DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF EDUCATION

BULLETIN, 1927, No. 15

PROGRESS OF RURAL EDUCATION

1925 AND 1926

By

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[Advance Sheets from the Biennial Survey of Education in the United States, 1924–1926]

UNITED STATES
GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE
WASHINGTON
1927

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PROGRESS OF RURAL EDUCATION, 1925 AND 1926

I. PROBLEMS CONCERNED WITH RURAL SCHOOL SUPPORT

THE SCHOOLS AND THE ECONOMIC SITUATION

The rural schools of the United States have both profited by and suffered from the general economic depression affecting farmers and farming during 1925 and 1926. Rarely, if ever in recent years, have the social and educational welfare, as well as the economic condition of the farm population and their influence on American life, received so much and such disinterested attention. Not only farmers but other social and occupational groups—citizens in general—have given thoughtful consideration to the situation. Congress has considered a variety of measures designed to ameliorate conditions. A Division of Cooperative Marketing in the Department of Agriculture was established by act of Congress during the biennium, its creation influenced by the desire of the Federal Government to give intelligent advice and assistance in an important phase of the business of farming.

An unusual number of studies of the farmer's income and standards of living, health, and hospital service in farm communities, supplementing those more specifically concerned with production and marketing, have engaged the attention of Federal and other organizations interested in farm problems.

Increased activity on the part of organizations concerned with the social, educational, vocational, and recreational welfare of the farm youth have been noticeable. A few important examples of such activities are mentioned as typical: The American Country Life Association conducted a nation-wide study designed to ascertain attitudes of farm youth toward certain social and vocational questions. The association devoted its 1925 annual conference to the subject of farm youth, the problems discussed growing in part out of the investigation.

The American Library Association has been active in investigating public library service furnished to rural communities and rural schools. A recent survey made by a committee of the association revealed the fact that 93 per cent of the people without library service live in rural territory. The association has set as its ultimate goal the development of adequate library service within easy reach

of everyone in the United States. This interest, among others, is stimulating efforts for better public and school libraries for rural communities.

The National Congress of Parents and Teachers has conducted an intensive campaign in North Dakota, with the result that there are now branches of that organization in all rural districts in some counties and in a high percentage of rural districts in the others. Similar campaigns are now being organized in Mississippi and Nebraska.

This concentration of attention on the general educational welfare of farm communities promises to continue, and should have a permanent influence for good on educational conditions.

The immediate effect of economic depression on rural schools has been to curtail expenditures for all but the accepted necessaries—sometimes narrowly interpreted; to delay building programs, school consolidation, provision for supervision, and the like, even to the extent of lowering established standards in some communities. It has not been confined to any particular section of the country, but has been most serious, of course, in those States or communities depending largely on agriculture rather than manufactures as a source of economic income and wealth. Among the comments on the relationship between the economic situation and general school progress which have been made by the chief State school officers of the States, the following, selected as representative of different sections of the country, are also reasonably typical:

Connecticut.—Progress has been very much slowed down by the present economy wave, but has not stopped. No retrogression is in evidence. The tobacco situation has hindered developments in the tobacco-growing districts.

Louisiana.—The economic conditions in the rural sections of the State are not very promising. The sugar crop has been a failure for the past two years. The cotton crop has been good, but the present low price has brought much hardship to the cotton farmers of the State.

Maine.—The fact that the farmer has been going through a period of depression has developed a psychology which makes it difficult to find ways and means for making the rural schools commensurate with the needs of the people. In one county in which a crop failure occurred last year an effort was made to maintain schools at their usual efficiency, but it became necessary in some instances to reduce salaries, shorten the length of the term, and postpone improvement. This year the county is prosperous and every effort is being made to recover the lost ground and to go ahead. The rural school situation is virally tied up with the economic conditions.

Montana.—While economic conditions in general in this State have improved, a large number of districts in rural sections of the State had exceedingly high levies, and many districts have not opened school at all. Children have been cared for in other districts, or in some instances have been left without any school whatever. Conditions can not be remedied until the State assumes a larger share of school support. Districts are helpless to carry so heavy a load as has been required.

New York.—Farmers have been paying disproportionately high taxes, and this heavy burden of taxation has retarded school progress.

North Carolina.—The low price of tobacco and the disruption of the tobacco cooperative association, together with a severe drought in 1925, have slowed up school progress in some parts of the State. The slump in the cotton-mill industry affected the income tax and limited State support. On the whole, however, the economic situation seemed fairly good until the slump in the price of cotton in 1926. There is no way to tell how far-reaching this will be.

South Carolina.—Agricultural States have had a hard time financially for the past few years, but South Carolina seems to have largely solved the problem of financing her public schools through indirect taxation.

Wyoming.—Economic conditions in most of the rural communities of this State have been bad during the past biennium. There is some indication of improvement at the present time. This, of course, has affected rural school improvement. Fortunately the rural schools have been able to continue and improve without much local taxation, so that the schools in this State have not suffered as severely as those in surrounding States where economic conditions were similar but State support less adequate.

But the economic situation has led also to fruitful and determined efforts to secure more generous school support and more efficient schools for rural children—movements which promise effective and permanent results. Two important factors are more clearly and widely recognized than ever: Local support as the sole dependence for rural schools is inconstant, inadequate, and inequitable; and rural schools frequently, from causes inherent in rural conditions, cost more rather than less than urban schools, if equally efficient. The ultimate result has been a reexamination of the situation and renewed efforts for improvement centering largely around two large aspects of rural education—scientific and equitable methods of support, and standards of achievement, the latter concentrating chiefly on improving the quality of instruction.

STATE AID AND EQUALIZATION OF EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

INTEREST IN RURAL SCHOOL SUPPORT AND EFFORTS TOWARD IMPROVEMENT

The unusual interest in questions of the adequacy and method of support of schools in rural communities, growing during the decade, culminated in unwonted activity during the biennium in all matters concerned with State school funds and their distribution. About three-fourths of the money spent on the public schools in the United States comes from local sources. Practically all of this, as well as a portion of that raised by State and county units, comes from property taxation. These two factors, namely, dependence on local resources and dependence on property taxation as the chief source of school support, render the farmer's school-tax burden particularly heavy as compared with his city fellow citizen, while the returns he receives in education facilities for his chil-

dren are not usually commensurate with the effort nor equal in efficiency to those offered in urban communities.

While this is particularly true of rural elementary and secondary schools, it is probably true also of State higher institutions of learning which the farmer helps to support. With the acknowledged inadequacy and inefficiency of rural elementary and secondary schools, it would be unreasonable to expect the farm population to furnish its quota of students to State higher institutions. Such studies as have been made of the placement of graduates of State teacher-preparing institutions indicate unmistakably that rural schools do not participate proportionately with urban schools in the service which State normal schools and teachers colleges are established to contribute. They neither secure nor retain to a reasonably adequate degree teachers prepared at such institutions.

Increased realization of the seriousness of the situation and of its inequity is responsible for the wider interest in more nearly equalized educational opportunities within States and for increased efforts to secure them. This interest is clearly evidenced in the number and content of state-wide studies of school support which have appeared during the biennium. The educational needs of rural communities and their financial ability to meet them; present and potential sources of funds for school support; State school funds and their distribution among local units; effect of different methods of distribution on local school offerings, and the like, have become common and fruitful subjects of research. Such research investigations have been carried on in several States by State officials, or under their direction, or at their request, with the purpose of using them as guides for proposed legislative or other revisions. Others are research projects initiated because of enlarged interest and contributing to the general knowledge and literature of the subject.

In at least one-fourth of the States efforts of one kind or another have been made during the biennium to secure increased appropriations from State sources for new or old purposes, distributed by new or old methods as permanent or temporary relief for small, needy schools. In several States new annual appropriations for general or specific purposes have been provided; in others a special appropriation for specific purposes or increases in the amount of present appropriation have been made, or the principle on which other appropriations are made or distributed has been extended to other activities; while in a few States fundamental changes either in the amount of State funds furnished or in the methods of distribution, or both, have been sought or accomplished. Even though changes advocated have not been effected, the extensive efforts made to arouse public interest in intelligent consideration

of problems of school support have had a significant and probably lasting effect. The efforts themselves have resulted in a better understanding of school needs and larger acquaintance on the part of the public with successful policies pursued in progressive States, and so have helped lay a foundation for later accomplishment. Montana and Missouri are examples of States in which constitutional amendments or legislation favorable to school interests, recently proposed and lost, apparently mark not the end but the beginning of wider or more united or better understood efforts in the direction of securing more nearly equalized educational opportunities.

SOURCES AND DISTRIBUTION OF STATE SCHOOL FUNDS

Old and new sources of school support.—The sources from which funds are derived, particularly State funds, effective and potential, are, of course, basic to any constructive consideration of revision of methods of school support. Several studies of recent origin, and particularly those made during the biennium just closed, have called attention to the inadequacy of the general property tax as the sole source of revenues for school support and to the growing tendency to seek other and so-called newer types of State taxes to relieve the overburdened property source and to meet the rising costs of education. Bureau of Education Bulletin, 1926, No. 18, points out that the majority of citizens have little knowledge of the extent to which many States are now employing corporation taxes, income taxes, and other newer types instead of, or in addition to, general property taxes as a source of school revenues.

As is well known, the public schools in the United States are supported by funds from State, county, city, town or township, and district sources. A portion of the cost of maintenance in all States comes from the State as a unit, the proportion varying widely among States from that in Delaware providing 81½ per cent in 1925 to Kansas providing 1½ per cent in the same year. While local school moneys are derived almost wholly from property taxation, State funds come from a number of sources. Among the most common ones are permanent invested funds, State property tax, appropriations from general State revenues, corporation tax, income tax, inheritance tax, and severance taxes.

The personal income tax is a source of school revenue in six States at the present time. Arkansas repealed in 1925 the law by which such a tax was levied specifically for schools, leaving Delaware as the only State, so far as information is available, in which this tax is levied and the entire revenue devoted to schools. Five other States, Massachusetts, Mississippi, Missouri, New York, and North

Carolina, set aside for school purposes some portion of the proceeds of a State personal income tax.[1]

In eight States all or a part of the proceeds of a State inheritance tax is devoted to schools. Of this number, one, Virginia, devotes the entire proceeds to the "State public school fund" or "to be used for primary and grammar grades of the public schools." Up to 1925 another State, Nevada, levied an inheritance tax, 40 per cent of the proceeds of which went to the State school fund. This law in Nevada was repealed in 1925.

Practically all States levy some type of corporation tax, though only seven make such a levy specifically for schools. In seven additional States part of the proceeds of such tax is devoted to school purposes. The States[2] levying some form of corporation tax specifically for schools are as follows: New Hampshire, Maine, Kentucky, New York, West Virginia, Kansas, and Delaware.

The severance tax is a new source of revenue attracting increasing interest because of a belief in its possibilities and fairness as a source of school revenue. It is defined in the laws of two States as a tax on all natural products separated from the soil except agricultural. The interpretation commonly used corresponds to this definition. Natural products, such as coal, oil, and minerals of all types, are sources of wealth which will ultimately become exhausted. Future generations will not share in the income accruing from these natural deposits unless some special provision assuring its continuation or other method of prolonging participation is made. A tax on such deposits or their products, set aside as a permanent fund or used for current school purposes, is considered one step in the direction of continuing or making permanent their benefits to future generations. The five States in which severance taxes are used for schools usually devote the money to the State common or general school fund and to funds for higher institutions. In Arkansas, Louisiana, and Oklahoma part of the proceeds is returned to the counties in which the tax is collected.

Eight States levy occupational, business, and license taxes, revenues from which are used for school purposes. In four States, Louisiana, Kentucky, South Carolina, and Georgia, there are tobacco or cigarette taxes used wholly or largely for schools.

