

The University of the State of New York
The State Education Department

THIRTY-FIFTH ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

FOR THE SCHOOL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 1938*

VOLUME 1

ALBANY
THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK
1940

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THIRTY-FIFTH ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Albany, January 25, 1939

To the Governor and Legislature of the State of New York:

SIRS: Pursuant to law, the annual report of the Education Department is herewith submitted.

Very respectfully yours

THOMAS J. MANGAN

Chancellor of the University

FRANK P. GRAVES

*President of the University and
Commissioner of Education*

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THIRTY-FIFTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

INTRODUCTION

This report of the State Education Department covers the first year of operation of the Department under the plan of reorganization adopted by the Board of Regents and effective beginning July 1, 1937. The reorganization plan is explained in the report of the Assistant Commissioner for Personnel and Public Relations. It has been a period of readjustment within the Department and yet the reorganization has been carried out so smoothly and effectively that there has been no break in the continuity of educational advances and, in fact, notable progress in improving instructional materials and methods has been achieved. Some of the more significant advances are mentioned in the following summaries of the various divisional reports.

The report of the Division of Elementary Education states that among the curriculum projects nearing completion at the end of the year were the syllabuses in mathematics, safety, science, health and English. Progress is also reported in the cooperative experimental program directed by the Department for the revision of the social studies curriculum in the elementary schools of the State. This report presents a summary of the past 12 years' work in elementary education that mentions such achievements as the improvement of rural education, raising the level of professional leadership of the elementary school principals and the organization of a continuous program of curriculum development. Increased interest in child development and parent education work is the result, the report states, of the leadership provided by the Department's Bureau of Child Development and Parent Education.

Evidence of the alertness of the secondary schools of the State to the changes in the character of secondary school functions and pro-

grams is given in the report of the Division of Secondary Education. Cooperative efforts that have been carried on between the State Education Department and committees of principals and superintendents have resulted in recommendations that have been put into effect through Department action or through Regents regulations. In recognition of the increasing responsibility of the secondary school the Board of Regents has approved a secondary school curriculum that stresses the significance of those basic constants that should constitute part of the education of all pupils. Included among these constants are studies of the English language, health and physical education, the fundamentals of mathematics and general science, and the social studies. As the result of a careful survey of the small school situation of the State, made by the staff of the Division, several recommendations looking toward the gradual decrease in the number of small high schools are made. In the field of curriculum development major emphasis has been given to the program in social studies. The Division has also encouraged the development of local courses of study to meet the particular needs of secondary school pupils.

The reorganization of the Department enlarged the scope of services of the Division of School Administrative Services by including in it the Bureau of Attendance and Child Accounting and the Bureau of Radio and Visual Aids. In the rural field the work of this Division during the past year has been aimed toward the solution of problems of supervisory services for rural schools, redistricting to obtain local district machinery capable of meeting present-day educational demands, and an adequate, safe and economical transportation service. Twenty-seven central school districts were established during the year. Included in these 27 districts were 420 former school units. This makes a total of 226 central rural school districts established during the past 13 years. These central rural schools are bringing enriched school opportunities to approximately 90,000 rural pupils.

The median attendance record in the State during 1937-38 was 94.52. This is .17 per cent higher than the preceding year. An improvement in the punctuality record of pupils is noted with satis-

faction by the chief of the Bureau of Attendance and Child Accounting.

Official recognition of the growing importance of radio in education is indicated in the change of the title of the Visual Instruction Division to the Bureau of Radio and Visual Aids. Since no provision has as yet been made for enlarging the staff of the Bureau, it has not been possible, however, to give to radio the amount of attention which its importance demands. The Bureau has made a study of motion picture equipment for schools and is developing a plan for the decentralization of its lantern slide lending service.

The proposed new testing service for the schools of the State is outlined in the report of the Division of Examinations and Testing. This new testing service will meet the need for means of checking a pupil's progress periodically from year to year, from semester to semester, and even more often if necessary. It is proposed that these progress tests will eventually replace certain examinations now set by this Department. As a beginning it is intended to prepare a progress test in reading since this is an ability fundamental to successful work in almost all other subject fields. Progress is reported in the continuing attempt to improve Regents examinations by providing more valid test items that will satisfactorily measure an increasing range of educational objectives and by securing greater uniformity of results. Improvement in scholastic achievement is indicated in the University scholarship records. Not many years ago these scholarships were awarded to pupils who had a passing average of only 75 per cent or slightly above. Now it is virtually impossible, except in a few counties, for pupils to secure scholarships if their marks are not well above 90 per cent.

The report of the Division of Health and Physical Education points out that during the past year consistent effort has been made to direct all activities of the Division so as to establish the educational significance of health and physical education as an integral part of the educational program. To assist in the improvement of local programs and to assist local authorities in carrying out the regulations and policies established by the Board of Regents, numerous conferences

and meetings have been held and supervisory visits have been made at various points throughout the State by the Division staff.

The Division of School Buildings and Grounds reports increased activity due to the allocation of federal funds to this State for school building construction under the supervision of the Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works. The annual appropriations for building projects supervised by the Department average \$15,000,000 a year. The amount last year was more than \$18,000,000. The Director points out that advice, counsel and control concerned with such expenditures place a responsibility upon the Division that is greater than the present personnel can adequately meet.

Accomplishments in the field of teacher education include the following: cooperation with New York City school officials in the revision of qualifications for admission to licensing examinations; cooperation with superintendents of schools in the preparation of requirements for supervisors' certificates; assistance to private teacher educating institutions in the development of curriculums for the preparation of teachers and administrative officers; development of a state program of selective admissions to the state teacher educating institutions; revision of curriculums for the preparation of elementary school teachers; development of a uniform policy for housing facilities for students in state teacher educating institutions.

