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# A Survey of Businessmen in Effingham, Illinois to Determine How Effectively the Business Curriculum at Effingham High School Is Meeting Employment Needs

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A SURVEY OF BUSINESSMEN IN EFFINGHAM, ILLINOIS  
TO DETERMINE HOW EFFECTIVELY THE BUSINESS CURRICULUM AT  
EFFINGHAM HIGH SCHOOL IS MEETING EMPLOYMENT NEEDS

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by  
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Eastern Illinois University  
December, 1960

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A paper presented in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree  
Master of Science in Education

This paper has been read and approved by the following members of the faculty at Eastern Illinois University.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to survey the businessmen to ascertain to what extent the business curriculum is meeting the employment needs of the businessmen in the city of Effingham, Illinois. The study also includes recommended changes which should be made in order to improve the service to the community.

#### Analysis of the Problem

This survey was made to evaluate the present business curriculum and attempt to arrive at the answers to the following questions:

1. To discover the makes of machines most frequently used and whether or not they are manual or electric.
2. To learn the basic requirements for beginning office workers and whether or not the graduates are meeting them.
3. To determine whether or not the business education program should be changed to meet the needs resulting from the increased business in the area.
4. To obtain the suggestions that businessmen have for improving the business curriculum.

### Delimitation of the Problem

The problem was limited to a study of twenty representative employers in the city of Effingham, Illinois.

Besides the usual constant subjects which were required of all students, those pursuing a business major have available the following courses:

Business Law

Business Arithmetic

General Business

Personal Typewriting

Distributive Education

Personal Typewriting (1 semester)

Advanced Typewriting (1 year)

Shorthand

Stenography

Bookkeeping (1 year)

## Justification of the Problem

The business education department of Effingham High School prepares some students for gainful employment, some it educates for better adjustment as citizens in the community, and others for continuation of their education. Changing times make it necessary for a continuous re-evaluation of the business program.

Every high school finds it difficult to change equipment often enough to provide an opportunity to work with the newest type of office equipment. It is important that the machines and methods used in the business of the town be taught so that the student will be better able to fit into the community business world. In order that the equipment in the school be as up to date as possible, knowledge of that used in the community must be known.

Effingham has grown in population by 1,033 persons over the 1950 census. It is predicted the city will grow even more during the next ten year period. If the school is to continue to produce qualified people for the expected growth, then there must be co-operation between the business community and the school.

Effingham High School, a public supported institution, has an obligation to provide the type of training and education the area needs. Each community has problems of its own;

therefore, a survey of some other area would be of little value. The projected enrollment alone with the predicted future of Effingham is an indication that now is the time to begin preparing for the future as well as any improvement for present needs of the community.

After pointing out the limitations of surveys, Tonne has this to say:

In spite of these deficiencies, local surveys can, if properly used, help fill out the picture of the training needs that the high school and post high school business-training facilities must render. It is often desirable to set up a local survey of business education. When a survey is well conducted, it may have results similar to those already known. Yet it makes the investigator himself more aware of the nature of his local community, and it gives him relationships with the local businessmen that might otherwise be difficult to obtain. Such surveys also make the businessman aware not only of the difficulties of the high school but also of the very considerable contributions that the school is rendering. The judgments presented in this book are in large measure distilled from numerous surveys of local communities.<sup>1</sup>

The results of the survey could lead to the training of students to fit the particular occupations found in the area. The curriculum could be changed to provide the type of training necessary for the particular jobs that are found.

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<sup>1</sup>Herbert A. Tonne, Principles of Business Education (New York: The Gregg Publishing Company, 1947), p. 120.

Teaching units with new aims and content could be developed from the information resulting from compilation of the questionnaire items. Weak personality traits, as indicated by the employers, could be reported and stressed to prospective employees. Other areas covered in the survey could serve in strengthening the business curriculum.

The survey could provide an instrument of contact between the teacher and the businessmen. Through this means the businessmen could become more conscious of the fact that the school is attempting to provide the businessmen with the competent and trained personnel it seeks.

