

standard vertical letter-size file. This is the recommended method of filing because the home-room teachers, counselors, and clerks may use the records more conveniently if they are filed vertically. The need for expensive patented visible files is also eliminated. The size of the card also makes possible ample space for recording the data.

One of the most outstanding features of the California Record is the inclusion of space for the recording of pupil growth and development in personality characteristics as well as in subject achievement. Space is included for evaluations of four characteristics: responsibility, inquiring mind, social concern, and work habits. There is evidence that ratings in these characteristics can be effectively made by classroom and guidance teachers.

It has been demonstrated that it is possible to use effectively a cumulative record folder card similar to the one described here even in the smallest school system. Procedures have been worked out to eliminate any unnecessary clerical work. A review of the

amount of time now used in school systems in the preparation and transcription of records reveals that the plan which is suggested, with some modification, can be adopted without much, if any, increase in the expenditure of energy or time even in the smallest schools.

Scores of schools are photostating the form efficiently at a minimum cost. In this way the original form containing the complete record made in junior high school can be forwarded to the senior high school. Much tedious copying of records may thus be eliminated and more adequate information be made available for the senior high school.

In developing any cumulative record system, the first consideration is the belief on the part of the superintendent, the supervisor, the principal, the counselor, and the teacher that a good cumulative record can be a most effective aid in guiding boys and girls. If this is believed strongly enough by all concerned, the problems of the function, form, and administration of the cumulative record can be solved.

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## Using Cumulative Records

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CLARENCE FIELSTRA

AS A REQUISITE to masterful performance, artists and artisans alike must have a thorough knowledge and understanding of the materials with which they work. To educators, who work with human materials, that kind of knowledge and understanding is imperative. Accordingly, increased emphasis is being placed by administrators and teachers on obtaining more information about the children who are entrusted to their guidance and educational direction. Improved means of facilitating the keeping of adequate pupil records are likewise gradually being developed.

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*Cumulative records have no value unless they are used by teachers and counselors in providing educational, vocational, and personal guidance functions for their students. Clarence Fielstra, director of curriculum, San Diego County, California, points out the need for a cumulative guidance record and how it functions in a school's guidance program.*

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### *Who Should Use Cumulative Records?*

Progress in the matters of obtaining and recording pertinent data concerning pupil personnel has been accompanied by the raising of certain problems relative to the use of such records. One of these problems is that of determining who in our schools should be given access to whatever guidance files are kept. To this question the educational profession has not formulated a reply which reflects unanimous opinion. A point of view which has gained wide acceptance, however, is that every teacher should know as much as possible about each of his pupils. It is believed that guidance should be the primary function of the classroom teacher and that he as well as the specialist in guidance should have access to all significant records.

In opposition to this point of view is the opinion that only good teachers who are truly professional can use pupil records intelligently. With this statement there can be little disagreement. It should be pointed out, never-

theless, that unprofessional pedagogues must be removed from our ranks at the earliest possible moment. Furthermore, it should be borne in mind that there is no evidence to the effect that lack of information about pupils would enable an incompetent teacher to do more effective work with them than he could do if he did have such information. The converse of this situation, on the other hand, is demonstrated daily.

Complete responsibility for much of the guidance program in elementary schools and in many of the smaller secondary schools rests, almost of necessity, on the shoulders of individual teachers. In larger schools, special guidance functions are frequently assigned to home-room teachers, advisors, and counselors, whose major task becomes that of coordinating the various efforts involved in collecting, recording, and using pupil data. Coordination of these more complex programs is often considerably simplified by having the home-room teacher or counselor assigned to a particular class or group over a period of years, following the pupils from one grade level to another. Although the responsibility of individual teachers for the guidance of each of his pupils is somewhat less general in large

schools, it is in no wise diminished. Good teaching in all schools, large and small, can result only when each teacher is fully informed concerning the pupils with whom he works.

### *Using Cumulative Records in Diagnosing Pupil Needs*

In considering what specific uses should be made of cumulative records, first thought should be given to their place in diagnosing pupil needs. Among these needs are those which may be found not only in the academic areas but also in the areas of health, personal adjustment, and social adjustment. The discovery of pupil needs and arrival at decisions with regard to meeting them satisfactorily frequently entail years of careful study by many teachers, administrators, and specialists in the fields of health and guidance. If the accumulated observations, findings, and evaluations relative to each pupil's needs are permanently noted in his record folder, his teachers will find therein a source of inestimable help in planning pupil experiences which will meet those needs.

On the elementary school level, where a  
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## **A CUMULATIVE GUIDANCE RECORD** **for the** **Department of Supervision and Curriculum Development**

The Department of Supervision and Curriculum Development believes that a cumulative guidance record which tells the complete story of the child's progress through school from the time he enters the kindergarten until he graduates from high school is desirable.

The cumulative record on the following pages not only permits this but also meets requirements for a good cumulative record as outlined by Mr. Brooks and Mr. Rhodes in their discussion of the California Records. One continuous record has the decided advantage of providing a complete picture of the child's development rather than focusing on one short period of that development. It also encourages better articulation between the three school segments.

The record may be printed on a folder card 9½ by 11¼ inches, standard size for filing cabinets. Detailed information on health, the type and amount of reading done, curricular experiences engaged in, and participation in extra-curricular activities can be placed on supplementary cards printed for that purpose and carried as riders in the folder. This has an advantage in that the detailed health card, for example, could be kept in the nurse's office while the significant data needed to be known by all teachers is summarized on the accumulative record and available to them at all times.

The Department recommends the following form to the membership and welcomes suggestions and criticisms for ways of improving it.