Methods of distributing State funds.—The search for better methods, usually called scientific methods, of distributing State funds among the various administrative units within the State is the phase of the general problem of State support which has received the largest attention during the biennium. Methods of distribution

[1] Summary of newer types of school taxes. Mimeographed circular by F. H. Swift, University of California.
[2] Ibid.

are particularly important in the prevailing efforts to promote equalization of tax burdens and school opportunities. Old methods of distributing State funds have, therefore, been subjected to re-examination and revision and to an unwonted scrutinizing both as to kind of distribution and its effect on local schools. The methods most commonly used at the present time in the different States, with the number of States using them are: (1) Per pupil basis, such as school census, average daily attendance, aggregate attendance, or enrollment. Forty-five States distribute some or all of their funds on one of these per pupil bases. (2) Per teacher basis, including number of teachers, graduated grant proportioned to salary basis, graduated grant proportioned to qualifications basis. Sixteen States use one or more of these in distributing some of their State funds. (3) On some specifically equalizing basis. Twenty-four States now have equalizing funds. (4) Miscellaneous bases or combinations of different bases.[3]

STATE-WIDE STUDIES OF SCHOOL SUPPORT

State-wide studies of school support numerous, and scientifically made.—The biennium has been unusually prolific in the production of studies having for their objective the discovery of methods of equalizing or approaching equitability of educational opportunities within the State studied. The majority of these studies have accepted the theses that such equalization is possible and desirable; that it is the business of the State as the responsible school unit to discover and put into operation means for its accomplishment; that certain minimum standards or criteria as to the educational offering should be set up by the State, which local units must observe. Beyond the minimum, freedom for further achievement, if not encouragement, is both possible and desirable. Apparently also a large number of the investigators have accepted the thesis promulgated by the Educational Finance Inquiry Commission in 1923 that equalization and reward for special effort are more or less incompatible, and that of the two, equalization of opportunity among school units is the particular function which it is unquestionably the first responsibility of the State to discharge.

> The result of the emphasis of reward for effort in a State-aid system is to destroy in some degree the effect of provisions for equalizing educational opportunity. It would seem, therefore, that in the future development of State-aid systems payment for effort would be either entirely eliminated or reduced to a minimum where the good arising from it outweighs the harm.[4]

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[3] F. H. Swift, University of California. Mimeographed circular.

[4] State Support of Public Schools. Paul Mort, Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York.

Many of us in our desire to equalize educational opportunity and to reward effort have said that the equalizing fund of North Carolina ought to be distributed on the dual basis of need and effort. * * * No method of apportioning the equalizing fund will accomplish both these aims, because they differ from one another in kind and not in degree. They are mutually exclusive. Equalizing burdens does not mean rewarding effort; nor can rewarding effort ever equalize the burden of support.[8]

Varied units of measuring educational need, effort, and ability to support schools have been used as bases in devising equalization plans. Among those used as measuring school needs are number of pupils enrolled, or in average daily attendance; number of teachers employed; and the "weighted pupil." As measurements of ability are (1) true or assessed or "equalized" tax valuation per pupil; (2) relationship between income and wealth as expressed by formulae set up for the purpose. As measurements of effort, actual or proposed, to support schools, are (1) tax rate, that levied or that necessary to raise a given amount per pupil on an assumed or fixed valuation; (2) a fixed per pupil expenditure—the amount established on some accepted basis, such as State average for the year.

Among the studies of school support from the State point of view made during the biennium which may be considered as official or semiofficial in character in that they were published by or sponsored or approved by State departments of education are:

Inequality in educational opportunity in Illinois. Circular 192, issued by Francis G. Blair, superintendent of public instruction.

Financing education in Connecticut, the proposed plan to enable the State to meet more adequately its educational responsibility. Prepared by the division of research and surveys of the State board of education, Hartford, Conn.

Development of State support and control of education in Connecticut. Doctor's dissertation by Mrs. Helen Martin Walker. Published by the State board of education, Hartford, Conn.

Equalization of the financial burden of education among counties in North Carolina, a study of the equalizing fund. Fred Wilson Morrison. Teachers College, Columbia University, contributions to education No. 184.[8]

State responsibility for the support of education in Georgia. Gordon D. Singleton. Teachers College, Columbia University, New York.[9]

The financing of education in West Virginia. Issued under the direction of the State superintendent of free schools, Charleston, W. Va.

Texas educational survey, vol. 2, financial support. Educational survey commission, Austin, Tex.

Survey of education in Utah, Chapter XI, Financing the elementary and high schools. Bulletin, 1926, No. 18, U. S. Bureau of Education.

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[8] Equalization of the Financial Burden of Education among Counties in North Carolina. Fred Wilson Morrison. Teachers College, Columbia University, Contributions to education No. 184.

[9] Made by member of State department or referred to in letter from State superintendent.

Report of State aid to public schools in New York State. Prepared for a joint legislative committee by Paul R. Mort, with the advice and cooperation of G. D. Strayer, J. R. McGaughey, and Robert M. Haig.

Appropriations and subsidies in educational surveys. Report of a committee appointed by Gifford Pinchot, Governor of Pennsylvania. Department of public instruction, Harrisburg, Pa.

In addition to these more or less "official" studies, the following are among the research studies on State-wide school financing of general interest made or published during the biennium:

Studies in public school finance—The Middle West, Illinois, Minnesota, South Dakota. Fletcher Harper Swift. Published by the University of Minnesota.

State support of public schools. Paul R. Mort. Bureau of publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York.

Studies in public school finance—The South, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Alabama, Tennessee. Fletcher Harper Swift. Published by the University of Minnesota.

A technique for the determination of unit school costs. University of Iowa. Studies in education.

Major issues in school finance. Research bulletin, vol. 4, No. 5, National Education Association, Washington, D. C.

The financing of education in Iowa. Educational finance inquiry commission. Published by Macmillan.

Two studies somewhat different in nature, but with an important bearing on the matter of State support, are "The Ability of the States to Support Education," by J. K. Norton, published by the National Education Association, and "Effect of Population upon the Ability to Support Education," by Harold F. Clark, Bulletin of the School of Education, Indiana University, Bloomington, Ind. The first is an effort to measure the economic power of the several States in terms of the children to educate, the unit being the number of children from 6 to 13 years of age. Several measures of a State's economic ability are presented, based on the relationship between the value of tangible wealth and the average annual income. The resultant of the accepted relationship divided by the number of children 6 to 13 years old is used as representing the economic power on which the State may draw for educational expenditures. The second, "The Effect of Population upon the Ability to Support Education," discusses costs from a different and, according to the author, a neglected angle. The study is an effort to indicate or measure the importance of the effect which the number of children a State or community has to educate and the relationship which the number of such children bears to the number of adults have on the ability of the State or community to pay for education.

It is not possible within the scope of this chapter to describe even briefly the many interesting phases of these studies bearing on State

responsibility for schools. As an example of procedures followed in conducting state-wide studies of school support some outstanding characteristics of two of them are described briefly.

Supporting schools in Utah.—Chapter 12, Financing the Elementary and High Schools,[7] in "A Survey of Education in Utah," Bureau of Education Bulletin, 1926, No. 18, sets forth three interesting plans for state-wide contribution to local school support. This study emphasizes two important points of general interest and application: (1) The failure of property taxation as the sole source of school support, and (2) the responsibility of the State for equalization among its school districts, at least to the extent of a minimum educational program. Of a general property tax as the sole method of school support, the report states: "The general property tax as a source of school revenue stands condemned to-day, not only by every leading authority in the field of taxation but by numerous State tax commissions consisting of men eminent in business and public affairs." Quoting from Essays in Taxation, by Prof. E. R. A. Seligman, and reports of special State tax commissions of Georgia, Ohio, and Illinois, the report discusses the desirability of other sources of school moneys, including income tax, severance tax, corporation tax, inheritance tax, with a view to ultimate adoption of one or more of them.

Defects in methods of apportioning State aid among the districts are pointed out. Approximately 35 per cent of school-maintenance expenses were from State sources. The bulk of this was distributed to districts on the per capita basis, scholastic population 6 to 18, inclusive. The defects are as follows: (1) The school census, which is employed as the basis of apportioning the major part of State aid, results in giving districts grants for children who are not in school and puts a premium on nonattendance. (2) In apportioning funds, differences in financial ability and differences in the effort put forth by the districts are ignored. (3) The prorating of funds is defective.

To remedy the situation the report outlines three different plans. Plan I recommends complete State support, the State to pay all the cost of a minimum program determined upon, by levying a State tax which would produce, when added to all other State funds, sufficient money to pay costs of all schools. This method has recently received serious consideration in a number of the States. So far, it has not been actually adopted in any State except Delaware, and there with some limitations. It is, however, similar to the policy followed by individual States composing Australia.[8]

[7] Chapter prepared by Fletcher Harper Swift. [8] See School Life, April, 1927.

Plan II proposes a large equalization fund. In addition to all existing State funds it is proposed that a special State equalization fund be provided and distributed in such a manner as to equalize district school revenues and district school burdens. (1) Existing school funds are to be distributed as at present. (2) Every district, in order to share in the State equalization fund, must levy a tax of a rate equal at least to that which the wealthiest district must levy to provide funds which, with the moneys received from the State district fund and all other existing State funds, will be sufficient to pay the total cost of providing the minimum program (in this district) without aid from the equalization fund. By the wealthiest district is meant the district having the greatest true valuation per school census child, and by minimum program is meant such program as can be purchased by an expenditure of $70 per child in average daily attendance. The rate which this wealthiest district levies becomes in effect a compulsory minimum tax rate to be levied by every district in the State. While the wealthiest district and all other districts will continue to receive all State grants they are now receiving the wealthiest district would not share in the equalization fund. No district would share in this fund which could meet the entire cost of the minimum program from the proceeds of its quotas of existing State funds plus the proceeds of the minimum tax. (3) Any district may levy a rate higher than that required for participation in the State equalization fund. In apportioning the equalization fund the State shall disregard moneys provided by districts through levying a tax rate higher than the minimum compulsory tax. No district, therefore, shall be penalized through deductions from quotas of the equalization fund because it exceeds the minimum compulsory tax rate, nor shall it be given additional aid from the equalization fund for that reason. (4) Every district shall receive from the State equalization fund an amount representing the difference between the cost of providing said district's minimum program and the sum of the proceeds of the district minimum tax plus all grants to which the district would be entitled from the now existing funds.

Plan III, equalization by means of existing funds. This plan is recommended in case the other two are rejected as impossible or impracticable. It proposes that one-half of the combined income of existing State school funds shall be apportioned among the districts on the basis of average daily attendance and that the remaining half shall be set aside as an equalization fund to be apportioned among all districts which levy a tax of a fixed minimum rate and are unable from the proceeds of this tax and from all other State funds to provide for each child in average daily attendance an amount equal to the State average expenditure per pupil in average daily attend-

ance during the preceding year. It is apparent that this last plan means merely the adoption of an "equalizing" method of distributing available funds. The report states that only by provision of a State equalization fund can Utah make progress toward evening out the present inequalities in the State school system and reach the first rank of those States endeavoring to finance their schools with some regard for sound and scientific principles of school support.

Some features of a study of State aid in New York State.—Several studies of school support have recently been made in New York State. Important changes in the statutes concerning the distribution of funds and providing for an increased appropriation (to which reference is made later) have resulted from or been influenced by a plan proposed in "Report of State Aid to Public Schools in New York State."[9] The author aims to determine the State's educational task by the "weighted pupil" measure. He states that improvement of the present system must come through a change in the (present) method of measuring need of communities for aid and from a consideration of the wealth of communities in the distribution of the funds.

> Taking the offering demanded by a given program for a city elementary child as a unit, this device ["weighted pupil"] weights a pupil when measuring the need in any other situation or in any type of education recognized on the minimum program by an amount representing the relative cost of giving the pupil what would reasonably be accepted as an equivalent offering. For instance, a city high-school child is given a weighing of two—that is, a city high-school child counts two weighted pupils.
>
> Considering both the educational task and the financial ability of the State, a measure of the type of educational offering the citizens of New York are willing to support may be obtained by discovering the kind of opportunity made available in those communities which have practically the same ability to support schools as has the State as a whole. From a study of the current expenses in 23 cities, villages, and supervisory districts having not more than 15 per cent greater or less valuation of real estate per weighted pupil than has the State as a whole, the median was found to be $70 per weighted pupil.
>
> The assumption is that the tendency for the people of New York living in cities, villages, and rural communities, when faced by the same financial and educational situation which the State as a whole faces, is to meet the situation by offering a $70 education. That is, they spend enough to buy for the children in their elementary schools the kinds of offerings that $70 will buy for a city elementary pupil and $140 will buy for the pupil of a city high school.

