

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

History of Salem Schools

Child Accounting

O. H. 342

DEAN PHILLIPS

Interviewed

by

James McNeal

on

October 29, 1975

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

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INTERVIEWEE: DEAN PHILLIPS

INTERVIEWER: James McNeal

SUBJECT: Pupil Personnel, Child Accounting, Busing,
Attendance

DATE: October 29, 1975

M: This is an interview with Mr. Dean Phillips for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program on the Salem Schools by James L. McNeal at the Salem Senior High on East Sixth Street in Salem, Ohio, on October 29, 1975, at 3:15 p.m.

Mr. Phillips, the first thing I would like to ask you is how and why you got involved in education?

P: Well, it's an odd circumstance in a way. In 1932 I graduated from Wooster with a liberal arts AB degree right in the middle of the Depression. I changed my course of study, which was preparatory to teaching then, to civil engineering, then to liberal arts with majors in mathematics and English.

After about twelve years managing a chain grocery store and after coming out of the service in 1946, I decided to go into teaching. I got my BS in education from Mount Union in 1950 and did some graduate work at Kent State University.

I started teaching in 1946, then in 1951 the supervisor of child accounting here in Salem died and one of the faculty members applied for the job, which involved enumeration throughout the summer, after which he decided to resign. It was pretty tedious work. The school enumeration at that time was quite tedious. It meant marking up every child by age, school, location, grade, and so forth. So he decided he really didn't care for it and the superintendent at the time asked me to come over and take over the job. I was a local boy and he

probably felt that my having been familiar with the physical and social characteristics of the school district I could probably tie in with what he had in mind.

M: This was 1951?

P: It was 1951, in the fall, yes. After school had started he had asked me. It may be interesting if I were to give you a makeup of the Salem School District and you could ask some questions after that.

M: Okay, fine.

P: The school district actually is pretty compact. It's made up of only 18 square miles, has 4,000 enrollment, has a four year senior high school of 1,325 students, a two year junior high of 675, five elementary public schools, and one parochial school of 140 pupils.

My job is kind of a unique thing. Child accounting is sort of a basic job, but the job description is tied in with transportation. It is sometimes called supervisor of pupil personnel. Maybe if I gave you a few of the on the job descriptions, some of the areas of responsibilities, that will lead to some questions.

M: Okay.

P: First and basic, my responsibility is to keep a continuous enumeration by families and by locations of all the pupils in the whole school district. That can be used for tuition purposes, transportation programs, distribution of pupils, and so forth. But in addition, a lot of other detail work has to be done.

As an attendance officer I also handle the mechanics of attendance at the senior high and any referrals by the seven principals for any home-school liaison work. This office maintains a file of permanent records for all pupils who have been enrolled in kindergarten through eighth grade. If one withdraws, his or her records come to my office, being a central child accounting office, then they are sent to the school to which the pupil transferred.

We also issue work certificates for youth between the ages of fourteen and seventeen. A person having been given a promise of a job must make an application in my office for a work certificate by state law. Applicants are given three preliminary cards and they fill them out by giving one to the parents, one to the employer, and one to the doctor. When the completed forms are

received, we issue a work certificate.

As I said before, this liaison between the school and the community has a lot of aspects to it. Some examples would be the liaison between the juvenile court, the local police, churches, home, and so forth. We supply information of all the families for state reports, whether it be transportation, psychological, and so forth. One example might be to screen, review, and pass on applications for the free lunch program, which is centralized in this office because we have to be alert at all times to cases of welfare, child abuse, under-privileged, denied, deprived families, and so forth.

This transportation probably is the biggest problem. It takes up about twenty to twenty-five percent of the time. My capacity there is one of scheduling, routing, and handling problems as they arise in the transportation of the approximately 1,400 kids to the schools. I believe that's a thumbnail sketch of the various areas of involvement I get into.

Basically, we have to keep abreast of all social aspects that cause physical changes in the school system in the matter of objections to policy matters and things like that. I have a list of control cards of all families of every student in the district and assist the superintendent and principals in resolving such problems.

