

A FOLLOW-UP STUDY FOR BUSINESS EDUCATION AT
BOZEMAN SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

by

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A professional paper submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree

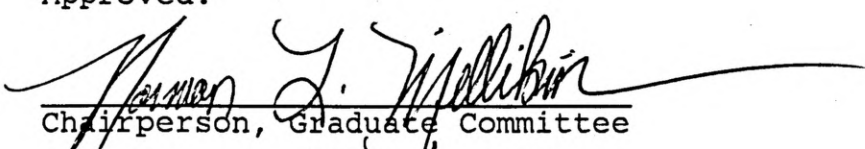
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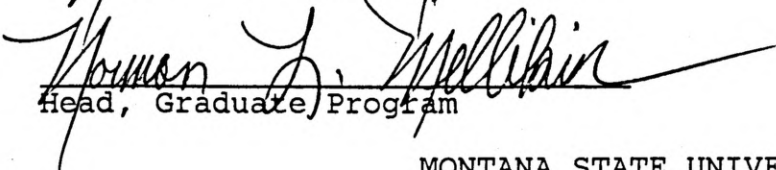
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Accountability in all areas of education has been the focus of national reports during the past few years. In business education, we are faced with students having to take more courses in the "so-called" basic areas such as math, science, English, and social studies. We, as teachers, must provide evidence that our business education program has a viable place in the overall secondary curriculum. We must have accurate, current, and complete facts if and when we are questioned as to justification of courses offered in business education.

One extremely effective tool to reinforce our previous actions is the use of a follow-up study. Counselors and administrators can aid in collection of data, but the major responsibility rests with the department and department chairman, who should provide leadership. Follow-up information is often a neglected area and can be a source of valuable information for program planning and evaluation. Business educators must take every opportunity to state their positions positively and accurately.

Betty Fry, in her article, "Promoting Business Education Through Use of Follow-Up Information," says:

With the projected job market for this decade very attractive in the area of administrative

support occupations, follow-up data can provide a strong basis of support for effective programs. Technological advances, changing career paths, and emphasis on nontraditional roles necessitates a realistic evaluation of the demands on the instructional program and planning offered students in business education. (Fry, 1983:99)

Our graduates are the most valuable sources of information about the program. It is stated in the South-Western Publishing Co. Monograph 120, Responsibilities of the Business Education Department Chairman, that:

By asking the graduate his opinion, his successes, his failures, and his appraisal of the value of the training he has received, we can assess the strengths, the weaknesses, and even the changes that might be necessary in the curriculum. (Hewitt, 1969:83)

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the business education program at Bozeman Senior High School, Bozeman, Montana by conducting a follow-up study of graduates from the classes of the past five years--1981 through 1985. Graduates were asked to answer questions in four major areas: (1) appropriateness of course content, (2) necessary standards of performance, (3) adequacy of preparation for entry-level positions, and (4) ranking of overall business education program.

At the high school level, we wanted to determine the adequacy of instruction as it related to the goals of the high school graduates, the appropriateness of course content and instructional equipment, the nature of the entry jobs of

graduates, and choices of graduates in post-high school education.

Specific questions asked of Bozeman Senior High graduates included the following:

1. What courses did you take at Bozeman Senior High School?
2. How would you rate courses taken at Bozeman Senior High as to their usefulness?
3. What standards of performance were required to be hired for your job?
4. How much skill was necessary on specific types of equipment?
5. How effective was your vocational training?
6. How would you rate the overall effectiveness of the Bozeman Senior High School business education program?

NEED FOR THE STUDY

As technology advances, the job market changes, career paths change, and the overall direction of education continues to change, demands are placed on our business education programs to provide accountability for our activities and methodologies especially as they relate to equipment and curriculum.

Our counselors have done follow-up studies to determine the percentages of students who have gone to college, but no specific studies have been done to determine the adequacy of the business education program. Since we receive funds from the state and federal governments, as well as locally, we

should develop a system to document the adequacy of our overall effectiveness.

James Bob Drake says:

Vocational terminee follow-up studies constitute one of the most valuable techniques for assessing the outcomes of business and office education programs. Not only do follow-up studies offer an excellent approach for dealing with accountability, they offer an excellent vehicle for program improvement. (Drake, 1977:8)

LIMITATIONS

This study is limited to those students who graduated in 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984, and 1985. More specifically, it is limited to students who were enrolled in our vocationally funded classes. Another limitation is that not all business education graduates are alike. In other words, they may have been enrolled in one or more vocational classes, but since Bozeman Senior High does not have areas of major study, this study will include both those enrolled in beginning vocational courses, such as typing, and those who took additional vocational courses, such as Accounting I & II, Cooperative Office Education, and Marketing.

Kathryn Iliff says:

The follow-up study, with all its limitations, may result in a worthwhile, small-scale contribution to business education if carefully and systematically conducted. Although the conclusions drawn and the recommendations offered will, in many instances, be applicable only to a single institution, nevertheless, the values realized may be of more practical worth than studies of wider scope. (Iliff, 1966:35-38)

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Accountability. Capability of being explained--a declaration of policy whereby educators seek to review, and often justify, existing programs. (Hunt, 1975:28)

Business Education. Education which will equip the student with skills necessary to perform particular functions in an office, data processing, or distributive occupations, and which will also provide the student with understanding and knowledges needed for the handling of personal affairs and using the service of the business world. (Woolschlager, 1969:10)

Course. An instructional unit of area or field, or organized subject matter and related learning experiences usually provided for the instruction of students on a quarter, semester, year or other prescribed length-of-time basis. (Franchak, 1980:15)

Curriculum. All the courses of study offered at a particular school (Funk & Wagnalls, 1966:330)

Entry-Level. The lowest position in any promotional line. (Franchak, 1980:15)

Follow-up. A systematic collection of pertinent data from or about individuals having had vocational education experiences. (Scott, 1981:8)

Graduates. All students who graduated with a high school diploma and who took business education courses.

Occupation. The name or title of a job which

identifies and specifies the various activities and functions to be performed. (Franchak, 1980:16)

Program. Any prearranged, proposed, or desired plan or course of proceedings. (Funk & Wagnalls, 1966:1076)

Questionnaire. The instrument used to gather data for the follow-up study. (Cox, 1977:28)

Respondent. A former business education student who completed and returned the questionnaire. (Robertson, 1978:78)

Responses. The data and information received from each respondent on the mailed questionnaire. (Robertson, 1978:7)

Technology. The application of technical advances in business and industry. (Funk & Wagnalls, 1966:1375)

Vocational Education Program. An elementary, secondary, post-secondary, or adult and continuing education program of studies designed primarily to prepare students for entrance into a specific occupation or cluster of occupations. This includes programs such as cooperative, work-study, exemplary, disadvantaged, handicapped, remedial, prepost-secondary, prevocational and vocationally related. (Montana Cooperative Educational Coordinators Handbook, 1972:ix)

Vocationally Funded Courses. Those courses that receive reimbursement monies from the state according to subject matter taught and numbers of students.

SUMMARY

Business Education plays a vital role in preparing students for further academic study or entry-level job positions. Therefore, we must constantly be searching for ways to evaluate, update, and improve our curriculum and equipment. There are several ways in which to do this. One would be with the help of an advisory committee, another would be with a survey to businesses to see what skills they want students to possess upon entry into the job market. However, one of the most effective tools for evaluation of the overall program is to survey those students who progressed through your program to see what areas they felt prepared them successfully for further education or training.

Ryerson stated in his research that:

Approximately two-thirds of all young people enter full-time employment at or before the completion of high school. The public schools have the obligation to help assure that these young people can fill the available jobs and make a successful transition from school to the world of work. Secondary schools need to address the concerns of business and the changes in the labor market. (Ryerson, 1983:16)

This study was done to determine how adequately students had been prepared for further education and employment at Bozeman Senior High for the five-year period 1981 through 1985.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A number of follow-up studies have been done in education--those assessing former graduates' abilities in the workplace to those evaluating secondary and postsecondary course offerings. The purpose of this chapter is to review available and pertinent literature regarding follow-up studies. An ERIC search was done at the Montana State University library to locate research done in vocational programs.

The review has been divided into four major areas: (1) purpose and necessity of follow-up studies, (2) research for program improvement, (3) research for vocational follow-up, and (4) follow-up studies in Montana.

PURPOSE AND NECESSITY OF FOLLOW-UP STUDIES

Business educators need valid data to support our decisions pertinent to program effectiveness and for justification for expanding services to students. No longer can the student complete school without having well-defined levels of competencies and without being given assistance for entry into the job market. So say Gary D. Scott and Alberta Chapman in their paper prepared for the Kentucky Department of Education. Their exact purposes of student follow-up are:

1. Justification for continuation or modification of existing programs or implementation of new ones.
2. Evaluation of existing instructional methods and providing an input source for improvement in order

to update and maintain relevant vocational training programs. (Scott, 1981:2)

"Most youth understand full well that education is a key ingredient in preparation for employment. We have passed on to youth the false societal myth that a college degree is the best and surest route to occupational success--and then cautioned them that less than 20 percent of all occupations existing in this decade will require a college degree" --National Advisory Council on Vocational Education (Nichols, 1976:5) This points out another reason we should continually be studying our course offerings and preparation of our students for entry-level job skills, especially on the secondary level.

Another important reason for conducting follow-up surveys is that the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act of 1984 requires that State Plans contain provisions for periodic and continuous evaluations of state and local programs, services, and activities. The follow-up data after graduation should be included at one-, two-, and five-year intervals. For this reason, this study was conducted for a five-year period--years 1981 through 1985.

