very well
 2. Fairly well
 3. To some extent
 4. Very little
 5. Not at all
6. Our school program is:
1. Exactly right

2. About right
 3. Needs much improvement
 4. Too modern
 5. Too old fashioned
7. I rate the total program of our school as:
1. Very good
 2. Good
 3. Fair
 4. Poor
 5. Very poor
8. All of us want our children to have a good education in the basic subjects. Beyond this, on what would you insist and be willing to support even if it should add to your school tax bill?
- Understanding of the history and geography of our country and the world.
 Appreciation of and participating in music and art.
 Instructing in a vocation (job skill) of the pupil's choice.
 Preparing for home and family living (budgeting, buying, family relationships, child care, food and clothing).
 Learning to drive a car.
 Providing opportunity for activity in school clubs.
 Public speaking.
 Learning to speak a foreign language.
 Competitive athletics.
 Other _____

9. Do you believe that schools are doing a satisfactory job in teaching about such matters as:

	YES	NO	UNCERTAIN
Importance of voting	_____	_____	_____
Understanding the source of money to operate the government	_____	_____	_____
Respect for the rights of minorities	_____	_____	_____
Method of assessing property for taxation purposes	_____	_____	_____
Method of how business and industry are established and financed	_____	_____	_____
The place of profits in business	_____	_____	_____
The purpose and workings of organized labor	_____	_____	_____
Appreciation of our American Heritage	_____	_____	_____
Other (specify) _____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

10. All of us have friends some of whom we consider as being well educated and some who are not. How do you decide whether a person is well educated or not? (Check three you think most important.)

- ___ The things he talks about
- ___ His grammar, pronunciation, etc.
- ___ The friends he keeps
- ___ Accuracy in figuring a problem
- ___ Ability to meet people--poise, manners, ease of conversation, etc.
- ___ Appreciation of "good" literature and "good" music

- His "at homeness" with new friends
 The amount of money he makes
 Personality
 The way he acts
 Ability to say what he means

List others: _____

11. Select five of these school subjects that you think are most important.
(Circle your choice)

1. Homemaking: (food, clothing, child care) _____
2. Social Studies: (history, geography, government) _____
3. English: (reading, spelling, speech, literature) _____
4. Mathematics: (arithmetic, algebra, geometry) _____
5. Health: (physical and mental health, gymnasium) _____
6. Arts: (music, painting, drawing) _____
7. Business and trade: (typing, selling, mechanics) _____
8. Sciences: (chemistry, nature study, physics) _____
9. Languages: (Spanish, Latin, French) _____

12. a. Would you prefer that your child attend a school that would give him more educational advantages even if it means riding the bus for a longer period of time?

YES _____ NO _____

- b. If you answer "yes" please indicate the maximum length of time that a child should ride a bus to school.

_____ minutes

13. I would like to see a more flexible high school program so my child could move faster or slower through high school according to his or her ability.

YES _____ NO _____

14. If money could be saved to improve classroom instruction, I would be willing for my child to walk to the bus stop a distance up to:

1/8 mile _____ 1/4 mile _____ 1/2 mile _____

15. Since 16 units are required for graduation, I think the total number of courses that all children should be able to choose from is:

20 _____ 25 _____ 30 _____ 35 _____
 40 _____ 45 _____ 50 _____ 55 _____
 60 _____ 80 _____

16. The most helpful subject my child has taken in school is _____

17. The least valuable subject my child has taken in school is _____

18. The most important course which should be added to the present school program is _____

19. One purpose of high schools is to prepare students for college. How well do you think our schools are doing this?

Very well _____ Fairly well _____ Poorly _____

20. Another purpose of the high schools is to prepare students to get and keep good jobs. How well are our high schools doing this?

Very well _____ Fairly well _____ Poorly _____