

PUBLIC EDUCATION IN INDIANA

REPORT OF THE
INDIANA EDUCATION SURVEY
COMMISSION

PREPARED UNDER THE DIRECTION OF
THE COMMISSION
BY THE GENERAL EDUCATION BOARD

GENERAL EDUCATION BOARD
61 BROADWAY NEW YORK

1923

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

HONORABLE WARREN T. MCCRAY,
Governor of Indiana,
Indianapolis, Indiana.

The General Assembly of Indiana in 1921 passed the following concurrent resolution, approved March 9, 1921:

Whereas, The efficiency and vitality of the school system of a commonwealth are fundamental to the progress, welfare and happiness of the people; and

Whereas, Public attention has been directed to the low rating of the Indiana school system, thus creating much speculation as to the causes of this low rank and the needed measures for improvement; and

Whereas, There has never been a thorough and scientific study, by direct and first hand investigation, of the system of public education in Indiana; and

Whereas, It is recognized that further progress and growth in efficiency of the system of public schools in this state imperatively demands readjustments of far-reaching importance; and that these readjustments, whether of administrative organization and control, of apportionment and distribution of school revenues, of provision of adequate facilities for training teachers, or of improvement in methods and materials of instruction, or other like problems, should be based upon a careful and impartial study of all the facts and conditions relating to the system of public education in Indiana: *Therefore*

Section 1. Be it Resolved by the Senate, the House of Representatives concurring, That a commission of five to be known and designated as the Indiana Education Survey Commission, to be selected and appointed by the governor, is hereby created for the purpose of making an educational survey of the State of Indiana including the investigations hereinafter enumerated:

1. To investigate the entire educational system of the state with a view to standardizing, unifying and correlating the vari-

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ous policies and agencies of such system in order that they may be in harmony with the educational requirements of the state.

2. To suggest to the next General Assembly such revision of the school laws as may be necessary and to prepare drafts of proposed acts where changes are recommended.

3. To investigate inequalities in the educational advantages of the children in various sections of the state.

4. To investigate the comparative needs and expenditures for elementary and higher education.

5. To investigate the present and future needs of Purdue University, Indiana University and the State Normal Schools in order that they may meet the necessary educational requirements of the state.

6. To investigate and determine the cost per student of those attending the schools of the state, including primary, secondary and advanced institutions of learning, and to recommend, if necessary, such methods and procedure as will eliminate extravagance and needless expenditure of money.

7. To prepare and submit to the next General Assembly, a statement showing in detail the various sources of revenue of Indiana University, Purdue University and Indiana State Normal School, together with a detailed statement of the expenditure of such funds.

Section 2. Upon the completion of such survey said commission shall make and file with the governor a report of its findings and recommendations, which said report shall be published for general distribution throughout the state not later than April 1, 1922. Said report shall be transmitted by the governor, together with such recommendations as he may see fit to make, to the regular session of the General Assembly of 1923.

Section 3. Any expense which may be incurred in carrying out the provisions of this resolution shall be paid by the governor out of any funds placed at his disposal for emergency and contingent purposes.

In accordance with the provisions of this resolution, you appointed on May 13, 1921, an Education Survey Commission composed of the following: J. A. Van Osdol, lawyer, Anderson; Byron Somers, President of the Fort Wayne Board of Education; Miss Carolyn Shoemaker, Dean of Women, Purdue University, Lafayette; William

O. Schanlaub, County Superintendent of Schools, Kentland; Chas. M. Curry, Professor of Literature, Terre Haute. The Commission organized May 17, 1921, by electing Mr. Curry to serve as chairman.

On account of the magnitude of the work outlined by the legislature and the comparatively small amount of money available from your contingent fund (\$15,000), the Commission sought the co-operation of the General Education Board of New York City in making the survey. The General Education Board furnished, without cost to the state, the services of the following staff: Dr. Frank P. Bachman, director; Mr. Frank L. Shaw, statistics and tests; Mr. H. J. Thorkelson, university and normal school accounting; Dr. Alexander J. Inglis, Harvard University, secondary and vocational education; Dr. Samuel P. Capen, now Chancellor of the University of Buffalo, higher education; and Miss Anna C. Thornblum, secretary. The value of the contribution of the General Education Board is above \$35,000.