Alfred L. Kaisershot an assistant professor of business education at Illinois State University says:

In this age of "accountability" in education, would it not seem logical for business education teachers to display a deeper professional concern regarding the propriety of subject matter content in their various courses which result in the development of skills, concepts, abilities, and

general knowledges required of their graduates? Should not current practices also be subjected to careful evaluation in order that we may be relatively certain of the proper direction in which we are headed? We can no longer afford to lead our students to believe (nor attempt to convince ourselves) that the business world working conditions, job tasks, and overall expectations are now or will remain as they were in recent years. (Kaisershot, 1972:248)

This is still true today as business education continues to change at an astounding rate. As Kaisershot states, "it would seem our duty to attempt to keep one step ahead of these conditions wherever possible." He further states that:

A follow-up study need not be construed as an inferior unscientific study of little value. Rather it is a reliable basis for improving and updating a business curriculum, a student teaching program, the content within a given subject, or the addition of necessary equipment to do an even more effective job of educating present and future business education students. (Ibid.:249)

In planning the study, the researcher must develop a knowledge of the purposes of his school and the employable community his school serves. In stating that the actual questionnaire must be constructed so that it will meet the needs of the investigation, Llewellyn says:

The investigator should have a clear picture of the data he wants, where and how he will collect it, and the school milieu in which he will operate. It is a mistake to attempt to collect too extensive data, especially if the study is his first. (Llewellyn, 1967:19)

Business Education can find all sorts of reasons for conducting follow-up studies as pertinent literature is reviewed. One of the main reasons for business educators to

gather this information is for assessing and evaluating curriculum offerings.

RESEARCH FOR PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT

Many articles and papers deal with follow-up for improvement of programs. It is up to business educators to give students a well-rounded and useful education. "Youth who are unsure about the future are bound, to some extent, to be unsure about themselves. The American cry for "freedom of choice" carries a very hollow ring for those whose choices have never been made clear." --National Advisory Council on Vocational Education (Nichols, 1976:9)

As programs are reviewed, Natalie Nichols, who is the chairperson at Pennridge High School in Perkosié, Pennsylvania, says that:

Business education programs generally include three curriculums which offer vocational competencies. The present trend, however, is to permit as much articulation and integration within the curriculum as possible to give an education designed to fit each pupil's abilities and interests. With the exception of courses in accounting, shorthand, and typewriting, the trend is toward having fewer one-year courses and more semester and mini courses. Thus, minimum time is lost if pupils find that their interests have changed or that their abilities lie elsewhere. Some schools have gone one step further and present the subject matter on an individual basis.

Independent study notwithstanding, the business education curriculum in most high schools usually are classified as accounting, clerical and stenographic-secretarial. (Ibid.:9)

In the November 1985 issue of Business Education Forum in an article outlining the next steps for implementing

national standards for excellence in Business Education, the authors state:

The shift toward an information-based labor market imposes a strong responsibility on business educators to update the content and resources of their programs. Only through periodic evaluations of all components of a program can business education maintain its position in the educational arena and meet its obligations to those preparing to enter tomorrow's labor market. (Calhoun, 1985:3)

In this day of the public wanting to know what educators are doing and why, business educators must have justification for what they are doing. A follow-up study can help provide some impetus for this. William Selden addresses the importance of follow-up studies in his December 1971, article in Business Education Forum by stating:

The need for high schools to conduct follow-up studies of their business graduates is recognized by business educators in general, and many high schools have done a commendable job in this area. (Selden, 1971:36)

Selden also writes in the January 1973, issue of The Journal of Business Education that:

Instruction in vocational business subjects should provide a means of developing and using the maximum potential of those interested or engaged in business occupations. To facilitate this need, business education departments should conduct surveys of office facilities and personnel requirements and do follow-up studies of graduates of the business program. Research of this type helps evaluate the adequacy of instruction being offered to business pupils and suggests the changes that should be made. (Selden, 1973:162)

He says the reason for using these questionnaires is to keep

the curriculum compatible with the times by making necessary modifications.

In still another article which addresses follow-up for evaluation of business education programs, Albert Pender says in the September 1970, issue of the Balance Sheet that:

The business education department should conduct an effective follow-up program, making inquiries concerning: program dropouts, their present employment status, graduates, colleges attended, and present positions held. The follow-up program is often conducted for the following reasons: to help trainees make satisfactory adjustments on the job; to provide extension, reconditioning, or rehabilitation training; to determine types of training needed; to discover strengths and weaknesses of the present business education program and make appropriate adjustments; and to assemble information on the success and failures of former students. (Pender, 1970:11)

As business educators continually try to keep up to date in business education what with technological advances, changing career paths, and emphasis on nontraditional roles, there is a need to remember information related by Betty Fry in the April-May 1983, issue of Business Education Forum. She says that:

Follow-up information may reflect the fact that a specific area of instruction is no longer needed because that function is obsolete. Continuing to teach an area that does not meet current needs not only deprives the students of valuable relevant experiences but also gives the impression that those in charge of the educational setting are lacking in foresight. (Fry, 1983:101)

In summary, one of the most significant benefits of follow-up as stated in the above-mentioned articles seems to be a refocusing of attention on the key aspects of the

business and office education program.

RESEARCH FOR VOCATIONAL FOLLOW-UP

In looking at employment stability of business education graduates, statements again made by Betty Fry state that:

Follow-up information provides evidence relative to employment stability. With a formal follow-up procedure, information concerning graduates' job activities is recorded and analyzed to determine if the education program is providing effective training for employment. (Ibid.:102)

Fry also says some important questions are:

How long do former students remain with the first employment accepted after leaving the educational setting? If they leave, is the reason based on lack of adequate training, lack of interest on the job, or opportunity for advancement? If either of the first two are applicable, the student may need more counseling and perhaps more assistance in the selections of educational options. This information will be valuable in program planning for the future. (Ibid.:102)

In a research paper for the National Center for Research in Vocational Education at Ohio State University in April 1984, Suk Kang and John Bishop provide ways to achieve excellence in secondary education by improving the productivity of the nation's work force.

By insuring that every young person obtains functional literacy--some minimum level of basic skills.

By improving the quality of the academic preparation of young people (especially for the two-thirds of high school graduates planning to attend college).

By improving the quality of the vocational preparation of young people (especially of high school dropouts and the one-third of high school graduates that do not attend college).

By improving the employability skills (career selection, job search, work habits, etc.) of young people. (Kang, 1984:1)

They further state that:

Vocational education is expected to affect direct market outcomes through its impact on a student's job search, educational attainment, labor market experience, job tenure, occupational choice, industry of employment, unionization, fringe benefits, job safety and frequency of various types of job separation. (Ibid.:5)

By doing follow-up research it can be determined whether business educators are adequately preparing students to be productive members of the work force.

Employers say that young workers don't demonstrate traditional work values. Leaders in higher education are aware of this serious concern. The president of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, Ernest L. Boyer, stated in 1984 that "Business and industry leaders complain about communications skills and work patterns of graduates" as he described the Foundation's plans for a comprehensive re-examination of the purposes of undergraduate education. (Brown, 1984:1)

This tends to be true, according to advisory committees, at the secondary level. With a questionnaire or some type of survey, we can find out whether former students, themselves, feel prepared in these areas.

From surveys or questionnaires, teachers could keep records on what students are doing and how many of them are attending school or working. In a paper on Vocational Education in South Carolina in 1983 by Gann Watson, it was stated:

The tracking of vocational students after

they leave the system to determine how many have secured and retained employment in and out of their vocational field is a difficult, but important task. Area vocational center staff are expected to keep records on the number of students they have placed in employment. In addition, the South Carolina State Department of Education conducts follow-up surveys of selected vocational and comprehensive high school students who have completed their vocational training or who were enrolled in a vocational program but did not complete their vocational studies before leaving the public school system. (Watson, 1983:19)

In addition to using follow-up information for program development and revision, the data collected could be shared with the business community or general public. Betty Fry says:

Business and industry hold business educators responsible for the expertise of the graduates from their program. Much is said about competency-based education. The employer is concerned with the level of competency the employee reaches before coming to work. That same employer is concerned with how that employee maintains the level of skill and training. The follow-up can assist the educational planners by identifying changes in the business and office atmosphere, equipment, and management style. Some programs concentrate on teaching skills only to find that those graduates who lose their jobs do so because of poor work habits and attitudes. The program must then look at its responsibility for dealing with this area of accountability. (Fry, 1983:102)

Once students have helped identify what changes should be made, this information can be shared with the community.

In a further attest to the fact that students are being prepared for employment as well as further education, Ralph Holmes says in a Business Education Forum article in January of this year that:

Research has shown that the noncollege-bound students who enjoyed the highest salary and number of months of employment took a number of vocational courses along with other related academic subjects in their last three years of high school. Employment statistics show that of the 40 occupations expected to account for half the new jobs between now and 1995, 17 are in the business areas. These 17 occupations account for 22 percent of the expected total job growth by 1995. Yes, there are jobs available, but students must have the training for these jobs, and you can give them that training. (Holmes, 1987:4)

Business education has been known to adapt to the current employment conditions, but must get out and sell its product to the public. The public must know what is being done to stay current with the changing business world.

FOLLOW-UP STUDIES IN MONTANA

Several schools in Montana conduct follow-up surveys, especially those with vocational education coordinators. Surveys for the years 1981 through 1985 were obtained from School District #1 in Helena. Each of the surveys was divided into three major areas:

1. High school vocational education training.
2. Status of current job.
3. Education since high school.

Their "main goal was to gather data about activities and perceptions of vocationally trained students after they left their formal high school training. The collection of this data will be utilized as a base for future program planning and improvement." (Fitzpatrick, 1985:1) More than half of these students were well-satisfied with their

vocational training in Helena for each of the surveys conducted.

Follow-up studies conducted in 1980 with grant monies from the Office of Public Instruction were also obtained. This survey was sponsored by the Department of Home Economics at Montana State University. The goal of this project was to "develop a process for implementing a standardized vocational education follow-up system in Montana that would meet local and state planning needs, as well as meet federal reporting requirements. (Parsons, 1980:1) This survey was divided into three sections with the first being Student Enrollment Data; the second, Employee Follow-Up Survey; and the third, Employer Satisfaction Survey. One of the surveys was done in a high school about the size of Bozeman. This school was Kalispell. Of the three vocationally funded areas acknowledged by the state (Filing, Office Machines, Clerical Office Practice, and Secretarial/Model Office) 49.5 percent were enrolled. In the "Employee Follow-up Survey" section of the study several findings were noteworthy. These were:

1. Thirty-six percent of the students were employed in jobs related to their secondary vocational training.
2. Former students indicated that their vocational training benefited them through jobs, 33 percent; further education, 41.7 percent; life enjoyment, 20.4 percent; and, other 4.9 percent.
3. Twenty-eight percent rated the overall training received in their vocational program at the high school level as excellent.

