

STRAITMORRE PAROCHMENT

1904

THE IMPROVEMENT OF INSTRUCTION BY THE
COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT IN SOUTHWESTERN OKLAHOMA

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THE IMPROVEMENT OF INSTRUCTION BY THE
COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT IN SOUTHWESTERN OKLAHOMA

By

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

It is the purpose of this study to show the relationships of the work of the county superintendents in Southwestern Oklahoma compared to that which they might be doing according to suggestions from the leading sources of literature in the field and the list of helps for improving the teachers in service as worked out in the course in County Superintendent Administration at the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College.

Need for Such a Study

If a beginning county superintendent could have the advantage of a study of the work of those experienced in his profession it would be a great time and effort saver. The results of a study similar to this would have been very welcome to the author when he became county superintendent.

When the expanse of the field of the work in the large counties of Southwestern Oklahoma is considered, it can readily be imagined how bewildering the outlook is to a novice in the field. It is hoped that this study will serve as a somewhat suggestive guide to the beginning county superintendent in this section of the State and also have a helpful and stimulating effect upon those more experienced.

Professional Improvement for County Superintendents

The fact that a county superintendent's position is political and, therefore, not ordinarily held long by one person, has caused colleges to be slow in planning professional courses for county superintendents. A few colleges have been offering courses that are helpful, but it is only recently that courses prepared especially for county superintendents have been available at colleges. The Oklahoma A. & M. College School of Education is pioneering in this field. August short courses have been given. In the spring of 1939 a six weeks course, ending June 23, was offered. This course should have been taken by every newly elected county superintendent. Much thought has been put into planning the courses. Also a great deal of the teaching is done by ex-county superintendents, and there were enough acting county superintendents enrolled to have a stimulating effect.

The University of Montana also started an annual short course for the county superintendents which was operated for at least seven consecutive years according to May Trumper, State Superintendent of Public Instruction.¹

It was after the writer had the course for county superintendents at the Oklahoma A. & M. College that he became impressed with the need for the program of the

¹Journal of Rural Education, vol. 3, p. 385. "Short Courses for County Superintendents", May Trumper, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Helena, Montana.

county superintendent. At the suggestions of Dr. Haskell Pruett, a teacher in the course and a former county superintendent, the writer began in earnest with the study of methods for the improvement of teaching as a part of the program of the work of the county superintendent.

Methods of Study

The writer has been county superintendent for some time in the same county in which he grew up as a boy and in which county he had his first years of teaching experience as a rural school teacher. He has had a personal acquaintance with the southwestern part of Oklahoma and his (Caddo) County is one of these counties. It was on this basic background that there was an interest in confining the study to the counties in the district of the Southwestern State Teachers College.

Good sources of authority recognize that one of the best ways of research is by personal interview. The writer started with the basic objectives and went in person one or more times to each office of each county superintendent in the counties in Southwestern State Teachers College.

These County Superintendents, Deputies, and their counties are given in Table I.

Table I
COUNTIES AND SCHOOL OFFICERS

County	Superintendent	Deputy
Beckham	Alice Stringer	Leonora Ford
Caddo	P. M. Freisen	Naomi Giles
Comanche	Clarence J. Scott	Helen Burris
Cotton	Earl Pinkerton	Corene Edwards Groves
Custer	Orviell J. Prior	Gwindola Brasier
Greer	Jake Smart	Bessie Brewer
Harmon	Walter Crouch	Zana McFall
Jackson	J. M. Maddox	Angie McCormick
Kiowa	Dewey Beeson	Edith Willis
Roger Mills	Lee Little	Irene Garrison
Tillman	Owen Compton	Monell Odom
Washita	Lonnie Vanderveer	Agnes Kelly

The following questions were used in the interviews with county superintendents and/or their assistants:

1. Do you use the Rural Supervisors of the State Department of Education for group meetings? To what extent?
2. Do you use the testing program of the State Department? To what extent? Do you have any other testing program?