Offerings of the Business Education Department  
in the  
Effingham High School

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Grade</u>			
Bookkeeping I	12			5 periods a week for 1 year
Stenographic Practice	12			10 periods a week for 1 year
Shorthand-Typewriting I	11	12		10 periods a week for 1 year
Typewriting I	11	12		5 periods a week for 1 year
Personal Typewriting	10	11	12	5 periods a week half year
Business Law	10	11	12	5 periods a week half year
Business Arithmetic	10	11	12	5 periods a week half year
General Business	10	11	12	5 periods a week half year
Distributive Education	12			15 periods a week for 1 year

## Organization of the Chapters

In carrying out this study and reporting the findings, the chapters were developed in the following manner:

Chapter I contains the introduction to the study including the statement and nature of the problem.

Chapter II explains the background of the study and also a background of Effingham, Illinois, where the survey was made.

A review of related literature is found in Chapter III.

Chapter IV contains the procedure followed in carrying out this survey.

The information received from the employers during the survey is tabulated in Chapter V.

Chapter VI contains the summary and recommendations which the author made for improving the curriculum at Effingham High School, based on the findings of this survey.

## CHAPTER II

### BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

#### The City of Effingham<sup>1</sup>

Effingham County was named after Lord Effingham, a British General who resigned rather than fight the Colonists. The city of Effingham was originally named Broughton but with the arrival of the Illinois Central Railroad in 1854 its name was changed to Effingham. Effingham grew as pioneers moved to the West along the Old Cumberland Road which was built in Effingham County in 1831. This road became U. S. Highway 40. In 1954 Effingham celebrated its 100th birthday. Over \$10 million in new construction has taken place in Effingham since 1950. Included in the major improvements are: a \$250,000 National Guard armory; \$75,000 public library; over \$1,000,000 in church and school construction; \$2,300,000 for new water supply and improvements to the water system; \$245,000 district highway office; \$4,500,000 memorial hospital; over \$600,000 for sewer rehabilitation, and a \$45,000 air-port improvement.

Effingham is the hub of a trading area which extends over a twenty-five mile radius. There are over 190 retail, wholesale, and service establishments in the shopping area.

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<sup>1</sup>The statistical information in this section is taken from, This is Effingham, Illinois, Effingham Chamber of Commerce brochure, 1958.

Recent annexations to the city have increased the corporate population to over 8,000 people and the population of the environs would add an additional 500 persons.

Effingham is located at the heart of one of the ideal transportation centers in the midwest. The Pennsylvania Railroad industrial locating service ranks Effingham very favorably as a distribution point because of its highway and railway facilities. Effingham is served by the mainline of the Illinois Central Railroad from Chicago to New Orleans, and by the Pennsylvania Railroad from St. Louis to New York.

In addition, there are two Federal highways--U. S. routes 40 and 45, and three state highways--state routes 32, 33, and 37 crossing at Effingham.

## Education in Effingham<sup>1</sup>

Effingham can point with pride to the progress of its public schools and can look forward with greater expectations to the years ahead.

Effingham hired its first public school teacher during the 1854-55 school year. The first school building was erected in 1873 and the first high school class to graduate was in 1881. A new high school building was constructed in 1894 and in 1910 a four year high school was inaugurated. In 1919 additions were made to the high school building to help take care of the increased enrollment. Again in 1924 another new addition was necessary to take care of a continually growing enrollment. In 1939 the first high school of solid concrete construction was erected. This is now the present high school building.

During 1945 an Effingham County School Survey Committee was organized with the purpose of reorganizing the school district. The primary objective was improving rural education. Out of this committee came the formation of Effingham Community Unit 40. Effingham High School not only became the center of its own city schools but also the

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<sup>1</sup>Information in this section obtained from notes of speech given by Mr. R. L. Bachman, past principal of Effingham High School, August 25, 1958.

focal point of its attendance centers. Therefore, the high school became the recipient of students who were promoted from the new unit's eight elementary schools.

With the formation of the new unit also came many problems connected with school consolidation. Transportation in the unit became a serious problem, due largely to the long rectangular shape of the district with the high school located at one end. Also another major problem was the socio-economic situation which consolidation brought about.

