

Banneker School  
Middleburg, Virginia  
February 10, 1954

Mr. O. L. Emerick  
Division Superintendent  
Loudoun County Schools  
Leesburg, Virginia

Dear Mr. Emerick:

During the course of the year, we have discussed various pertinent educational topics in our faculty meetings. Our discussions have included such informative topics as Grouping, Developing Responsibility in Children, Developing a Code of Ethics for Teachers, and Interpreting the School to the Public.

We would like very much to have you sit in on some of these discussions, if your schedule permits.

Our next scheduled meeting will be held on Tuesday March 2nd at 3:30 p.m. Our discussion topic for this meeting will be, "Reporting Student Progress."

Hoping it will be possible for you to attend, I am

Sincerely yours,

*Fred E. Drummond*

Fred E. Drummond

Principal

FED/tb

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Bannaker School  
Middleburg, Virginia

## APPRAISING AND REPORTING PROGRESS OF STUDENTS' SCHOOL MARKS

By  
Fred E. Drummond

It is commonly recognized that the marking system is one of the major problems of the elementary school. It is another of the problems that remains to be solved as no one has yet developed the perfect marking system.

The purpose of this outline is not to present a marking system, but rather, to stimulate thinking on the pitfalls of traditional marks, objective, and modern trends of school marks.

- A. School marks have had unfortunate results.
  1. Some of the undesirable outcomes in relation to pupils are:
    - a. They stimulate unwholesome rivalry.
    - b. They encourage dishonesty.
    - c. They create bitter feelings between pupils and between pupils and teachers.
    - d. They transfer interest from subject to symbol.
    - e. They create undue elation in some cases and depression in others.
    - f. They cause pupils to lose interest and drop out.
    - g. They often eliminate students from extra-curricular activities.
  2. Some of the unfortunate results on parents are:
    - a. Too many parents have a blind faith in marks.
    - b. Parents urge their child to strive for A's when actually the child should be praised for a mark of C.
    - c. Parents are inclined to praise a child of superior ability who receives a high mark for a minimum amount of effort.
  3. Marks have also adversely affected teachers
    - a. Teachers have become grade conscious and subject centered in their teaching methods.
    - b. Too much of the teachers' time is spent in marking papers. This time could be better utilized in guidance, planning, etc.
    - c. Many otherwise good teachers become emotionally upset at grading time.
    - d. Much misunderstanding and hard feelings between parents and teachers can be traced to marks.
- B. There has been little comparability in marks. A mark of B in one class might be represented by any letter in the scale in another class or in another school. There should at least be some uniformity in marking within a given system. Efforts

in this direction can be made by faculty - administrator conferences. Some of the steps that might be followed are:

1. Determine the functions that marks are to serve
    - a. These might be administrative in nature such as classification, promotion, guidance, evaluation of curriculum and instruction, and public relations
    - b. Instructional functions might be motivation, diagnosis, remedial, and relative standing
  2. Determine and define the objectives to be marked in subject areas such as:
    - a. Ability to develop desirable attitudes
    - b. Ability to acquire information
    - c. Ability to organize concepts and ideas clearly
    - d. Ability to make reasonable interpretations of data
  3. Assign marks for each objective and combine into a composite mark if necessary
  4. Define the meaning of the marks
    - a. A common five scale system is: A, outstanding; B, above average; C, average; D, below average; F, very poor
    - b. A common three scale system is: H, honors; S, satisfactory; U, unsatisfactory
    - c. The two letter system S, satisfactory and U, unsatisfactory is more common in elementary schools than in secondary schools
  5. Set up standards so as to have comparable marks in different subject areas. The curve of normal probability should never be used with small groups. Its use is of doubtful value in any situation.
    - a. Progress in achieving the objectives may serve as a basis
    - b. Achievement on a basis of relative rank in class may be chosen, although this is in high disfavor today
    - c. Progress according to ability should be considered in setting the standards
- C. Much experimentation and discussion have not solved the problems of school marks. What has proven satisfactory in one community has failed in others. Some of the trends in marking practices worthy of consideration are:
1. Only the most backward schools continue to use the per cent scale of marking
  2. The trend is away from the A B C D F scale to an H S U or S U scale
  3. The trend is away from a subject centered mark to pupil centered marks that indicate weaknesses and strengths.
  4. More emphasis is being placed on those qualities that make for good citizenship
  5. The trend is to eliminate failing grades and to substitute remedial procedures
  6. The trend is toward marking systems on a basis of achievements as related to ability or progress made, rather than achievement as compared to others in the class.

7. The trend is toward student self-evaluation

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February 15, 1954

Mr. Fred E. Drummond  
Purcellville, Virginia

Dear Mr. Drummond:

Thank you for your letter to be with you on March 2. I should like very much to do this but I have such heavy commitments in respect to our two building projects and equipment that it seems unwise for me to undertake to be with you any time soon at one of the meetings.

Very sincerely yours,

O.L. Emerick  
Division Superintendent

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