ACTIVATING THE MAXWELL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT

COUNCIL, MAXWELL, IOWA

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Master of Science in Education

by
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ACTIVATING THE MAXWELL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT COUNCIL, MAXWELL, IOWA

by

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Schools in the American society have taught democratic principles for many years. It is important that citizens understand the concept of democratic living but more important that they know how to live and practice these principles in everyday life. The student council is commonly used as an instrument for teaching the responsibilities and obligations of good citizenship.

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. The purpose of this project was to develop an effective student council in the Maxwell High School to:

1. foster better student-faculty understanding,
2. encourage democratic student participation in school affairs,
3. teach citizenship through student government,
4. improve school spirit and morale, and
5. improve scholarship.

Need for the project. The understanding and skills involved in the practice of democratic citizenship cannot be acquired in the reading of books alone. If boys and girls are going to learn democracy through practice, they must have daily experience in the assumption of responsibility and in discharging it successfully. ¹ A student council can provide

for high school students an opportunity to participate in the management of school affairs and to practice democratic living.

**Local conditions.** The town of Maxwell is located in the southeast part of Story County. The population from the 1950 census was 802. The high school enrollment at Maxwell has averaged 107 students during the past ten years, with 46 per cent of these students living in town.

The present principal came to Maxwell in the fall of 1955. During the preceding ten years there had been seven different principals, three staying two years each and the other four serving only one year each. During this time there had been one attempt to organize a student council, but a constitution had not been adopted to perpetuate its existence, and it was not continued the following year.

In the spring of 1956, students and faculty began talking of organising another student council. The principal discussed the situation with the superintendent and was given permission to go ahead with the organization if the students would show an interest and take the initiative to promote it. Gradually, more and more interest was shown by students and a committee of four students was elected in the fall of 1956 to draw up a constitution. This committee contacted several schools in the county and procured sample constitutions to use as guides in preparing one for the Maxwell Student Council. After a constitution was written, it was read to the student body and each article was discussed. After several amendments and additions, the constitution was ratified by the students and approved by the principal.

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2 *Room Registers,* filed in the Office of the Superintendent, Maxwell High School, Maxwell, Iowa.
Student council elections were held and the Maxwell Student Council became official. The interest was high at this time but the expectations were greater than the results. The constitution did provide for elections each year, however, so a new council was elected in the fall of 1957 and the members met twice a month. This council decided to sell apples at home basketball games and to plan a Christmas party for the high school students. The council then elected to sponsor a "student of the month" for the remainder of the year. One student was selected each month by council members on the bases of scholastic achievement, participation in school activities, and personality.

The writer as principal decided, during the summer of 1958, that the student council at Maxwell was in need of more guidance and cooperation if it were to become effective, hence, this project came into existence.

II. ORGANIZATION

Procedures used. The writer made a study of literature in the field and made some of this literature available to the Maxwell High School students. Two new books, So You're in High School, by Mary F. Detjen and Ervin W. Detjen,¹ and So You Were Elected, by Virginia Bailard and Harry C. McKown,² were secured for the high school library. A handbook for student councils, published by the National Association of Student Councils, along with numerous pamphlets and reprints of


magazine articles concerned with student councils were obtained through the National Education Association and made available to the students.

A study was made of student activities of the past twelve years in the Maxwell High School. The information was gathered from school annuals, school records, and interviews with the superintendent. A questionnaire was answered by the students, giving their opinions in regard to the functions of a student council and what they would like to see accomplished by the council at Maxwell. The results of the questionnaires were studied by the student council members and used as a guide in planning the year's activities.

A record of student council meetings and activities was kept and used as an aid in evaluating the success of the program at the end of the year. Suggestions for improving the student council were solicited from the students and teachers, through a written questionnaire. Recommendations for future student council organization and operation in Maxwell High School were presented. These recommendations were based on student opinions, faculty opinions, and personal experiences encountered by the writer while working with the student council.

Sources of information. The National Association of Student Councils and the National Association of Secondary-School Principals supplied information in regard to the functions and purposes of student councils as well as organization and operation techniques that have been employed successfully in other schools. This information was supplemented by magazine articles, books, and field reports pertinent to student council organizations.

1Appendix A. 2Appendix B.
CHAPTER II

DEVELOPING THE PLAN

During the past twenty-five years there has been much literature written on the subject of student councils. There has been disagreement among educators in regard to organization and operation techniques, but the consensus appeared to be that a student council organization should be developed locally and should grow out of local needs. Since no two schools were exactly alike, it seemed extremely improbable that two councils should be exactly alike. There was no one type of council nor one way to organize and operate a council that would be best for all schools, as each school would want to develop a plan that would best serve its own needs.

I. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Any organization that exists in a school program must have a definite purpose and be of educational value in order to justify its being. A student council in the high school should aid the school in developing competent adult citizens by enriching the learning environment through the provision of a means for young people to solve problems relating to their own needs and interests.1

Self-government needs to be practiced by young people if they are going to grow up to be independent, self-disciplined individuals. This does not mean that students should be given complete freedom to act.

1Johnson and Faunce, op. cit., p. 45.
Adult control must enter into school government in keeping with the authority of the state and the school district. All students should have acquired, by the end of their secondary school experience, the realization and understanding of good citizenship as well as the desire and ability to exercise the rights of citizenship.¹

The students must realize the need for a student council and take the initiative to promote it. A council organized by the faculty loses its effect if the students are not given the opportunity to help plan. It is important that the students visualize a student council as an organization that cooperates with the faculty in order to make better student-teacher relations and provides for better school atmosphere. Good citizenship cannot be developed nor can a wholesome attitude be attained in a school in which all thinking and all planning come from the principal's office. Principals who control every action of their student councils and student bodies should remember that preparation for life's future adjustments call for practice in present adjustments.²

The representation in the council should be school wide. To teach democracy and good citizenship, every student must feel that he is a part of the organization, either by being a member or having a direct representative that was elected from and by a group of which he is a member. Mathes stated that student council members and officers should have excellent qualifications but there should be few, if any, eligibility restrictions placed upon candidacy. The student council should be a positive


organization where boys and girls are taught to vote intelligently for their leaders rather than have eligibility restrictions imposed on candidates so that only the students with the highest grades can run for office.¹

McKown made the following comment on the importance of the council sponsor:

probably nothing will wreck a council more quickly than student recognition that the sponsor is not sufficiently interested, prepared, or personally equipped to lead it. The faculty representative is the most important single member of the council, not only because he is older, more mature, and experienced, and has better judgment than have the students, but because he, more than they, must accept responsibility for developing suitable policies and procedures, also for coordinating student and teacher relationship. obviously, then, much of the success of a plan of participation depends upon this specialized guidance officer.²

listed below are guiding principles for judging the effectiveness of the council sponsor.

1. The entire faculty should recognize and accept its responsibility in electing the student council sponsor.

2. The sponsor should really represent the faculty and reflect its opinion on important policies.

3. He must understand the participation idea and have a basic respect to the council as a form of democratic government.

4. The sponsor must be discriminately loyal to the council in spite of conflicting loyalties.

5. The sponsor should be an enthusiastic member of the council but not a 'teacher.' (Domination and preaching must never be used as a way of influencing student opinion.)

6. The sponsor should not be too conspicuous at meetings.

7. Student respect and confidence must be won and held.


8. The importance of the sponsor's personality should not be over-rated or underrated. (Personality popularity should not overshadow traits such as tact, integrity, and sincerity.)

9. He should have a wholesome sense of humor. (Some of the sponsor's ideas will not meet with student approval and at such a time a sense of humor helps to meet the situation with the right perspective.)

10. A good sense of relative values will help to encourage student discrimination toward possible courses of council action.

11. The sponsor should give much time and thought to the council's program.

12. He should stress and practice cooperation with key individuals such as principal, guidance counselors, club director.

13. Since the evaluation of new ventures results in growth and progress, the sponsor should not be afraid to experiment. An occasional failure may represent a valuable educational experience.

14. The sponsor should study himself and try to make personal readjustments if he senses a lack of mutual understanding with students.

15. The sponsor should continue training for his council responsibilities.¹

II. STUDENT COUNCIL FUNCTIONS

Writers in the field were consistent in their statements concerning the function of student councils in secondary schools. A given student council in a given situation may have a specific function designed to meet a particular need but the purposes and functions of most student councils are basically the same. A student council should be an over-all student organization which represents everyone in the school and provides training in citizenship for the students. This begins with the election of council members and develops as student problems, and school problems in general, ...

arise and are given consideration. A function of a council is to serve as a sounding board of student opinion. A council should help promote the common good for the school through such activities and projects as:

1. Help with the orientation of new students.
2. Sponsor social activities for the student body.
3. Sponsor homecoming activities.
4. Sponsor money making projects.
5. Schedule assembly programs for the school.
6. Support the athletic teams by encouraging attendance at the games.
7. Maintain a bulletin board.
8. Help keep school buildings and grounds clean through student support.
9. Sponsor campaigns that may be of benefit to the school or the community.

III. THE PLAN FOR ACTIVATING THE MAXWELL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT COUNCIL

The organization of the council was to be carried out in accordance with the constitution of the Maxwell High School Student Council.¹ This constitution had been adopted in 1956 and had proved to be functional during the first two years of student council activity in the Maxwell High School. The writer felt that amendments were desirable but that changes should be an outgrowth of need and should be initiated by the students as the need became apparent.