The present Effingham High School presents the following curriculum for those students who wish to pursue a career in business.

Tenth Grade:	Personal Typewriting
	Business Law
	General Business
	Business Arithmetic
Eleventh Grade:	Shorthand-Typewriting I
	Typewriting I
Twelfth Grade:	Bookkeeping I
	Stenographic Practice
	Distributive Education

Personal typewriting, business law, general business and business arithmetic are each one semester courses which may be taken at any time after the ninth year. Shorthand-typewriting I is a two hour class period course which incorporates the first year of shorthand and the second and third semesters of typewriting. Stenographic practice is a two hour class period course which incorporates the second year of shorthand and office practice. All the other classes are a normal class period.

These are the business machines in the school for instructional purposes:

53 Typewriters--manual

19 Royal

27 Remington

7 Underwood

2 Typewriters--electric

1 I. B. M.

1 Underwood

1 Mimeograph--manual

1 Mimeoscope

1 Ten Key Underwood

1 Monroe Educator--manual

Effingham High School's business department has one typewriting room, one room used for a machines and stenographic course, and two rooms for lecture courses.

## CHAPTER III

### Review of Related Literature

The true evaluation of the business education program in School X then is not to be determined by a set of criteria prepared by a committee of graduate students in some university hundreds of miles distant. Instead, the acid test is to be found in how well the business education program meets the needs of the community--the students, the businesses, and the civic and social institutions.<sup>1</sup>

In order that the business departments in public high schools be well informed as to job requirements in the local area, many business teachers are making community surveys.

The following review is the findings of a few of these surveys with regard to the weaknesses of the high school trained employee.

All of the studies reviewed were restricted to a limited area and conducted with a questionnaire as the means of obtaining data for the material collected.

Catherine A. Delaney made a survey of the Framington, Massachusetts, area surveying thirty employers to determine the effectiveness of the high school curriculum and this is what she found:

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<sup>1</sup>Shilt, Bernard A., "Grass Roots Business Education," The Journal of Business Education, January, 1960, p. 155.

1. The requirements for beginning employees in typewriting and shorthand were not high. For typewriting the rate of speed demanded was from 40 to 60 words per minute, and for shorthand the basic requirements were from 80 to 100 words per minute.
2. Twenty-one, or 70 per cent of the employers, indicated that the new employees had adequate speed and accuracy in typewriting and shorthand. However, five, or 17 per cent of the businessmen, did not think the speed and accuracy in these skills were adequate.
3. The most frequently used office machines reported were the typewriter, adding machines, and calculating machines.
4. The trait which the businessmen regarded as most important was accuracy. Of the thirty employers interviewed, twenty-eight stressed the importance of accuracy in all phases of office procedures.
5. Several suggestions were made by the businessmen for improving the business curriculum at Framington High School. The most significant of those suggested was a review of the arithmetic fundamentals in high school.<sup>1</sup>

Harold L. Radarmel made the following recommendations from the results of his survey of business concerns in the Chico, California, area. His survey was conducted to determine how the secondary schools in the Chico, California, area could better train and prepare students enrolled in business courses and how could the schools serve the interest of business in the area.

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<sup>1</sup>Catherine E. Delaney, "A Survey of Businessmen in Framington, Massachusetts and of Recent Business Graduates of Framington High School to Determine the Effectiveness of the High School Curriculum" (unpublished Master's thesis, Boston University, 1955), pp. 59-62.

When the concerns were asked to indicate the skills and knowledges in which their office employees could have had more adequate school instruction and training, the five most frequently checked items were: ability to spell, attention to small details, arithmetic skill, penmanship or handwriting, and reasoning ability. The above skills and knowledges are listed in order of importance as indicated by the firms. Other skills and knowledges were also rated by the firms.<sup>1</sup>

The following are two of the recommendations made by Mr. Radarmel after completing his survey:

1. That a re-examination of the scope and content of the clerical training program be made in the local high schools where it is now established. This re-examination be conducted in view of strengthening weak personality traits, and the skills and knowledges in which the businessmen indicated their office employees could have had more adequate school instruction and training.