4. Forty-one percent of former graduates felt overall training received in their vocational program at the high school level was "very good."
5. Business courses were most valuable to 32.8 percent of the students.

It was also interesting to note that 44.4 percent of the employers rated former students' work attitude as being very good, and 55.6 percent rated work quality as very good.

(Ibid.:11) These statistics provided much useful information for these various state schools to evaluate their overall vocational programs.

SUMMARY

After completing the review of literature, it was clear that follow-up studies have a definite purpose and are necessary to help determine what course offerings are most valuable and in what areas to consider making changes. Studies have been conducted for years on national levels, state levels, and local school levels. They have been done to update curriculum and equipment as well as to provide information relative to employment stability.

General findings were that for the most part business educators are doing a more than adequate job of preparing students for further education and employment, but that there are many areas that should also be taught--many relating to communication skills and positive attitudes toward work.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The major problem of this study was to evaluate the business education program at Bozeman Senior High School, Bozeman, Montana by conducting a follow-up study of graduates from the classes of the past five years--1981 through 1985 to obtain information about business courses taken, usefulness of these courses, overall preparation of students, and overall effectiveness of the program.

This chapter is written to: (1) describe sources of data, (2) explain construction of the survey instrument, (3) explain the administration of the survey instrument, and (4) describe the procedure for the analysis of data.

SOURCES OF DATA

All data was obtained from former graduates (200) of Bozeman Senior High who had taken beginning as well as advanced courses in the business education program during the years, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984, and 1985.

CONSTRUCTION OF THE SURVEY INSTRUMENT

One survey form was used to gather information for this study. The review of literature provided the basis for the survey instrument. The form (Appendix B, p. 57) was sent to 200 students who graduated from Bozeman Senior High and who were enrolled in beginning vocational courses such as typing, and those who took additional vocational courses. Students were asked to:

1. Check business courses they took.

2. Check business courses they wish they would have taken.
3. Rate each of the courses taken as to usefulness.
4. Check business courses they wish Bozeman Senior High would have offered.
5. Check skills initially needed on stated equipment.
6. Indicate preparedness for further education after completing our program.
7. Indicate preparedness for vocational applications.
8. Rate various areas of the overall business education program.

The survey was first reviewed by Dr. Norm Millikin, Assistant Dean, School of Business, Montana State University. Revisions and clarifications in survey statements were made at that time in order to obtain desired information and to aid in students' ease in filling out the questionnaire. At this time, the survey instrument was approved for mailing to former students.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Students were chosen by studying report cards of each student in each of the five graduating classes and were selected based on the number of business courses taken.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

A questionnaire was used to collect the data in this follow-up study. The results were then presented following descriptive research procedures. Data were reported by total numbers responding and percentages of totals in each of the questions.

In the textbook entitled Educational Research, the authors state that:

In a sense research has only two purposes:

(1) description, and (2) exploration of relationships between variables. Descriptive research seeks to characterize a sample of students, teachers, school buildings, textbooks, and so forth on one or more variables. The sample's response to one variable is not correlated with their response to another variable, though. Descriptive studies are primarily concerned with finding out "what is." (Borg, 1984:30, 354)

They also tell us that:

Studies involving surveys account for a substantial proportion of the research done in the field of education. Local school districts sometimes need to do surveys. The comprehensive school survey explores and evaluates many aspects of the school system. . . . The questionnaire and individual interview are the most common instruments for data collection in survey research. (Ibid., 1984:404-406)

Tables were used to relate the data in order that it could be better presented and understood by the reader. The data was compiled and tabulated by using a computer program with the help of Ray Meyers, a computer teacher at Bozeman Senior High School.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Presentation of the findings of the follow-up study of Bozeman Senior High graduates of the classes from 1981 through 1985 will be made in this chapter. Findings reported are limited to major areas in which former students were asked questions as outlined in Chapter One. These major areas were (1) appropriateness of course content, (2) necessary standards of performance, (3) adequacy of preparation for entry-level positions and (4) ranking of overall business education program as it relates to overall quality and methods of instruction. Before major areas are outlined, areas of general information will be covered. If the percentages don't add to 100 percent, it is due to rounding off.

Responses to questionnaires mailed out were received from each of the five classes, 1981 through 1985. Total responses received were 89 which was a return of 44.5%. Data gathered from this survey provided feedback relative to curriculum relevancy and overall value of the program to former students. Valuable input was gathered concerning the types of equipment which will help with purchasing decisions. Follow-up contacts made will provide information concerning the effectiveness of the current program of training from the standpoint of the former student.

GENERAL INFORMATION

TABLE 1

GENDER AND MARITAL STATUS OF GRADUATES					
	Number	Percent		Number	Percent
Female	80	90	Single	66	74
Male	9	10	Married	23	26
Total	89	100	Total	89	100

Of the 89 total returned surveys, 80 (90%) were from females and 9 (10%) were from males. Sixty-six (74%) of the respondents were single, and 23 (26%) were married. Table 1 shows an analysis of respondents by gender and marital status. Since most of the former students who returned surveys were single, this seems to follow the national trend of females prolonging marriage until they have further education or have established themselves in a career.

TABLE 2

PRESENT STATUS OF GRADUATES		
	Number	Percent
Working	43	48
Unemployed	2	2
In School	25	28
Working-in school	17	19
Armed Forces	2	2
Total	89	99+

Present status of respondents shows that 43 (48%) are presently working, 17 (19%) are working and going to school, 25 (28%) are going to school, 2 (2%) are unemployed, and 2 (2%) are in the armed forces. Table 2 gives a breakdown of these statistics.

TABLE 3

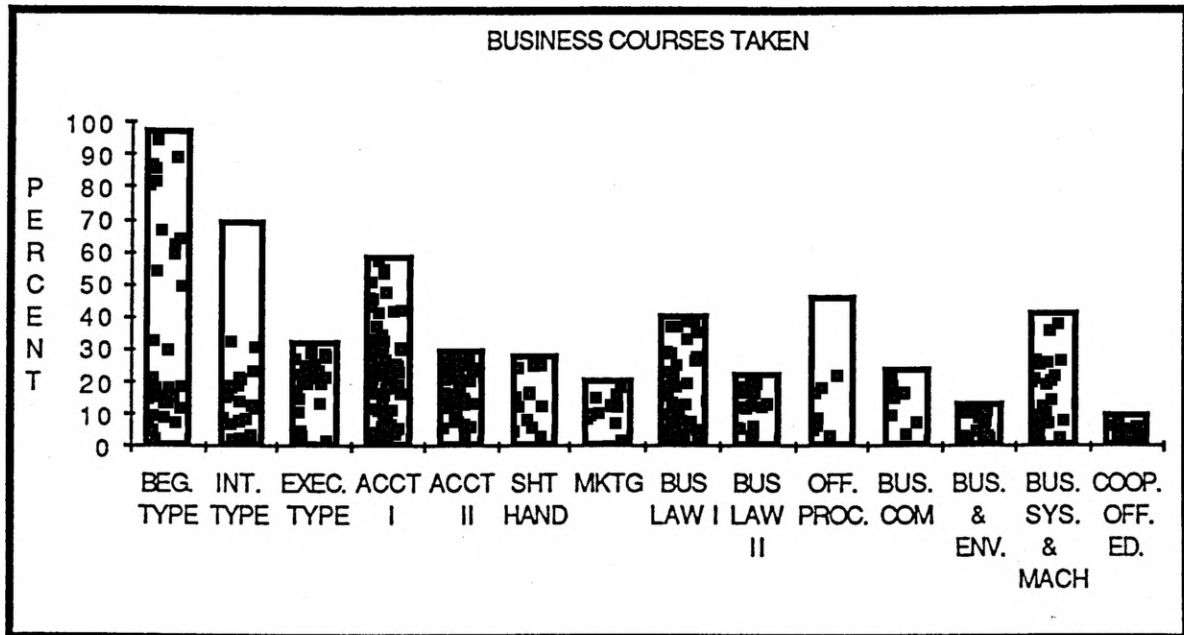
PRESENT LOCATION OF GRADUATES		
	Number	Percent
In Bozeman	61	69
In State	6	6
Out of State	22	25
Total	89	100

It was interesting to note that the students, as a majority, have stayed in Montana with 61 (69%) living in Bozeman, 6 (6%) living outside of Bozeman in Montana, and 22 (25%) living out of state. It would be safe to say that Bozeman and Montana State University are providing adequate employment and educational facilities for Bozeman Senior High graduates. Table 3 shows where the present graduates are living.

APPROPRIATENESS OF COURSE CONTENT

One of the first areas analyzed was the courses former graduates had taken while at Bozeman Senior High School. All courses offered during the years 1981 through 1985 were listed on the survey instrument.

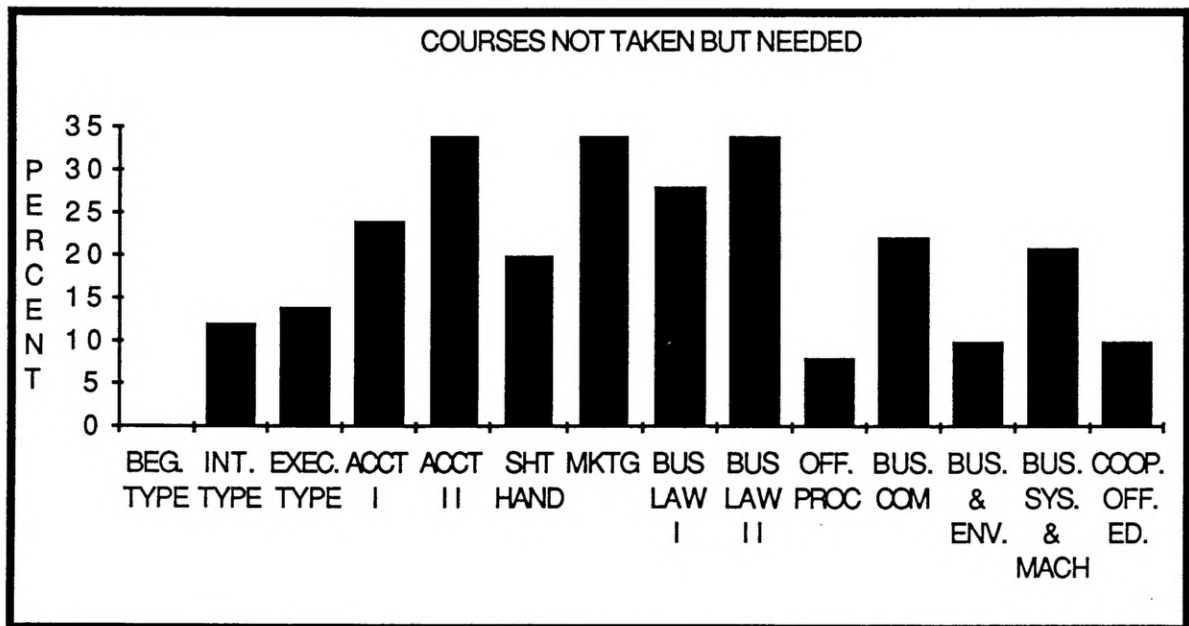
TABLE 4



It was interesting to note that 88 (99%) of the 89 respondents had taken Beginning Typing. For the second semester of typing (Intermediate Typing) the number dropped off to 63 (71%) while the third semester (Executive Typing) included 30 (34%) of the students. Approximately half of those who had completed Accounting I completed Accounting II. Twenty-six (29%) of the respondents enrolled in first-year Shorthand, a number that has dropped even more the past few years. Nearly half the respondents were enrolled in Office Procedures (47%) and Business Systems and Machines