¹Appendix C.
Student council meetings were to be held during school time and worked into the schedule so that a minimum of class time would be lost by the members. As the members were not known at this time, the schedule for meetings would have to be made after the elections.

The writer planned to improve the two-way communication between the student council and the student body by soliciting suggestions for student council activities from the student body and presenting the suggestions to the council for study, in an attempt to find an activity or project that would aid the promotion of student interest and participation. The council needed to gain the confidence of the students if it were going to speak for the student body and propose action for the betterment of the school.

The last, and probably the most important part of the plan, was that the writer would show a more genuine interest in the council and give full support to the program.

IV. SUMMARY

A good student council does not just happen, but is an outgrowth of the recognition of a need by the students, faculty, and administrators. The principal must be in accord with the idea of student participation and offer enthusiastic cooperation and support. The council should be provided with a regular place to meet and meetings should be held during school hours. The whole school must have some share in the functions of the council and every individual student must feel that he is represented. The specific functions should be determined by the council
members and the sponsor if the organization is a laboratory for teaching

good citizenship. Along with citizenship education and training, the
function of a student council is to offer assistance and cooperation in
the management of school affairs when and where the need arises. These
functions may range from ushering at school programs to publishing a
school calendar or writing a conduct code for the student body. The
function should be an outgrowth of a need.
CHAPTER III

ACTIVATING THE STUDENT COUNCIL IN
THE MAXWELL HIGH SCHOOL

A record which appears below was kept of the student council activities throughout the year. This record shows the steps taken by the council members and by the writer in an attempt to make the student council become an active and functional part of the school program.

I. STUDENT COUNCIL ELECTIONS

Student council members were to be elected at class meetings during the second week of school. An assembly was held, three days before the election meetings, to discuss the election procedures and the importance of selecting capable students as members of the council. The portion of the Maxwell High School Student Council Constitution pertaining to election of members and officers was read to the students. One boy and one girl were to be elected by each class as members of the council. The student council officers were to be elected by the student body in a special election after the members were chosen from each class. Any council member was to be an eligible candidate for any one of the three offices, namely the office of president, vice-president, or secretary-treasurer.

Class elections were held Wednesday, September 10, 1958, and the elected members to the student council met the following day. A temporary chairman was selected by the group and he, in turn, appointed
an acting secretary. Business at hand was to plan officer election procedures, which were not specifically stated in the constitution. After much discussion, the council proposed amendments to the constitution as follows:

1. The president of the student council shall be elected on the third Wednesday of the school year at a general election in which all the high school students will vote. A candidate must be an elected member of the council and must file a petition containing signatures of twenty-five high school students. These petitions must be filed with the principal no later than the Monday preceding the election.

2. At the first scheduled meeting of the council the following officers will be chosen from among its members: vice-president and secretary-treasurer.1

The proposed amendments were read before the student body, posted on the bulletin board, voted on, and passed by a 75 per cent majority of the students.

September 17 was set aside for the election of the president. Three petitions were filed and time was allowed the three mornings preceding the election for campaign speeches. Ballots were printed and the election took place during the noon hour on Wednesday, with class presidents acting as clerks of the polls.

II. STUDENT COUNCIL MEETINGS AND ACTIVITIES

September. The first regular council meeting was held on September 25 with all council members in attendance. The president called the meeting to order. The vice-president and the secretary-treasurer were elected by the council. A regular weekly meeting time was set for

1 Amendments proposed by Student Council, Maxwell High School, Maxwell, Iowa, September 11, 1958.
Thursday mornings from ten minutes after nine until nine-thirty. The meeting was adjourned with no further business.

After the meeting was adjourned, the principal lead an informal discussion on the responsibilities of a student council member and how the council meetings should be conducted in order to accomplish the most in a limited amount of time. The specific ideas presented were:

1. Members of the council should feel free to voice their opinions and ideas at council meetings.

2. The council should be a sounding board of student opinion.

3. Council members must show enthusiasm for the student council program.

4. Council members should learn to accept criticism and defeat.

5. Each member should abide by decisions of the council.

6. Careful consideration should be given to all problems before action is taken.

7. Council members should have a good sense of humor, a friendly attitude, and a desire to work for the improvement of the Maxwell High School.

8. Meetings should be conducted according to parliamentary law.

9. The council president should plan the agenda in advance for each meeting.

The members agreed to study the Maxwell High School Student Council Constitution and to acquaint themselves with correct parliamentary procedure before the next meeting.
October. The council elected to join the Iowa State Association of Student Councils and the National Association of Student Councils and to send four delegates to the Iowa State Association of Student Councils' Convention at Iowa State College, October 20, 1958. The three officers and one elected delegate were chosen by the council to attend the convention along with the principal.