The law providing for this survey stipulated that it must be completed and the results published by April first, 1922. Soon after beginning the work it became apparent that the time allowed would be wholly inadequate. As the General Education Board was furnishing the state the entire staff for the survey and providing very generously in a financial way for carrying on the work, the Commission was convinced that the people of the state would be willing to defer the completion of the work rather than to have an imperfect and incomplete result. The Commission, therefore, furnished a preliminary report of the progress made on April first, and

continued in their work until the present time. We are now able to present to you what seems to us a very full discussion of the public school situation in Indiana, and to suggest the immediate steps that ought to be taken for the improvement of the system.

In the effort to keep this report within as small a compass as possible, we have largely concentrated attention on the defects of Indiana's educational system. We are convinced that in many respects the schools of Indiana have been making consistent progress in the right direction. We have, however, in this report emphasized the few important phases that need revision in order to secure the greatest amount of efficiency and to bring the schools into line with the best educational thought of the day. Among the many questions that thus receive especial attention are the possible improvements in state administration, local administration, general school organization, teacher training and finance. This explanation is made in order that the reader may understand why the material in this report is frankly critical and why so little space is given to noteworthy and praiseworthy features of our system.

The Commission realizes very fully that the present time is not one in which to ask for greatly increased appropriations even for the purpose of increasing the efficiency of the public schools. Such changes suggested here as will involve increased expenditures, can, we believe, be to a considerable extent financed out of savings made by reorganization. The important thing needed in Indiana at the present day is improvement in the organization and administration of its schools which

will lead to a better use of the money already available for school purposes.

It is not possible for the Commission to name all of the individuals and institutions who have given freely of their time and energy in helping to make our work so complete. Dr. Wallace Buttrick, president of the General Education Board, and Dr. Abraham Flexner, secretary of the Board, have rendered great service not only in making special visits to the state but in giving valuable counsel to the Commission and members of the staff during the progress of the survey. The Commission feels also that it should express its appreciation of the very hearty co-operation given by the present state superintendent of public instruction, Honorable Benj. J. Burris, and by the entire staff of his department.

The Commission believes that the plans proposed in this report are not visionary but that they are intensely practical and indicate the next steps to be taken if Indiana is really to achieve the high place in education that she is capable of achieving. We have tried to put these plans before the people of the state in a form that will be convincing and easily understood. To that end we have avoided the use of technical language, have illustrated the book with suggestive reproductions of photographs and with many graphical illustrations of facts. Elaborate statistical material which it seemed desirable to include has largely been relegated to an appendix.

In transmitting this report to you, the Commission desires further to express most hearty appreciation of the sympathetic attention which you have given at

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various times during the course of its work. We hope that our efforts may assist you in bringing about the educational improvement that we all have at heart.

Very respectfully,

(Signed) CHARLES M. CURRY, *Chairman*

WILLIAM O. SCHANLAUB

CAROLYN SHOEMAKER

BYRON SOMERS

J. A. VAN OSDOL

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PART I
PRESENT CONDITIONS
CHAPTERS I-X

Public Education in Indiana

CHAPTER I

INSTRUCTION AND PUPIL PROGRESS IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

A CHILD'S education includes his progressive development in every direction—physical, mental, social, religious, and æsthetic. While home, playmates, church, and school thus obviously co-operate in education, it is the modern tendency to throw increasing responsibility on the school; not only mental training, but also physical, social, moral, and æsthetic training are now held to fall within its province. School equipment, school organization, and school administration are therefore much more elaborate than in the old days when the school was expected merely to drill pupils in the three R's.

Nevertheless, it is still true that, whatever else the school may be expected to do in promoting the child's development, its primary and indispensable business is instruction in the fundamental tools of knowledge. Children must learn to read, write, spell, and calculate, because otherwise their education in other directions is crippled from the outset. Schools that fail to teach

children the fundamental branches are hardly likely to succeed in other and more difficult endeavors.

In a study of the public schools of Indiana, one asks, therefore, first of all: How well do the children read, write, spell, and figure? And what is their rate of progress through the schools?