2. That a re-examination of the scope and content be made of all present business courses in the local high schools in view of strengthening weak personality traits, and skills and knowledges in which the businessmen indicated their sales and office employees could have had more adequate school instruction and training.<sup>2</sup>

Harry W. Baggett, Jr. made a survey of businessmen in the Richmond, California, area for the purpose of determining the business curriculum for a new high school being established.

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<sup>1</sup>Harold L. Radarmel, "Business Curriculum Recommendations Through a Survey of Business Concerns" (unpublished Master's thesis, Chico State College, 1955), pp. 57-58.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 59.

These are some of the findings:

1. Employers rate a course in knowledge of the application of English principles to everyday oral and written communications as most important.
2. Businessmen rate typewriting as the second most important skill for students to gain in high school, and it is followed by a knowledge of business arithmetic, spelling, and some form of practical experience which they may apply using all of these skills and knowledges.
3. Employers rate getting along with others as the most important character trait to be developed in the high school.
4. Employers rate initiative and ambition as the second most important character trait. This is followed by willingness to learn.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Harry W. Baggett, Jr., "An Occupational Survey of Richmond, California for the Purpose of Determining the Business Curriculum of a New High School" (unpublished Master's thesis, San Francisco State College, 1957), pp. 53-59.

CHAPTER IV  
METHOD OF PROCEDURE

The following steps were taken in conducting the survey of businessmen:

1. Permission to conduct the survey was secured from the principal of Effingham High School and the superintendent of schools.
2. A review of related literature was made in order to provide a background for this study. Some of the literature which was reviewed and findings from this literature are recorded in Chapter III.
3. The Effingham Chamber of Commerce was contacted to secure the history of and pertinent information about the town. A list of representative employers, to whom a request for a personal interview could be sent, was obtained at this time. It was found that seventy employers employed two or more office employees. From this list was selected twenty employers to be interviewed.
4. A composite list of representative businessmen was made. The businessmen chosen were selected so as to give a sampling from each of the most prevalent

- type of industry or business found in Effingham.
5. On May 27 a letter requesting an interview was sent to the twenty representative firms in the town. Table I in Chapter V shows the different types of businesses contacted. The letter sent to these employers seeking permission to conduct the survey is included in the appendix.
  6. On receipt of answers to the letters from the businessmen, arrangements were made by telephone to visit the employers at a convenient time.
  7. Data received during the interviews were tabulated and summarized. Data were collected on forms which are illustrated in the appendix.
  8. A summary of the findings and recommendations were made, based on the data received. Analysis and recommendations are found in the succeeding chapters.

## CHAPTER V

### ANALYSIS OF DATA OBTAINED FROM EMPLOYER SURVEY

The results of the survey to determine the extent to which the business curriculum was meeting the employment needs of the businessmen in Effingham are analyzed and tabulated in the following pages.

As shown in Table I, of the twenty firms completing the questionnaire during the personal interview four, or 20 per cent, were manufacturing concerns, three or 15 per cent, were retail establishments, and the remainder tabulated were a sampling of some of the different types of businesses located in Effingham.

Table II shows the number of employees in each type of business. Since manufacturing, banking institutions, and retail establishments have the highest number of office employees in the group surveyed we could conclude that this would be the type of office work at which high school graduates would most likely gain employment. It is interesting to note the large number of manufacturing office employees currently employed--52.9 per cent. The predictions by the city planning commission are that this ratio will become even greater in the future.