3. Do you use the Rural Supervisor of the Teachers' College in your district? To what extent?
4. Does your office send out bulletins regularly? To whom and how often? Purpose?
5. How often do you have County Teachers' Meeting? Purpose?
6. Do you have superintendents and principals clubs? Rural Teachers organizations? Festivals? Interscholastic contests? Athletic Contests?
7. To what extent and for what purposes do you use the newspapers?
8. To what extent do you use the State Health Department? Do you have a County Doctor and/or nurse?
9. Do you have a county library? How many volumes? How used?
10. How much do your schools use books from the Oklahoma Library Commission?
11. Do your rural schools have any supervision except what you can give them personally?
12. Does your office own any visual education machines?
13. How many one-and two-room schools do you have in your county? What is your dependent school population? Independent?
14. What would help you most in improving the instruction in your county schools: (a) Finance; (b) A supervisor; (c) The County Superintendent having real authority in approving or refusing to

approve teachers contracts; (d) County Superintendent's authority extended to independent schools?

15. Do you have a full time assistant? Salary?

Your salary? Amount of money for office supplies?

Of course other subjects often presented themselves for discussion during the interviews.

Meeting these people in their own office for interviews is a much more satisfactory method for gathering thesis or field problem material than mailed questionnaires. Aside from the usual arguments presented for the personal interview method there were special advantages in this study.

The arrangement of office records, the meeting of patrons, the general "feel" of the offices, have all contributed more to the general knowledge of the different ways that county superintendents manage their offices than can be shown the reader of this paper.

CHAPTER II

HISTORY AND PLACE OF COUNTY SUPERVISION IN OKLAHOMA

The supervision of schools is the most important work of the county superintendent. Yet it is usually greatly neglected. It may be very true that a county superintendent distinguishes himself by his optional work rather than by those requirements that are "mandatory" or legal, but the political nature and legal set-up of his office make it necessary to spend too great amount of his time for other duties than those of a supervisory nature.

In 1927, C. M. Conwill, in his A Job Analysis of the County Superintendency in Oklahoma, submitted at the University of Oklahoma said,

"Four superintendents have supervisors belonging to the office force who assist in visiting schools. This is the embryo stage, the author will hazard the guess that within ten years there will be a real rural school supervisor in every county superintendent's office in the state."¹

Twelve years have passed since that statement and there are county rural school supervisors in only the same four counties as on the day when Conwill's worthy thesis was presented.

Southwestern Oklahoma counties have no supervisors. There is the depression, but other lines of endeavor have

¹Conwill, C. M., A Job Analysis of the County Superintendent, Master's Thesis, University of Oklahoma, Norman Oklahoma.

not ceased progress. If offices, structures, and highways continue to be improved, why neglect the supervision of those rural children from whose clean minds and strong bodies so much of the progress of our nation comes in spite of their neglect?

Oklahoma is among the twenty-four states that make no provision for supervision by the county superintendent.²

In 1937, A. L. Crable, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, made an effort before the legislature to have rural school supervisors included in House Bill No. 6.

In the Sixteenth Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the State of Oklahoma Mr. Crable says,³

"This plan of supervision has existed without change since the organization of the Oklahoma Territory in 1889. No change has been made in the qualification of the county superintendent since that time. A person holding only a first grade certificate is eligible to hold the office. A large majority of those elected in recent years, however, have held much higher credentials than the statute requires.

"During recent years, especially during this biennial period, there has been an unusual increase in the work required or demanded of the county superintendents. This has been occasioned by new responsibilities on the superintendents under House Bill 212 and by the constantly increasing requests made by federal agencies and by school districts applying for financial aid from the state or nation.

²Journal of Rural Education, vol. 5, p. 409.

³Sixteenth Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, State of Oklahoma, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, pp. 23-24.

"The amount allowed for traveling expenses of these officers is entirely inadequate and their salaries are not commensurate with their duties and responsibilities. It is earnestly recommended that the qualification of the county superintendent, the travel allowance, and the salary be raised in proportion to the increase that have occurred in the duties, responsibilities, and work during recent years.

"It is practically impossible for effective supervision of the rural schools to be done under the present plan of organization. Few of the persons elected to the office of county superintendent have had previous experience or training for the work of school supervision.

"Those superintendents qualified by training to do supervision, who would gladly devote time and effort to the work, find soon after they are inducted into their offices that the demands made on their time and practically none of their meager expense allowance to spend in the actual supervision of their schools."