The following ends were sought in developing the plan proposed for distribution of State funds:

> (1) A $70 education—that is, an annual current expenditure of $70 per weighted pupil—should be provided throughout the State. (2) The burden of this $70 education should be distributed so as to bear upon the people in all

[9] Report of State aid to Public Schools in New York State, prepared for a joint legislative committee by Paul R. Mort, with the advice and cooperation of G. D. Strayer, J. E. McGaughey, and Robert M. Haig.

localities at the same rate in relation to their taxpaying ability. (3) No community should receive less State aid than it now receives. (4) Of the total amount of State aid the maximum amount possible should go toward equalization of educational opportunity. (5) The plan should demand as small an amount of State and therefore as large a degree of local support as possible.—*Equalization of Educational Opportunity, by Paul R. Mort, in Jour. of Educ. Research, Feb., 1926, p. 94.*

The law passed in New York in 1925, while based on a modification of the plan recommended as a result of the study made by the joint legislative committee, did not accept the $70 expenditure provision. Discussing the New York law of 1925 and the type of organization of districts in New York, Doctor Mort states:[10]

The New York equalization law attempts to use the $44,000,000 State fund that is distributed by a combination of large fund methods in such a way that it will contribute to the support of a minimum program of $1,200 for each elementary teacher and $1,600 for each high school teacher.[11] * * *

The shortcomings in the law are: (1) The minimum program equalized is not satisfactory except as a first step. (2) Only half the cost of transportation is recognized. (3) The equalization law does not apply to all of the districts in the State. * * * Districts not having a satisfactory organization are barred from participation. Provision is made for further development by requiring all communities receiving State aid to offer a program in advance of the equalized program and by admitting districts to participation as soon as they have formed satisfactory units.[12]

The New York law makes provision for relieving the smaller districts[13] from impossible local burdens so that any district may have available the minimum amount per teacher without making local effort out of all proportion to reason. Yet the differential between the burden required in such districts and that which they would be required to carry if they were properly organized locally is such as to promise to be a real incentive toward voluntary reorganization.

EQUALIZATION AND REWARD OF EFFORT

Apropos of the apparent wide acceptance of the point of view of equalization of educational opportunities and tax burdens as the State's chief responsibility, and that equalization of opportunity and reward for special effort represent two methods of distribution so opposed as to be incompatible if not antagonistic, Prof. George A. Works, of Cornell University, recently called attention to the importance of rewarding local school effort. As is well known, the method of distribution practiced in many States, while carefully worked out, has been based on the idea of rewarding effort and has taken little or no account of equalization. Professor Works appar-

[10] State Support for Public Schools. Paul Mort. Teachers College publication, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York.
[11] Ibid., p. 41.
[12] Ibid., pp. 41, 42.
[13] Ibid., p. 36.

ently believes there is some danger of swinging to the opposite extreme.

In some recent discussions of this subject [methods of apportioning State aid to local schools] there are evidences that, in the desire to secure a certain mechanical efficiency in the distribution of funds, there is danger of overlooking certain aspects of the problem fundamental to education in a democracy. It is well to bear in mind that equality of tax burdens and equality of educational opportunities are not necessarily concomitants. Under our educational organization equality of educational opportunities will be likely to follow from the equalization of tax burdens to the degree that laymen have an intelligent appreciation of the function of education in a democratic society. This makes it necessary that those who support education should have a growth attitude toward its place in a constantly expanding civilization.[14]

Professor Works criticizes the view that equalization is the only end worthy of consideration in the distribution of State aid, and the application of this principle advocated for New York in the study to which reference has been made on the "weighted pupil" basis. Professor Works states that the author of the plan subordinated all other considerations to that of equalization and asserts that such a policy has certain inherent weaknesses, of which he points out the following:

(1) It is impracticable to secure complete equality of educational opportunities. * * * Each school district would be free to make expenditures on its own initiative beyond the suggested minimum standard. The result is that, while the stated objective is equality of educational opportunities, this would not result from putting the proposed plan into operation. Districts of great wealth would find it relatively easy to go beyond the minimum offering. (2) In going beyond the minimum offering, the districts of great wealth per weighted pupil would have a distinct advantage over districts of small wealth per weighted pupil. This fact is especially significant in its relation to progress in the field of rural education. (3) Closely related to the preceding weakness is the rejection of the recognition of effort when school units make provision for educational offerings that are better than the minimum.

Professor Works concludes that complete equalization would not result from the acceptance of the proposed plan. He states further:

While equalization may well be an important objective in the distribution of State aid, to fail to recognize that beyond a certain point it is less important than the recognition of effort is to overlook a fundamental characteristic of the method by which a democratic society arrives at its conception of what its educational offering should be. The methods of financing schools that are set up should be conducive to growth. No matter how mechanically perfect a plan of State aid may be in providing equalization, it is certain in the long run to be a barrier to educational progress if it fails to recognize this growth conception in education. Such a plan may bring temporary expansion in parts of the State school system, but it is not conducive to permanent progress in the system as a whole.

Professor Works concludes the article as follows:

The argument is not against equality of educational opportunities, but rather against making this the only end sought in the distribution of State aid. It

[14] Relation of the State to the Support of Education. George A. Works, Cornell University, Ithaca, N. Y. Elementary Sch. Jour., January, 1927.

must be acknowledged that there is not complete harmony between the equalization of educational opportunities and the recognition of local effort, but it is believed that it is much better to secure and maintain an attitude of growth toward education than to sacrifice it for equality of educational opportunities. The recognition of effort has proved a most effective means of developing this attitude. Instead of rejecting it completely we should endeavor to place it on a scientific basis.

SOME SPECIAL PROGRESS REPORTS

Among the States reporting to the Bureau of Education definite revisions of the laws concerning State school funds or the securing of appropriations providing for more generous support from State sources are Georgia, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Mississippi, Nebraska, New York, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, and Tennessee. In Louisiana the 1926 session of the legislature placed a tax on smoking and chewing tobacco and snuff, the proceeds of which go to the public schools of the State, distributed according to the number of educables in each parish. While the tax has not been in effect long enough to form an accurate estimate of the revenue derived from it, it is expected materially to increase the State school revenue.

In South Carolina a law which became effective during the biennial period guarantees a minimum seven-months term by providing that those counties which are unable, with the maximum tax set, to operate the schools for the required term shall receive from the State a sufficient sum to enable them to do so. The funds for the support of this law, known as the 601 law, are derived almost entirely from indirect taxes on soft drinks, tobaccos, luxuries, and nonessentials. "The proceeds are collected where the wealth is, and disbursed for the education of the children where they are. The result is a wonderful renaissance in the public schools of the State."[18]

Tennessee reports that through State funds the average school term has been lengthened. The legislature in 1925 amended the school law to guarantee an eight-months school term to all children in counties levying a minimum of 50 cents on $100 of taxable property for teachers' salaries and operating expenses of rural and elementary schools. If the county tax provided does not raise sufficient funds from county sources, State funds are provided up to the required amount. The apportionment is made on the teacher basis, counting one teacher to each 25 pupils in average daily attendance. A State schedule of salaries based on training and service is in operation. In addition an allowance of 15 per cent of the teachers' salaries for operating expenses is furnished from the State.

[18] Letter from State department of education.

Georgia reports considerable progress as the result of the acts of the 1925 and 1926 sessions of the legislature. Among the important provisions are the following:

1. General appropriation bill—a $5,000,000 appropriation for the public schools for the years 1926 and 1927. This is an increase of $500,000 in the public-school fund.

2. An amendment to the Barrett-Rogers Act, providing that the funds be increased to $253,000 for 1925 and $300,000 thereafter. This is an increase of $100,000 for consolidation and high-school aid.

3. An extra appropriation of $325,000 for the public schools for 1925, with the provision that $20,000 be used for summer institutes at the A. and M. schools; $53,000 to be used for the increase to the Barrett-Rogers fund and the remainder to be apportioned to the counties as early as the money is available.

4. Equalization act, authorizing the general assembly to appropriate funds, in addition to the regular appropriation for the common schools of the State, to give all children of the State equal opportunities.

5. An act authorizing trustees of local school districts to borrow funds for payment of teachers.

Constitutional amendments to be voted upon at the next general election:

To increase the borrowing power of the governor to $3,500,000 for the prompt payment of teachers.

Taxation for educational purposes in counties having cities of more than 200,000 population within their boundaries.

The appropriation by the legislature for education throughout the State has been increased $500,000 annually, which is an aid to rural as well as to city schools. One hundred thousand dollars has been added to the fund for providing for consolidations of rural schools and better high-school advantages of rural boys and girls. The last session of the legislature passed an "equalization enabling act" authorizing succeeding legislatures to appropriate funds, in addition to the regular appropriation for the public schools of the State, to provide all children of the State equal educational opportunity. The next legislature will be asked to appropriate $1,000,000 for this fund, which will be used to provide a minimum educational offering for the rural boys and girls of this State.

The outstanding problems in rural education are defined by the State Department of Education of Georgia as follows:

1. The constitutional limitation prohibiting a county from levying more than 5 mills for the operation and maintenance of schools.

2. The lack of a complete county-unit system which would make the property in the towns and cities subject to taxation for the education of rural boys and girls in the poorer areas.

3. Inadequate State support.

4. The present system of distribution of State funds without regard to ability to pay and without an accurate measure of the educational need of the various counties.

Less extensive but significant progress in school support from State sources is reported from Massachusetts, in which the laws concerning State aid to rural towns and State aid for the employment of union superintendents have been amended to provide that

a substantial number of small towns which have been deprived of State aid will become eligible for it, and that State aid for supervisors' salaries will be extended to a larger number of towns.

In Mississippi the last legislature appropriated a million dollars for the improvement of colleges and a million dollars for the common schools, both for the biennial period.

Nebraska reports the minimum term extended from three to six months, with State aid granted districts unable to support the minimum.

In Pennsylvania the 1925 general assembly, recognizing the value of the law of 1923 providing more liberal aid to districts which because of limited wealth were financially handicapped in providing minimum essentials for educational opportunity, applied the same principle to reimbursement of districts for transportation of pupils as an aid to poorer districts. The State's share of transportation costs in districts where the true wealth per teacher is more than $50,000 and not more than $100,000 was increased from 50 to 60 per cent; where the wealth per teacher was $50,000 or less, to 75 per cent.

The State department of Illinois reports that during the past biennium the basis of distribution of the $8,000,000 State school fund has been changed. The following are considerations on which the new apportionment is based: (1) The "teacher school day." The basic apportionment is 70 cents for each "teacher school day" or major fraction thereof, with an additional sum graduated in inverse ratio to the assessed property valuation per teacher. There is a provision requiring school districts to levy the maximum legal rate in order to participate in the additional graduated subvention. (2) Training of elementary teachers. A per capita allowance for training beyond the twelfth grade in a recognized high school, the amount graduated according to training, to a maximum representing graduation from a standard normal school. (3) Number of pupils in daily attendance. (4) Employment of normal school graduates. An outright appropriation of $100 is made by the State to each county for each teacher who is a normal-school graduate and is employed for nine months in a one-room school.

This change has stimulated teacher preparation, the employment of trained and experienced teachers, length of school term, and attendance. It has failed to equalize educational opportunity as was expected. Some of the counties with the highest assessed valuation which can maintain rural schools at a low rate of tax receive more of the State fund than they did under the old method of distribution, while some of the counties that must tax themselves to the limit for even a seven-months term receive less than formerly. The State Teachers' Association is fashioning a bill to remedy the situation.[38]

[38] Letter from State department of education.

The State Department of Education of New York reports that the most constructive movement within the past several years was the enactment of certain amendments to the education law made by the 1925 session of the New York Legislature.