It's a little odd . . . I hate to take too much time now, but maybe just to change the point of reference here. When you have housing developments outside city limits, for instance, there is an increase in needs for busing. You have a state demanding a two-way kindergarten busing. Special classes have to be centrally located, and they've increased from two in the last thirteen or fourteen years to seven, LDIBD and E. M. R. and other special classes. That presents a problem in one respect because they're eligible to be transported to these special classes. Since they live a mile away from town and they lived scattered throughout the district you have to make arrangements for busing them, know where they are, and know what special classes and schools they attend.

St. Paul students are eligible to be transported. They live throughout our whole school district and if they live a mile or more from their school, which is kindergarten through sixth grade now, they're able to be transported, and we tie it in with our regular runs.

Some aspects of social change were touched upon briefly. This may have some bearing; in 1951, when I started,

there were 2,900 students, then it peaked to 4,500 in 1968, which came as an aftermath of the late forties baby boom, and now it has drifted back to 4,000.

The entrance policy in 1957 was changed making it necessary for a child to be five by September 30th in order to be eligible for kindergarten. That made a difference in one year because it represented three-fourths of a year's pupils instead of the projected number to be accommodated in the following kindergarten year.

In 1967, I remember not only was the Fourth Street School, a centrally located school, condemned, but a new GM plant came in, which affected our school population.

Another thing affecting staff and distribution of children was St. Paul's discontinuing their cafeteria. This had a decided effect on the number attending St. Paul's, an influx in our schools in the outlying areas which sometimes overcrowded the younger, primary grades, and so forth. But in 1972 St. Paul's eliminated their seventh and eighth grades right after they had eliminated the cafeteria, which further complicated the picture.

All these things have to be anticipated and foreseen as to the impact they would have on our transportation program and so forth. Now I just went across that very rapidly. Maybe I provoked some . . .

M: No, that's fine. You provoked some questions and things I hadn't thought of beforehand. Going back to 1951, you made mention of the previous supervisor. Who was that? Do you recall?

P: The one that died?

M: Yes, the one that died.

P: They called him Simley Rich. That was his familiar name, but his name was Clyde.

M: Did he have a fancy title or was he a truant officer?

P: No, he was supervisor of child accounting, which was changed in the late 1930's when the accent was on the positive rather than on the negative. The words truant officer really feel negative; attendance officer is positive. That's one of the changes that came about around 1939 or 1940.

M: So it was a psychology title then rather than . . .

P: Yes, I think so.

M: When you took over in 1951, do you have any recollections of how you felt when you stepped into that job right out of your earlier experiences?

P: My misgivings to a certain degree were due to the type of job it was. I had two young children coming up through school at the time. I had to act out their defense against problems pointing to decisions that had to be made in my authoritative position and on which they disagreed. But we got through all right.

I was familiar with the town. It was very interesting and challenging and I had to really build up from nothing because of this sudden departure of this gentleman; it just left the whole thing in a hodgepodge. We had, at that time, four busses under contract and they have increased to our present ten. We transport 1,400 pupils, we have vocational setup with Alliance and we have to transport some 36 pupils over there, 15 miles west of Salem.

It has been very interesting over the years and sometimes frustrating and sometimes gratifying.

M: Well, that would be a total of, just for rough figures, twenty-five years?

P: Yes, in this job.

M: What do you see as the biggest changes in the area, say in the last twenty-five years, with regard to your job?

P: The way you handle a job depends on the demands. I recall in the field of welfare and need, back maybe 15 or 17 years ago we had an appeal for used clothing, protective clothing, by all the elementary principals; the junior high also participated. Pupils would bring in boots, shoes, heavy coats, basically those three things. I would store them and as I ran across the need for some of them I would be able to furnish them to the needy families. As the year progressed not only was there more money and less need for things like that, there were more places where these people could get them, the deprived and underprivileged people. But then the time ran so short as we got more pupils and more problems and so forth. In the face of what I sometimes call the present permissive society we haven't had the time to do what we did before. As I run across a case I make applications to service clubs who respond with money and other aid.

We belong to the Salem Schools Health Advisory Council, and I failed to mention that the supervisor of child accounting is the chairman of the funding committee of the Health Advisory Council. The service clubs do a marvelous job in funding all these needs that we bring to their attention and I spend about \$200 a year of their money in isolated cases.

Now that has progressed to the point where I think the big problem right now is the rebellion of youth against any kind of authority, which makes it doubly difficult in dealing with the family, then they would put the clamps on the boy or girl and usually they would benefit. But lately too many times the boys and girls are dictating to the parents and it makes it doubly hard. I've run across many cases where they're just outright lying on the part of families, and under complete frustration, they don't know what to do.