Mr. Crable failed in his efforts to secure rural supervisors for county superintendents, but his efforts did result in a considerable increase being allowed county superintendents for traveling expenses. Mr. Crable has considerable to say about the qualification and duties of county superintendents.

Only one county superintendent in Southwestern Oklahoma receives as much as \$175.00 monthly salary, and the others range from a monthly salary of \$100.00 to \$150.00. It is really surprising that such good men are in the positions. One county superintendent in Southwestern Oklahoma does not have a full time assistant, while only three are able to pay their assistants as much as \$100.00 per month. The assistants in the remaining counties receive salaries ranging from \$50.00 to \$90.00 monthly. It is difficult

to secure very competent and efficient help for such low salaries.

So much to show that the county superintendent can hardly be expected to be an efficient and sufficient rural school supervisor. Comes now the problem of the very great need for rural school supervision. Table II shows that the number of one- and two-room schools vary from practically none in Greer, Harmon, and Jackson counties to 55 in Commanche County and 72 in Caddo County. Nearly all of these Southwestern Oklahoma counties have large numbers of one- and two-room rural schools, and as will be seen later the need of supervision in such schools is great. Nor is the need of supervision much less in the highly consolidated counties such as Greer, Jackson, and Harmon Counties. Nearly all of these consolidated schools come in the six to twelve teacher bracket.

If a superintendent of such a school should be well qualified to supervise, his other duties would not permit it. In nearly all cases he is a teacher. Many times a full time teacher. The remainder of his time must go to administrative, clerical, and outside of school duties.

Supervision in these somewhat larger schools can be accomplished much more economically in time and effort. The fact that these schools are graded and compact is sufficient reason for seeing this. The one-room school teacher must be taught to handle much more difficult situations. Not only this, but the one-room school teachers

Table II
THE NUMBER OF ONE-ROOM SCHOOLS IN EACH COUNTY

County	Number of Schools
Beckham	20
Caddo	72
Commanche	55
Cotton	46
Custer	44
Greer	3
Harmon	4
Jackson	1
Kiowa	39
Roger Mills	3
Tillman	31
Washita	33

are scattered over a great extent of territory. Some such schools in Caddo County are more than fifty miles from the county superintendent's office.

Quoting from Status of Rural-School Supervision in the United States in 1935-1936, we find the following:⁴

"Leaders interested in promoting the growth of trained supervision for rural schools insist that such supervision is even more needed in the schools of rural than of urban communities. On the one

⁴U. S. Department of the Interior, Office of Education, Pamphlet No. 72, p. 1.

hand they point out that, as a rule, the teachers employed in the smaller schools have had less training; that they tend to be less mature, and that a much larger proportion of them are beginners in the profession; on the other hand they insist that such teachers must teach pupils representing a larger variety of grade and ability levels and a broader need of subject matter. It is pointed out that to these more complex services demanded of rural teachers there must be added community and administrative responsibilities which in city schools are discharged by highly paid and specially trained school officers. The whole situation is still further complicated by the fact that too often beginning teachers, trained for the simpler work of teaching a single grade or subject of the large school set-up, find that city school systems will not employ them without previous experience. They must, therefore, first seek employment in rural school teaching, which presents many problems for which they have no special training."

The irony of this situation is that the rural teacher cannot go to a city system to receive supervision until she has first proved in a rural school that she is not much in need of supervision. Laughable? Well, may be, until you think of the children! Then one finishes the big laugh "with tears in my eyes".

CHAPTER III

HOW COUNTY SUPERINTENDENTS HELP THE TEACHERS

A county superintendent should have an outlined program. Since his large field of service brings in many surprise and unexpected interruptions and exceptions to the daily routine, the program cannot be as rigid as that of a city superintendent, but the schedule should, nevertheless, be detailed and definite. County superintendents should have a definitely planned program, not only for supervision, but for all work; This program will have its interruptions, but it will still facilitate work.

The bulletin, Improvement of Instruction in Rural Schools through Professional Supervision,¹ outlines a good supervisory program as follows:

1. "A set of clearly stated definite objectives.
2. "A clear cut outline of the means, devices, and procedures to be utilized in the attainment of the objectives.
3. "A clear cut outline of the criteria, checks, or tests to be applied to the results of supervision in order to determine the success or failure of the program."