New York State is still operating many of its schools under the district system. In 1914 an act known as the central school act was adopted by the legislature. This provides that the commissioner of education may lay out—

> any territory exclusive of a city school district conveniently located for the attendance of scholars and of suitable size for the establishment of central schools to give instruction usually given in the common schools and in high schools, including instruction in agriculture.
>
> This act had been practically inoperative until the 1925 session amended it to provide greatly increased State aid for such districts, in the form of transportation and building quotas. During the 18 months preceding, 24 such districts have been established in the State. The rural people are gradually learning of the advantages to be gained both in taxation and educational facilities by the provisions of this act. There is a prospect that it will open the way for solving the one outstanding problem in rural education in New York State.
>
> Other constructive legislation by the 1925 session was:
>
> (*a*) Increased State aid to all districts. A large portion of this increased aid will go to rural districts and will help make the tax burden light.
>
> (*b*) Increased aid for training classes and for the other teacher-training institutions.
>
> (*c*) Increased aid in the form of transportation quotas to consolidated districts other than central rural school districts. These districts do not receive building quotas.[17]

A number of States report systematic plans for securing increases in State appropriations for schools by giving wide publicity to facts ascertained through studies of the state-wide school situation and advocacy by official sources of plans for larger school support or more scientific methods of distribution. The State department of Kentucky defines outstanding problems in rural education as: (1) Financial inequalities (*a*) among counties, (*b*) between counties and independent districts, (*c*) among subdistricts within the counties. The report from the State department states that the obstacles in the way of overcoming difficulies are the constitutionally provided method of distributing funds on a per capita basis and lack of educational sentiment.

In Indiana a number of studies have been made showing the financial situation of the Stat , published in State reports, and given wide distribution as a means of educating the public to school needs.

A report from the State department of Missouri states:

> An outstanding problem confronting public education in this State is that of creating a larger permanent State school fund which will enable the State

[17] Letter from State department of education, October, 1926.

to assume a larger share of the cost of public education. Something definite will be worked out along this line in the near future."

In Montana the State legislature in 1925 provided for a referendum measure to be voted on at the following election providing a 5-mill state-wide levy for the support of public elementary and high schools. The measure was lost at the polls by a relatively narrow margin, apparently due to the fact of insufficient education of the public concerning the needs of the schools.

A report from the State Commissioner of Rhode Island contains the following statement:

The outstanding problem is financial, and more particularly, apportionment. Statistics indicate a wide variation in town tax rates for the support of schools. The State division is urging a State equalization measure based on a uniform minimum local tax and a general State tax, both for the support of schools. The State revenue is to be apportioned essentially on the basis of need, to guarantee a definite minimum for the support of every school. The division is also promoting a measure providing State assistance in consolidated schoolhouse construction projects, proposing State aid up to 50 per cent for towns having a valuation under five million, provided the schoolhouse and school system are approved by the State commissioner.

From Wisconsin the State department reports:

Research reveals startling inequalities in taxation between the different communities within the same county or within a township and has led to a new interest in the problem of remedying the great injustices that are being done to children and to taxpayers unduly taxed to support inadequate schools[8] under certain unfavorable conditions.

The State department has given special study to the inequitable per capita distribution basis and issued a pamphlet entitled "Equalizing Educational Opportunity in Wisconsin."

Connecticut now gives the small town the same aid in supporting a school nurse that it gives for teachers. Most of these towns now enjoy the benefits of a school nursing service.

II. IMPROVING INSTRUCTION

GENERAL DEVELOPMENT

The instruction offered in rural schools has received more than the usual attention during the biennium. Efforts for improvement have been both general—through development or betterment of contributory factors or activities—and specific, through concentration on the quality of instruction offered as an outstanding problem. Specific attack has been most obvious through supervision; raising the quality offered and supplying more supervision when possible from State and county educational offices; through revision and improvement of curriculum content and through the teaching staff. There is a more

[8] Letter from State superintendent, department of public schools.

insistent demand for prepared teachers on the part of employing officials and a growing professional interest among teachers in specifically rural education problems.

In a few States the staff of the State department of education has been enlarged or improved, enabling the department to give a new kind of assistance or more of an established kind to rural school superintendents, supervisors, and teachers. In 1926 one or more staff members assigned to the special field of rural education were reported from 39 State departments. In a few States there are from four to six staff members who make up a rural division or bureau. The number of rural school specialists reported in the 39 departments in 1926 totaled 85. In these 39 States practical supervision, generally including some kind of in-service training, is offered to those responsible for local rural schools. The influence of these efforts is registered in better administration, supervision, and teaching.

The new tendency to establish in State departments of education two additional services, namely, for research and for the interests of exceptional children, is resulting in providing guidance to rural-school officials in the solution of some of their most serious problems. Such research divisions, or specialists assigned solely to research, are reported from 10 States; five divisions were organized or reorganized for this kind of work during the biennium. Several are or have been engaged in research concerned with or bearing on rural-education problems. In a number of other States excellent studies of various problems concerned with rural schools have been made by or in cooperation with the regular staff. In other States the regular biennial reports are now assuming the aspect of carefully made studies of education conditions. The Nineteenth Biennial Report of the superintendent of public instruction of Montana, 1926, is an example. Of a similar nature are bulletins and leaflets issued during the biennium from several State education departments. Examples are Connecticut, Indiana, Maryland. Even mimeographed circulars issued by State departments (those from the Louisiana State department are an example) are taking on a strictly professional tone and are devoted in large part to means of improving instruction.

In nine States one or more members of the State department of education staff are now assigned to the direction or supervision of special classes and to the care and treatment in school of defective or special-problem children. The States reporting such specialists in 1926 are Alabama, Connecticut, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Wyoming.

The grade placement, adaptation of the regular curriculum, and other problems concerned with the education of exceptional children in small rural schools—even in larger consolidated schools where no

special teacher can be assigned—have long been of serious concern to rural school teachers. As practical and scientific assistance becomes available through State departments of education, better instruction for the normal group as well as for the special problem children should result.

Contributions to the literature of rural education continue to grow in number and value. That there is now available a growing amount of high-grade material representing research, records of experimentation, valuable compilations of various kinds, critical evaluations of contributions, and the like, is apparent from a recent bibliography of contributions to certain aspects of rural education from 1920 to 1925, including approximately 500 titles. (Bureau of Education Bulletin, 1927, No. 4.) On these special contributions, as well as on those made to the general field of education, rural school teachers can draw as never before for practical help in improving teaching technique.

Defining problems in rural education.—It is quite generally agreed by students of the subject that the education of children in rural communities offers difficult and in some respects specialized problems in school administration, school organization, and curriculum organization and content which are worthy of special study and of more complete, intelligent, and sympathetic understanding than has yet been attained. However, the kind of differentiation, if any, and the degree to which it is desirable as between rural and urban administrative and instructional procedures, are not authoritatively nor satisfactorily determined. Some students of the subject have apparently taken the extreme position that rural education is a separate and distinct field of education differentiated in objectives set up for attainment as well as in method of attaining them. Keeping the rising generation of farm children on the farm; training a large number of farmers to reduce or stabilize prices of farm products have been advocated as objectives of elementary as well as secondary rural schools.

Certain rather definite efforts in the direction of clarifying the situation have been made during the biennium which are worthy of consideraiton and which should contribute toward a better understanding of the type of specialization desirable as between urban and rural education in the light of generally accepted education principles and objectives. According to Dr. Julian E. Butterworth, professor of rural education, New York State College of Agriculture, Cornell University,[19] the term rural education is commonly used with too narrow a meaning. It should not be limited to that

[19] Principles of Rural School Administration. J. E. Butterworth. New York. Macmillan, 1926.

provided in the one-room or other small school or to the schools of the open country; nor should it be confined to preparation for farming and related activities, nor to the education of those dependent primarily on agriculture for a living. Rural education, according to this author, is not different from urban education. Both involve the same general objectives and procedures. It is only because environmental conditions differ in city and country that problems of education and materials available for use differ to a greater or less degree.

> The conditions of country life likewise create needs or problems—finding sufficient financial resources, providing economical school units, overcoming isolation, getting reasonable living and working conditions for teachers, making adequate provision for supervision—problems that are so different from those in the city that we require different elements of knowledge to find wise solutions. We are likely to make greater progress in meeting such problems if they are set off where they may be directly attacked by those who have the necessary personal and professional equipment. Adequate preparation for work in rural schools clearly demands special training.

It is the author's position that it will be easier to comprehend many of the problems of rural education if one keeps clearly in mind the fact that environmental factors change gradually rather than abruptly as one passes from the open country to the city. What we should have is not a rural curriculum and an urban curriculum, but a curriculum modified to meet the needs of pupils under different environments. There are not two types of conditions only, but many shading from one to another, and each degree may create different educational needs. Applying Doctor Dewey's philosophy of growth to the problems of rural education, the author concludes:

> Briefly, there is no difference in the ultimate objective of rural and urban education. In each case we are concerned in providing those conditions that will stimulate people to grow in ability to meet effectively the problems of life. Since rural children live in a peculiar environment, a real education must utilize the materials of that environment. But this should not be interpreted as meaning that education should be directed primarily to keeping rural people on the farm, to prevent deterioration of rural life, to provide an adequate labor supply, to keep up production, or to protect people from the supposedly inferior conditions of urban living. On the other hand the school should not try to educate people away from the country. Rural education, like urban education, should utilize materials from all significant sources and make an individual with constantly expanding powers. As the individual grows, he acquires that knowledge and develops those skills, habits, and attitudes that enable him to meet better the situations that arise. Our large problem is to so understand rural life and to supplement its facilities and to organize its resources that each person may secure, so far as is possible, what is needed for his individual development.

Dr. Fannie W. Dunn, professor of rural education, Teachers College, Columbia University, writing recently of the rural elementary school curriculum, states:[20]

[20] United States Bureau of Education, Rural School Leaflet No. 40, A Rural Curriculum: An Outstanding Need in Rural Schools. Fannie W. Dunn. February, 1926.

It is a matter of fairly general agreement among educational theorists that the educational objectives of the elementary school are common to all, the same for rural schools and for rural children as for schools and children anywhere in the Nation. Progress made in defining these school objectives is as valuable for rural schools as for any others. If it were true that pupil nature and environmental conditions were the same in rural schools as elsewhere, a common curriculum would suffice for schools in all localities, excepting only the administrative differences necessitated by the type of organization, particularly the one and two teacher situation. We do not yet have sufficient data to enable us to say with positiveness how the native ability of rural children in general compares with that of the Nation's children as a whole, nor how the acquired capital of habits, knowledge, and motives which the rural child brings with him when he first enters school compares with those of children in other types of communities. It is possible, however, to list differences in the experiential accumulation and to say with considerable certainty that rural and urban children differ materially in the nature of the contributions which their preschool years have made to their intellectual and emotional status at the beginning of the school period.

It is certain, moreover, that there are many differences in the nature of the outside experiences encountered during school years by urban and rural children respectively. The school is but one educative agency. What the home and the community provide it does not need to afford. Different supplementation of experiences in rural and urban schools, different points of approach for the same educational content, different grade placement may be required for experiences which both types of school must furnish because the out-of-school life lays the basis for them at different stages of development of the children in the two types of situations.

The first step in the making of the rural elementary school curriculum—that is, the setting up of aims and objectives in line with the best modern educational theory—would be common to all types of situations. The second would be the determination, from a survey of the rural social situation, of the points to be specially emphasized by the school because left undone by the home and community education, or points which the school might stress more lightly because the outside experiences largely made provision for them. Next, the curriculum maker would need to canvass the experiences potential in the rural environment for realization of the educational objectives. Unquestionably here would be wide divergencies from corresponding contributions of an urban environment.