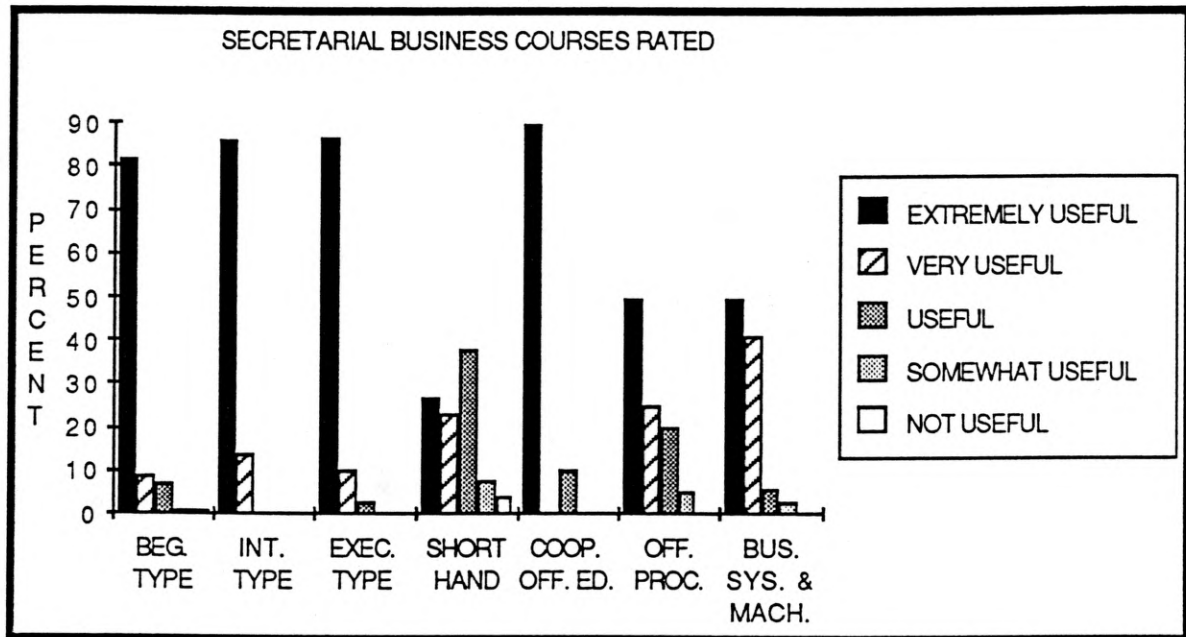
(43%). Only 10 (11%) of the students had been enrolled in Cooperative Office Education. This probably was due to the fact that this course was offered only during two of the years the survey covered--1981 and 1982. Table 4 (p. 27) shows an analysis of each of the business courses taken during the five-year period.

TABLE 5



Respondents were then asked which of the courses offered while they were students at Bozeman Senior High did they wish they would have taken. The five most often mentioned were Accounting I (25%), Accounting II (35%), Marketing (35%), Business Law I (28%), and Business Law II (35%). See Table 5 for an analysis of all course offerings.

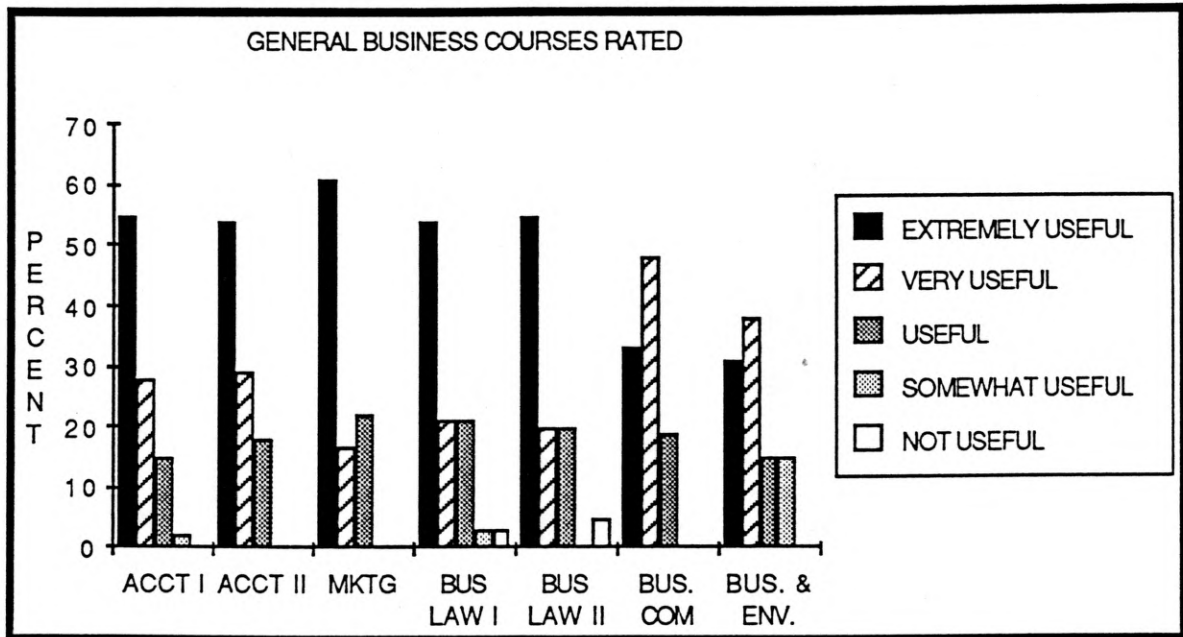
TABLE 6



Graduates were then asked to rate the courses they took on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being extremely useful. This was broken down into two areas with the first one being "Secretarial Business Courses Rated." See Table 6 for the breakdown of these courses. As might be expected the three semesters of typing were rated highly by former graduates. Each of the three was rated as being "extremely useful" by more than 80 percent of the graduates. Cooperative Office Education was rated highly, but one must remember that only ten of the respondents were actually enrolled in this

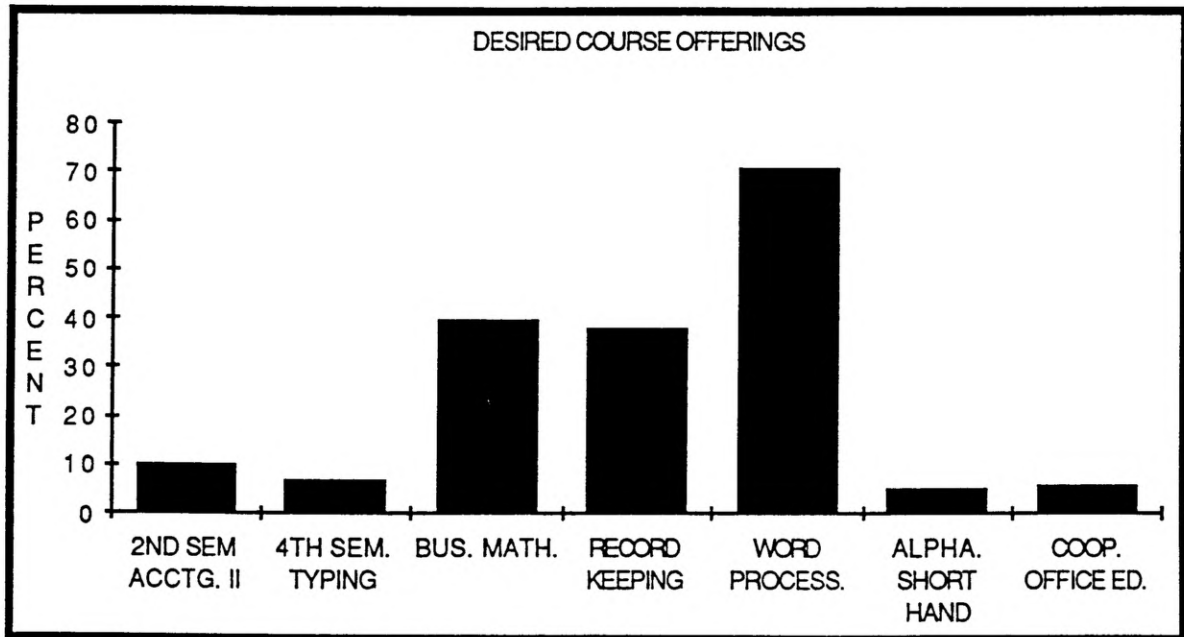
course. Of the ten enrollees, 9 of them (90%) found it to be extremely useful. Looking at the 7 secretarial courses, Shorthand was ranked lowest with only 7 (27%) finding it extremely useful. Six of the 26 who had taken Shorthand (23%) gave it a rating of 2 out of five so 50% of the graduates found it useful.

TABLE 7



Next, the ratings of the "General Business Courses" were analyzed. Marketing was out in front for usefulness with 58% finding it extremely useful. Both Accounting I & II and Business Law I & II were rated very highly--all between 50 and 60% with a number 1 ranking. These courses have been popular courses with Bozeman Senior High students for the past decade, and this points out that students also found them to be extremely useful. See Table 7 for an analysis of the general business course offerings.