Some necessary steps in constructing supervisory programs are the following:

1. "Study or survey the situation by any means available and fitting in order to determine the needs of the system or building.

¹Department of Interior, Bureau of Education. Bulletin 1926, no. 12, p. 33.

2. Construct a total list of needs, problems, defects, or new departures which might be made into definite objectives.
3. Select from this list a small number of these problems and state them definitely as the objectives for the term or year.
4. Outline for each objective the specific and detailed procedure which will be utilized in achieving the ends sought.
5. Outline clearly the criteria, tests, or checks which can be fairly used to determine the success or failure of the plan at the close of the period of its operation.
6. Publish this plan in printed or mimeographed form. Place it in the hands of teachers, supervisors, principals, and, if necessary, devote a general meeting to explanation and discussion.
7. Provide for flexibility."²

W. H. Burton, who wrote the above rules, might have added to rule number seven "and common sense".

As "knowledge comes but wisdom lingers" for those who cannot practically apply the theories of life, so common sense must be used in the attempt to use any set of rules in the administration and supervision of a group of rural schools.

None is more important than supervision, but many are more pressing. There are problems of finance, buildings and their equipment, pupil classification and their progress, pupil elimination, curriculum, consolidation and transportation, etc. Each is important and none can be neglected.

²The County Superintendent in the U. S., U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington, Bulletin (1932), No. 6, p. 41.

for long without serious waste of efficiency. The whole problem is further complicated by the fact in most of the States the county superintendent has to deal with many local boards and districts.

If the county superintendent does not set aside a portion of his time for supervision, he will never get to this important part of his work.

This chapter might have been named "activities". Its relation to the program of the county superintendent may be likened to the relation of the school superintendent's extra-curricular activities and his so-called regular program. However, the activities program of the county superintendent is more varied and less definitely established than that of the school superintendent.

It is in this optional field that the really wide awake county superintendent distinguishes himself from the ordinary one. The word "optional" is used more as a distinguishing term than as a definition. The meaning is used to discuss those duties which are not strictly required by law. Only a few outstanding activities will be discussed here.

Adult Education

Practically nothing is being done by this group of county superintendents for adult education. This lack of interest in such a program is short sightedness. It is not deliberate, however, most county superintendents feel that they already have more than they can do. They also feel that there are federal agencies to take care of the program.

The writer thinks, however, that the neglect of educators to see to adult education has been the cause of the setting up of numerous adult education programs by the federal government. If we had not "lost the ball", these agencies would not be in existence. This is not meant to say that these agencies are not serving a useful purpose. But these programs properly should be a part of the school program under the direction of regular school men. And that is only half of the argument. School men should be better equipped to help train adults for citizenship and adjustment to changed conditions. John W. Studebaker, National Commissioner of Education, says,

"What happens to young people who leave school but cannot find jobs is of national concern. During recent years the number of such youths has greatly increased. Nor can it be expected that this problem will disappear with the return of so-called normal times."

"Nearly 87 per cent of Houston's out-of-school youth were interested in further vocational training, and one-half of them were willing to work half-time if they might thereby received some additional education.

"A desire to continue their education was expressed by 44 per cent of the out-of-school farm youth in Iowa, and by 70 per cent of the town youth."³

Nearly 2,000,000 out-of-school adults are being given training in the rudiments of elementary education and further vocational training. This is very important. But the training that emphasizes chiefly more useful citizenship

³Community Surveys, p. 4. Government Printing Office, Washington.

must also be given consideration.

"On this latter field, largely disregarded by other forms of adult education, public-affairs, forums, discussion groups, and lecture programs, largely managed by private individuals or associations, place the greatest emphasis. These agencies for adult education concentrate almost exclusively on the presentation of questions dealing with public policy. They undertake that education for intelligent citizenship so vital to democracy and so neglected in our day."⁴

If private concerns are willing to spend money for such a program, it behooves county superintendents, as leaders of rural education, to lend an attentive ear. Southwestern Oklahoma has a considerable out-of-school youth population. Most of these young people are capable and willing to take further training. The county superintendents in this section of the state would do well to have discussion meetings with other members of their group and the school superintendents concerning this problem.

