growth of a number of years of experimentation and research on the part of a committee appointed by the Association of California Secondary School Principals. The experience of this Committee and the Record which it developed should be valuable to other communities in developing cumulative guidance records.

The California Cumulative Guidance Record

for Elementary Schools

ALVIN E. RHODES

Most elementary schools in California use guidance records which have been developed to meet their own needs. The content of these records is generally similar, but differences in form and organization have prohibited effective exchange. California has a mobile population, and as pupils have moved from school to school records could not effectively follow them. To provide for statewide exchange of guidance data and to promote general improvement of guidance records, the California School Supervisors Association undertook to develop a record system which could be recommended for use in the elementary schools of the state. This project, initiated in 1942, was planned to utilize the cooperative efforts of supervisors, administrators, teachers, guidance workers, nurses, attendance and welfare supervisors, curriculum specialists, and other persons in all parts of the state who would be concerned with use of the records.

Nature of Record

The California Cumulative Guidance Record for Elementary Schools as adopted by the Association consists of a vertical file folder, three inserts, a manual, and a request card. The folder is of standard letter size. The basic form, which is printed on all four pages of the folder, includes four major divisions: identification data, home environment, personality development, school experiences. The nature of these divisions is suggested by the topics within each. “Identification Data” includes such items as the pupil’s name, sex, present school, and birth record. Under “Home Environment” are found data concerning present and past home and school residence, nature of home community, parents or guardians, and other members of the family. “Personality Development” is represented by records of health and physical development, mental development, and social and emotional development. Included under “School Experiences” are records of units of work, and of growth in skills as measured by achievement tests.

There are many unique features of the California Cumulative Guidance Record for Elementary Schools which cannot be described within limits of this article, but attention should be given to one feature which makes it possible to adapt the records to a wide variety of school situations. Some schools are very small, with no clerical help and little opportunity to obtain or use detailed guidance data. Others are large and have specialized guidance services. Any record which would be useful throughout the state would be adaptable to all types of situations. Adaptability is achieved through the use of inserts which supplement the basic form. This form, printed on the folder, is intended for use with all children, and contains only those items which are commonly needed in most schools. It may be completed in detail or only in part as opportunity permits. If provision is needed for recording more detailed information, either throughout a school system or for individual pupils, any or all of the supplements may be used in place of the sections of the basic record which they represent. These are inserted in the folder and become a part of the basic record. The three supplements are “Health and Physical Development,” “Curriculum Experiences,” and “Adjustment Factors.” Provision is made for the addition of other supplements which may be developed in individual school systems to meet special needs.

Principles Represented by Record System

Early in its work the committee formulated a statement of principles and criteria which should serve as a blueprint for the record system to be developed. Because
principles are of a universal nature, the following summary of the more important ones recognized by the committee probably will be of more value than a detailed description of the record itself.

I. Content and Organization

A. Content of records should be selected with regard to usefulness in serving guidance purposes. Records should not be encumbered with content which does not serve these ends.

B. Content generally should include:
1. Identification and personal data. (Name, age, address, phone, etc.)
2. Family and home data. (Parents, brothers and sisters, home conditions, language, etc.)
3. School history and experiences. (Schools attended, teachers, promotions, fields of work, positions of responsibility, plans, etc.)
4. Educational and mental development. (Mental and achievement test scores, teachers' estimates of work, study habits, growth in understandings and appreciations, etc.)
5. Emotional and social development. (Data from adjustment scales, personality inventories, teachers' reports and suggestions, etc.)
6. Health and physical development. (Physical examinations, disease history, protective tests and treatments, physical handicaps, evidences of physical growth, etc.)
7. Special activities and interests. (School and non-school activities, hobbies, work experience, etc.)

C. Provision should be made for descriptive comments and narrative reports by teachers, counselors and others working with the youngsters.

D. Data should be recorded in specific terms and should deal with specific characteristics. Items should be worded in specific rather than general terms, and use of symbols should be avoided except when they are commonly understood.

