

PRINCIPLES OF RURAL SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

BY

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**PRINCIPLES OF
RURAL SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION**

RURAL EDUCATION SERIES

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PRINCIPLES OF RURAL SCHOOL

ADMINISTRATION BUTTERWORTH

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EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

THE most immediate and pressing problem of rural school improvement is that of re-organization. This implies not only the wise and efficient consolidation of schools wherever possible but the generous support and highest development of one-teacher schools wherever necessary. It means also the retention of all that is good — and much good there is — in one-teacher organization, the employment of taxing units large and resourceful enough to insure the adequate financing and direction of rural education, and above all a recognition and appreciation of the farmer's point of view on civic matters and of his peculiar contributions, reservations, and difficulties in community organization.

These factors make the task of rural school administration both difficult and distinctive, yet little regard has been given them thus far. Students of school administration have concentrated upon cities for the most part and have neglected the rural aspects of their problem; or when attempting to enter the rural field have ignored and over-ridden the human factors involved. This accounts above all else for the conservatism and caution with which farmers sometimes resist reform in school administration and explains very largely the obsolete practices and ideals still persisting in this field.

Under these conditions it has remained for Professor Butterworth to come forward as the first outstanding student of rural school administration and as the author of the first adequate book in this specialized field. Others, it is true, have assayed this task, but all have fallen short either on the scientific educational side on the one hand or on the "farm-understanding" side on the other. Professor Butterworth alone among all who have written on this subject seems to have had the professional technique and the rural sympathy

to handle the question satisfactorily. More specifically stated, the unique characteristics of his book are four:

1. It approaches the subject of school administration from a background of sound philosophy. (Chapter 2.)

2. It shows a clear understanding of the psychology of farmers and is guided in its recommendations by the latest and most scientific contributions of rural sociologists. Note especially the advocacy of the natural community unit for school-organization purposes and the balanced appreciation of the restricted but energizing function of the school as a community agency. (Chapters 6 and 7.)

3. It advocates the maximum employment of the state as a taxing unit — the only unit except the federal which can ever be reasonably fair to farmers. (Chapters 16 and 17.)

4. It reveals throughout a liberalizing attitude and tendency which would give both laymen and teachers more voice than usual in school administration and thus help to nourish the bedrock principles of democracy upon which our government is supposed to rest. (Chapters 8 and 9.)

The book is most timely, for there has never been a more critical period in either agriculture or education than the present. School costs have been soaring while farm incomes and general economic conditions in agriculture have remained nearly stationary and far below their pre-war level. This has produced a crisis so great in some rural communities as to lower salaries, to shorten terms, and in a few rare cases actually to close schools. The situation is now improving, but the problem is still serious and help from any source should be welcomed. Dr. Butterworth's book is offered to the public therefore with the conviction that it will prove an outstanding contribution to the development of education in rural areas, equaled only by Professor Brim's notable study of rural school objectives with which this series was introduced.

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MABEL CARNEY.

PREFACE

THE increased interest in the educational problems of our country and village communities manifested in the last few years justifies an evaluation of policies and activities in the organization and administration of the schools in those areas. This volume undertakes to bring together and to interpret the recent developments in this field. It presents an analysis of educational objectives and of criteria or standards for measuring the degree to which those objectives are attained. It sets forth principles that in the light of present knowledge appear to be significant in the administration of our rural schools. For the most part these are not principles in the sense of being definitely established laws, but principles as *guides to action* — means of testing out the effectiveness of different policies and methods until greater insight into the various problems is developed.

Progress in this field will usually, as elsewhere, not come through radical procedures. Rather it will be through a painstaking building up from conditions as they are to conditions as we think they ought to be. Accordingly this volume not only attempts to state ideals in organization and administration as they are now conceived, but analyzes conditions that exist and suggests "next steps" in the attainment of those ideals. The questions at the end of the chapters are designed especially to stimulate the reader to analyze his own educational situation that he may see more clearly its elements of strength and weakness.

In the long run an adequate educational system cannot be built up in a democracy without the intelligent and aggressive

effort of the citizens affected. With this belief considerable attention has been given to the social forces in rural life. The volume aims to present the chief factors that favor and those that hinder the educational development in the rural territory. It takes the point of view that in promoting growth in the educational ideals of rural people there must be stimulation and direction by those professionally trained. Hence it sees the leadership of the rural population as an important factor in educational progress and attempts an analysis of one of the more important types of leadership.

The entire volume is so organized as to consider these and related questions as they appear on local, intermediate, state, and federal levels. This gives opportunity to see how these different levels of government do and may function separately and together in dealing with the problems of rural education.

This prefatory statement should not be closed without giving recognition to the contributions of the members of the writer's classes in "Principles of Rural School Administration" at Cornell University during the years 1919 to 1926. Their frank criticisms have been a genuine stimulus. Acknowledgment should also be made to G. A. Works, P. J. Kruse, R. M. Stewart, T. H. Eaton, E. N. Ferriss, and C. B. Moore of the Department of Rural Education, Cornell University, and to M. G. Nelson of the Albany Teachers College and R. D. Baldwin of the Stevens Point, Wisconsin, Normal School. These men have read the manuscript in whole or in part and have made many helpful suggestions.

*Ithaca, N. Y.,
August, 1926*

JULIAN E. BUTTERWORTH

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PART ONE

THE MAJOR PROBLEMS IN AMERICAN RURAL EDUCATION AND A POINT OF VIEW IN ATTACKING THEM

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