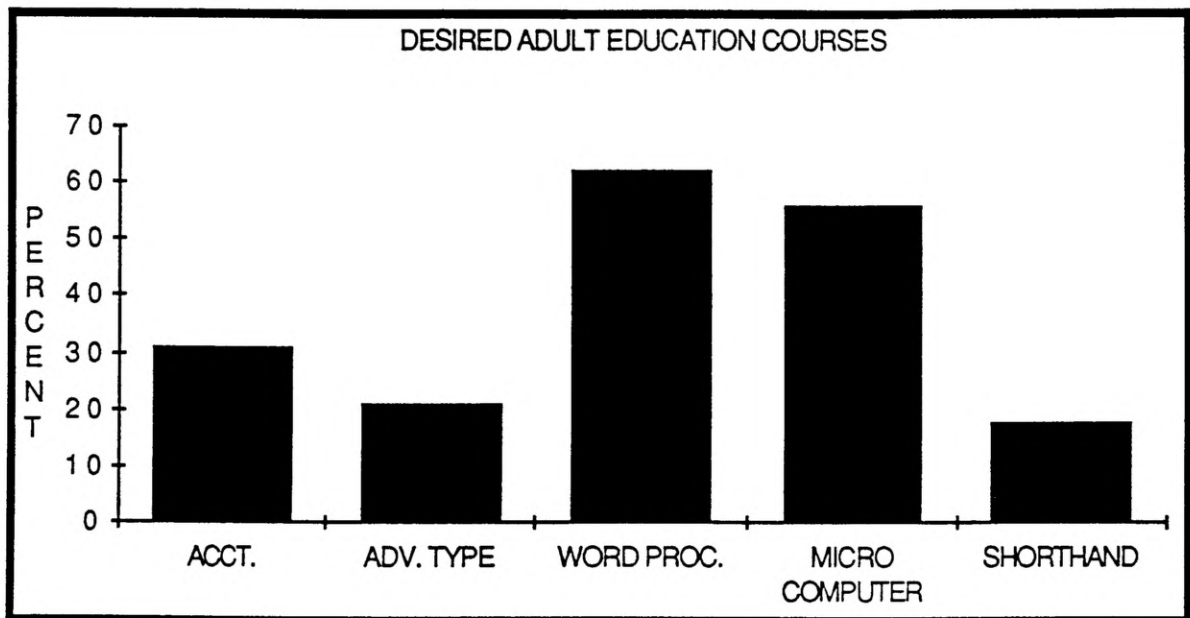
TABLE 8



Of the courses marked as courses students wish Bozeman Senior High would have offered, Word Processing comes out with a strong 72% or 64 of the 89 respondents. This course is now being offered as a semester course, but was incorporated since these people had graduated. Recordkeeping and Business Math had a somewhat surprising showing of 38% and 40% respectively. Even though the Cooperative Office Education was found to be extremely useful by a great number of students, only 6 (7%) would like to see it offered in the curriculum. Most respondents seem to think that

three semesters of typing and accounting are adequate for their needs for further education or entry-level work positions. Table 8 (p. 33) graphically shows how graduates responded, in detail, to this question of desired course offerings.

TABLE 9



Respondents were asked, if they live now in the Bozeman area, what courses they would like to see offered by the Adult Education Program which might aid in skill improvement. The number used for a total in figuring percentages for this question was 61, which is the total number of students living in the Bozeman area. Word processing again comes out ahead with 62% while 58% would like to see more offered in the microcomputer area. The school district's Adult Education Program does offer courses in all areas listed and is thinking about offering

speedwriting for a shorthand system. This confirms the feeling that a word processing course is definitely important to former students. See Table 9 (p. 35) for a complete analysis of desired adult education courses.

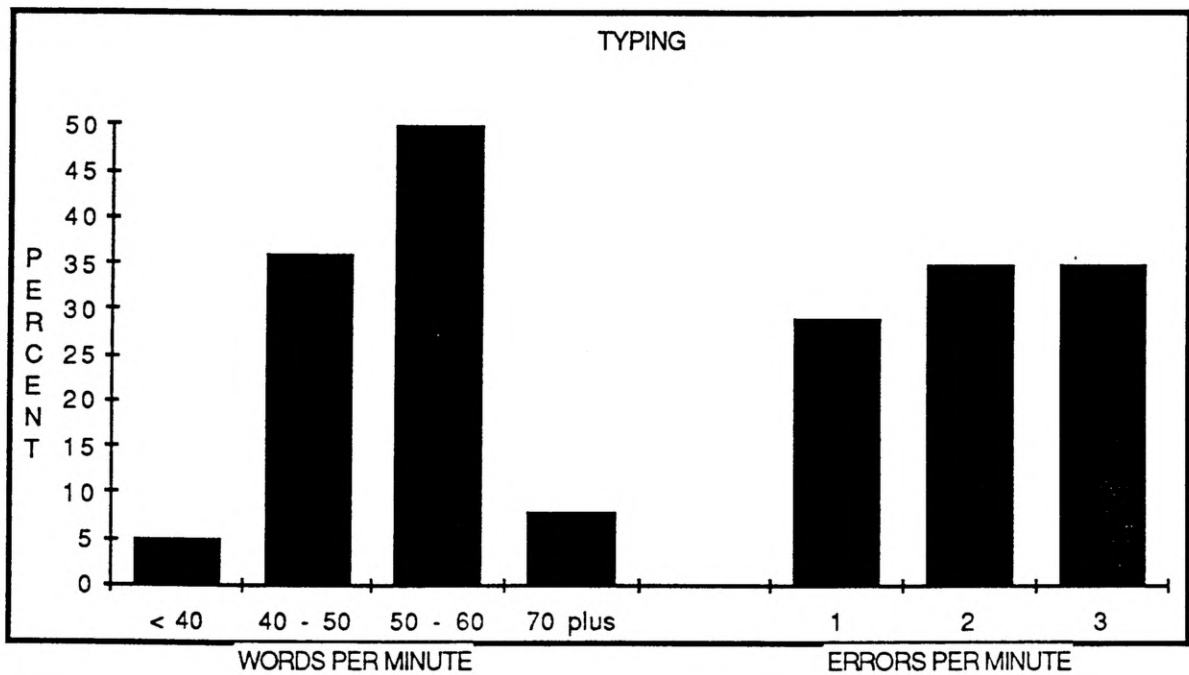
In summary, the Bozeman Senior High Business Department curriculum seems to be up to date with what former students are finding out in the "real" world. It might be necessary to look at Recordkeeping and Business Math as future course offerings. Alphabetic Shorthand is a course to be offered next year (1987-88). Students on this survey didn't give us a clear picture of whether this shorthand method is desirable, but did indicate that Shorthand, as it was offered to them, was not as useful as other courses.

Students have taken various "other" business courses as asked on the questionnaire. Most of the courses have been taken at Montana State University, and these ranged from Typing to Statistics, Data Processing, Accounting, Shorthand, Business Law, Word Processing, and most every business course imaginable. A few courses were taken from Adult Education and a few were taken at vo-tech schools.

NECESSARY STANDARDS OF PERFORMANCE

Respondents were asked to check the desired skill level for their first job.

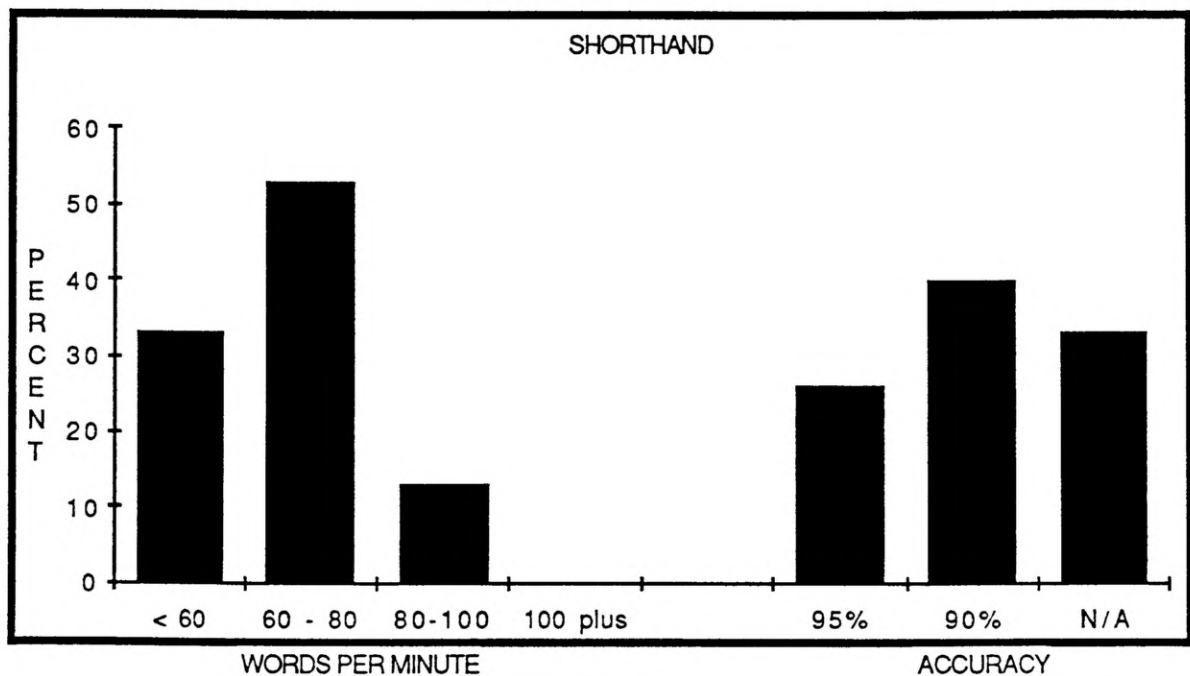
TABLE 10



Forty-nine percent were required to type at least 50 to 60 words per minute. Only 8% were required to be faster than 70 words per minute. The level of accuracy was fairly evenly distributed according to 1, 2, or 3 errors per minute. Thirty percent of the students checked both 2 and 3