But, fortunately, we have wonderful, supportive help now. In other words, we have what we solely needed, a juvenile detention center, which allows our juvenile a chance to compare the privileges he had under his parents and the school system in which he did not behave with a school system where there are no privileges, except what's earned by their getting merits from their chores and so forth.

M: With all those things to do you surely don't work by yourself. What kind of auxiliary help do you have?

P: Well, my work actually dovetails with the nurse's duties. The nurse and I work together in many home visitations. I assist a psychologist in making contacts and preparing the families of all these people for various referrals, whether they're coming from psychologists, principals, nurse, or whoever it is. Sometimes we're in the position to go in and talk to the families. The unfortunate part is that there is not too much help. We have a secretary who is not only the secretary to child accounting, but to the nurse, and to the psychologist, and to the superintendent at times when the need arises. We do the best we can. Unfortunately, at times frustration crops up and duties are watered down too much. You don't have the time because when you're out working on a transportation problem you may have a demand for a behavioral problem from some principal trying to contact you and you're not there.

All in all, I think we're very fortunate because handling the mechanics of attendance here at the high school, I keep my fingers on developing patterns of behavior. I have a running account of all absences by reason on everyone's schedule card, which allows me, for

counseling purposes, to talk to them and their parents when I see a pattern arising that might mean trouble in the near future. So that helps quite a bit.

I do have one helper, a vocational work study girl who helps in the summer. The summertime is spent drawing up graphs of all the mobility of the present day population. You can have so many people located in the spring, but the trouble is making sure where all these people are before school starts so that you can set up your routes to equalize the loads, equalize the distances and the time involved and also get to all the schools with all the hazards and the holdups of city traffic and so forth. Another demand is keeping buses off certain streets that are posted under 8,000 pounds. But, all in all, we have a pretty favorable situation here in Salem.

M: Would you say the job has definitely gotten more difficult in the last twenty or twenty-five years?

P: It's extremely more difficult because there are so many details affecting so many more boys and girls that at times it's too time consuming and you don't think that you've really gotten your job done. We just don't have time for little things that we feel are important, services to the boys and girls as we see the needs.

Today I went out and I bought two pairs of shoes for two children. The referral came from the principal and also an interested mother who was a maid in one of the schools. It took time. Sometimes I didn't have the time. It may have been three or four days before I could get around to doing it. But to give you an illustration, at one time I was able to go out and probably make five or six home contacts in one day, supplying some need that they had or having a conference with the parents and so forth.

M: You've mentioned that you are a hometown boy. Do I take that to mean that you were born and raised in Salem?

P: That's right.

M: Then you would have gone through the same schools yourself?

P: Yes.

M: What schools were involved in your years in public education as a student?

P: I started at the old Columbia Street School, which was centrally located at that time and wasn't as big and spread out as it is now. That was demolished in 1927, I think, and replaced by the Reilly School, which is also centrally located. Then, when I got to the fifth grade,

they didn't have any more room over in Columbia Street, so we had to go from a block and one-half to Columbia Street, and walk eight blocks to McKinley School. That is still here for fifth and sixth grade. Then I went to junior high in the old Fourth Street building. That was condemned in 1967 and razed a year or so ago. The present junior high at that time was the high school. Those are the four schools involved when I went.

We didn't have kindergarten in those days. Kindergarten was established here in 1948 in the Buckeye School, which is a new school out in the northwest part of town. In 1948 they had nineteen pupils. At the present time there are approximately 300 in 5 schools. More interestingly, I believe, is the fact that in the kindergarten today we have ninety-nine and two-thirds percent membership of all those people located in Salem. Last year there were only three people who didn't attend kindergarten, nor sign up for kindergarten in the fall.

M: This would be five-year olds?

P: Five-year olds.

M: You mentioned the Columbia Street School. You had been there for four years, for four grades?

P: Yes.

M: Do you have any recollections at all? You would have been quite young, but most people don't even remember that building being there. They think of the A&P and that's it, but I wonder if you have any recollections of that building?

P: I don't have too many recollections of the building. I recollect being ordered off the fire escape by the teacher. I recollect there being a portable at the time. I can't recollect too many things.