The following excerpts emphasizing the need of liberal education for farm youth are from a recent address by the United States Commissioner of Education, Dr. John J. Tigert:[21]

But for the farm youth of certain areas of the Nation, administrative difficulties have as yet prevented the extension of educational opportunities comparable to those we have evolved for urban youth and for the farm youth of more favored areas. * * * *

Added to the administrative difficulties which in themselves tend to restrict opportunity, however, there has grown up in the United States and acquired widespread adherence a restrictive philosophy of purpose which, as it affects practice, makes the public school recreant to the obligations imposed upon

[21] The Education of Farm Youth. Address delivered by John J. Tigert, United States Commissioner of Education, before the American Country Life Association, Washington, D. C., Nov. 12, 1926.

it by the social order which it is charged with perpetuating. This philosophy holds that national safety is endangered through the decay of rural life and that the public schools should so indoctrinate farm youth as to create a bias for farm life and thus stop the rural exodus and the consequent urbanization of the Nation. * * *

The essence of this philosophy is in fundamental conflict with our ideal of a social order. Our democracy is peopled largely by immigrants. They migrated as a protest against deprivation of freedom of occupational choice. In the United States the ceaseless shifting of our native population from community to community, from city to city, and State to State, has been prompted largely by the search for better occupational opportunity. We have no occupational castes; we desire none. Under the best of circumstances occupational misfits are all too frequent and are a social menace. The occupational misfit is relatively unproductive, because the keen stimulation of working toward a self-chosen end is lacking. The occupational misfit is a discontented man, ripe for propaganda, inciting to violent acts against the established order. The occupational misfit is unhappy as a man, and organized society is not justified in contributing to such a lot. * * *

There is a general danger that specialization in education corresponding to vocational specialization will contribute to social disintegration. Public education in general has recognized the danger and seeks to lay a basis for social solidarity through a common education extending through the elementary and junior high school periods, and by requiring even in specializing senior high school curricula a considerable amount of common educational experiences gained through English, the social studies, the fine arts, and through socializing extra-curricular activities. The purpose back of these requirements is to give an understanding of the entire social order and common ideals, appreciations, and interests which tend to make men companionable and cooperative.

Ignoring this generally accepted principle of curricular administration, those who have become alarmed at the trends of rural life and have forgotten the general purpose of public education have sought to vocationalize even the elementary school curriculum of farm youth.

The road to the qualification of farm youth for the largest possible service as citizens of the United States does not lie in that direction.

The following series of reasons for partial differentiation in courses for training rural teachers are contained in a recent study of the question by Mabel Carney, professor of rural education, Teachers College, New York:[22]

1. The interests of rural schools suffer from neglect. Special attention and emphasis are therefore essential.

2. The different school organization, especially in one and two teacher schools, presents serious problems of class organization, grouping, organizing materials of instruction, etc.

3. Teaching should be in terms of the country child's experience and needs. Utilization of the experience of farm children as an apperceptive or interpretive basis in teaching and sufficient differentiation to give conviction and skill is desirable for teachers during their period of training.

4. The characteristic differences in contributions of country versus city life. Educational practice is influenced by attitudes, habits, prejudices, and ideals deep rooted and significant among country people. The rural teacher must

[22] Reasons for the Partial Differentiation of Rural Education. Unpublished study by Mabel Carney and others. Mimeographed circular. Teachers College, Columbia University, New York.

understand them and make special adaptation of general educational theory to these specific needs. The peculiar contributions of country life to the national character should be preserved. Appreciation and analysis of these and ability to give them emphasis in school education require specialization on the part of teachers and supervisors.

5. A conscious morale or esprit de corps among rural school workers is essential and justifies differentiation of rural education interests.

6. Professional guardianship is desirable, because rural schools, being a weak spot in the profession, are liable to criticism and exploitation. Protection means that educational leaders should be specifically prepared to cope with problems which arise.

7. Job-analysis studies of rural teaching show needs for differentiation in preparation of teachers, supervisors, and administrators for rural schools in specialized skills, knowledge, and attitudes.

The foregoing are reasonably typical of recent attempts to formulate accepted principles and conclusions on which a sane philosophy of rural education may be based. They indicate a fairly general agreement that there are differentiated problems as well as general problems offering special or acute difficulties which must be met in providing adequate or equitable educational opportunities for children in rural communities. These problems center around general administration and support, the supervision of instruction, the preparation and retention of teaching staff, the formulation or adaptation of courses of study. Their satisfactory solution involves both farseeing statesmanship and professional insight.

Lacking adequate evidence to indicate differences in degrees of mental ability, in types and modes of learning activities or potential motives of rural and urban children, they must be assumed to be alike in these respects. The accepted general objectives of education, ideals, and achievements which it is hoped to attain or accomplish by means of education are independent of living place, whether urban or rural.

An adequate understanding of the country and the people who live there, and of the various situations which influence the educational offering which the school should make, demands special and commensurate training on the part of those concerned with administration and practice in rural schools. Isolating special problems for direct attack is the most promising procedure to insure their solution. Rural education thus becomes a specialized rather than a separate or distinct phase of general education.

RURAL SCHOOL SUPERVISION—A SPECIFIC EFFORT TO IMPROVE INSTRUCTION

DEFINING THE FIELD OF SUPERVISION

Historically, "rural school supervision" means the work done by the county school superintendent. Supervision is an evolution from the work of the school committee or school board.

Early attempts at local rural supervision were confined almost wholly to the management and investment of funds and other services connected with the material organization of the school. Then came the idea of inspection and visitation and sometimes examination of teachers and pupils. * * * The necessity of employing teachers with educational qualifications, and of visiting schools not only for inspection and examination, but for directing methods of teaching, providing courses of study, etc., has brought about professional supervision.[23]

The term "supervision" as applied to rural schools is still confusing, used both with the wider meaning "the county superintendent's work," and in the more limited sense of "professional supervision."

There are two kinds of supervision commonly practiced over the country, first, that which is primarily administrative in character; and second, that which has to do with instruction. The first provides the facilities for education, exercises general control over the school system, and sees to it that the schools operate under reasonably favorable conditions. The second is concerned directly with the teaching performance and the conditions affecting it. It deals with teachers, pupils, the course of study, and the activities that grow out of the classroom work. The purpose is to improve education. Administrative supervision is as old as American education; instructional supervision is yet in its infancy.[24]

There is unquestionably a tendency and indeed marked progress toward splitting up the vague general inclusiveness of the older concept of the superintendent's work into the two quite definite and distinct functions which common practice now denominates as administration and supervision.

Many rural superintendents to-day are dual functionaries, forced, because there is no provision of professional assistants for them, to assume all the duties of both administration and supervision. Less typically, but in a few States, rural school "supervisors" are also dual functionaries, having, within an area usually smaller than a county, full charge of both phases of the oversight and direction of the rural schools. In a number of States to-day, however, there are well-established county educational staffs of supervisors whose function is increasingly recognized to be specialized "professional" or "instructional" supervision.

Whether the two functions of administration and supervision are both performed by one agent, or whether there are one or more agents in the county whose duties are limited to supervision, it is important that the field of supervision be clearly defined. Experience indicates that administrative demands tend to be more vocal and insistent than do those of supervision, and, if not definitely prevented, to usurp more than their rightful share of time.

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[23] Bulletin, 1916, No. 48, U. S. Bu. of Educ.

[24] Foote, J. M. "A State program of instructional supervision." Jour. of Rural Educ., Apr., 1922.

According to a report adopted in 1920 by the section of county superintendents and supervisors of the department of rural education of the National Education Association—

> Whereas a large part of the administrator's time must be given to working with and through the school board and the community toward the establishment of progressive policies and adequate support for education, the supervisor's effort should be concentrated on working with and through teachers for realization of policies of effective use of all provisions that are made.[a]

Rural school supervision, in this sense, is not mere oversight. It is not inspection, not judgment of the teacher as an end in itself. Nor does it consist of miscellaneous, unsystematized activities of the "general helper" type. Its function is specific, i. e., improvement of instruction, through improvement of the teacher's practice. It is concerned with producing changes in teachers, in their habits, their knowledge, their interests, their ideals. Supervision is sometimes compared to the work of the physician, but the analogy is imperfect. It does not consist merely in finding defects, sick spots in teaching, as it were, and curing them.

> The fundamental element of supervision is not remedying defects; it is stimulating growth. And growth is continuous throughout life. The teacher who is not growing is a dead teacher. The supervisor's function is not primarily to discover defects and remove or correct them; it is rather to discover potentialities and develop them.[b]

No matter what the level of efficiency of the rural school system, the same general concept of supervision applies. But its practical adaptations vary with variations in the organization and in the teaching personnel. Where the qualifications of teachers are substandard—that is, where certification does not rest upon the completion of at least a two-year course in a standard normal school—the supervisor's first task is that of providing the preliminary preparation for teaching. Under this condition, very prevalent in rural schools to-day, supervision is largely "training of teachers in service." With our present rate of progress in certification and provision of facilities for the preparation of teachers before they enter the profession, this will doubtless continue for some time to come to be an important feature of the supervisor's work. But even after all his teachers are "trained in service" or trained before certification, the supervisor has not "worked himself out of a job."

> The more intelligent or better qualified the teacher, the greater are her potentialities for development. * * * A crucial test of supervision is the extent to which it keeps the superior teachers in the system growing to the limit of their capacities. * * *

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[a] "The distinction between administration and supervision." Jour. of Rural Educ., vol. 1, No. 5, Jan., 1922, p. 236.

[b] Dunn, Fannie W. "What is instructional supervision?" Jour. of Rural Educ., vol. 2, No. 6, Feb., 1923.

Supervision is * * * leadership and cooperation, rather than direction and compulsion. It is democratic utilization of all the powers of all the individual teachers of a system for the benefit of each and all of them. * * * It is the province of administration to provide as adequately as possible the *conditions for* effective instruction—a well-organized system; sound and progressive policies; adequate financial support; good buildings and grounds; well equipped, well qualified teachers. It is the function of supervision to realize to the utmost on all the provisions that are made," including the teacher with all her potentialities.

SUPERVISION RAISES NEW PROBLEMS FOR SOLUTION

Rural-school supervision, as a specialized field having for its purpose the improvement of instruction through constructive leadership of teachers, is a development of the past decade. In the beginning of this development, and to a large extent to-day, the teachers under supervision were in small schools, usually of the one-teacher type. They were isolated and scattered, and the supervisor was the only agent directly concerned with integrating their work and organizing it as part of a constructive county program of education. With the advance of consolidation during this period, there are now in many areas under supervision consolidated schools of 6, 8, 10, or more teachers, each having its own principal. The programs of supervision suited to the former condition are not adequate for the latter. There is a growing demand to-day that the school principal shall hold himself responsible for supervision as one of his functions. To what extent is this possible in rural consolidated schools? Ordinarily such schools include both elementary and secondary departments. Ordinarily, too, the total number of teachers is not large enough to warrant a full-time supervisory principal.

An important problem for the next decade of rural supervision is to work out a type of supervisory program for such situations as this which will best utilize all potential agencies. In this the rural-school supervisors, and especially the State leaders in this field, generally State rural-school supervisors, need to take an important part. What supervisory functions is it practicable and reasonable to expect of the principal of the typical consolidated school? What functions can more adequately and economically be performed by a peripatetic supervisor? Shall the supervisor be responsible for training principals in service to supervise?

There is value in the scope and consequent interrelations of a county-wide program of supervision. There is value in close personal familiarity with the factors of a single school. How preserve both? How keep the emphasis on the service of the supervisor and the principal to the children of the rural schools, rather than let it shift to the relative authority of the two functionaries? The

[a] Dunn, Fannie W. "What is instructional?" Jour. of Rural Educ., vol. 2, No. 6, Feb., 1923.

problem is one of coordination and understanding rather than subordination.

Another question which the next decade of supervision should attempt to answer is that of the relative merits of a system with a small supervisory load, in territory and number of teachers, under a superintendent who performs both administrative and supervisory functions, and of a larger supervisory unit, with a staff composed of an administrator and one or more supervisors.

A beginning of a serious attack on these problems has been made during the biennium in several States. In North Carolina, a State in which rural supervision has had an interesting evolution, having begun with the employment of a combined school supervisor and home demonstration agent and developed to the present system of county supervision under the joint direction of the county board of education and the State department of education, a careful study of the need and value of supervision has been made. The study was carried on over a period of five months. Its purpose was to answer this question, "Is there a need for supervision in the consolidated schools of North Carolina, and if so, what is its value?" A report from the State department of North Carolina states:

> In the light of the findings of this investigation it is concluded that supervision is a positive factor in promoting pupil progress, and furthermore, that it is needed in graded consolidated schools. The children in the supervised group of schools show two and one-fourth times as much progress as those in the control group.