All meetings at the Student Council Convention, other than the general session, were lead by student councils. Most of these councils were from schools larger than Maxwell, but their problems were similar to those of Maxwell High School. After the convention, each Maxwell delegate reported to the council of his convention activities and the meetings he attended. The projects and activities that the Maxwell Student Council adopted from the convention reports were:

1. Once a month the council met in the conference room at 11:45 for a luncheon meeting. This meeting replaced the regular meeting for that week.

2. A suggestion box was placed in the study hall for students to write suggestions for the student council.

3. The council designated one day in December and one day in May as "Dress-up Days."

4. A committee was appointed to study the constitution for possible amendments that seemed advisable.

5. The minutes of each meeting were posted on the bulletin board in the study hall.

The council members were ready to learn more and each read a portion
or portions from one or more of the following books:


The next step was to learn what the student body expected from the council. The suggestion box had been used very little and the majority of "suggestions" were concerned with individual problems or complaints of students that the council could do little about. Each suggestion was discussed, however, and a general announcement of the action by the council was made to the student body by the president. Personal contacts with individuals were made when the problem was of a personal nature.

The council decided that a written questionnaire should be prepared and given to the entire student body in order to better determine the desires of the students.

November. A questionnaire was made by the council and the writer and a copy given to each student.\(^1\) The students were asked to be frank in answering the questions and to return the questionnaires unsigned. Table I

\(^1\)Appendix A.
presents a summary of the answers of ninety-three students in the Maxwell High School. The responses indicated that the students felt a definite need for a student council. A majority of the students indicated that they felt a council could improve student-faculty understanding, improve school spirit and school morale, and aid in teaching good citizenship. They seemed doubtful as to the probability that a council could improve scholarship as forty-three students indicated "no opinion" and sixteen answered "no" to the question, "Do you think a student council can improve scholarship?" A majority of the students stated that a student council should set forth rules of conduct and deal with discipline cases but several comments were added that discipline should be handled by the faculty. The council members studied the list of suggestions written by the students and planned the year's activities and projects from these proposals. Suggestions made by the students are presented as they were written:

1. Have a roller skating party.
2. More time for lunch.
3. Put up signs to improve school spirit and morale.
4. Appoint committees to keep the halls clean and report any one who makes a mess.
5. A five hour workday.
6. Give awards to the best citizen of the month.
7. Don't set forth rules of conduct and deal with discipline cases, because we had that in 8th grade and it didn't work very well.
8. The student council are students as we are and they shouldn't be able to set rules of conduct and deal with discipline cases.
9. They should sponsor more parties.
10. The student council can improve school spirit and morale by finding ways for the school kids to go to the basketball games.
11. A "Code of Ethics" for Maxwell High School which would include citizenship, dating, and driving.
### TABLE I

RESPONSES OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS TO THE QUESTIONNAIRES RELATING TO PURPOSES AND FUNCTIONS OF THE MAXWELL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT COUNCIL, MAXWELL, IOWA, 1958-1959

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<th>Question</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Opinion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you think we need a student council in Maxwell High School?</td>
<td></td>
<td>81</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think a student council can foster better student-faculty understanding?</td>
<td></td>
<td>67</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think a student council can improve school spirit and school morale?</td>
<td></td>
<td>65</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think a student council can improve scholarship?</td>
<td></td>
<td>34</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think a student council can aid in teaching good citizenship for the entire body?</td>
<td></td>
<td>61</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think a student council should set forth rules of conduct and deal with discipline cases?</td>
<td></td>
<td>50</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12. Something also may be done to improve behavior concerning the display of affections in the building and other proper boy-girl relationships.
13. They can plan advertisements for football and baseball games and encourage attendance.
14. It is needed to have more student representation.
15. It could do a lot of good things if it was recognized by faculty and school board members, and given some authority.
16. Raise money for curtain for our stage and other dramatic equipment.

The council members studied the comments on the questionnaires and elected to take action on three of the suggestions. The secretary was instructed to write to the roller skating rinks in the area for
information in regard to private skating parties. A committee was appointed to work out plans for providing transportation for student spectators to basketball games and a committee was appointed to investigate the possibilities of sponsoring a high school carnival.

Arrangements were made for spectator transportation. Two busses were used for all basketball games away from home, one for the girls' team and one for the boys' team, but only those out for basketball had been allowed to ride. Each bus would normally accommodate eight to ten more persons so the coaches agreed to let other students ride along if there were not too many and if they conducted themselves in a suitable manner. A paper was posted on the bulletin board the day before every basketball game away from home for students wanting a ride to sign. The team managers were given a list of those going, with the team each time, and the plan worked well without any adverse incidents.