I had a little brother who had tuberculosis of the bone, and I had to transport him back and forth by wagon and sled. He died in the first grade. But I can't recall too many things except the big playground area and the big gully, which is now the A&P. That was all gully then because they put the school building on the north side while the south side went right straight down into a big hollow. I can't recall too many things there. I can't recall who the principal was there, to tell you the truth.

- M: Perhaps you can remember, did you have a schedule similar to the grade school with recesses, open lunches, and so forth at that time?
- P: Oh yes, open lunches, definitely. They never thought of a cafeteria, but they had recesses, morning and afternoon.
- M: It was pretty much the same?
- P: About the same as today in the elementary schools. I can't recall everything. To tell you the truth, I can't think back that far.
- M: What I'm getting at is, having gone through the Salem School System, then by way of Wooster, the military service, and the college level you were familiar then with staff and administration, perhaps some individuals prior to taking that first job in student accounting. You knew E. S. Kerr, for example?
- P: Yes, he hired me.
- M: I'm curious, how did he go about hiring? I've interviewed some other people and there are some interesting stories about Mr. Kerr. For example, he would drive a good distance to see somebody. He actually went after Miss Thorp up in Ravenna after she had been recommended to him. Are there any stories associated with your knowledge of him and how you picked up the job?
- P: Not that I know of. The man who applied, Mr. Jacobs, after Smiley Rich's death, really didn't know what the job involved, and he resigned suddenly at the end of the summer before school started. That meant they had no supervisor then until Mr. Kerr could find someone who could take over. And as I said before, I was local and he knew me. I had been in the service. I believe Mr. Kerr felt that, possibly, I would be better off because I had taught math for four years in junior high and I had a fairly good report from the teachers and staff. We got along well, and I imagine he felt I would be most likely to adjust to the situation. I recall that we did take one little jaunt to Columbus together and we talked it over and that's when I made my decision. That's all I recall.
- M: So, he more or less came after you?
- P: Probably. He came over and asked me to take the office over because he felt I was more adjustable to the needs of the job.
- M: I'd like to take a closer look now at some of the

problems you went through, more or less a summary of your work which certainly does cover a tremendous number of topics. What main problem do you run into? What major problem seems to occupy the greatest amount of time with the students, in the personal end of the business?

P: Well, I'd venture to say that as I see a pattern develop that can lead to nothing more than trouble for the boy or girl, the main problem is finding the time to get to the parents. I operate first by contacting the parents because they are the ones responsible for the child's attendance and conduct. There are various things I look for when these patterns start to develop. First I see if I'm going to meet with receptive parents. It's very difficult when they're not receptive. Some of them resent any outside interference in what they feel is their own personal privilege of raising a child as they see fit.

I kind of look for five things, in a way, in the early identification of these problems. Number one is a physical handicap where a child just can't hold his own in the school population. Some develop a school phobia. Some have an attitudinal thing that they picked up from their parents who haven't established any values in education or schools in general because they may have been deprived of a good school experience. Homes are broken in various ways as you well know. It might be drinking parents, doting parents, divorced parents, departed parents, or delinquent parents. Then there are deprived homes, whether that deprivation is material or psychological.

You asked me what I feel is growing as the biggest concern. I would say it is this youth rebellion. It makes it more difficult because they have resisted authority in general. To have a disciplined society, you have to have authority and you have to have respect for that authority. If the authority in the home breaks down that is transferred immediately over into the school. That same lack of credibility in the school then makes it twice as difficult today.

In four cases of truancy I was outright lied to by parents in their attempt to cover up for the child or didn't want to lose face or they didn't want to cause trouble. That makes it extremely difficult.

As I had started to say some time ago, in the permissive society the kids, I believe, have too much money, too much free time, and too little respect for earning what they get. In other words, it is just unearned affluence of some kind. They operate the same way in school, they

expect a grade without earning it.

This might be off the subject, but I was thinking of one case, an extremely bad case, which took place years ago. It was one of my early experiences in this job. I had an eighth grade boy, a little tough, that I would put up against any high school senior. He was really tough in actions, looks, and physical being. He came from a very large family, twelve children, eleven of which ran afoul of the law in some respect. I met this boy in a bowling alley one night when I was bowling in a league, and I said, "Tommy, you ought to go home and study. You have always told me that you couldn't do as well as the other kids because you were stupid. It's 10:30 right now. You're probably just as smart as they are, but you're just not doing the work."