TABLE I

## TYPES OF INDUSTRY REPRESENTED BY THE EMPLOYERS INTERVIEWED

Type of Industry	Number	Per Cent
Manufacturing	4	20
Retail	3	15
Banking Institution	2	10
Oil Drilling	2	10
Co-operative	2	10
Membership	1	5
Professional	1	5
Wholesale	1	5
State	1	5
Loan Company	1	5
Public Service	1	5
Credit Association	1	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>

TABLE II

## NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES IN EACH TYPE OF BUSINESS

Type	Number of Employees	Per Cent
Manufacturing	121	52.9
Banking Institutions	44	19.0
Retail	19	9.0
State	15	6.1
Co-Operative	14	6.0
Wholesale	7	3.0
Oil Drilling	5	2.0
Public Service	4	1.1
Membership	4	1.1
Professional	3	1.0
Credit Association	2	.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>231</b>	<b>100.0</b>

All the people surveyed were genuinely interested in raising the present educational standards. The acceptance of this survey can be pointed out by the fact that no one refused to be interviewed and all were anxious to make appointments. It can be noted in Table III that all people interviewed were of the executive level which again points to the high level of response that was shown toward this survey. One manufacturing organization called a meeting of department heads whose employees were in the category being surveyed and met as a group to discuss the problem.

Table IV shows the response given the question which asked if any requirements for typewriting and shorthand were used by the employers. Thirteen of the twenty answered this question by stating they did not have any specific speed requirements, but they did give practical tests to determine if the prospective employee was competent enough in either shorthand or typewriting, depending on the work required by the job to be filled. Those employers who specified they had no requirements were those whose jobs called for a minimum of typewriting or shorthand.

Table V points out the percentage of students who have entered employment with a deficiency in either shorthand or typewriting. Shorthand was mentioned most frequently as being the weaker of the two skills. Fifty per cent of

those persons who used shorthand came to the employer with a deficiency in either speed or accuracy. Accuracy was given most frequently as the failing point. Those who took shorthand could not transcribe accurately that which they had taken. Typewriting faired somewhat better with 65 per cent saying students came to them with enough accuracy and speed. Here again the most frequent cause of failure was the inability to type accurately. Most employers felt accuracy superseded speed. The fact that no specific requirements are made of employees in either typewriting or shorthand, the author sees no reason why most high school students could not meet these requirements.

TABLE III

## CAPACITY OF THE INDIVIDUAL COMPLETING THE SURVEY

Title	Number	Per Cent
Manager	6	30
Owner	3	15
Vice President	2	10
President	2	10
Partner	2	10
Superintendent	1	5
Cashier	1	5
Assistant District Engineer	1	5
Secretary	1	5
Personnel Director	1	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>

TABLE IV

## EMPLOYER REQUIREMENTS FOR SHORTHAND AND TYPEWRITING

Typewriting	Times Mentioned	Shorthand	Times Mentioned
Competent	13	Competent	11
None	4	Not Used	4
2 Years	1	2 Years	2
50 w.p.m.	1	None	2
Civil Service	1	Civil Service	1

TABLE V

DO STUDENTS COME TO YOU WITH SPEED  
AND ACCURACY IN TYPEWRITING AND SHORTHAND?

Skill	Times Mentioned	Per Cent
Typewriting		
Yes	13	65
No	7	35
Shorthand		
Yes	8	50
No	8	50

Table VI indicates that most of the popular makes of typewriters are used in both the manual and electric. The high school uses all except the recently introduced Olympia typewriter. Therefore, the graduates should have ability to type on the most popular makes used by the employers. The table indicates that the Royal typewriter is the most popular.

The results show a very definite trend toward a more extensive use of the electric machine. Approximately one third of the typewriters used were electric. It is interesting to note that the International Business Machine typewriter was the most popular, but all models represented had at least one electric. Royal followed close behind I.B.M. in popularity.

The stenographic room at the high school does have an I.B.M. and an electric Underwood typewriter. Experience in operating these typewriters should enable the student to be more efficient in the operation of these machines when he gets on the job.

According to Table VI there is a wide variety of duplicating machines. The Thermofax is the most popular, but this machine needs a relatively small amount of instruction for operation. Next in popularity is the mimeograph. This is a machine in which students should have some know-

ledge of operation. Most of the duplicating machines were manually operated, but a practical knowledge in the operation of a manual machine should mean there will be little difficulty in handling an electric model.

In the dictating machine group the Dictaphone and Stenorette were the two leading models used. As the Effingham High School curriculum is now set up, if the school had any voice writing machines, only those students in the stenographic classes would have an opportunity to use the dictating machines. Since a definite period of training is necessary in the efficient operation of these machines, it would seem advisable that all advanced typewriting students have an opportunity to work with the dictating machines.