The council elected to sell apples at home basketball games. This was the only source of income for council operating expenses during the year.

December. Plans were made for the high school Christmas party which was to be held on the last afternoon of school before Christmas vacation. The council voted to provide apples and the teachers offered to furnish soft drinks and cookies for the refreshments. A program committee was appointed and the members worked out a program consisting of group games, group singing, dancing, and a one-act Christmas play that was presented by the sophomore class with the cooperation of the English teacher. Play books were paid for by the student council.
The president lead a discussion with the student body in regard to a gift exchange. The council decided that everyone would bring a toy to be given to a needy child rather than have a gift exchange. A suggestion was made that several could go together and buy more expensive gifts than one would be able to buy as an individual. A committee was appointed from the student body to make a list of needy youngsters in the Maxwell community, and to give the list to the principal for consideration. Care was taken in selecting the children to receive gifts and publicity was held to a minimum in an attempt to complete the project in a true Christmas spirit without causing any ill feelings for anyone concerned.

After the party, toys were selected for the Maxwell children from the collection of gifts given by the students and were delivered on Christmas Eve by students who were acquainted with the recipients. The remainder of toys were taken to a children's home in Des Moines by two of the student council members.

A carnival date was set for March 20 and the student council accepted the organization responsibilities. The president asked for a vote of confidence from the student body in pledging their support to make the carnival a success. Since a carnival would be a cooperative effort and a time for fun, everyone was to be asked to help. Suggestions by the students were solicited and recorded by the secretary.

January. Arrangements were made with Skateland Roller Rink at Ames, Iowa, for a private roller skating party for Maxwell High School students on the evening of February 23rd. Tickets were sold in advance by the council members and arrangements were made for two school busses to provide the transportation.
Carnival planning continued during January and three novelty supply companies were contacted by mail. One company offered a consignment plan which allowed the return of all unused merchandise for full credit. The council elected to use that plan as the cost compared favorably with the other two companies and there would not be the risk of having the profits tied up in excess merchandise.

The council elected to participate in World Clothing Week, sponsored by the Christian Children's Fund, Incorporated. The project was a nation-wide campaign to collect used clothing, shoes, and bedding for needy children and adults in the United States and thirty-six countries overseas. Circulars, explaining the project, were provided every student in the Maxwell Community School, and the clothing collected was turned over to the Christian Children's Fund for distribution.

February. Carnival planning committees were formed with the student council acting as the steering committee, whose function was to coordinate all committees. The student council president appointed chairmen from student volunteers for the following committees:

1. Tickets and door prizes.
2. Publicity.
3. Variety show.
4. Lunch room.
5. Queen contest.
6. Concessions.

A suggested list of concessions was posted on the bulletin board and students signed for booths in which they would like to work. The
first student volunteering for each concession was named chairman and was responsible for booth construction, providing a sealed ticket box, and securing enough workers so that no student would have to work all evening without relief.

Seventy students and five teachers attended the skating party February 23rd.

March. The student council concentrated on the carnival during the month of March and worked on organizing and administering the preliminary details. Every student in the high school had a definite assignment, either as a concession worker, a performer in the variety show, or a lunchroom worker.

The boys on the council drew a floor plan of the gymnasium indicating the space assignments for the booths, and posted the drawing in the gymnasium. They made arrangements with the local lumber yard to get the necessary materials for booth construction and made a list of available desks, tables, and benches in the school that could be used in the booths. Flameproof crepe paper streamers and materials for making signs were available through the principal's office and were issued to the concession chairmen.

The gymnasium was open from 7:00 P.M. to 9:00 P.M. two nights before the carnival and all booths were constructed during this time. Last minute details were finished Friday afternoon and the doors were opened to the public at 7:30 that evening.

Enthusiastic patrons took part in the carnival merriment which was brought to a close with the presentation of the queen and drawings for door prizes. All booths were taken down and the general clean-up completed
before midnight. Tickets, purchased from the ticket booth in the center of the gymnasium had been the only medium of exchange and the receipts from this booth totaled $559.30. The expenses amounted to $180.46 leaving a net profit of $378.84 which was deposited in the high school activity fund.