Much of this work is now being done in Southwestern Oklahoma by federal agencies; but worthy as their work may be, education programs should be carried on by educators. If county superintendents were more willing to assume responsibility in sponsoring and supervising National Youth Administration projects, probably the supervision of adult education would have a tendency to drift back under the direct supervision of the county superintendents.

Bulletins to the Teachers

Of the twelve counties studied the five which send

⁴Education for Democracy, p. 11. Office of Education, Washington.

out monthly bulletins are: Commanche, Jackson, Kiowa, Tillman, and Washita. Harmon County sends out a weekly circular. Those which send out occasional bulletins to the teachers are: Caddo, Cotton, and Greer. Two counties, Beckham and Roger Mills, indicated that they did not send out bulletins to teachers at any time during the year.

The purposes of bulletins include announcements, helps for daily programs, hints for special programs, statements of general and specific aims and policies, helps to new teachers, information and encouragement for board members, patrons, and teachers.

Demonstrations

In the counties studied in Southwestern Oklahoma, not a single one of them uses the demonstration as a method of helping the teacher. Yet in face of this fact, Mr. Moeller points out at length that one of the best things that he has done as a county superintendent in Black Hawk County, Iowa, is to put on demonstration teaching with his teachers in his visits to their class rooms and also in group and general meetings.⁵

The supervisors under the direction of the Alabama Department of Education make use of the demonstration lessons as a device in supervision. These demonstrations are planned to meet the individual needs of as many teachers as possible. The following is typical of the

⁵Journal of Rural Education, Vol. 4, p. 113, "Raising the Standards of County Supervision Through Demonstration Teaching."

types of lessons they use:

1. The lesson or group of lessons taught for a group who are meeting outside the classroom.
2. The lesson taught for the individual teacher by the supervisor during the classroom visit.
3. The lesson or series of lessons taught by a teacher in her own classroom for a group of visitors.

"Some suggestive principles governing the type of demonstration are given below:

1. "The supervisor must be familiar with the procedure the teacher has been using heretofore and she must know what the teacher is capable of doing in the way of better procedure.
2. "There must be an understanding between the teacher and the supervisor as to why the lesson should be taught and as to what the lesson is to illustrate.
3. "No lesson should be taught without the supervisor's being familiar with the subject matter involved.
4. "There should be a summarizing of the procedure by the teacher when the lesson is finished to state what she has learned, or to point out which features she thinks are worth trying out.
5. "Whenever there is any doubt about the advisability of demonstrating for the individual teacher, do not demonstrate."⁶

Festivals and Contests

There is a decided change in sentiment, regarding the place of curricular contests and festivals, in all of these

⁶ Journal of Rural Education. "The Demonstration Lesson as an Agency in Supervision", by Cassie R. Spencer. Vol. 5, p. 236.

Southwestern Counties. The tendency is away from the contest idea. There seems to be a feeling that contests served purposes in those years when competition was necessary to arouse interest. But now, when it is relatively easy to have 500 rural, or high school, boys and girls together on one stage, cooperation seems to be more important than competition. Why not combine a program of fellowship and entertainment where we all win and none lose?

Just one-half of this group of counties has gone over to the festival idea recently. Nearly all of the others are giving the idea serious consideration. Most of the festival programs are beginning to carry out a theme or pageant. One county, this year, dramatized, in song and story, the following stages in American history:

- I. Indian Life
- II. Spanish Explorations
- III. French Explorations
- IV. Louisiana Purchase
- V. Establishment of Military Posts
- VI. Removal of Civilized Tribes
- VII. The Arrival of the Missionaries
- VIII. The Reign of the Cattlemen
- IX. The Building of the Railroads
- X. The Struggle of the Boomers
- XI. The Run
- XII. Fifty years of Progress

Athletic contests have been retained by all of these counties. In nearly all, the contests include track and field events, basket ball, soft ball for grades, and base ball. In all of these counties basket ball is the greatest single source of revenue for Teachers' Associations.