Sometime after that something came up--this is at the old junior high building--and I was called over to take this boy home immediately. When they contacted the home, the home didn't believe the school's story. They said their boy wouldn't do that and the teacher was at fault. So while the situation was fresh I went over and took the boy down to the house, after calling the home, so that I could give them firsthand information on exactly what he did, face to face so they couldn't refute the school's story. The father was a foundry worker, a big heavysset, muscular, gruff man, actually a wino. The mother was a frail, little lady who worked out doing housework. It was a large family, but at that time most of the family had left home. One older brother was shot during a burglary. The father came staggering into the room while I was talking to the mother and explaining it to her, and he gruffly said, "I know you, you're the guy who helped me get my daughter out of school by giving her a work certificate." I said, "Oh yes, how do you do?" The mother said, "Get back in there. I told you to stay back in the other room while Mr. Phillips was here." He said, "Oh, he knows me." So after the third pleading he did go back and I continued on, and the mother told the boy what he should have done and so forth, or should not have done.

We walked out. I put him in the car, and we started back to school, and this little tough kid, about halfway back to school, broke out crying. I said, "Johnny, what's the matter? I never thought I would see you cry." He said, "You remember when you saw me down at the bowling alley and you told me if I would stay home and study like those smart guys did, I could be as smart as they are?" And I said, "Something to that effect." He said, "Would you stay in a home like that?" That's just one illustration.

M: Do you run into many situations like that?

P: Quite a few.

M: In good old Salem, U. S. A.?

P: You see, when you're driving around past these homes and so forth, you don't know what's behind closed doors, and there are many like that. I remember one home in which they cooked a big bowl of oatmeal in the morning and set it in the middle of the table. There were eight children in the family. Whenever anyone got hungry he would go over and take a spoonful of oatmeal. Sometimes there was no milk or anything else, they just ate it dry.

That family was ordered out of a condemned house. We were in court and the judge ordered them not to go back to the condemned house unless it was okayed by the school nurse and Mr. Phillips. That put quite a load on our shoulders because we weren't qualified to make such a decision. But that's just another illustration.

The same family, I remember, was given all kinds of clothing. I made several trips down there and we looked in the closet and there was all the clothing. Instead of washing the clothing they just threw it over in the corner because they knew there would be some more coming from some church group, school, or someplace. There were probably nine or ten cubic yards of clothing packed over a stairwell.

M: Are there really a lot of hard luck cases that you get involved with in what would be relatively a small town like Salem?

P: Well, that's the clue there. In a small town like Salem, what is a lot? Here, I believe, there are too many for the type of affluent district it is. But most money is used up, not in the family's interest, but wastefully by incompetent or irresponsible parents. In the present economic situation there are too many sad cases, many hidden.

In one very severe case the boy came to school regularly and neat, but circumstances led to this home being entered by some authority. The police went in, they wouldn't allow them to see it, but the police got some other authority, sanitation department or something, and it was ridiculous. They had a broken camode line and they kept on using it. They would throw their clothing over in a corner until they had a closet full of clothing stacked clear to the ceiling. Pictures were taken of

that, of course. Of course, the child was taken away from the home. But it took three months of work, investigation, and so forth before it was done. Too often these things go on too long with a decided effect on the children before they could or would do anything about it.

- M: Of course you see it all the time, but then the teacher in the classroom at Reilly or McKinley or the junior high or anywhere else may suspect some kind of difficulty just in a glance at a student. But, certainly, I know I have no idea. I have 180 kids a day. I'm sure that there are some hard luck situations there and I'm just not aware of them.
- P: I remember Mr. Kerr one time handing out a directive, when I was still teaching, on this burned out family that I had trouble with a year later. That's one of the deprived families I worked with. They were living in a cellar with no furniture, nothing else; everything was lost, very little furniture, and no electric or anything else, just a gas propane lamp of some kind. Mr. Kerr told the teachers not to give these children homework with the same degree that they gave the others because they certainly wouldn't have the same opportunity to do homework as other children would. Later on they got more furniture as the father was gainfully employed. They had a brand new electric carpet sweeper I saw while I was there. I was out at the house one day and the little boy was sitting there hammering on this brand new vacuum cleaner with a teapot. All I could see was about fifteen dents in the top of it with nothing done. The mother completely ignored the boy. He was playing and that was it.
- M: I wonder, there is so much talk about suspension of students. I know that finally they reach a point where this becomes a necessary situation. How have you seen that change over the years? I know it's tougher, but how far does the situation have to go before you suspend students or, in worse cases yet, have to go to court?
- M: That's in the principal's and the superintendent's jurisdiction. I don't suspend them. In severe cases, and at the principal's request, I cite them and their parents to a hearing with an officer from juvenile court. Usually if someone does something severe enough to be suspended and the principal suspends him for a few days, according to policy, after they've had a hearing the family knows exactly what is expected of the child. But if that doesn't work and the boy or girl comes back and exhibits the same behavior as before, it's indicated that suspension didn't work.