April. The student council reviewed the year’s activities and the president lead a discussion with the student body in regard to the accomplishments and failures of the council during the year. Following the discussion, the principal distributed a questionnaire to each student. Table II presents the results of the questionnaires and indicates that a majority of the students felt the council fostered better student-faculty understanding, encouraged democratic student participation in school affairs, and improved school spirit and school morale. There were only eighteen students that felt the council had improved scholarship, twenty-four indicated that scholarship had not been improved, and forty-nine stated no opinion. The council recommended that next year’s council work out a plan to encourage better scholarship. There were eighty-three students that indicated they were interested in the work of the council but only fifty-nine stated they would like to be a member of the council. The council members were encouraged by the fact that eighty-nine of the ninety-one responses indicated that the council had been successful.

Along with the questionnaire, the students were requested to write comments or suggestions and return the forms unsigned. Listed below are some of the comments as they were written by the students.

The thing that really helped the council was the carnival.
# Table II

**Responses of High School Students to the Questionnaires Evaluating the Student Council in the Maxwell High School, Maxwell, Iowa, 1958-59**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Opinion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you think the student council fostered better student-faculty understanding?</td>
<td></td>
<td>53</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think the council encouraged democratic student participation in school affairs?</td>
<td></td>
<td>67</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think the council helped in teaching good citizenship?</td>
<td></td>
<td>46</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think the council improved school spirit and school morale?</td>
<td></td>
<td>73</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think the council improved scholarship?</td>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you interested in the work of the council?</td>
<td></td>
<td>83</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would you like to be a member of the student council?</td>
<td></td>
<td>59</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In general, would you say the council has been successful this year?</td>
<td></td>
<td>89</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I think they should promote a longer lunch period.

The skating party was a good thing because it helped draw the different classes closer together.

The council is doing fine—more school activities are needed such as parties, shows and carnivals.

I think that we should have class basketball tournaments next year.
I think we should have a school carnival every year.

Give them more time. The council hasn't gotten a good start yet.

Not so many dances and more 'fun' parties.

The older the council gets, the more experience and knowledge it will gain toward helping the students. The council has done more this year and in my opinion will continue to help the students.

I think there should be more things such as the carnival. It helped the kids to work together, and accept responsibilities.

They have done a very good job this year and it has improved from last year.

I've never heard a complaint against the student council that can be backed.

I think the council did real good work. There isn't much more that can be done because our school is so small.

A member should have a quality of leadership about him at all times. I didn't feel that was the case with our student council members.

Should have more projects and better understanding at the student council.

You should sponsor more high school parties and programs.

Something should be done about student-teacher relations and encouraging better scholarship of the students.

The teachers answered a similar questionnaire and the following comments were written:

As in all organizations, the council can be no better than its members. We have to find a balance between training citizens and getting the better students on the council from the standpoint of citizenship, but we perhaps improved their citizenship through this training.

Need more careful consideration as to election of council members and who should be the leaders.

I think that the council could be improved if the student body knew more about how the student council operates.
The idea of posting the minutes of council meetings is good.

It would help if the student council would inform the students and faculty of its goals at the beginning of the year.

The responses made by the high school faculty to the questionnaires evaluating the student council are shown in Table III. The responses indicated that the faculty was in unanimous agreement that the council had fostered better student-faculty understanding, encouraged student participation in school affairs, helped teach good citizenship, and

TABLE III
RESPONSES OF THE HIGH SCHOOL FACULTY TO THE QUESTIONNAIRES EVALUATING THE STUDENT COUNCIL IN THE MAXWELL HIGH SCHOOL, MAXWELL, IOWA, 1958-59

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you think the student council fostered better student-faculty understanding?</td>
<td>8 0 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think the council encouraged democratic student participation in school affairs?</td>
<td>8 0 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think the council helped in teaching good citizenship?</td>
<td>8 0 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think the council improved school spirit and school morale?</td>
<td>8 0 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think the council improved scholarship?</td>
<td>5 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you interested in the work of the council?</td>
<td>7 0 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In general, would you say the council has been successful this year?</td>
<td>8 0 0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
improved school spirit and helped morale. There were two teachers who felt the council had not improved scholarship and one teacher that expressed no opinion. All but one of the teachers stated they were interested in the work of the council and all indicated that the council had been successful. The data indicated a favorable attitude by the faculty in regard to the student council and encouraged the members in their expectation of faculty support in the future.

III. SUMMARY

Student council members were elected by their respective classes, and from the council members, a president was elected by the student body. The first council meeting was held on Thursday, September 25, and the vice-president and the secretary-treasurer were elected by the council. Following the meeting, the writer oriented the members as to their responsibilities as representatives of the student body.

The council elected to join both the state and national student council associations and sent four delegates to the Iowa State Student Council Convention. The delegates reported to the council on the proceedings of the convention meetings they attended.

From ideas received at the convention, the council elected:
(1) to hold a luncheon meeting once a month, (2) to place a suggestion box in the study hall, (3) to sponsor two "dress-up days," (4) to study the Maxwell Student Council Constitution for advisable amendments, and (5) to post the minutes of each council meeting on the bulletin board in the study hall.