A new plan of supervision is being effected in Connecticut (a State in which rural school agents are both supervisory and administrative officers) by the employment of primary supervisors who are assistants to the town superintendents and are relieved of all administrative duties. The State commissioner of education writes:

> Small towns are frequently the victims of their larger neighbors who prey upon them for their best teachers and supervisors. Supervisors who are outstandingly successful soon leave for bigger and better-paid positions. This problem is of concern not only to the small towns but to the State as a whole. So long as conditions of this kind obtain, just so long will the rural schools continue to be the weakest link in a State's educational system.
>
> It is to meet this condition, together with some others, that reorganization of the supervisory force in the small towns is taking place. Territories of more successful supervisors are being enlarged, and with them women primary supervisors are being associated.
>
> To the men are assigned all administrative and executive duties, as well as supervision of the high schools and upper grades. To the primary associate are assigned supervision of the primary grades, together with such one-teacher schools as are predominantly primary. Other one-teacher schools are arbitrarily assigned to one or the other. The primary associate has no responsibilities other than for supervision.

This magnifies the job of the rural supervisor, puts a specialist in the primary grades, and provides a better-working administrative scheme for handling the problems of the part-time special teacher and nurse.

With the rapid development of primary education in recent years the rural school for quite evident reasons has failed to keep pace. This plan puts the State in a stronger position to solve this problem in part, at least.

"Supervision is an art, but few supervisors are artists", paraphrases a saying of teaching and is equally true. The past two years have been largely devoted to improving the art of supervision. Consideration has been centered upon the technique of supervisory objectives, of teachers' meetings, of visits and the ensuing conference with the teacher. Progress has been made, and the program has been extended to another year.

That other States are attacking problems similar to those indicated is shown by the following excerpts from letters of State education department officials of three States:

During the past two years the rural division of the State department of Louisiana has devoted most of its attention to the improvement of classroom instruction. The chief task is to assist superintendents and principals to become effective supervisors. Louisiana has set up definite State objectives and plans for supervision for 1926–27.

There is a healthy growth in the rural supervision movement in California. The organization of State and sectional rural school supervisors' associations and sectional organizations of rural school elementary principals in various counties are promoting professional growth.

Massachusetts raised the qualifications of eligibility to the union superintendency. Applicants must have graduated from a four-year college or normal school, have six hours' credit in education and two years' experience in supervision or administration or both. Recently a study of the superintendent's work has been made by a committee of superintendents. Among other findings the report states that the superintendents are unable to supervise their schools effectively because of the *large amount of administrative and office duties.*

RECENT TENDENCIES AND PROGRESS DURING 1925 AND 1926

The total number of local rural supervisors employed, considering the United States as a whole, and the number of States in which such supervisors are employed, have both decreased since 1922, the last preceding year in which complete information was collected, according to reports received in the Bureau of Education. The number of supervisors has probably dropped approximately 150 since 1922, including a decrease of approximately 50 during 1925–26. Local rural supervision has been discontinued in certain counties in Washington, New Mexico, Kentucky, Kansas, Indiana, and Mississippi, from each of which a few supervisors were reported in 1922. In Indiana an experiment in county supervision carried on for two years, financed by the General Education Board, was completed in 1926. No supervisors are reported from that State at present. In Washington the payment of county supervisors from county funds was declared illegal by a recent decision of the attorney general,

and several supervisors paid in this manner were dropped in consequence.

The decrease in the actual number of local supervisors reported is both real and apparent. We have reached a better understanding of what supervision means and have progressed in defining and delimiting the supervisory field. Superintendents and other school officials, therefore, in reporting the number of supervisory officers differentiate between assistants assigned to clerical, routine, or inspectorial work and those assigned to instructional supervision. Fewer of the former are reported as supervisors. To the extent that this is true the decrease in the number reported is apparent rather than real. Actual decrease in the total number of supervisors is due in large part to three factors:

(1) The economic situation. In many communities retrenchments in established educational movements, of which supervision was one, have been necessary and expansion practically out of the question.

(2) A few States in which supervision, established on a wave of enthusiasm, was inadequately financed were forced to drop the project in whole or in part. Examples are Virginia and Kentucky. Virginia reported 57 local rural supervisors between 1921 and 1922. In 1926 it reported 23. Kentucky reported 17 in 1921; in 1926 none are reported. Authoritative statements from these States indicate that the decrease is due chiefly to the fact that salaries were too low to retain trained supervisors and funds available not sufficient to provide necessary traveling expenses and other working conditions essential to success. Under these conditions supervision did not fulfill the promises made for it, and school officials are faced with the difficulty of reestablishing a project which has apparently failed.

(3) Some superintendents in charge of rural schools, who are political rather than professional officers, have appointed supervisors for considerations other than professional efficiency. Often local teachers employed as supervisors have not the qualities of leadership nor the professional training necessary to success in supervision. They fail to attain success or to win the approval of patrons and teachers. Under these circumstances supervision has sometimes been discontinued because of the mistaken impression that supervision rather than the kind of supervision, or more correctly the kind of supervisor, was responsible for the failure. Experience of the last few years has demonstrated in practice what should have been obvious—that adequate salaries and careful selection of personnel are essential to the success of supervision.

On the other hand, state-wide local supervision of rural schools has been established since 1922 in one State, California, from which

134 supervisors were reported in 1926. The number of supervisors reported increased during the same period in six States—Florida, Maryland, New Jersey, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin.

In all States from which information is available there has been steady improvement in the efficiency of the supervisory service, in organization, in techniques, and in practice. There is a better realization on the part of employing officials that intelligent leadership and professional skill are a necessary basis for success in supervision. In several State and county administrative organizations, adjustments have been made to secure increased efficiency in the staff assigned or in the procedures followed in supervision. The total result, viewing the situation at the end of the biennial period, is fewer supervisors but better trained staffs with freedom to devote more time to the improvement of instruction and less to inspectorial and clerical duties and the kind of "visitation" which formerly passed for supervision.

There is a very evident appreciation of the value of rural school supervision on the part of patrons and school officials generally, including those in the States in which legal or financial provision for it has not yet been made. Reports from State officials recently received in the Bureau of Education indicate unmistakably the favorable trend of opinion. Two statements are quoted, one from a Northern and one from a Southern State, which are typical of others received from State departments of education in response to an inquiry for "outstanding problems" in rural education:

> The office of county superintendent should be taken out of politics, and he should be appointed by a competent board on the ground of fitness for the job. Rural schools of South Carolina are poorly supervised, the greater part of their supervision being left to county superintendents, who in most cases know nothing about teaching.

> Among the serious problems in rural education with which we are confronted are inadequate salaries paid county superintendents, constitutional limitation of superintendents' tenure of office, and lack of supervision of rural schools. (*South Dakota, letter from State department.*)

Institutions of higher learning in several States are showing increased interest in the in-service training of rural school superintendents. During the biennium conferences for county superintendents have been called by or under the direction of the State University of Oklahoma, at Norman; the State College of Agriculture, at College Station, Tex.; and Ohio State University, at Columbus, among others. Rural school supervision was among the subjects of discussion at one of the mid-west conferences on supervision, held annually at the University of Chicago. The Southeast Missouri State Teachers College reports "county superintendents'

short courses," approximately two weeks in duration, offered during February, 1925, and February, 1926. Three hours' credit is given to those fulfilling entrance and other requirements.

Annual conferences for county superintendents designed to give in-service training in instructional supervision have been held in at least 10 States during the biennium. They are particularly valuable in those States in which no special supervisory assistants or an inadequate number are available. They are usually held under the direction of State departments of education assisted by specialists in rural education or supervisory method from within or without the State. The practice of holding these conferences is spreading, and the offerings, as indicated by programs, are increasing in value. They are from one to three weeks in duration. In Wyoming a conference for county superintendents lasting three weeks was held during each of the past two summers. This is the longest conference period reported. Montana follows with an annual conference of two weeks' duration. In several other States the period is one week in length. Shorter but more frequent conference periods devoted to intensive study and practical discussion are reported from several States.

In Minnesota a different plan designed to train superintendents in service has been established during the biennium. There have been added to the staff of the State department of education a number of rural school supervisors who spend several days, probably a week, in a county visiting the schools with the county superintendent preceding the holding of two or more days of teachers' institutes. This plan enables the State supervisors to assist the superintendents with better methods of supervision through both classroom visits and teachers' meetings.

Two important conferences quite different in their nature from any preceding conferences on rural supervision were called by the United States Commissioner of Education and arranged under his direction. These conferences were called at the request of State and county superintendents and supervisors in the Southeastern States, in which progress in the direction of professional supervision, both State and county, has been definite and commendable. The first conference was called at Peabody College, Nashville, Tenn., December, 1925. Twelve States were represented. According to the statement of the Commissioner of Education, it was the purpose of this conference to offer opportunity to supervisors of rural schools to formulate principles underlying successful practices and procedures which they had initiated and carried on for their own guidance, for the assistance of others meeting similar problems who had not yet found a successful method of solving them, and for

those entering the field for the first time, many of whom had not the benefit of definite and adequate training. The time had apparently come when it was possible to reduce to some degree of uniformity the problems of supervisors of rural schools, classify them according to accepted principles, and to set up tentative acceptable standards. The proceedings of the conference were published in Bulletin, United States Bureau of Education, 1926, No. 12, and form a brief summary of principles and practice followed in supervising rural schools.

Proceedings of the second conference, held at Raleigh, N. C., December, 1926, revealed that supervisors had made progress during the intervening time in developing effective methods of supervision following the lines marked out in the Nashville conference. The reports concerned progress made in adapting supervision to the varying abilities of teachers classified in homogeneous groups, in profiting by the results of research and participation in research studies, in facilitating cooperation between supervisors and principals, and in adjusting the curriculum to special needs of rural children and to varying conditions, especially as to lengths of term which obtain in rural communities. The conference resulted also in the initiation of two important research studies to be carried on by the supervisors and superintendents of the States represented, the one a study of teachers' meetings and the other a study of the possibilities of extending the service of county supervisors through principals of consolidated schools.

The proceedings of these conferences, observation in several States, special reports sent to the Bureau of Education, and recent literature of the subject reveal the following important trends in supervision of rural schools, particularly in those States in which supervision has been in practice under reasonably favorable conditions:

1. Systematizing the efforts of supervisors. Success in systematic work among teachers has been promoted by supplying more supervisors, thereby reducing the number of teachers that each is expected to supervise and by a more general movement to formulate definite plans and programs defining objectives and processes. The programs usually extend over a period from a month or a school term to a year or more and include definite means for familiarizing those who participate in carrying them out with their provisions in detail. In the early stages of supervision the supervisor traveling from school to school, assisting the teacher in improving her methods, organizing her school, or whatever seemed most essential at the moment, dissipated time by individual work requiring too much repetition of effort and too little purposeful, constructive follow-up work. Carrying out more systematic, carefully formulated, and defi-

nitely understood plans results in economy of effort and improved relations between supervisor and teacher.

2. There is a better understanding of the definite field of supervision and its objectives. This results in relieving the supervisor of many routine tasks and permits freedom to promote the work on a more strictly professional basis.

3. Considerable progress has been made in carrying on, with the advice of supervisors, systematic in-service training for teachers of the two types previously referred to: (1) Substituting for lack of preservice training on the part of those teachers who have come into the system without such training or with inadequate training, and (2) supplying the type of in-service training which encourages continuing professional growth on the part of teachers prepared and experienced. Teachers are encouraged to secure further training of a particular type which the supervisor's observation shows is needed at institutions of higher learning. In many cases cooperation between professors of higher institutions and supervisors results in credit courses for teachers designed definitely to promote their efficiency in the particular teaching positions they hold while taking these courses.

4. Promoting professionalization of the teaching staff. This has been done in a variety of ways: Through the promotion of professional reading, the enlargement of educational opportunities and contacts, by helping teachers to discover their own errors and successes and to improve by experience, and in general the development of what is called "professional spirit."

5. Renewed efforts and improved means toward making teachers' meetings result definitely in the improvement of classroom instruction. Teachers' meetings have in the past been criticized as being given over in large part to misnamed "inspirational" addresses, topics designed for entertainment, a type of routine instruction which can in many cases well be given through circular letters and the like. The tendency to hold teachers' meetings in which demonstration classes are observed, discussion being based on practical problems or on results of research studies or reading, is increasingly noticeable. Programs are increasingly designed to fit the specific needs of a particular group rather than for general interest only.