In the broad field of vocational education increased activity is reported by the Associate Commissioner in charge of this work. Trade and industrial high schools and technical courses in high schools show an increase in the number of classes and in pupil enrolment. A new activity of the Bureau of Industrial and Technical Education is the licensing of private trade schools in accordance with the provisions of a new statute. Progress has been made in enforcing this law. Industrial arts departments and registration continue to increase. An increase is also noted in the number of schools offering programs in business subjects, the supervision of which has been transferred to the newly established Bureau of Business Education. A new important phase of business education is the promotion and supervision of courses in distributive subjects. The Bureau of Agricultural Education has continued to place

emphasis on assistance to graduates of high school departments of agriculture and state schools of agriculture to enter farming or to secure employment in agricultural occupations. Increasing activity is reported by the Bureaus of Home Economics Education, Physically Handicapped Children, Guidance and Rehabilitation. Another new Department activity is the aid given to training programs for state and local employes. The new Bureau of Public Service Training during its first year of operation cooperated with public, quasi-public and private agencies in the organization and operation of training schools and special courses which enrolled 16,742 state and local employes.

The Director of the Division of Adult Education and Library Extension reports an increased interest in establishing library service for rural people. The extension of library service to the nearly two million people in the State without such service and the improvement of the existing library facilities are continuing objectives of this Division. In the field of school library service it is reported that more elementary schools and central rural schools have employed librarians. In addition to its regular activities the Bureau of Adult Education has sponsored an extensive project financed with Federal funds.

The report of the Associate Commissioner in charge of Higher and Professional Education presents an enlightening review of the undertakings of the Department in this field during recent years and a statement of the problems that lie ahead. His remarks regarding the place of colleges of liberal arts and sciences, junior colleges, graduate courses and state-supported colleges merit careful reading. A review of the progress made in the enforcement of the professional laws and suggestions regarding next steps are included in this report.

The Seventy-third Convocation of the University of the State of New York held on October 15, 1937, celebrated the one hundredth anniversary of the establishment of the New York State Museum. This anniversary Convocation not only celebrated past achievements but also was an attempt to reveal to the public the nature of the institution. The large contributions that the State Museum has made to basic scientific research during the past 100 years are sum-

marized in the annual report of the Director of the State Museum, which is printed separately. Accomplishments of the New York State Library are detailed in a report that is also printed separately.

The report of the Division of Archives and History mentions the editorial work on historical source material and the progress made in the preservation and safeguarding of public records. The Division is performing a useful service in stimulating interest in local history.

Besides outlining the reorganization of the Department, the report of the Assistant Commissioner for Personnel and Public Relations gives a statement of the more important staff changes during the year and presents the situation faced by the Department in attempting to meet increased demands for printing with reduced funds.

The Division of Motion Pictures reviewed 1955 films during the year. Twenty-three of these were rejected and eliminations were made in 110 films. More than 450 foreign films were reviewed by the Division. The net revenue to the State was \$239,425.22 as compared with \$227,514.16 for the previous year.

The Assistant Commissioner for Finance reports that the expenditures for education, of which the greater amount was for state aid for local units, were increased from 1937 to 1938 by approximately two million dollars. His report also gives a summary of appropriations and expenditures. Among the reorganization changes was the establishment of a Bureau of Field Services under the supervision of the Assistant Commissioner for Finance. This Bureau is performing a most useful service in auditing school district accounts, assisting local officers in accounting, budgeting and long-term financial planning and inspecting school districts. Effective July 1, 1937, the Department established regulations governing school district accounting in common and union free school districts for the purpose of securing more nearly uniform accounting practices. As a result of a study of student organization funds, regulations governing the financial accounting of these funds also have been adopted.

The Department reorganization gave greater emphasis to research through the creation of a new assistant commissionership for research. During the year plans were formulated for the expansion of the Department's research services. The report of the Division of

Research gives an account of research studies and service activities performed during the year.

Summaries of the more significant court cases involving the Department and of decisions on appeals to the Commissioner of Education are presented in the report of the Division of Law. During the year 245 decisions were rendered by the Commissioner. This report also gives a review of educational legislation.

This incomplete summary merely indicates the scope of Department activities. A careful reading of the reports that follow is recommended.

Respectfully submitted

FRANK PIERREPONT GRAVES

INSTRUCTIONAL SUPERVISION

Prepared by George M. Wiley, Associate Commissioner and Acting Assistant Commissioner for Instructional Supervision

The following sections of the annual report include the six divisions operating under the general area compassed by the term "Instructional Supervision." These six divisions are as follows:

- Elementary Education
- Secondary Education
- School Administrative Service
- Examinations and Testing
- Health and Physical Education
- School Buildings and Grounds

The reports as transmitted herewith cover a period which was transitional in character. The functional reorganization of these services had not been completed. It was a period during which the reorganization had been set up as an aim but during which the functional changes had not been compassed through the reassignment of definite responsibilities. In some cases the divisional directors had not even been appointed. It was, therefore, necessary for the administrative work to be carried on in part under old assignments with full appreciation of the gradual changes which had to be worked out step by step in connection with the new distribution of divisional assignments.

This changing and temporary situation is reflected in the reports themselves. It is to be noted, however, that the work was moving forward with full recognition of the change in administrative and supervisory responsibilities and therefore marks a year of definite progress notwithstanding the temporary difficulties under which the work was carried forward.

The reports in each case have been prepared by the directors who were continuing under former assignments or who were acting provisionally under the new assignments pending complete departmental reorganization.