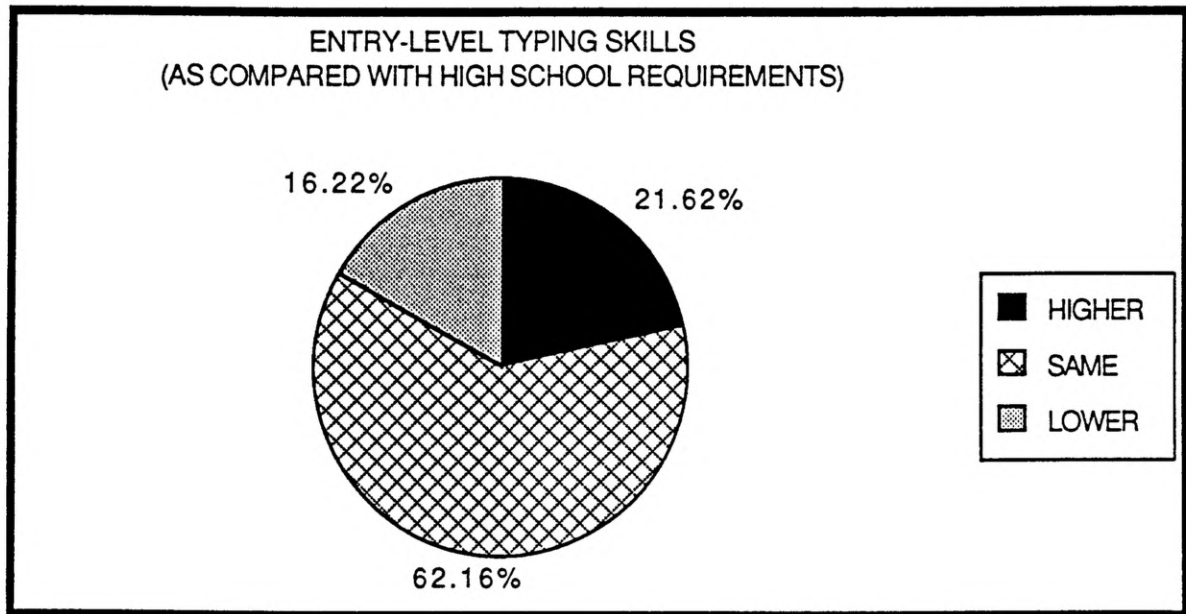
errors per minute. Table 10 (p. 37) shows an analysis of both these statistical areas.

TABLE 11



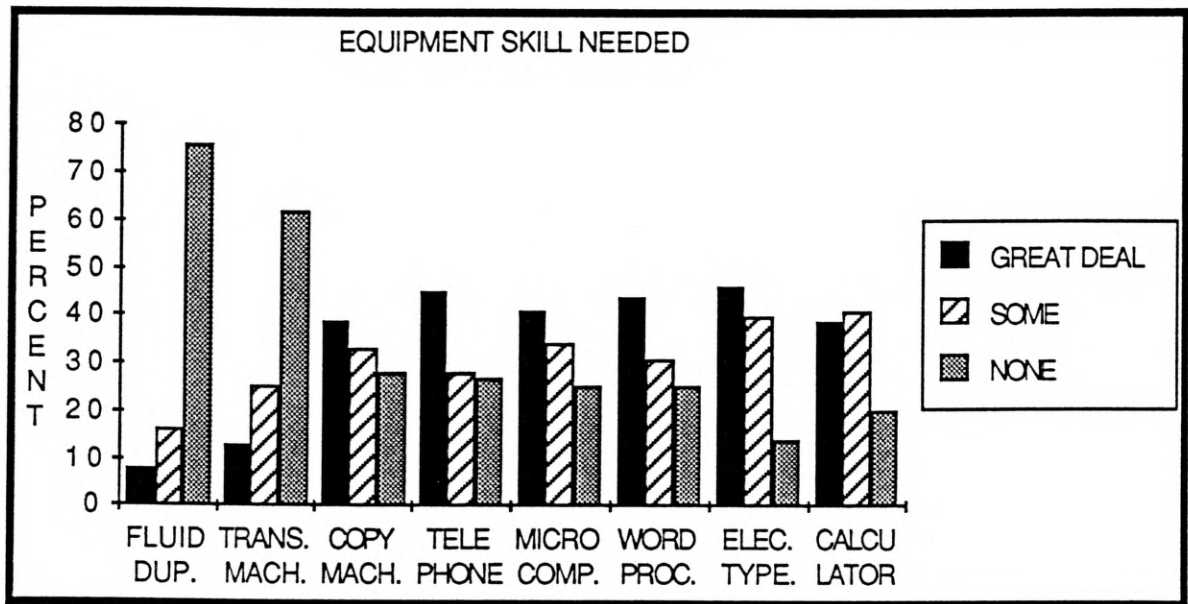
Another level of accuracy investigated was shorthand. The majority of respondents (53%) were required to take shorthand at 60 to 80 words per minute. Forty percent of the respondents found that a 90% accuracy was required by employers. Approximately 33% of the respondents were not required to have a level of accuracy for their shorthand use. Table 11 breaks down these findings.

TABLE 12



Sixty-two percent of graduates stated that entry-level typing skills for their first job were the same as those required in typing classes in high school. Twenty one percent said that their job required higher skills than was required in high school. Table 12 breaks this area down.

TABLE 13



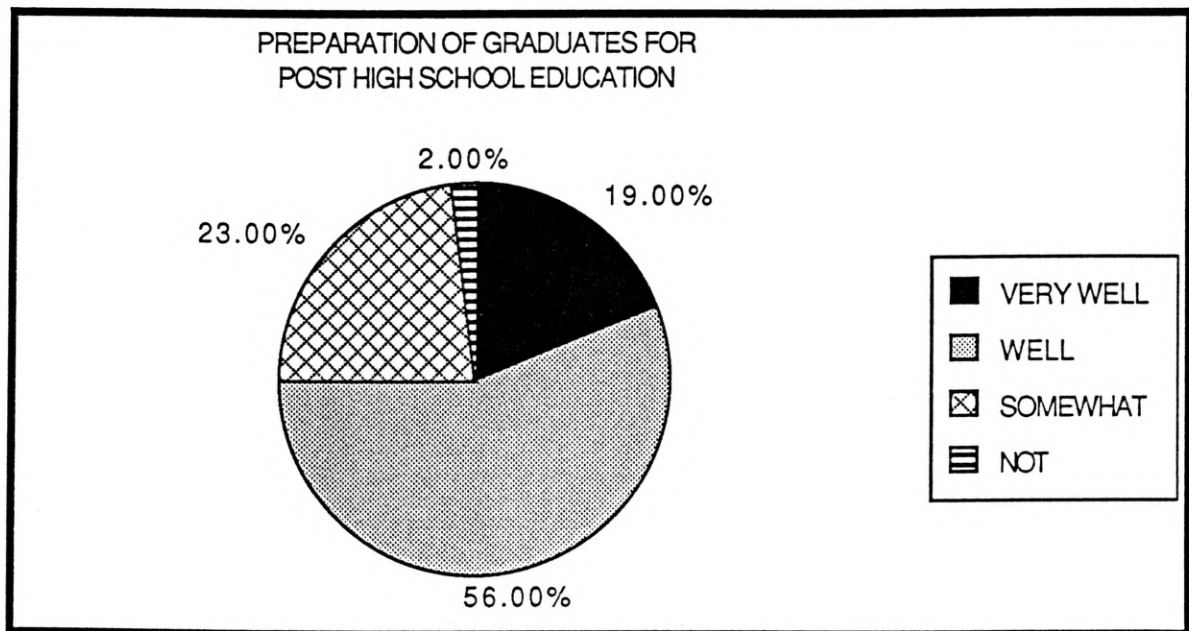
Graduates were asked to rate the skill needed out in the world of work on 8 different types of office equipment. When analyzing data, the percentages looked fairly even in most cases; however, there were two they rated low in necessary skills. These were the fluid duplicator and the transcribing machine. The fluid duplicator was given approximately a 23% use in the categories "a great deal" and "some," while the transcribing machine skill was necessary approximately 32% of the time. This suggests that Bozeman Senior High should discontinue use of the fluid

duplicator as a teaching tool. The transcribing machine could be continued at this time, but might need to be reassessed in a couple of years. Approximately 70% of the respondents showed a need for at least some skill on other types of office equipment. See Table 13 (p. 40) for a detailed analysis of this survey question.

ADEQUACY OF PREPARATION

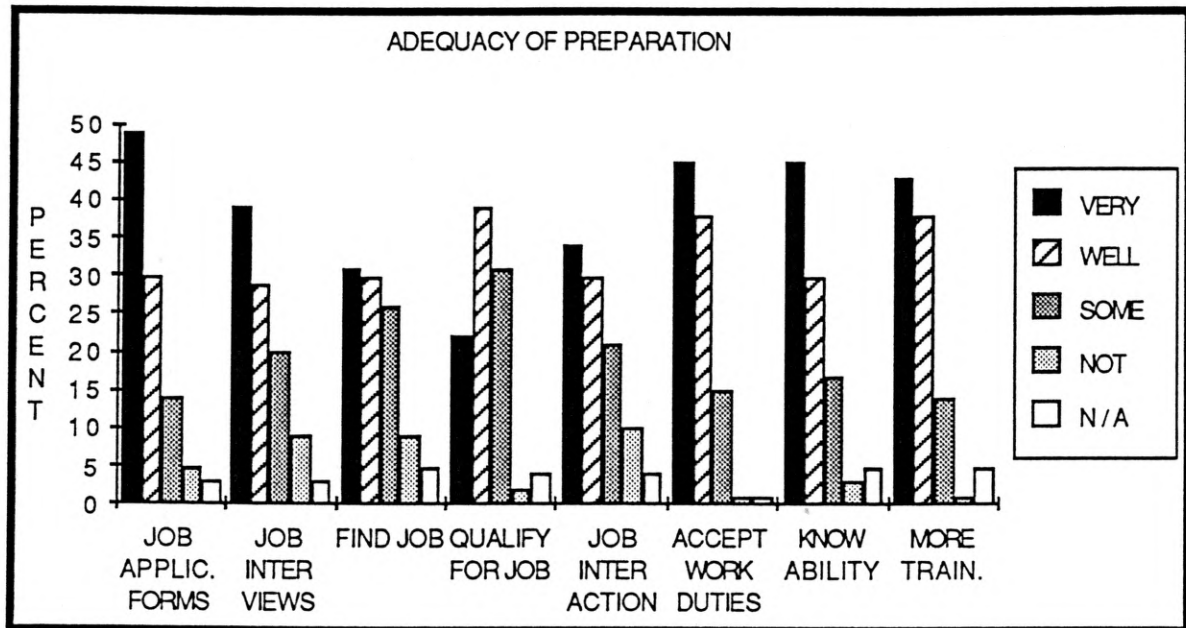
Next, the investigator reviewed the preparation of former graduates both for further training and education and entry-level employment.