Health Program

Only four counties of twelve have any thing like a definite school health program. Two of these counties, Greer and Harmon, each have one full time nurse to co-operate with the State Health Department in working with school children. In the other counties state nurses do what they can with a small number of State Health Department nurses in a wide field. This program consists principally of occasional tours for immunization against the more contagious diseases and an attempt to interest parents, teachers, and children in a health education program. This education program shows a tendency toward getting patrons interested in supporting a general health program.

A great weakness exists in the fact that few health records are kept on the child. A complete health record should be kept on each child in a convenient card file. This card should accompany the child when he moves. It is as much a part of his school history as his scholastic accomplishments.

Libraries

Twenty-nine states now have county library laws.

Oklahoma has no county library law, but it is successfully operating two county library systems, but not a county in this group is one of them. There are, however, five counties which have something in the form of a county library designed for professional growth and help for the teachers and to serve as a little supplement to the local school libraries. These counties are Beckham, Commanche, Cotton, Jackson, and Washita.

These libraries are all new and their number of books is small. All county superintendents that have County Libraries are very enthusiastic and optimistic relative to the future usefulness of County Libraries. The books in the libraries are checked out to rural schools in limited numbers for stated periods of time. In some counties libraries are purchased from the general revenue of the county. One county superintendent has succeeded in getting each rural district to contribute to the library fund.

All counties used books of the Oklahoma Library Commission to some extent. The schools would use more books of the Commission if the books were available.

The number of fiction, travel, history, science, and other books read has multiplied many times in the last decade. No school is any longer considered as having a good program unless the pupils are selecting and reading a wide variety of books.

"The future possibilities of the county-wide library service, through activities brought about by social trend are practically unlimited in a

scope."⁷

Meetings

"Undoubtedly the group meeting is one of the most effective agencies for improving teachers in service, as it enables the supervisor to set up high standards of achievement, whether it be in the meeting preliminary to the opening of school when the year's objectives are agreed upon; or the meeting preliminary to the opening of school when the year's objectives are agreed upon; or the meeting following a county-wide testing program when remedial measures are planned for the purpose of achieving a desired goal; or the meeting designed to insure the interpretation, use, and continuous growth of the course of study; or the meeting at which problems of classification and promotion are discussed, resulting in the development of definite policies for promotions; or the meeting where demonstration teaching takes place under supervised observation leading to higher standards in skills, habits, and attitudes."⁸

Though one of the oldest institutions of this group of activities, the teachers meeting is still one of the most successful. The ordinary functions of an average teacher's meeting are to combine a program of teacher training and entertainment. In all counties of Southwestern Oklahoma these meetings are sponsored by the County Teachers' Association. All of these counties have annual programs. This is the important teachers' meeting of the year. One county has an annual get together of rural teachers and rural school boards sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce

⁷ Journal of Rural Education. Vol. 5, p. 270. "The Social Trends of the County Library Activities."

⁸ Journal of Rural Education. Vol. 3, p. 343. "Raising Standards of County Supervision Through Teachers Meetings", by Jewell Simpson, State Supervisor of Elementary Schools, Maryland.

in the county seat. Five counties have superintendents and principals clubs that meet monthly or at the call of the president. But in all counties of this group, the combined annual meeting of all teachers gets the emphasis. Following is a copy of a program sent out to teachers of Caddo County:

PROGRAM

Caddo County

Teachers' Meeting

Anadarko, Oklahoma

Friday October 30, 1936

Officers of Caddo County Teachers' Association

Wm. Copeland President
Fort Cobb, Oklahoma

Billie Bryan Vice-President
Albert, Oklahoma

P. M. Friesen Secretary-Treasurer
Anadarko, Oklahoma

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MORNING SESSION

Friday, October 30, 1936

- 9:30 - Invocation Rev. John R. Kelly
- 9:35 - Welcome Address R. L. McLean
- 9:45 - Music Anadarko High School
- 9:55 - Response to Welcome Billy Bryan
- 10:00 - Character Education F. A. Balyeat, O. U.
- 10:40 - Music Fort Cobb High School
- 10:50 - Purpose and Aims
of the N. Y. A. Adeline Cunningham
- 11:10 - Music Carnegie High School
- 11:20 - Address M. A. Nash
President O. C. W.