## USING CUMULATIVE RECORDS

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pupil frequently has but one teacher, the teacher may find it most convenient to have the cumulative guidance folders in the files of the classroom. There the records are easily accessible and as a result are more likely kept up to date and are more often referred to for purposes of determining the interests and needs of each child. When a pupil has several teachers, as is often the case on the secondary school level, the home-room or general education teacher may keep guidance folders in his room or the counselor may keep them in his office, depending on the organization of the guidance program.

No matter where these records are kept, it is the duty of their keeper not only to know their content himself but also to help acquaint all of the pupils' teachers with it. This may probably be done best by encouraging each teacher to use the records freely and by holding periodic conferences of these teachers for purposes of considering and evaluating recorded information pertaining to the needs of children on any given grade level. At such conferences hitherto unrecorded observations and statements of opinion on the part of the teachers concerning certain pupils may be shared and may well be used in developing cooperative plans of action for working more intelligently with them.

### *Using Cumulative Records in Counseling and Programming*

In elementary schools the fairly common practice of correlating or of fusing subject-matter areas makes it highly desirable to keep brief written reports of what each child does and how he does it. Unless this is done, successive teachers will very likely have insufficient information about the pupil's academic background to build upon intelligently. Having this kind of data available in the cumulative folder, however, and having likewise health records and remarks about the pupil's personality and social behavior, the teacher has excellent bases for building the child's individual curriculum and for furthering the development of the whole child.

Because of the larger number of choices faced by pupils in secondary schools, choices between subjects, activities, and even vocations, it is very important on that level also that sound guidance be provided. If the pupil's

educational and vocational decisions are not to be based on passing whims or conveniences of the moment, considerable time must be given by his advisor or counselor to the study and interpretation of his cumulative guidance record. The pupil's health, abilities, achievements, interests, behavior, and personality must be weighed separately and in relationship to each other before counsel which may well affect his entire future is given him. The best source of evidence concerning these facts is an adequate cumulative record folder.

### *Using Cumulative Records in Articulation*

Not only is "horizontal correlation" of pupil experiences on any grade level facilitated by the use of cumulative guidance records, but also "vertical articulation" of those experiences on sequential levels is greatly implemented. As a pupil progresses from one grade to another, unless his cumulative record is available to his new teachers, each of those teachers must start practically from "scratch" in acquiring an understanding of the pupil and in arriving at decisions with regard to "where the child is" and "where he should go" academically and socially.

Especially unfortunate is the fact that every year literally hundreds of thousands of pupils enter secondary schools with practically no cumulative records accompanying their entrance. Of course, their report cards are usually sent along with them, but the "A's," "B's," and "C's" or other symbols found thereon are of relatively little use in efforts to solve the personal and social adjustment problems common to a pupil's new life in a departmentalized high school. It is true that "permanent records" are also often sent by elementary schools to secondary schools, but these records are simply pupil accounting records indicating school attendance, courses taken, and marks given.

Although these sorts of records are indeed necessary, a major step in the direction of better articulation between elementary and secondary schools will not have been taken until a cumulative guidance folder, which includes as well the information found on the permanent accounting record, is sent for each pupil who enters high school.

### *Recommending Pupils to College or Industry*

Inasmuch as high school graduates vary greatly in their abilities and achievements, it is just as erroneous to believe that all of the



*Courtesy Long Beach (Calif.) Schools*

valuation emphasizes growth

graduates are qualified to get jobs as skilled workers as it is to believe that all of them could succeed in professional schools. Graduation does not indicate, in every case, a knowledge of Shakespeare, an understanding of physics, a mastery of trigonometry, or even a skill in English grammar and spelling. It signifies only the completion of a program of study and experiences which were suited to the capacities of the pupil.

Since a high school diploma is in itself inadequate as an indicator of a pupil's probable future success in college or in industry, his cumulative record must be relied on for that purpose. The record, if it is to be of maximum usefulness in this regard, should include something more significant than mere credits and marks. It should contain the pupil's own educational plan and the story of his progress in carrying out that plan. It should have brief written statements from each of his teachers, summarizing his achievements in his courses

and appraising personal characteristics, such as initiative and reliability. Measurements of the pupil's performance in tests of intelligence, aptitudes, occupational skills, and civic competence should be included. Reports of all employment experiences at home, on the farm, and in business; descriptions of citizenship services and leadership activities in the school and community; and comments from teachers and counselors regarding items of personal information should all be integral parts of each pupil's cumulative record.

On the basis of this kind of total picture, a high school administrator can make intelligent recommendations to admissions officers of colleges and to prospective employers. So meaningful and reliable will these recommendations likely become that marks and credits, which often mean different things to different people, may be in much less demand, and requirements in terms of formal and fixed courses may gradually be diminished.

**Summary.** The use of cumulative records is highly essential to the education and guidance programs of our schools. In diagnosing needs, in counseling and programming, in articulating school offerings, and in recommending to college or vocational employment, the educator needs as much information as possible about each of his pupils. He can use data found on the pupil accounting records which are usually kept in the administrative office, but he needs much more than that. He needs a brief but complete history of every pupil. That history, including a transcription of the accounting record, should be available in a cumulative guidance record folder. Such a folder in the hands of the home-room teacher, counselor, and administrator becomes a most effective instrument in building for each pupil a continuous and expanding curriculum and in furthering the all-round adjustment of each pupil to himself and to society.

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### **Nominations Are Now in Order**

Nominations for the slate for members of the DSCD Board of Directors may be sent to any member of the Nominating Committee. Committee members are Dale Zeller, State Teachers College, Emporia, Kans., chairman; Daisy Parton, University of Alabama, University, Ala.; and Jennie Wahlert, principal, Jackson School, St. Louis, Mo. A slate of fifteen names from which five will be elected will be presented to the membership for mail vote early next fall.

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