TABLE 14



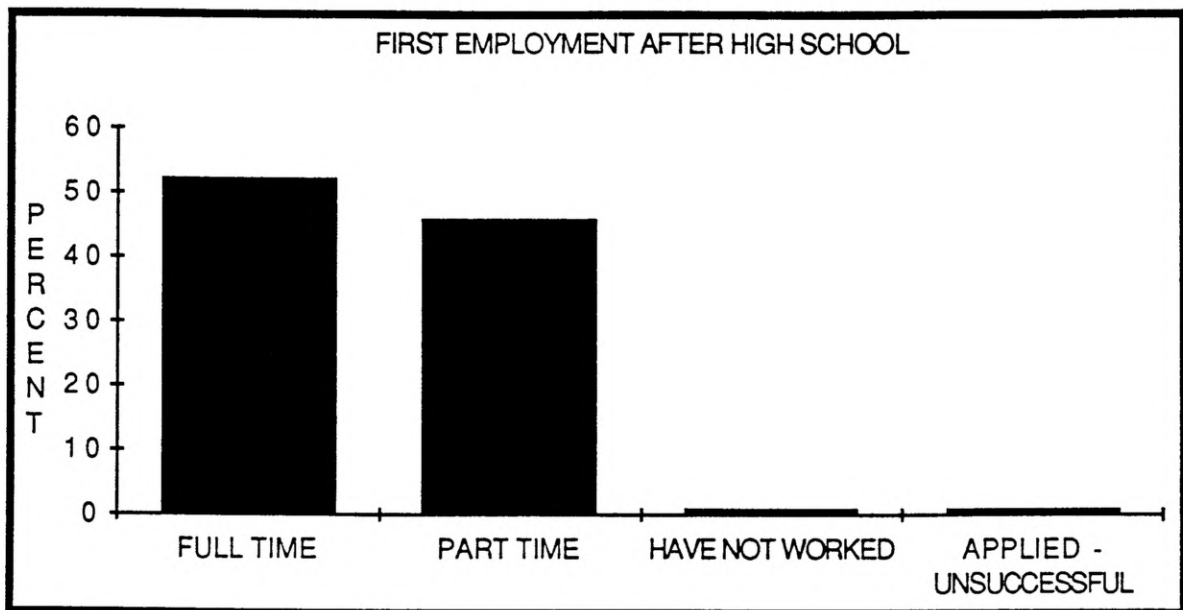
First, Table 14 shows how graduates perceived their preparation for further education. Fifty-six percent felt well prepared while 19% felt very well prepared. Only 2% of the 89 respondents indicated that they were not prepared for further education.

TABLE 15



Former graduates were asked to rate preparation in eight different areas outlined in Table 15. In each of the eight areas, the majority of former students felt either well qualified or very well qualified for the various job-related skills. There were two areas in which they did not feel qualified. These were the ability to actually find a job (26%) and those who needed special technique skills (32%). The investigator found that this lower percentage in technical qualification was from those students who did not take enough typing or shorthand courses. As mentioned earlier, most students who took these courses found them to be extremely useful.

TABLE 16



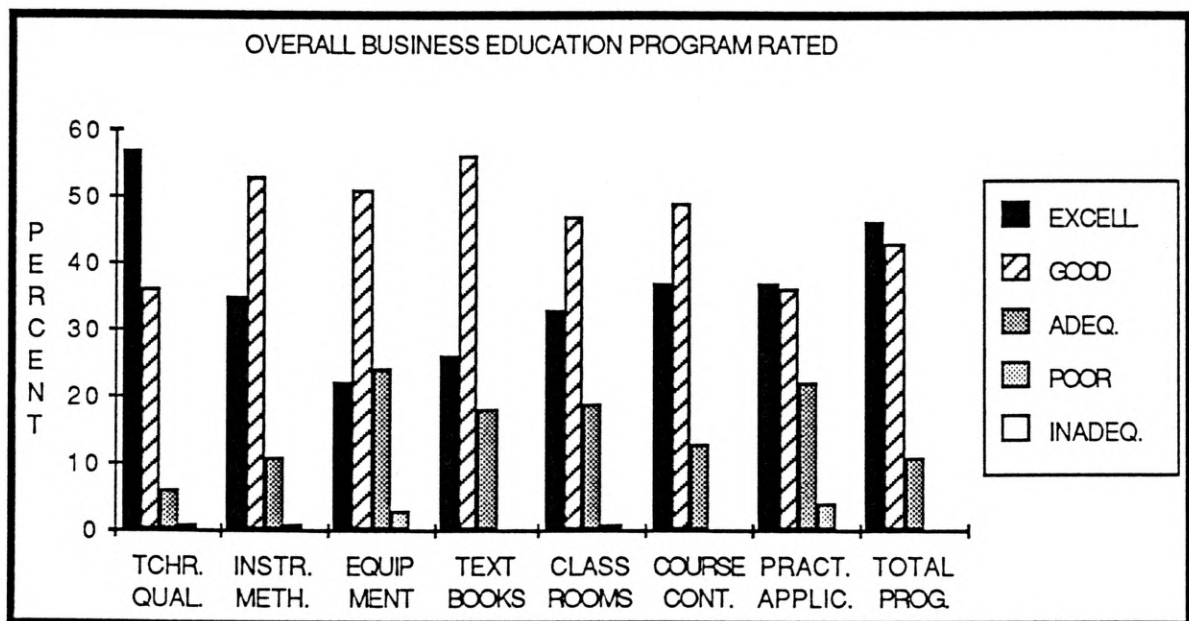
Lastly in this area, employment after high school was investigated. Fifty-two percent were employed full time while 45% were employed part time. This is shown in Table 16. Thus, 97% of the former students who replied to the survey have been employed at least part time since graduating from high school.

In the area of adequacy of preparation, it was felt that an overall majority of the students felt qualified for further training and/or education as well as well qualified to operate specific kinds of office equipment and qualified to handle various job and job-finding tasks.

RANKING OF OVERALL BUSINESS EDUCATION PROGRAM

The overall ranking of the department at Bozeman Senior High School was good to excellent with none of the respondents feeling that it was inadequate.

TABLE 17



Ninety percent of the graduates felt that the total program was good to excellent. Two areas were in the 70% range. Those were 74% for equipment and 71% for practical applications. All other categories ranked good to excellent. Fifty-seven percent of the respondents ranked

instructors excellent and 36% ranked instructors good. This would indicate a high level of satisfaction with the business instructors at Bozeman Senior High School. Table 17 (p. 45) shows a detailed breakdown of the overall ranking of the Bozeman Senior High Business Department.

It was interesting to this investigator to note that most of the students were employed in some type of business, either in retail or office work, as their first employment. Two listed teaching, a few worked in restaurant or motel work, and one was a truck driver. Various reasons for leaving that first job were given. Many of the jobs were temporary, and some left because they couldn't keep up with school work. Some moved from the area or left to take a better job. When asked if they had had more than one position, it was interesting that many of them had held more than one position even though they graduated, at the most, six years ago.

Graduates have worked at everything from receptionist to bookkeeper to assistant manager to advertising consultant.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to conduct a follow up of Bozeman Senior High graduates who had taken several Business Education courses from the years 1981 through 1985. Present status, business courses taken, business courses desired, rating of business courses taken, courses that Bozeman Senior High should have offered, standards of performance, initial skills necessary on various types of office equipment, preparation in various vocational areas, and an overall rating of the Business Education Department were the major areas studied. The study also identified areas of first employment, types of positions held, and if not employed since high school, the major reason.

A review of the most up-to-date literature dealing with follow-up studies was conducted. There was a great deal of information available, and many pertinent reasons for conducting such a study were given. An article in Business Education Forum by Betty Fry provided an abundance of information as did some not-so-recent articles by William Selden, James Bob Drake, and Harry E. Jacobsen. Studies conducted in Montana through a pilot program with the Office of Public Instruction and one done by the Helena School District provided helpful information as well.

A questionnaire was developed by the investigator and was used to gather data. This survey was mailed to former

students who had taken many business education courses in the program at Bozeman Senior High School during the years 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984, and 1985. A cover letter explaining the reason for the study was mailed along with the questionnaire. An adequate number of responses were received from the first mailing with a 45 percent return so a second mailing was not conducted. The sample included 200 graduates, and responses were received from 89 graduates. Tables and charts were used to report numbers and percentages in each of the informational areas. A copy of the cover letter and questionnaire are included in Appendixes A and B.

The numbers or raw data were compiled by hand and put into a Macintosh computer using an Excel program which computed percentages and created tables and charts for specific data.

CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions were drawn from this study of Bozeman Senior High graduates during the years 1981 through 1985.

Appropriateness of Course Content

1. The general business courses of the Bozeman Senior High Business Department received a 67% rating of former graduates finding these courses extremely useful. Business and Its Environment, which is a course offered only to sophomores, received the lowest rating with a 69%. Overall,

it is felt that the courses are offering students useful information for either further education or entry-level job preparation.

2. Seventy-three percent of the respondents rated the secretarial business courses as extremely useful. Shorthand, however, was the lowest rated of the courses. The investigator feels positive that students are gaining skills in these areas that have been a definite help in whatever endeavors they have chosen.

3. Those students (72%) who were unable to take Word Processing strongly recommended that it be offered by the Business Education Department. This is now being done. Only 7% would like to see Cooperative Office Education offered in the curriculum. Students, for the most, part were satisfied with the curriculum offerings.

4. Former students rated Word Processing and Micro-computers as courses they would like to see offered by the Adult Education Program. Students from the years 1981 through 1985 did not receive enough training and education in these areas.