Footnote: When you arrive in Anadarko, go to the High School to register. Your O. E. A. ticket will admit you to all program numbers.

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AFTERNOON SESSION

- 1:10 - Address Joe Scott
Assistant State Superintendent
- 1:45 - Entertainment Johnny Marvin, W. K. Y.
- 2:15 - Address Dr. Haskell Pruett, A. & M.
- 2:45 - Business Session General Assembly

EVENING SESSION

- 7:20 - Fine Art Program O. C. W.
- 9:00 - Good night

Mr. Blankenship shows that there are about three phases of the teachers institute which might be styled the

1. Subject Matter phase
2. Methods phase
3. Present phase
 - a. Keeping abreast with educational programs
 - b. Reappraising educational objectives
 - c. Formulating county-wide programs for the work of the year

"As a clearing house for educational progress, as a means for promoting county-wide programs in education, the county teachers institute still functions."⁹

Publicity

"Our present problem is to make possible a better understanding of the why and wherefore of modern educational practices."¹⁰

Miss McIntyre suggests the following plans for meeting this problem.

1. National Education Week, or local school visit week.
2. An Educational Rally.
3. A local field day, with demonstrations for the parents, etc.
4. The old school entertainment.
5. School Mothers Day or Afternoon.

⁹Journal of Rural Education. Vol. 4, p. 262.
 "The County Teachers Institute", by A. S. Blankenship.

¹⁰Vol. 3, p. 172. "Making the Public Understand and Appreciate Modern Methods of Classroom Instruction", by C. E. McIntyre.

6. Local professional or business people invited to address assemblies at school on what the school is doing.
7. Press campaign.
 - a. A weekly school column in local and county papers.
 - b. A monthly page of school news inserted in the local paper.
 - c. An independent school periodical.

All of the under discussion counties use the local newspapers for news and news only. It may be that a good opportunity for selling our schools to the county is here being passed up.

"A good publicity man attacking the problem of how to secure better support for rural schools through publicity would at once set about securing accurate information on the following:

- I. Who are the persons that actually decide the amount of support for rural schools?
- II. What are their chief characteristics that must be considered if such support is to be secured?
- III. What are the appeals that will influence them favorably?
 1. Direct appeals.
 2. Their chief objections and offsets to same.
- IV. How to present the appeals successfully.
- V. Good examples and descriptions of successful appeals or campaigns for better school support in rural communities.
- VI. Bibliography or list of sources and suggestions for material and its presentation."¹¹

State Supervisors for Help

All county superintendents in this group use Mr. Riling, Mr. Duke, and others from the rural division of the State Department of Education. Nearly all of the counties use these valuable people for group meetings at least once

¹¹Journal of Rural Education. Vol. 2, p. 290.
 "Publicity Work for Better Support of Rural Schools", by
 Carter Alexander of Columbia University.

annually. The programs of this department vary. Emphasis last year was placed upon reading and libraries. At present these staff members are busy explaining Oklahoma's new integrated courses of study.

These state men offer valuable help in their Model School Score Card for checking non-accredited as well as the accredited schools. The same procedure is good in the use of evaluating the work of teachers. A county superintendent can learn much by watching them work with the schools of a county, by reading their literature and by listening to their instructive lectures.

Each one of the State Teachers Colleges in Oklahoma offers some kind of help for the county superintendents and the Southwestern District is no exception. Mr. Ernest Crain is the supervisor from the college at Weatherford for the county superintendents in Southwestern Oklahoma. The counties which use the services of the district supervisor are: Commanche, Harmon, Jackson, Tillman, and Washita. The counties which use him some are: Beckham, Custer, and Caddo. The counties which do not use his services at all are: Cotton, Greer, Kiowa, and Roger Mills. The main reason why his services are not used more is because his services cannot be sufficiently available to all the counties in such a large area. Mr. Crain has made a speciality of organizing rural school singing work, and in this field he excells.