Table VI shows the adding machine to be a very popular piece of office equipment. There was almost an even distribution of the number of ten key type machines used as compared to the full key board. There were five different models of full key board machines and four different models of ten key machines. The Burroughs full key board adding machine was by far the most popular with the Remington ten key next in popularity. Since the present department has only one ten key adding machine this is one area in which some consideration should be given for improvement in the training of students.

The fact that Table VI shows there are almost as many calculating machines found as adding machines points to a definite area of training. The calculating machine, to operate efficiently, needs more time devoted to it for training than does the adding machine. Employers expect employees to operate a calculating machine efficiently as indicated in Table IX. All the calculators found were electric so the one manual calculator which the present business department now possesses could be pointed to as one reason for the unpreparedness of Effingham High School graduates in this area.

As shown in Table VI, the number of billing, bookkeeping, and other office machines used in the businesses surveyed are of little significance. From the standpoint of expense involved, it is impossible as well as impractical, to provide training on these machines.

TABLE VI

## THE MACHINES USED IN THE TWENTY BUSINESS FIRMS

Machine	Manual	Electric
<b>Typewriters</b>		
Royal	10	3
Remington	7	2
Underwood	7	2
I. B. M.	-	4
Olympia	-	2
Auto-Typist (Royal)	-	1
<b>Duplicators</b>		
Thermofax	6	-
A. B. Dick	3	1
Apico Unimatic	3	-
Gestetner	1	1
Speed-o-print	1	-
Roneo	1	-
Hectograph	1	-
Osolet	1	-
Multilith	1	-
Liquid-Ditto	2	-
Standard	1	-

TABLE VI CONTINUED

Machine	Manual	Electric
<b>Dictating Machines</b>		
Dictaphone	-	3
Stenorette	-	2
Dictette	-	1
Edison Voicewriter	-	1
<b>Adding Machines</b>		
Burroughs Full Key Board	-	8
Remington Ten Key	-	5
Burroughs Ten Key	-	4
Nation Full Key Board	-	4
Underwood Ten Key	-	3
Victor Ten Key	-	1
Monroe Full Key Board	-	1
Allen Full Key Board	-	1
Frieden Full Key Board	-	1
<b>Calculators</b>		
Frieden	-	6
Marchant	-	3
Victor	-	3
Monroe	-	3
Remington	-	2

TABLE VI CONTINUED

Machine	Manual	Electric
Burroughs	-	1
Olivetti	-	1
B. D. C. Contex	-	1
<b>Billing Machines</b>		
National Cash Register	-	1
<b>Bookkeeping Machines</b>		
Burroughs	-	6
National Cash Register	-	2
National Cash Register Postronic	-	1
<b>Payroll Machines</b>		
National Cash Register	-	1
<b>Others</b>		
Addressograph	1	3
Proof	-	2
Teletype	-	1
Card Punch	-	1
Underwood Electro-File	-	1
Graphotype	-	1

Table VII shows a variation from the rest of the surveys due to the fact that at one of the manufacturing companies the author had two department heads and the personnel director meet with him when he came for the interview. Therefore, the table totals will show twenty-two employers interviewed rather than twenty which would be equal to the number of businesses surveyed.

Honesty and accuracy both tied for first as the most important requirement for employment. Co-operation followed next. It is important to note the position of both speed and skill. Speed was last and six employers felt it was unimportant. This supports the position that accuracy maintains. The reason given by employers for this low position is about the same as the one for skill. They feel that if an employee maintains the qualities listed above, these two requirements, skill and speed, will both develop as he gains experience. This is especially true, the employers felt, of speed. Some of them felt that skill was unimportant for beginning employees because the work required by their business would be different than that which the student might be trained, but to be good employees they would need the rest of the requirements listed.

Other requirements which were not listed but added to the list by employers were these: Adaptability was listed twice, and these once each: able to work without supervision,

physical capabilities, able to keep confidential communications, and friendliness.