5. Most graduates felt that the overall course offerings were up to date with what is being found in the "real" world.

Necessary Standards of Performance

1. Nearly half of all respondents were required to type 50 to 60 words per minute with 2 or 3 errors per

minute. Former students (62%) felt that entry-level typing skills were equal to what was required in high school.

2. The majority (53%) of respondents were required to take shorthand at 60 to 80 words per minute with 90 percent accuracy. This is comparable to requirements at Bozeman Senior High.

3. The copy machine, telephone, microcomputer, word processor, electric typewriter, and calculator were all found to require at least some skill by former graduates (70%). Skills on the fluid duplicator and transcribing machine were found to be less important than the other types of office equipment.

Adequacy of Preparation

1. In rating the adequacy of preparation for further education, 75 percent of the respondents felt well prepared.

2. In the area of vocational skills, the majority of former students, over 60 percent in all cases, felt well prepared. The weakest areas were job interviews, how to find a job, and working with other people.

3. The majority of former students have been successfully employed either full time or part-time since graduation from high school. Many of the part-time employees have worked while continuing their education.

Ranking of Overall Business Education Program

1. The overall ranking was high with at least 70 percent of the students ranking the program good to

excellent. Instructors were ranked the highest in this category. The lowest ranking was given to practical applications, but 71% still rated this from good to excellent. Overall the program was very well received by former graduates.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the research in this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Course offerings should continue to be studied in accordance with what is most up to date in Business Education. More business math and recordkeeping should be offered either as courses or as part of existing courses.

2. Microcomputers should be expanded to include more information and training--possibly in the area of spreadsheets, data base management, and graphics.

3. Business Education advisory committee members should review this study and take into consideration these findings as they relate to their responsibilities as advisors.

4. Promotion of the program should continue to take place and a presentation of these findings should be given to guidance counselors to take into consideration when they are counseling students.

5. Teachers should continue to attend workshops and take courses to stay current with changing teaching techniques and methodologies.

6. Equipment should be continually evaluated as to its effectiveness as a teaching tool, and to determine if it is current with what is being used in business.

7. These findings should be presented to administrators to demonstrate the overall quality and viability of the business education program at Bozeman Senior High School.

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APPENDIX A

April 30, 1987

^F1^
^F2^
^F3^

Dear ^F4^:

As partial fulfillment for a master's degree in business education at Montana State University, I am conducting a follow-up study of Bozeman Senior High School graduates for the classes of 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984, and 1985. I am interested in information concerning business courses you took, ratings of those courses, your overall preparation, and a rating of our business education program. This will help us assess and evaluate our program for future graduates.

Enclosed is a questionnaire which I would greatly appreciate your taking a few minutes to fill out and return by June 1. I hope to complete my degree by the end of the first session this summer.

Our department is undergoing changes all the time as technology advances are made. Since you have been furthering your education or working in some area of business, you are in a position to give us up-to-date information to enable us to make further changes and advances.

The questionnaire should not take more than fifteen minutes to complete. Please return it in the pre-addressed, stamped envelope. I am hoping for a great return. I am anxious, also, to hear what you have been doing these past few years as well as how well prepared you were to face your new endeavors.

Sincerely,

Peggy Ross, Chairman
Business Education Dept.

Enclosure

APPENDIX B

FOLLOW-UP STUDY OF GRADUATES OF
THE BUSINESS EDUCATION PROGRAM

Bozeman Senior High School
Business Education Department
Bozeman, MT 59715

Name _____

If married, maiden name _____

Present Address _____

1. Male _____
Female _____

2. Marital Status
_____ Married
_____ Single

3. Year graduated from high school _____

4. Present status: _____ working
_____ unemployed
_____ going to school
_____ armed forces

5. Check (☒) the business courses you took at Bozeman Senior High School:

_____ Beginning Typing	_____ Business Law I
_____ Intermediate Typing	_____ Business Law II
_____ Executive Typing	_____ Office Procedures
_____ Accounting I	_____ Business Communications
_____ Accounting II	_____ Business & Its Environment
_____ Shorthand	_____ Business Systems & Machines
_____ Marketing	_____ Cooperative Office Education

6. Check (☒) the business courses you wish you would have taken while in high school:

_____ Beginning Typing	_____ Business Law I
_____ Intermediate Typing	_____ Business Law II
_____ Executive Typing	_____ Office Procedures
_____ Accounting I	_____ Business Communications
_____ Accounting II	_____ Business & Its Environment
_____ Shorthand	_____ Business Systems & Machines
_____ Marketing	_____ Cooperative Office Education

7. Please rate each of the courses you took in high school by circling the number as to their usefulness: (NOTE: 1 is extremely useful; 5 is not useful at all)

<u>Name</u>	<u>Ex. Useful</u>					<u>Not Useful</u>
Beginning Typing	1	2	3	4	5	
Intermediate Typing	1	2	3	4	5	
Executive Typing	1	2	3	4	5	
Accounting I	1	2	3	4	5	
Accounting II	1	2	3	4	5	
Shorthand	1	2	3	4	5	
Marketing	1	2	3	4	5	
Cooperative Office Education	1	2	3	4	5	

7. Continued

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Business Law I	1	2	3	4	5
Business Law II	1	2	3	4	5
Office Procedures	1	2	3	4	5
Business Communications	1	2	3	4	5
Business & Its Environment	1	2	3	4	5
Business Systems & Machines	1	2	3	4	5

8. Check (✓) the business courses that you wish Bozeman Senior High would have offered:

☐ Second semester Accounting II
☐ Fourth semester Typing
☐ Business Mathematics
☐ Recordkeeping
☐ Word Processing
☐ Alphabetic Shorthand
☐ Cooperative Office Education
☐ Other _____

9. If applicable, indicate standards of performance that were required of you to be hired for your job:

Typing

☐ less than 40 w.p.m.
☐ 40 - 50 w.p.m.
☐ 50 - 60 w.p.m.
☐ 70 w.p.m. or above

Level of accuracy:

☐ 1 error per min.
☐ 2 errors per min.
☐ 3 errors per min.

Shorthand

☐ less than 60 w.p.m.
☐ 60 - 80 w.p.m.
☐ 80 - 100 w.p.m.
☐ 100 w.p.m. or above

Level of accuracy:

☐ 95 percent accuracy
☐ 90 percent accuracy
☐ Not applicable

10. If your beginning position required typing, compare the job requirements with your high school requirements:

☐ Higher than in school
☐ About the same as in school
☐ Lower than in school

11. List any additional business-related courses you have taken since high school graduation:

Name of Institution _____

Name of Course(s) _____

12. Check (✓) the amount of skill you initially needed on the following types of equipment:

Great DealSomeNone

☐
☐
☐
☐
☐

Fluid duplicator
 Transcribing machine
 Copy machine
 Telephone
 Microcomputer

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Word Processor
Electric Typewriter
Calculator
Other (please list)

13. If you continued in one of the business programs offered in a vocational school, four-year college, adult education program, or community college, how well prepared were you after completing our program?

_____ Very well prepared _____ Well prepared _____ Somewhat prepared
_____ Not prepared

14. If you live in the Bozeman area, check () the courses you would like to see offered through our adult education program which might aid you in improving your skills:

_____ Accounting	_____ Shorthand
_____ Advanced Typing	_____ Other (please list)
_____ Word Processing	_____
_____ Microcomputers	_____

15. Were you prepared by the Bozeman Senior High School business education program to: (Check (✓) one answer for each of the following)

	<u>Very Well Prepared</u>	<u>Well Prepared</u>	<u>Somewhat Prepared</u>	<u>Not Prepared</u>	<u>Not Applicable</u>
a. Complete job application forms	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
b. Prepare for job interviews	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
c. Find a job	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
d. Technically qualify for a job (had necessary skills such as typing, etc.)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
e. Work with other people on job-related problems	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
f. Accept work responsibilities	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
g. Know your abilities and interests	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
h. Prepare for further training	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

16. What was your first employment after high school graduation? (Check () one answer)

_____ Full-time employment (40 hours or more per week)
 _____ Part-time employment (anything less than 40 hours per week)
 _____ I have not worked either part time or full time
 _____ I applied for work, but did not become employed

17. If you have been employed, in what type of business was your first employment?

18. If you left that first employment, what was the major reason? _____
19. If you have held more than one position, please list the type of position. _____
20. If you have not been employed since high school graduation, indicate the reason(s). _____
21. Please rate the business education program at Bozeman Senior High by placing a check (✓) under the appropriate heading:

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Adequate</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Inadequate</u>
a. Quality of instructors	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
b. Methods of instruction	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
c. Adequate and up-to-date equipment	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
d. Textbooks and instructional equipment	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
e. Adequacy of business education classrooms	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
f. Course content	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
g. Practical application of training to jobs	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
h. Overall business education program	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

APPENDIX C

GENERAL COMMENTS MADE BY STUDENTS

Various comments were made in notes or letters along with the questionnaire. Some of these included:

"The graduates from Bozeman Senior High School should all have some basic business skills such as typing, the use of calculators, and how to use a photocopy machine appropriately."

"All of the business classes I took in high school helped with the classes I took at the Vo-tech. I even got to skip a few classes."

"I'm excited to see the results of the follow-up questionnaires because Bozeman possesses excellent business programs, and I've been fortunate to have graduated with the knowledge of the program. The more people I meet outside of Bozeman and Montana, the more I realize just how lucky I was to have had the opportunities available to me and to take advantage of them."

"The area in which the business department was lacking the most was computers. To even survive in college, let alone the business world, a working knowledge of computer skills with emphasis on word processing is absolutely imperative."

"What you taught me about business and the world in general has helped me immensely in obtaining the position I am currently working in. The one regret I have concerns word processing and computers."

"I recently left a job as office manager for a doctor here. My business education in high school played a great part in obtaining that position at my age (24)."

"As you know, I was real active in the DECA program, and I feel that helped me prepare the most for college and the workplace."

"I feel the business education program at BSHS is very good, although when I attended the National OEA convention I felt I was lacking in the accounting area compared to even those from Billings."

"One recommendation I have, which is related to business, is an introductory course of economics. I think it could have made my life easier."

"I'm still at the same job, but because of my accounting classes I have been given more responsibility as far as payroll and book work which others have not gotten."

"Just so you can see how well the department taught me, here's a copy of my resume. Thanks for everything."