6. There is a decided tendency to hold fewer large general meetings and more small or group meetings, in which teachers are classified on some well-worked-out basis. This tendency toward classification of teachers extends beyond teachers' meetings. It is an extension of the same principle now applied in classifying pupils on the basis of needs, individual and group. Supervisors find it economy of time to classify their teachers for all supervisory purposes. One

classification successfully carried on as reported to the bureau is as follows: Group 1, inexperienced unprepared teachers; Group 2, experienced unprepared teachers; Group 3, experienced prepared teachers; Group 4, experienced teachers who have not reached a high degree of success; Group 5, superior experienced teachers. Individual needs of teachers within various bases of classification are receiving attention in well-organized supervisory programs.

7. Concerted efforts have been made, in a number of counties in which consolidation has been effectively promoted, to extend the service of supervisors by working more largely through elementary-school principals. Adjustments must be made to the needs of principals who are obliged to teach a large part of their time; to those qualified by experience and training to supervise secondary rather than elementary work; to others who lack any type of supervisory training and experience. Regular supervisors are finding it profitable to spend considerable time in training these principals for elementary supervision in order that, working through them, they may reach a larger number of teachers than would be possible through individual contacts.

8. The movement for teachers to participate in research and experimentation has been extended under the direction of supervisors, and supervisors themselves are carrying on research projects. These projects concern (1) the work of supervisors, as time-allotment studies; (2) studies of the value of supervision of one-teacher schools and of consolidated schools;[28] (3) instructing teachers in the use of results of scientific research as applied to classification of pupils on the basis of ability or as a result of testing programs; special provision for atypical children, and the like. Experimentation under the direction of supervisors in program making, in measuring results of different methods, in class organization, and the like is also common.

9. Supervisors are directing teachers in the revision of rural curricula in a number of States, Maryland and Alabama, for example. General direction is usually given by members of the staff of the State department.

10. Rural school supervisors are working out means of checking results of supervision and assisting teachers in checking the results of teaching. The construction of satisfactory rating scales is well known to be a matter for future consideration. However, teachers and supervisors unquestionably learn through rating systems essential qualities of growth, what personal and social qualities are most

[28] Educational Bulletin 84, State department of public instruction, Indiana: Educational Publication 106, division of supervision, No. 25, State department of public instruction, Raleigh, N. C.

necessary to success, and some means of evaluating their own activities and profiting by their own experiences.

11. Supervisors have progressed in ability to devise and keep better school records, both child accounting records and statistical records, and they are seeking light in the matter of more intelligent teacher selection and placement.

12. There is renewed interest in the establishment of an esprit de corps among rural supervisors and teachers. There is a better understanding on the part of both supervisors and teachers that the success of school work is a shared responsibility for which neither supervisor nor teacher alone is responsible for success or failure, but both together.[29]

13. Supervisors have made progress in the ability critically to evaluate textbooks and teaching materials. They are thereby able to advise with teachers and with school officials who purchase equipment as to the intelligent expenditure of funds at their dispósal.

Among recent research studies bearing directly on supervision are: Value of rural school supervision, Educational Bulletin No. 84, State Department of Public Instruction, Indianapolis, Ind.; A study of the value of supervision in consolidated schools, Educational Publication No. 106, division of supervision No. 25, State Department of Public Instruction, Raleigh, N. C.; A study of the distribution of the supervisor's time reported in United States Bureau of Education Bulletin, 1926, No. 12; A study of the activities of district superintendents in New York, by M. G. Nelson.

THE RURAL TEACHER SITUATION

State-wide studies of the teaching personnel, including qualifications, salary, and tenure, have been made during the biennium in several States, among them Alabama, Connecticut, North Carolina, Georgia, Ohio, Massachusetts, South Carolina, Vermont. Among other things, these studies throw considerable light on replacements annually called for in different types of schools (as rural, urban; elementary, secondary, etc.) and facilities offered which provide standard preparation for such service. Several have disclosed facts concerning the high percentage of replacements annually called for in rural teaching positions and the inadequacy of existing facilities for training enough eligibles to fill them. Wherever the facts may reasonably be expected to lead to efforts to remedy the situation, rural schools should profit by these disclosures.

Standards for certificates to teach have been consistently raised, consonant in many States with a plan adopted by statute providing

[29] Bulletin, 1926, No. 12, U. S. Bu. of Educ. Improvement of Instruction in Rural Schools through Professional Supervision, p. 6, What is Supervision? Fannie W. Dunn.

gradual, year by year improvement in the quantity and quality of credentials demanded for the lowest grade of certificate issued or as prerequisite for all types of certificates. In Utah the culmination of such a plan, represented by graduation from a standard normal school or equivalent, i. e., completion of two years of higher education in a standard institution, was reached in September, 1926. So far as information is available, Utah is the only State which has established so high a prerequisite to date. Several other States are continuing to raise prerequisites. Among them Connecticut, Washington, and Pennsylvania will reach the established minimum of two years of professional training beyond high school in 1927; Colorado, Delaware, Indiana, Michigan, Missouri, Montana, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Wisconsin, and Wyoming have raised the minimum prerequisite during the biennium in varying amounts of from six weeks to one year above high-school graduation; Delaware, Iowa, New Hampshire, Connecticut, Virginia, have discontinued one or more of the low-grade certificates; Maryland, Maine, Minnesota, and New Mexico have adopted higher requirements for some type of certificate not the lowest grade certificate. Nebraska, New York, and Virginia have abolished the method of certification by examination and will hereafter issue certificates on the basis of academic and professional credits or credentials from recognized institutions.

The situation as to supply and salary of teachers remains relatively unchanged except for the fact that serious shortage in teachers has been overcome in all but a few States. Where standards for teaching certificates are low, salaries are correspondingly low, and the percentage of unprepared teachers employed continues to be high. No State in which qualifications for certificates have been materially raised reports a shortage.

The following reports from State departments of education are selected as representative. They show conditions generally prevailing.

North Carolina.—The teacher-shortage problem in North Carolina is qualitative rather than quantitative. Our qualitative deficiency is greatest among the elementary, especially the rural elementary schools. Considerable progress is being made toward the elimination of those teachers who hold lower-grade certificates. Since teacher-training facilities in this State are totally inadequate, we are asking for enlarged facilities or additional normal schools. To aid in meeting the present demand for better trained teachers we are employing many who have received their training in near-by States. It is significant and hopeful to note that within the past five years, namely, 1921–22 to 1925–26, North Carolina has reduced the number of white nonstandard teachers (those whose training is less than the equivalent of high-school graduation) from 19 to 6 per cent and reduced the number of white teachers who have had less than two years of training beyond high-school graduation from 61 to 45 per cent.

Nebraska.—In 1921 the number of teachers who had at least the equivalent of a four-year high-school education was 77 per cent; in 1926 the number with the same amount of training was 95 per cent. An attempt has been made during the last two years to provide equal educational facilities and equally well-trained teachers for all the children of the State. We are getting good results through a definite graduated certification law.

Rhode Island.—Whereas we have in Rhode Island a surplus of well-trained teachers available for urban and semiurban communities, the rural situation is not so satisfactory. The outstanding problem appears to be (1) finding satisfactory teachers in the neighborhood, or (2) finding satisfactory boarding quarters for teachers from outside. We could place our surplus of urban teachers in rural schools if we could guarantee reasonably satisfactory boarding conditions, *but we can not.* The remedy appears to be either (1) inducing larger numbers of country girls to attend our College of Education, or (2) consolidation of schools and cooperative housekeeping for teachers. We are, at present, trying to solve the problem by appeal to rural communities to send young people to the college.

New Hampshire.—Our normal schools have now reached the point where we can supply all teachers necessary for vacancies in rural and urban elementary schools, in junior high schools, and in the high-school specialties for which the normal schools now train.

We have in the year 150 to 200 one-room vacancies which need to be filled by new teachers. Last fall there were 142 of these vacancies. One hundred and one were filled by full graduates from our normal schools and 12 more by graduates from other normal schools. Four were filled by those who had college preparation and 25 by those who had the minimum six weeks of training. This number included the last group of teachers to be trained by summer courses only. Not a single special permit was issued for a rural school, and hereafter full high-school graduation will be required of all new teachers.

For 1925–26 every child in the State had for him a school kept open for the full 36 weeks.

New York.—There is improvement in the teacher situation. There is no shortage. Last year 74 per cent of the teachers in the one-room schools were graduates of the high-school training classes. In these same schools 65 per cent of the teachers received a salary of $25 a week or more. There has been a gradual improvement in the salary situation.

Massachusetts.—A marked improvement in the average salaries of teachers in the smaller towns has taken place since 1921. In towns under 5,000 maintaining high schools the salary has increased from $970 in 1921 to $1,122 in 1926, an increase of 15.7 per cent.

Delaware.—The teacher situation in Delaware may be regarded as normal. There can not be said to be either a surplus or a shortage on the basis of our present rules for certification. Holders of bachelors' degrees who have satisfied our requirements of 12 semester hours in professional work receive the same salary whether they teach in elementary schools or high schools. The State still continues partial reimbursement of its teachers for their expenses incurred during attendance at in or out of State summer schools.

All teachers holding third-grade certificates will be eliminated by 1930, or become holders of second-grade certificates (high school plus two years normal) by 1935. At the present rate of progress in that direction this will be easily accomplished. It is also planned to modify the salary schedule for teachers holding the first-grade certificate in such a way as to justify the professional

preparation necessary to secure that certificate. Every pupil in the State is now provided with high-school opportunities.

Maine.—There is no shortage of teachers in Maine and virtually no surplus, but there is a shortage of well-prepared, experienced teachers, as there must always be. We are, however, working on a program which will give us an adequately trained teacher either with or without experience for every school by 1930. We are differentiating the salary according to training and experience. There has been a slight salary increase this year over previous years. In fact, there has been a slight increase in salaries for every year but one during the past eight years.

Connecticut.—The trained-teacher situation is steadily improving, and there is every reason to anticipate continued progress. The enrollment in the normal schools is large, and the State is now turning out enough trained teachers each year to meet the demand. With this increase have gone higher standards of normal school admission and graduation.

The percentage of trained teachers in the one-teacher schools of 95 small towns increased last year from 35 per cent to 47 per cent. Graduates of normal schools in graded schools in the same towns were 70 per cent the same year. The turnover of teachers was less and the number of beginners fell off from 119 to 97. Teachers' salaries are rising. The average in the small towns rose about $100 last year. The minimum increased likewise, but the maximum showed no such gain. There is a tendency for salaries in the one-teacher schools to bunch between $1,000 and $1,100. This is a real problem, because it means increased turnover and shorter periods of teaching because of the lack of opportunity for salary increases.

Wyoming.—The qualifications for certification of rural teachers have been consistently raised at practically every meeting of the State board of education. High-school graduation plus a half year of teacher training will be the minimal requirement for certification in the State after January 1, 1927.

CURRICULUM REVISION

All curriculum studies, wherever made, in so far as they result in formulating principles and establishing desirable procedures, affect rural as well as urban schools. Moreover, it is becoming increasingly true, because of enlarged professional interest, that painstaking efforts resulting in courses of exceptional merit are nation-wide in effect and raise the general standard of State and county courses.

Modern practices in curriculum making as worked out in progressive cities have been followed during the biennium in greater or less degree by a number of States in formulating State courses of study. In one State, for example, a course of study was compiled by members of the faculties of the normal schools of the State, committees of teachers and superintendents, with a member of the staff of the State department of education serving as coordinator. Each section of the course as completed was sent to subject-matter experts for suggestion and criticism and returned for final working over by the original committees. In another State, separate courses, one for each county, are in continuous process of formation by teachers and super-

visors, with general direction from the State education department staff. Mimeographed sheets are prepared, used by teachers, and changed as such experimentation suggests to be desirable. Two theories are illustrated in this procedure, one that a course of study is continuously in the making, the other that county courses, being more localized, are better adapted to the needs than one State course would be. Special efforts are being made in this State and in others to adjust the curriculum to schools with varying lengths of term.