INSTRUCTION

In order that a fair judgment of Indiana's success in teaching the common school subjects might be arrived at, standard written tests in reading, spelling, arithmetic, and history were given to 15,691 elementary pupils.¹ The tests used have been given to thousands of pupils in different parts of the country; we know the scores or "marks" that the pupils of every grade should make. These tests, therefore, enable one to determine the standing of Indiana schools in comparison with the standing of schools elsewhere, and also to determine the relative standing of rural, town, and city schools within the state.

The tests were given in ten cities: Evansville, South Bend, Kokomo, Columbia City, Brazil, Washington, Rensselaer, Franklin, Union City, and Winchester; and in nine counties: Clay, Crawford, Daviess, Franklin, Howard, Jasper, Johnson, Randolph, and Whitley.

These places, representing all parts of the state, and including both rich and poor sections, were selected in consultation with members of the state department of education and a committee of city and county superintendents. It was the general opinion that results ob-

¹For results of tests given to 9,135 high school students, see Chapter II.

tained from tests given in these places would represent fairly the work done in schools of every type, and that together they would give a fair measure of the average school work of the state as a whole.

All fifth, seventh, and eighth grade pupils in these counties and cities who were in attendance on the days the tests were given took part. The testing was done during the period from January 16 to January 20, 1922; the results therefore represent conditions as they existed at the mid-year period.¹

The papers were scored by a small group working together under an experienced director. Results in city and town schools were tabulated separately; and the results in the townships were arranged according to size of school. The number of pupils tested and the scores made in the various tests are given in Tables I to VI of the Appendix. They are presented in terms of averages for each type of school; it should be understood, of course, that some schools made scores above, and some made scores below, the average for the type to which they belong.

RESULTS IN READING

The test² used to measure pupil achievement in reading consists of eleven short selections, all prose but one,

¹The tests were given, under the direction of representatives from each of the higher institutions of the state and from the state department of education, by city and county superintendents and principals. Altogether 153 Indiana school people co-operated in the giving of the tests.

²Thorndike-McCall Scale.

and three or four questions about each which the pupil is required to answer in writing after he has read the paragraph. The selections are arranged in a graded series, beginning with easy ones and ending with more difficult ones. The test is devised to find out how well pupils understand what they read.

A summary of the average reading scores in the various types of schools in terms of standards reached is given in Table I. This table shows that the poorest work in reading was done by pupils in one-teacher schools.

The reading achievement of fifth grade pupils in these schools is represented by the figure 4.4. This means that these pupils, half way through the fifth grade, did work of a quality equal to that usually done by pupils four-tenths of the way through the fourth grade. That is, in reading, these pupils are more than a grade below standard. And the higher one goes in the one-teacher school, the worse relatively do the results become. The average results of seventh grade pupils were a year and two-thirds below standard, and the eighth grade scores were two full years below.

The scores in the larger township schools, that is, in two- and three-teacher schools and in consolidated schools with four, five, or six teachers, were better than the scores in one-teacher schools, but nevertheless even they were below the standard that ought to be reached. The scores of fifth grade pupils in two-teacher schools were almost a year below standard, while the scores of fifth grade pupils in six-teacher schools were more than a full half year below. The eighth grade results in all

these larger schools were at least a year and a half below standard.

TABLE I

THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF INDIANA PUPILS IN READING IN TERMS OF GRADE STANDARDS

KIND OF SCHOOL	STANDARD REACHED BY 5TH GRADE	STANDARD REACHED BY 7TH GRADE	STANDARD REACHED BY 8TH GRADE
Township:			
1-teacher	4.4	5.8	6.5
2-teacher	4.6	6.1	6.8
3-teacher	4.9	6.2	6.8
4-teacher	4.8	6.2	6.8
5-teacher	4.8	6.4	6.9
6-or-more-teacher .	4.9	6.3	6.9
Town	5.0	6.4	7.0
City	5.3	6.7	7.5
Country-wide standard	5.5	7.5	8.5

Note.—In this table scores are given in terms of the grade of work they represent. For example, the entry 4.4 for fifth grade pupils in one-teacher schools means that these pupils did work which pupils who are four-tenths of the way through the fourth grade usually do.

Better work in reading was done by city pupils. The fifth grade reading achievement of city pupils in Indiana was only one-fifth of a year below standard. The results from the seventh and eighth grades of the city schools were worse, the seventh grade results being on the average three-quarters of a year below standard and the eighth grade results a full year below.

It is thus clear that Indiana children do not read as well as they should.