The council members helped the writer prepare questionnaires
soliciting opinions and suggestions relative to the student council. The Maxwell High School students answered the questionnaires and the council used the results as a guide in planning the year's program. Action was taken on three of the suggestions: (1) to have a high school roller skating party, (2) to provide transportation for student spectators to basketball games, and (3) to sponsor a high school carnival.

The high school Christmas party was planned by the council and the student body brought Christmas presents that were given to needy children. The council enlisted the cooperation of the Maxwell school children in participating in World Clothing Week.

Council members helped the writer prepare questionnaires for the student body and the faculty to complete an attempt to evaluate the effectiveness of the council and to solicit suggestions for council action in the future. The results of the questionnaires were tabulated and studied by the council.
CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I. SUMMARY

The purpose of the project was to activate the student council in the Maxwell High School and develop an effective council: (1) to foster better student-faculty understanding, (2) to encourage democratic student participation in school affairs, (3) to teach citizenship through student government, (4) to improve school spirit and school morale, and (5) to improve scholarship. Maxwell High School had organized a student council during the 1956-57 school year. The development had been a slow process and care was taken to avoid mistakes. Maxwell had a student council in name only.

The procedures consisted of: (1) a study of literature in the field, (2) a study of past student activities in the Maxwell High School, (3) soliciting student and faculty opinions through written questionnaires, and (4) a cooperative effort by the student council members and the writer to increase student body interest in student council activities.

A review of literature relative to student council organization and operation was made and a proposed plan for activating the council in the Maxwell High School was developed. The plan for activating the council was: (1) to find a project or an activity, through student suggestions, that would provide a stimulus for the student body and gain the support of the students in student council work, (2) to improve the two-way communication between the student body and the student council, and
(3) to offer the writer’s support of the student council program.

The council members read literature on the organization and operation of student councils in other schools and elected to join the Iowa State Association of Student Councils and the National Association of Student Councils. Four delegates attended the State Convention. The council members made an effort to keep the student body informed in regard to council proceedings and encouraged the students to make known any complaints or suggestions that might promote the general welfare of the students or the Maxwell High School.

The student council promoted campaigns for the election of the council president and supervised the election. A "suggestion box" was placed in the study hall and a student council bulletin board was maintained. The council sponsored a Christmas party, a roller-skating party, two "dress-up days," a clothing drive, and a high school carnival. The council members helped the writer develop and interpret questionnaires to the students. The questionnaire results were studied by the council members in an attempt to determine the need for a student council in the Maxwell High School and to ascertain the wishes of the student body.

Apples were sold at home basketball games by the council members. These sales provided the council with the necessary funds for completion of the year’s program.

Student interest in the council increased markedly as school carnival plans developed. All committees worked through the council and every high school student was actively included in the project. The organizing and planning might well have been accomplished in much less time, had the teachers taken the initiative, but the carnival was not an end in itself.
nor was the purpose merely that of a financial nature. The experience of doing a job well and accepting the responsibilities through a cooperative spirit was certainly of great value to the students.

The students and teachers in Maxwell High School indicated by their responses to the questionnaires given April 2, 1959, that they felt the student council had been successful during the 1958-59 school year. There were, also, many suggestions offered for improving the council which should be helpful in furthering the effectiveness of future Student Council action.

II. CONCLUSIONS

Based upon the review of literature in the field and the responses of the Maxwell High School students and faculty to written questionnaires, the following conclusions were reached:

1. A student council must have a definite purpose and be of educational value in order to justify its existence.

2. Students should realize the need for a council and take the initiative to promote it.

3. Functions of a student council should be an outgrowth of a need.

4. The Maxwell Student Council fostered better student faculty understanding, encouraged democratic student participation in school affairs, helped teach good citizenship, and improved school spirit and morale during the 1958-59 school year.

5. The effects of the Maxwell Student Council on scholarship were inconclusive.
6. It was the belief of the writer that the carnival was an ameliorant of school morale and student respect for the student council that made the greatest stride in the direction of developing an effective student council.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for future student council activities in the Maxwell High School are:

1. The students should be encouraged to give careful consideration in choosing student council members.

2. The principal should acquaint the faculty members with the student council program and encourage their support.

3. A high school carnival should be an annual project for the council.

4. The council should sponsor more high school parties and social activities for the student body.

5. The council should continue to seek ways of improving school spirit.

6. The council should make every effort to publicize activities.

7. The student council members should be aware of their duties as representatives of the student body.

8. The council should work out a program to increase student interest in scholarship.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. BOOKS