An examination of State courses of study recently made in the Bureau of Education [30] leads to the conclusion that the State courses of study formulated or revised during 1925–26 are considerably improved over those of earlier years. The improvement is due in part to the general stimulation previously referred to and to the application of better principles of curriculum formation. Such application is possible because of the facts that (1) State departments of education are better organized, have larger and better trained staffs, and include one or more persons detailed especially to the field of rural education who, therefore, know it at first hand; (2) teacher-preparing institutions, superintendents, supervisors, and teachers are cooperating with State department staffs in the make-up of committees who work with subject-matter specialists in the formulation of courses. This practice follows out the example set by several progressive cities. (3) Professional literature offering guidance in curriculum-making and giving the results of scientific research and experimentation is more abundant than ever before, and better trained supervisors and teachers who can intelligently use it in preparing courses are becoming increasingly available in rural communities. Largely as a result of the foregoing the newer State courses have better organization; they are superior in content in that they offer specific aid to teachers in the preparation of daily schedules, use of textbooks, apportionment of time among subjects and among essential topics; they offer suggestions which enable teachers to plan pupil activities, stimulate interest in wider reading, guide in checking achievement by the use of tests and in other ways; they set up minimum essentials and assist in adapting school work to individual differences.

Several studies were made or published during the biennial period which are of particular importance to those interested in revision of rural school curricula. One is a report of an experiment extending over a four-year period,[31] working out in a typical rural-school situation a school organization and a curriculum suited to the one-

[30] Rural School Leaflet No. 41, Characteristic Features of Recent Superior State Courses of Study.

[31] Four Years in a Country School. Dunn and Everett. Bureau of publications, Teachers College, Columbia University.

teacher school's essential conditions. This experiment was carried on in a community in which all but two families made a living by farming and all lived in the open country. During the four years an organization definitely fitted to the needs of the school and community, a revision of the materials of instruction, and daily programs were worked out. The results of this experiment are particularly suggestive, and many of the findings can be adapted to similar situations.

Another study is an effort to judge a large number of courses of study, State, county, and city, as to their relative merit on the basis of criteria worked out by a curriculum committee. These criteria should be particularly suggestive to makers of rural-school curricula.[32]

A third contribution to this field is the twenty-sixth yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education on curriculum making. Chapter VII relates particularly to the construction of rural school curricula. It is a description of progressive practice in making State and rural courses of study in a number of States, with an evaluation of the procedures followed.[33]

Specific advance in the formation of new curricula or revision for better adaptation has been reported to the Bureau of Education from a number of States, in addition to that referred to in the preceding paragraphs. A report from the State department of Illinois states:

> The revised State course of study and a special bulletin issued from the State office provide a program and show the teacher how she can get the time to give individual help to pupils who need it to enable them successfully to learn their lessons. A large number of county superintendents are putting the idea into practice.

From Nebraska the State superintendent reports:

> New elementary courses of study were placed in the schools in the fall of 1924. These courses emphasize especially reading, spelling, arithmetic, and language. An organization adapted to rural communities, providing for the combination of grades, alternation of work, longer and fewer recitation periods, was suggested. The first two-year period under this new plan was completed at the close of last year. The work has proved successful. Among the results are directed study, promotion of individual study, of interest and competition, and securing of better prepared teachers.

A statement from the commissioner of education of Wyoming reads:

> Probably the outstanding accomplishment in the rural schools of the State for 1925–26 is the reorganization plan put through in connection with a new

[32] Rating Elementary School Courses of Study. Stratemeyer and Bruner. (Studies of the bureau of curriculum research, Bulletin No. 1, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1926.)

[33] Works, George A. Progressive practices in making State and rural school courses of study. *In* Twenty-sixth Yearbook, National Society for the Study of Education, Part I. Bloomington, Ill., 1926. Chapter 8, pp. 163–185.

se of study. Under this plan we reduce the number of class periods in a e-room school containing eight grades to 14 a day, provide 30-minute periods in the upper classes, abolish long study periods and purposeless seat work.

In Massachusetts a committee of union superintendents, working with the supervisor of elementary education of the State department of education, prepared a report in 1925 on problems of the one-teacher schools in Massachusetts. The committee sets forth the aims of the school, discusses the difficulties presented by the class organization in one-teacher schools, and advocates three practicable plans for simplifying the organization of such schools, as follows: (1) By grouping pupils by subjects rather than by grades; (2) by the alternation of grades; (3) by the alternation of subjects. It is suggested that pupils be grouped not by grades but by subjects in small schools. The report discusses the daily program and suggests recitation and study schedules.

These examples illustrate the very general trend toward reorganizing small rural schools with the aid of a curriculum designed to provide an intelligent distribution of the teacher's time among children and among classes; toward finding an effective balance between the desirability of providing for individual instruction and of retaining the socializing values of group instruction; and toward giving specific help to teachers in solving the problems peculiar to one and two teacher school organizations.

Efforts to enrich the curriculum, especially in the direction of better health instruction, are noticeable in the newer courses of study. Connecticut and Massachusetts report that there are now school nurses in small as well as large towns in those States. Massachusetts reports a school physician employed by every town. In Maine special provision has been made during the past year for corrective treatment of rural children who are physically handicapped in any way, thus promoting the possibilities of such children profiting by the regular curriculum offered in the small rural schools.

Maine reports also experimentation with backward children in providing the type of instruction best calculated to fit their needs. The State contributes $500 to any community which segregates children of low mentality and provides for them trained teachers and an adapted type of instruction.

A large number of States reported this year state-wide testing programs. While in many States such programs have been carried on for several years, they have not been universally given in a number of others. The following quotation from a report from the State department of Connecticut indicates the attitude in a few States in which such programs have been carried on over an extended period:

A wave of standard tests has nearly inundated the rural schools during the past two years. The devotion of so much time to testing results can not be

long continued without serious loss. In the great majority of rural schools in this State pupils were shown to be well up to or above standard. A school much below was a rarity. The weakness of the rural schools in this State has not in recent years been of the type revealed by such tests.

On the other hand, Wyoming, Montana, and some other States report special progress, particularly in curriculum revision, through conditions revealed by testing programs. It is interesting to note, in this connection, that Connecticut is one of the relatively few States in which a program of state-wide instructional supervision has been practiced for a number of years.

CHANGES IN ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION INFLUENCE INSTRUCTION

Few significant changes in administrative organization resulting from statutory changes have been reported during the biennium except as indicated in the preceding discussion. There has been considerable reorganization in practice within present statutory limitations. Reference has been made to a few such changes, particularly those concerned with supervision and organization in one and two teacher schools. Centralization through consolidation of schools for more effective administration, supervision, and instruction has gained in public favor and in efficiency. There is a better understanding of the fact that administrative reorganization is but a means to an end. To fulfill its promises a higher quality of school offerings must result, including particularly better classroom instruction.

Probably the most significant growth in the direction of reorganization offering the possibility of improvement in school achievement and quality of instruction given during the biennium came through the consolidation movement. The growth in number of consolidated schools continues to be about 1,000 a year in the 48 States. In nearly all States the number of one-teacher schools diminishes each year. There were probably more than 8,000 such schools in each of Illinois, Iowa, New York, and Pennsylvania at the close of the year 1926. Four other States, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, and Wisconsin, each had more than 7,000 one-teacher schools. A large percentage of rural pupils attend these schools in the States named. A small percentage of rural pupils attend one-teacher schools in Arizona, California, Connecticut, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Mississippi, New Jersey, Rhode Island, and Utah. Illinois, Nevada, Montana, and Iowa each report consolidation at a standstill, but Pennsylvania and New York report that it is increasing rapidly.

It is estimated from reports coming to the Bureau of Education from the different States that there were approximately 16,000 consolidated schools and 158,000 one-teacher schools in the United

States at the close of 1926. Among the consolidated schools are two-teacher and three-teacher as well as larger schools. Some are little better equipped than the average one-room school; others are splendid types of the best American schoolhouse architecture, with the finest equipment and with experienced, well prepared teachers. The whole number of teachers in consolidated schools is estimated for 1926 at about 150,000, and the number of pupils at 3,000,000.

Improvement in quality and extent of pupil transportation has kept pace with the centralization movement itself. The amount of money spent for transportation during the biennium exceeded previous records. Annual expenditure in the 48 States now exceeds $30,000,000. A fourth of the States spend more than $1,000,000 each annually in transporting children to schools. In Indiana this item of the school budget exceeded $3,000,000 during each of the last two years. Generally, there is more care in planning transportation systems for safety and economy, in preparing budgets, and recording performances with the idea of improving the service, than ever before.

States which contribute from State funds specifically toward transportation now are: The New England States, New York, Pennsylvania, Delaware, North Carolina, Texas, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Wisconsin. Nearly all States contribute indirectly from State funds toward this generally necessary accompaniment of consolidation.

The following are extracts from reports concerning school consolidation and transportation of children which have been received in the Bureau of Education for 1925–26:

Connecticut.—The number of one-teacher schools in Connecticut was reduced by 15 in 1925 and 19 in 1926. The total number of such schools in the State at the close of 1926 was 358. Four more towns abolished the last school of this type (close of 1926), making a total of 14 towns with *no* one-teacher schools. There are 19 towns which have no other type. At the close of 1924, 159 towns were transporting 8,740 pupils to elementary schools, at an expense of $386,576 for the year. Connecticut, through its State research department, is issuing a series of bulletins on problems of consolidation in Connecticut.

Georgia.—During the year $100,000 was added to the State fund for helping in consolidation of rural schools, extending high-school advantages to rural children.

Illinois.—The demand for high-school privileges being satisfied, the country people do not see the necessity of centralizing their elementary schools. There is no doubt that better elementary-school privileges could be provided by centralization, but to get the people who have the children and who pay the costs to see it in this light will take time.

Indiana.—The consolidation movement continues; 357 one-teacher schools were closed during 1925. Transportation facilities have been greatly improved.

Kentucky.—One hundred thirty-five one-room schools were abandoned between September, 1925, and October, 1926.

Louisiana.—Consolidation has now been effected in most cases where road conditions make it possible. It is no longer necessary for us to stimulate this movement.

Maine.—We have made interesting progress in consolidation, and especially in transportation. Inclosed automobiles are coming into use, and little way stations are being built where children may wait, when necessary, for the conveyance. We have a large number of consolidated or centralized schools, both elementary and high school; and 27 junior high schools, mostly in rural communities. The State has funds at its disposal for cooperating with local towns in new and progressive educational movements.

Massachusetts.—Transportation at public expense is increasing at the rate of 2,000 pupils per year. Over half the children transported are conveyed by motor vehicles.

Minnesota.—Reports for the rural division of the department of education show that the number of consolidated schools transporting pupils increased in 1925–26 as compared with 1924–25 from 360 to 370; the total number of conveyances used increased from 1,442 to 1,651, or 209; and the number of children transported increased 1,259 in the same period. The per "child-mile-day" unit of cost was slightly reduced—from 7.72 cents to 7.69 cents. The cost of transportation and board for 1925–26 was approximately $1,092,000, an increase of approximately $36,000 over 1924–25. The present enrollment in consolidated schools in Minnesota is 101,200.

Mississippi.—Seventy-eight per cent of the rural children in this State attended well-graded consolidated schools in 1926, with a school term of not less than eight months. The organization of high-school grades in connection with consolidated schools has increased the number of high-school graduates in Mississippi 500 per cent in the last six years. In 1926 we transported to consolidated schools in Mississippi 92,671 children. In 1915 the number was 6,489.

Montana.—The consolidation movement has not grown in Montana during the biennium and will not grow until there is considerable improvement in roads.

Nevada.—Consolidation can not be extended further in Nevada because of the widely scattered schools.

New York.—By a law of 1925 the State aid to transportation was made 50 per cent of the total cost.

North Carolina.—There are now 800 consolidations in North Carolina. The State has loaned to the counties $15,000,000 to build consolidated schools. There are now 120,000 white children in elementary consolidated schools of seven or more teachers—30 per cent of the total rural white school enrollment. There are 4,000 white children in rural high schools with three or more teachers.

Pennsylvania.—The State aid to transportation was increased in 1925 from 50 per cent to 60 or 75 per cent of the total cost, the amount received by any district depending on its wealth (in tax valuation) per teacher.

Wyoming.—Twenty-five per cent of all rural children in this State are now transported to school.

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