When it gets referred to me I make a home call, talk to the parents to see if they can give any suggestions as to how we can keep this child from getting further into trouble. And I talk with the boy or girl and then I give them one more chance. For instance, I have the family call in any time he is going to be absent so that the control will lay on the family's shoulder and so forth as to remove the temptation for misconduct, and any misbehavior infraction of rules on a bus or anything like that. I warn them against that because that would be just cause for reporting him to the juvenile officials.

If he continues on with this type of behavior, whatever it may be, I refer him to the juvenile officer as a screening agent, or a referee you might call him. I give him the home history, the social history, and so forth, and all things he has done so that the juvenile officer can talk to him intelligently. The referee tries to see if he can put the child on probation and avoid a court appearance.

Now, if this fails, of course, it has to go on to the court. He is cited and charged with being an unruly child. Sometimes they might find them neglected or unruly, incorrigible. Sometimes they might find the parents neglectful, or whatever it is, it finally goes to the judge. The judge has disposition and may send him to the honor farm. If the judge feels that they boy is beyond that and he needs detained in such a manner to let him consider the privileges he's losing, then he goes to the detention center or attention center, the accent's on the positive again. That's Judge Louis Tobin's detention center, where he has to do his chores and through the merit system gets his free time. He can play Ping-Pong, read books, and so forth. He has to earn his privileges there. That's one way of learning it. If he does right he's going to be rewarded. When he does wrong, he gets the consequence, and I think it's really workable.

Severe cases, of course, are sent on to the Ohio Youth Commission by the juvenile court. In some cases, if they decide that the family is not providing a fit home, they hand them over to the welfare to find a foster home. Unfortunately now they cannot find foster homes for older kids. You can find a few foster homes for the young ones. If they can find foster homes, then they put them in there. Then, of course, they're placed in the school district in which the foster homes lie,

M: How many cases a year would you say you handle, just a rough estimate? Is there any figure you can give me?

P: Do you mean home visitations on a problem leading to referral?

M: Yes, that's what I had in mind.

P: I'm trying to recall now. In the last two months of report, I recall, there were 68 home visitations. That would be approximately thirty a month. I imagine it would average one and one-half visitations a day or well over two hundred in a school year where it's necessary to go in and talk to the parents over a problem.

M: A lot of these would be follow up?

P: A lot of those would be follow up, a lot of those would be severe, and probably I'm overlooking many cases where it's just to go in and talk to the family over some little matter, taking five minutes that are not listed on report.

M: You get it all resolved in just one conversation?

P: That's right. But severe cases, holding family conferences, I think probably that's what I had in mind when I was saying about an average of about one and one-half a day.

Sometimes I make a telephone call and have the parents come into the office after the school's closing time. I have the boy or girl stay there so that the parent can come in and we can talk it over while it's fresh in everyone's mind. Often, when it's severe enough to make a referral to the juvenile officer, these are just attempts to avoid that because that is time-consuming and usually it builds up a resentment in the boy or girl and we would like to avoid it if we can.

M: You mentioned using a phone. Do you have any idea of the number of phone calls you make?

P: Well, that's something too I remember from this last report. There were 612 phone calls, many of them may have been overlooked, but those were outgoing phone calls. A lot of times it was calling someone maybe in certain situations, like I said before. I don't know how many the front office makes, but if I would call out in situations, I imagine that would be three hundred a month. I imagine it would average three hundred a month contacts by phone, that is three hundred each way.

M: It keeps you pretty busy?