E. The record should provide for keeping samples of original work.

F. The selection and arrangement of recorded data should focus attention upon processes and consistency of growth rather than upon the meeting of arbitrary requirements.

G. Cause and effect relationships should be shown by the nature and arrangement of data in the record.

H. Content should be so organized that data may be recorded or located quickly and easily. Wording of items should indicate clearly what is to be recorded. Pages broken into small boxes should be avoided, and left-to-right reading movement should be facilitated.

II. Administration and Use

A. Records must fit the situation in which they are to be used. Factors to be considered are:
1. Size of the school or school system.
2. Type of school organization.
3. Permanency of data to be recorded.
4. Professional ability of persons using records.
5. Teacher load and available clerical help.

B. Records should be filed where they will be easily available to persons expected to use them.

C. Records should be accompanied by clear directions for their use. Brief directions should be printed on the record, and a manual with complete instructions should be available.

D. The record system should provide for keeping each pupil's record with him throughout his school life. Original records should be exchanged through a carefully organized system of transfer, or standard transcript procedures should be observed.

E. Provision should be made for systematic collection of data upon enrollment of a pupil as well as at regular intervals thereafter.

F. Records should be developed and used cooperatively, but should be treated confidentially. They should be available only to persons who share responsibility for directing pupils' school experiences.

G. Recorded data should be as valid and objective as possible. Standard measuring instruments should be used whenever available, and subjective judgments should be based upon guided
III. Physical Features

A. The stock on which records are printed should be:
1. Durable enough to withstand years of use.
2. Substantial enough to stand in a file.
3. Thin enough to require minimum filing space.
4. Light enough to be economical in mailing.
5. Free from glare, and suitable for ink or pencil writing and for erasing.
6. Of a color which is attractive, restful to the eye, easily distinguishable, and light enough to contrast well with writing.

B. Different colored stocks should be used to distinguish forms which require different handling. Color differences should be reserved for this purpose.

C. Forms should be of such size and shape that they are easy to file, handle, transport, and mail.

D. Forms should be reasonably low in cost.

E. The filing system should be one which is commonly used, is economical, is simple to operate and does not require unusual equipment or forms.

F. Forms should be planned to accommodate supplementary materials conveniently.

G. Records should be so designed that only a reasonable amount of clerical work will be required for maintenance.

Importance of Philosophy

The most important element in any system of cumulative guidance records is the understanding with which they are used. Like dynamite in the hands of a workman, records may be dangerous if misused, worthless if neglected, and capable of moving mountains if employed properly. No guidance service can offer maximum value without the help of an adequate system of records, but the most carefully developed records are nothing more than a clerical burden to the teacher who lacks a positive guidance philosophy or opportunity to act upon it.

When the curriculum consisted of an inflexible series of predetermined tasks for which every child was accountable, teachers required little knowledge concerning their pupils. In the modern curriculum the teacher is no longer a taskmaster, but a guide and counselor. Performance of the guidance functions involved in this position requires adequate records properly used.

California Develops a Cumulative Guidance Record for Secondary Schools

HAROLD B. BROOKS

At a meeting of the State Representative Council of the Association of California Secondary School Principals held in October 1935, the high school principals of California determined to work together to prepare a better cumulative record form. At that time the conclusion was reached that the cumulative record forms used in a large majority of the secondary schools of California needed to be improved. The forms in use were inadequate in several respects: (1) as aids in achieving the objectives of the guidance program, (2) in the space provided for evaluations of the personality growth of the pupils, and (3) in provision for the required information for the official state transcript.

The committee appointed to make a study of cumulative records analyzed some 527 record forms in use in all types of secondary schools and obtained from 410 secondary school educators in California evaluations of a provisional form of a cumulative record.1 The cumulative record forms in use in California at the time the study was made were characterized by extreme diversity in use, size, form, and the number and kind of individual items.

The items used on the forms fell into five


Educational Leadership