Most of the employers indicated that the requirements listed as important would develop to very important as the employee gains work experience, provided he had all the qualities listed. The employers felt all the traits were important and every effort should be made to develop them.

TABLE VII

## THE IMPORTANCE OF TRAITS IN BEGINNING EMPLOYEES

	Very Important	Important	Unimportant
Honesty	19	3	
Accuracy	19	3	
Co-operation	18	4	
Dependability	17	5	
Neatness about work	16	6	
Courtesy	15	7	
Interest in work	15	6	1
Responsibleness	13	9	
Efficiency	13	9	
Loyalty	13	9	
Initiative	13	8	1
Punctuality	10	12	
Tactfulness	8	14	
Agreeableness	8	14	
Judgment	7	14	1
Appearance	7	14	1
Skill	5	17	
Speed	3	13	6

Table VIII shows those business courses that are most essential to the majority of jobs as rated by the employers surveyed. Sixteen of the employers felt typewriting and fifteen indicated business English were the most essential. Next in order and high on the list were bookkeeping, business arithmetic, and shorthand. These five courses, along with office practice which was next, should form the nucleus of our business department as indicated by this survey. Salesmanship, business law, and advertising were given as unimportant more times than any other courses listed.

The two courses which received considerable attention which we do not have in our department at Effingham High School were business English and business economics. The inclusion of these two courses in our business curriculum, the author feels, needs to be given some attention as indicated by the survey.

TABLE VIII

## IMPORTANCE OF THE FOLLOWING BUSINESS COURSES

	Essential	Desirable	Unimportant
Typewriting	16	5	1
Business English	15	6	1
Bookkeeping	11	10	1
Business Arithmetic	10	11	1
Shorthand	10	10	2
Office Practice	8	12	2
Basic Business	5	15	2
Business Economics	5	14	3
Salesmanship	4	9	9
Business Law	3	11	8
Advertising	1	2	19

As shown in Table IX, spelling ranked first as the skill which needs the most improvement. More fundamental ability in business arithmetic was second. Tied with business arithmetic as second was the student's attitude toward work. This weakness was pointed out as being more prevalent among Effingham High School graduates than those who graduated from some of the other area high schools. Attitude toward work was reported by four of the five employers mentioning attitude, as the reason why they have not made a practice in the last few years of hiring Effingham High School graduates. Attitude is not specifically mentioned in the survey, but since five employers mentioned this voluntarily the author feels it is a definite area in which considerable attention should be focused, especially since four employers felt strongly enough about the attitude of students that they would not hire them if they graduated from Effingham High School. Penmanship ranked next along with ways of meeting people and what to say to people when different situations arise. One employer felt a section on how to be a good receptionist should be presented to girls. It was felt telephone etiquette and more confidence in shorthand need to be stressed. These were the most frequently mentioned suggestions, but the author feels that all suggestions need to be reviewed and some type of corrective measure made if possible for each of them.

TABLE IX

## SUGGESTIONS FROM BUSINESSMEN FOR CURRICULUM IMPROVEMENT

Rank	Suggestion	Times Mentioned
1.	Spelling needs to be improved.	8
2.5	More fundamental ability in arithmetic is needed.	5
2.5	Student's attitude toward work needs to be improved.	5
3.5	Penmanship needs to be improved.	4
3.5	Ways of meeting people need to be improved-- what to say and how to handle people.	4
4.5	Students need more confidence in shorthand ability.	3
4.5	Improvement in telephone etiquette.	3
5.2	Students are weak in basic fundamentals.	2
5.2	Learn the correct technique for filling out job application forms.	2
5.2	More ability in figuring situations by logic.	2
5.2	Better ability in expressing themselves.	2
5.2	More accuracy in sentence construction.	2
6.125	More filing efficiency is needed.	1
6.125	More voice writing machine proficiency is needed.	1
6.125	Operation of different types of duplicating machines needs to be stressed.	1
6.125	More experience on different types of common office machines is needed.	1
6.125	Students need to learn the ability to follow directions.	1
6.125	More stress on punctuality.	1
6.125	More proof reading ability.	1

## Observations

In conducting this survey the author found that after approximately half of the surveys were completed it was rather easy to predict most of the responses to the questions being asked. Due to the consistency of the employers in answering most of the questions in the same manner and the similarity in their remarks on improving the future Effingham High School graduate, the author feels the findings in this report are nearly the same as they would be had all employers of two or more office employees in Effingham been surveyed.