B. PERIODICALS


C. UNPUBLISHED MATERIALS


Appendix A

Student Council Questionnaire
(September, 1958)

Please check one of the answers in each of the following questions:

1. Do you think we need a student council in Maxwell High School?
   ____ yes
   ____ no
   ____ no opinion

2. Do you think a student council can foster better student-faculty understanding?
   ____ yes
   ____ no
   ____ no opinion

3. Do you think a student council can improve school spirit and morale?
   ____ yes
   ____ no
   ____ no opinion

4. Do you think a student council can improve scholarship?
   ____ yes
   ____ no
   ____ no opinion

5. Do you think a student council can aid in teaching good citizenship for the entire student body?
   ____ yes
   ____ no
   ____ no opinion
6. Do you think a student council should set forth rules of conduct and deal with discipline cases?

   ______ yes
   ______ no
   ______ no opinion

7. What would you like to see the student council do for our school?
1. Do you think the student council fostered better student-faculty understanding?
   Yes ______  No ______  No opinion ______

2. Do you think the council encouraged democratic student participation in school affairs?
   Yes ______  No ______  No opinion ______

3. Do you think the council helped in teaching good citizenship?
   Yes ______  No ______  No opinion ______

4. Do you think the council improved school spirit and school morale?
   Yes ______  No ______  No opinion ______

5. Do you think the council improved scholarship?
   Yes ______  No ______  No opinion ______

6. Are you interested in the work of the council?
   Yes ______  No ______  No opinion ______

7. Would you like to be a member of the student council?
   Yes ______  No ______  No opinion ______

8. In general, would you say that the council has been (underscore one)
   SUCCESSFUL  UNSUCCESSFUL  VERY SUCCESSFUL

What are your suggestions for improving the council or its work?
Appendix C

CONSTITUTION

Maxwell High School Student Council

We, the students of Maxwell High School, in order to create advancement in scholarship, school spirit, and a better understanding between the faculty and the student body, do hereby establish this constitution of the student council.

Article I. Name

This organization shall be known as the Maxwell High School Student Council.

Article II. Purpose

Purposes of the student council shall be as follows:

1. To promote better student-teacher relations.
2. To present ideas and represent problems of the students.
4. To make possible self-government as far as it is advisable under existing conditions.
5. To stimulate self-control.
6. To promote better school spirit and citizenship.
7. To promote general welfare of Maxwell High School.

Article III. Membership

Section 1. The members shall be chosen annually by ballot at the first regular class meeting of the school year. There must be two-thirds of the class present to vote officially, and majority vote.

Section 2. The student council will always consist of eight students (two from each class) and one faculty advisor.

Section 3. To be elected to the student council, the student must have earned a C average or better in all subjects carried in the semester prior to the election.

Section 4. The principal will be the advisor of the Student Council and shall sit in at all meetings.

Section 5. One boy and one girl shall be elected from each class.
Section 6. There shall be no restrictions to the number of terms one person may serve.

Article IV. Organization

Section 1. The officers of the student council shall be a president, a vice-president, and a secretary-treasurer.

Section 2. Any member of the student council is eligible for any office.

Section 3. The classes will elect the student council members and the whole student body will elect the officers.

Article V. Meetings

Section 1. There will be no less than two meetings a month.

Section 2. Special meetings of the council may be called by the president with approval of advisor.

Section 3. All meetings shall be conducted under Robert's Rules of Order.

Section 4. The president of the class may take the place of an absent member of that class.

Article VI. Voting Powers

Section 1. The advisor shall have no voting power.

Section 2. Each qualified member shall have one vote.

Article VII. Vacancy

Section 1. If any vacancy occurs, such as moving, ineligibility or resignation, a new member shall immediately be elected by his class to fill the said vacancy.

Section 2. In case of vacancy of any other officers, they will be elected by the student council members.

Article VIII. Committees

Section 1. The president shall appoint all new committees from the student body, and shall be approved by the student council.
Article IX. Quorum

Section 1. A quorum shall consist of six student council members and the advisor.

Article X. Recall

Section 1. A class may recall its council representative by a two-thirds vote of members of the class.

Section 2. Any officers may be removed from office by a vote of six members of the student council.

Article XI. Amendments

Section 1. A constitutional amendment may be proposed at a regular meeting of the student council by a simple majority vote of the members.

Section 2. A proposal amendment must be passed by a two-thirds vote of the student body force before it can become an amendment.

Article XII. Radifications

Section 1. The constitution has to be approved by a majority vote of the student council, the principal, and a two-thirds vote of the student body.

Article XIII. Power of Revocation

Section 1. Since the superintendent is responsible for the administration of the school, it is expressly understood that all student powers herein set forth are delegated to the council by him and may be revoked by him at any time.