P: A lot of these aren't definitely on truancy problems, behavioral problems, and so forth. Many of these are on transportation problems where there's a misconduct on the bus and so forth. The bus driver makes a report to

me and I have to make my investigation so I have all the facts on hand before we can charge somebody for property destruction on a bus or maybe to deny them the privilege of riding. We have to have concrete evidence because it's difficult to have someone who lives two miles out in the country walk in, especially a fifth or sixth grader.

But I would say that's a good average, probably three hundred phone calls a month or pretty close.

M: You mentioned that the term truant officer became a more positive reference of attendance officer, pupil accounting, or pupil personnel, and that even the term detention center is now attention center to emphasize the positive, yet you work with so many areas that are anything but positive. All the individual cases that you've mentioned and the general areas they fall into, are there any bright areas in your work? It must seem awfully frustrating?

P: Well, there are many bright areas, every time you see results. In other words, you get positive results, it's a bright area.

M: Does that happen very often?

P: I had a mother last spring, after graduation, make a trip out to the house and personally thank me for riding hard on her daughter. She was well-known to me. I had known her for years, but I still went out and told her that she was exercising, let's say, lack of judgement in giving her daughter a new car when she was a junior. Right after she got the new car, during her junior year, I caught her truant twice. The third instance of truancy we have to refer to juvenile authority for disposition, so I made her mother call in whenever the girl was going to be absent. Then I pressured her throughout her senior year and I believe that that's the only reason that the girl graduated, because she was prone to just running and enjoying life because she couldn't see too much in the future. She had plenty of money, very affluent family. The mother was extremely gratified that someone took the time to interfere with her child raising, let's put it that way, because she knew that the girl benefited.

M: A positive interference?

P: That's right.

M: Certainly at the beginning of this interview all the areas that you covered and the items that we've talked about so far leads me or anyone else to believe that you have a really difficult job and one that's quite demanding. The satisfactions you get out of it usually, as you say,

are in the positive results that you can get. Do you have any final comments with regard to the job and your role in it, the feelings, attitudes that you have towards it and your 25 years, let's say roughly 25 years, at the helm of child accounting?

P: I believe that when I retire I'm going to make a recommendation that the job be split, that they remove transportation from the job of child accounting because it is so time consuming. Positive results can be accomplished, I think, if more time could be applied to just home visitations and personal contacts.

Outside of that I believe the key to the whole thing is someone who is willing to take the time to maintain this continuous accounting of all the students in the district and get away from the impersonalness of today. Whenever you have a change in the physical structure of the school district, you're going to affect so many things like transportation, distribution of pupils, and so forth. It is upsetting when you have a kindergartner lost on a bus run, which, fortunately, we've never had, that is completely lost.

I haven't formulated any philosophies or anything, but I believe if I were to make any suggestions, it would be to separate the supervisor of transportation from supervisor of child accounting. In pupil personnel it's a wide coverage and it's too much for one person to do his job to his satisfaction, what he feels is his satisfaction, when he has so many demands from principals, bus drivers, superintendent, assistant superintendent, counselors, and so forth. Each one, in his estimation, is of prime importance and you feel somewhat frustrated or weak. You want to do that job, but you can't because you've got to set priorities and some job must wait. Sometimes these lower priority situations develop into more pressured cases when you let a job go for three days that should have been handled the first day.

The final comment I could think of would be that I hope that someone in the future will maintain this continuous enumeration. You see, all changes in the school system have to come through my office. We have a form, and whenever a boy or girl moves away, transfers within the district, drops out of school, or whatever, that comes through on this change slip and we note it right away on our central control cards. Too often it's necessary to revise a bus run to transport someone who moves into town and who is placed in a special class. Someone may be referred to a psychologist, and others, and we can give those people to whom a referral is made, the location of the boy or girl, what his needs are, and possibly some

recommendation as to what some psychological needs are based on the information and the past contacts I've had with the family.

M: Well, like so many other areas of education, it's tough to sell to the public and others involved in the school system that there is definitely a need for more help so that a job can be done the way you and others feel it should be done.

P: Yes. I don't believe it's the only one either. I believe there are an awful lot of cases where we have to do the best with what we have within the time and the money and the effort available.

M: Well, Mr. Phillips, before we finish up I'd like to personally thank you. I thank everybody that I interview because I know my time's precious in the school system and I know your's is too. Thank you very much.

P: Thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW