

**CLEVELAND EDUCATION SURVEY**

**FINANCING  
THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**BY**

**EARLE CLARK**

**STATISTICIAN OF THE RUSSELL SAGE FOUNDATION**



**THE SURVEY COMMITTEE OF THE  
CLEVELAND FOUNDATION  
CLEVELAND · OHIO**

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**THE SURVEY COMMITTEE OF THE  
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## FOREWORD

This book, entitled "Financing the Public Schools," is one of the 25 volumes comprising the report of the Cleveland Education Survey conducted by the Survey Committee of the Cleveland Foundation in 1915 and 1916. Twenty-three of these volumes are separate monograph reports. In addition there is a summary volume entitled "The Cleveland School Survey," telling of the conduct of the entire study and giving the findings and recommendations of the 15 monographs relating to the regular work of the public school. There is also a volume entitled "Wage Earning and Education" which gives a summary of the eight monographs relating to industrial education. Copies of all these publications may be obtained from the Cleveland Foundation. They may also be obtained from the Division of Education of the Russell Sage Foundation, New York City. A complete list will be found in the back of this volume, together with prices.



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# FINANCING THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## CHAPTER I

### EXPENDITURE AND REVENUE

The activities of the school systems of American cities are conditioned upon the collection and disbursement of public funds: the public school is borne upon the shoulders of the taxpayer. From this intimate relationship between taxes and education it follows that financial as well as educational problems must be considered by the school authorities. Indeed, every educational problem is, on complete analysis, a financial problem, and every financial problem pertaining to the schools an educational problem. The members of a board of education must decide how much money is to be spent for the operation and maintenance of schools and for improvements in the school plant; they must secure, through taxation or by other methods, the funds needed for school purposes. In directing expenditures, and in collecting and managing school funds, they should avoid waste and should seek to obtain for each dollar paid out the largest possible educational return.

The financial operations of the Cleveland Board of

Education are conducted on a large scale. Each year the Board spends millions of dollars for school purposes, and the expenditure has been mounting from year to year. Table 1 and Diagram 1 show expenditures for the years from 1902 to 1914.

TABLE 1.—EXPENSES AND OUTLAYS OF THE CLEVELAND BOARD OF EDUCATION. 1902-14 \*

Year	Operation and maintenance	Outlay	Operation, maintenance, and outlay
1902-3	\$1,768,847	\$593,880	\$2,362,727
1903-4	1,797,116	643,307	2,440,423
1904-5	1,913,165	397,184	2,310,349
1905-6	2,025,045	585,319	2,610,364
1906-7	2,184,139	338,828	2,522,967
1907-8	2,334,764	690,671	3,025,435
1908-9	2,581,561	827,508	3,409,069
1909-10	2,812,688	812,161	3,624,849
1910-11	3,001,543	1,003,597	4,005,140
1911-12	3,115,303	987,554	4,102,857
1912-13	3,470,510	842,856	4,313,366
1913-14	3,820,748	950,274	4,771,022

\* Annual reports of the Clerk of the Board of Education. "Operation and Maintenance" includes amounts reported as "total ordinary disbursements" from the tuition, contingent, building, and bonds and interest funds; in "outlay" are included amounts reported as "paid for permanent improvements" or "paid for improvements." The sum of \$35,928.10, transferred in 1913-14 from the building fund to the contingent fund, is not included under "outlay."

In 1902 the total expenditure for public schools was \$2,362,727. The expenditure for 1913-14 was more than twice as great—\$4,771,022. For the early years of the period the curve representing expenditures shows an irregular course, but since 1906-7 the increase has been continuous.

In the table and in the diagram expenditure for improvements—new buildings, new equipment, land,

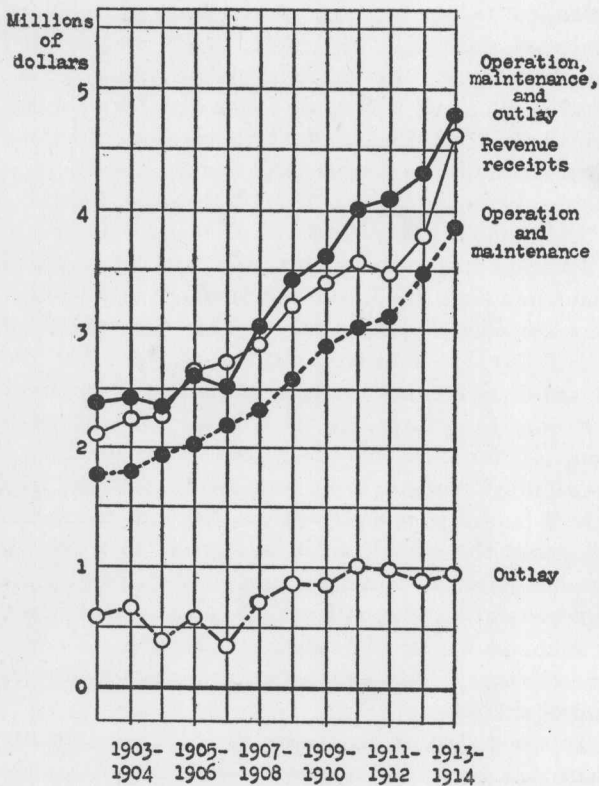


Diagram 1.—Expenditures and revenue receipts of the Cleveland Board of Education. 1902-14



etc.—and current expenses of operation are shown separately. A modern public school building is intended to serve many generations of scholars, and such equipment as chairs, desks, etc., is used year after year. Hence, it is not uncommonly supposed that a city can equip itself with an adequate school plant and that, a plant having been obtained, there should be no further large demands on the taxpayers for improvements for a number of years.

Diagram 1 shows that the Cleveland Board of Education has not in any year had its physical plant in such a condition that further improvement was considered unnecessary. This persistence of the outlay for improvements means, not that the Board of Education has been neglectful of its duty, but that in a large and rapidly growing city the demand for new buildings and equipment is a continuing demand. Without either building new school houses in advance of the demand, to remain idle until the school population grows to them, on the one hand, or leaving a part of the city's school children unprovided with schools, on the other hand, it is impossible in a city such as Cleveland to avoid, in any year, a considerable outlay for new buildings and equipment.

In the course of expenditures for improvements there has been less regularity than in the course of total expenditures. The curve of the diagram shows that the heaviest outlay occurred in 1910-11 and the lightest in 1906-7. The outlays for the more recent years, though lower than those for 1910-