It can be noted that not all questions on the questionnaire were tabulated due to some employers not having the information desired, or the additional work needed of the employer to make such information available was not asked by the author.

The truth in the quotation taken from the book by Tonne<sup>1</sup> was brought to the attention of the author many times during and since this survey was conducted. The ties between businessmen and the school are made greater by this personal contact and the value derived is unmeasurable.

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<sup>1</sup>Supra, Chap. I, p. 4.

## CHAPTER VI

### SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Summary of the Findings

An attempt was made in the survey of the twenty businessmen to determine how well the business department of Effingham High School was meeting the employment needs of the businessmen.

As a result of these interviews the following findings were made:

1. All twenty of the employers contacted for interviews granted permission to be included in the survey.
2. The largest percentage of office employees in Effingham are found in offices of manufacturing companies.
3. There was only one of the twenty employers interviewed that had specific speed requirements in typewriting and none had specific speed requirements in shorthand. The most common reply to speed in both shorthand and typewriting was "competent."
4. The most frequently used office machines reported were the typewriter, adding machine, and calculators.
5. The traits which the businessmen regarded as most important were honesty and accuracy. Nineteen of the twenty-two completing this part of the survey listed these two as very important.

6. The business course which was ranked as most important by the businessmen was typewriting. Sixteen of the twenty employers rated it as essential. Advertising and business law were ranked as unimportant the most number of times.

Recommendations for Improving the Business  
Curriculum of Effingham High School

The following recommendations are made as a result of the interviews with businessmen in Effingham:

1. More emphasis should be placed on the fundamental education objectives--primarily spelling, arithmetic, and penmanship. These courses could help off-set the major objections given by the businessmen as weaknesses in the prospective employee.

2. Students should be indoctrinated as to what constitutes a good employee. More emphasis should be placed on these qualities in the classroom. By doing this the student will be better prepared to meet those requirements expected of all employees.

3. A unit on business ethics should be given. This unit should include how to apply for a job, the job interview, business manners, and getting along with fellow

employees. The first impressions of an employee are gained through the use of these techniques and it is important that prospective employees have confidence in their ability to carry them out successfully.

4. Additional machines should be added to the equipment available for instructional purposes. At least one more ten key adding machine, a full key board adding machine, and a calculator are needed. These additional machines will increase the skills a student will have for immediate use upon employment.

5. At least one dictating machine, with two being more practical, should be made available. These dictating machines should be made available to all advanced typewriting classes. The practical use of the dictating machine gives a student more initial value as a beginning employee.

6. A course in business English should be added to the curriculum. This course would help build efficiency in spelling, penmanship, vocabulary, and sentence construction.

7. A course in business economics should be added to the curriculum. This course would help the student better understand how the business world functions.

The above recommendations are made not only with the hope of better preparing those students who wish to enter

the field of business, but also to aid in the adjustment of the student as an adult citizen of the community and to give better background training to those students who wish to continue their education.

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**APPENDIX**

Effingham Community Unit

District No. 40

Raymond H. Lane, Superintendent

Effingham, Illinois

May 27, 1960

Dear Mr. -----

At the present I am employed as a teacher at Effingham High School. I am making a survey to determine to what extent the business curriculum is meeting the needs of businessmen in Effingham.

To complete this study successfully I need your cooperation. At your convenience during the next two or three weeks, may I have an appointment with you in order to discuss this matter?

No names will be used in this study and all information will be shown in tabulated form only. Your participation in this project may help to improve the caliber of education available and in turn raise the abilities of job applicants.

Sincerely yours,

Joseph F. Green  
Commerce Teacher





What suggestions do you have to improve the business education of the students who come to you for employment?

Any other suggestions?

Names of Effingham High School graduates you now employ.