Tests and Testing

Elizabeth Rucker, supervisor of rural schools, Dorchester County, Maryland, has shown that tests may be used as an excellent means of helping the teacher and

"teachers who had not valued supervision found it to be of real service the source of study is being modified by the facts as shown by the use of tests."¹²

"Her use of tests is valuable, because she has made the testing merely a means toward an end and not an end in itself. The tests have shown teachers how their classes stood in the subjects tested, have shown them what needed to be done, have aroused in them a desire to do a better job.

"It is possible that the most important phase of the whole supervisory program may grow out of the public interest involved."¹³

These citations have been offered as examples of importance of the use of tests in helping teachers. All of the counties studied give both semester tests of the Oklahoma Department of Education to all one- and two-room schools.

A few county superintendents give the tests to all the grades of all the schools in the county. Several do not include independent schools in this testing program, because it is not customary for the county superintendent to work in the independent districts. Furthermore the county superintendents have little time to give to the

¹²Journal of Rural Education. Vol. 4, p. 262. "Supervisory Use of Tests in Rural Schools", by Elizabeth Rucker.

¹³Journal of Rural Education. Vol. 1, p. 311. "How One Superintendent of Rural Schools Used Standardized Educational Tests as a Basis for Supervisory Program", by J. C. Morrison.

independent districts and they feel the greatest need is in the rural schools.

Not any of the counties in this district have any regular testing program except that furnished by the Rural Division of the Oklahoma Department of Education.

Visitation

The laws of the State of Oklahoma require that the county superintendent visit the schools of his county at least twice during each school year. There is no doubt that all county superintendents in Southwestern Oklahoma visit schools that often and some of them see some of their schools many times during each year. The visitation could be made a good help to the teachers if some common sense is used in the visits.

Here are some valuable suggestions gleaned from some of the literature in the field showing how the visitation may be used to the best advantage.

"No visit should be made by the rural supervisor solely for the purpose of inspection."¹⁴

"No visit should be made unannounced.

"Should be a written record of the problems discussed.

"Teaching will be put upon a growing basis when the supervisors and administrators are thoroughly converted to the idea that teachers, as a class, are capable of originality; that they are capable not only of executing plans of work but of making plans. It is our duty to stimulate, to give praise when it is due, and, above, all, to preserve an

¹⁴Journal of Rural Education. Vol. 1, 1922, p. 194.

invincible faith in the potentialities of even the weaker teacher."¹⁵

While the county superintendent is visiting schools he can carry ideas of good teachers to other teachers in the same county. In fact, one of the greatest opportunities presents itself here. If the county superintendent is skillful in the selection of striking methods observed, and in disseminating them to other teachers, he can really render a useful service.

Visual Aids

Closely related to the library program and other forms of help is the program of visual aids. Only the counties of Comanche and Washita have a picture projection machine. The program of the use of the equipment has not yet been set up but the county superintendents concerned are very hopeful about a good beginning. Since no county superintendent in any of these poor counties of the southwest could afford to employ the services of an operator for the motion picture projector, a visual education course of training for the county superintendent would be of much value.

Organizations for Help to the Teachers

In all of these twelve counties there is no outside help for the teacher, experienced or unexperienced, except what may be given through the office of the county superintendent. It is therefore somewhat a question of organization

¹⁵Ibid., p. 197.

to be of the best help to the teachers. Looking forward to a broader program when more supervisory help may be added there is the question of how to organize for the best efforts in selecting and using the supervisory staff, if and when it is added.

The following arguments are presented about the types of supervisors to use.

"Educators who insist that the zone or district plan of supervision is best even for one-room rural schools, apparently have failed to consider that teachers in such schools have had little experience and training; that they have great range of ages and grades and many difficult problems which require the guidance and support of the wisest and best trained teachers. Highly efficient instructional supervision is impossible under the district zone plan, for efficient instructional supervisors are unwilling to work in county districts under such a plan."¹⁶

". . . supervision may be departmentalized on the basis of subjects by having a specialist to supervise each of the related subjects; or the basis of grades, by having a supervisor for each grade or limited number of consecutive grades. Either plan makes it possible to have specialists as supervisors. This plan had been used in Woods County, Ohio . . . since 1920."¹⁶

"The departmental plan adapts itself to any average county. It can be maintained as easily and as economically as the zone or district plan. It provides efficient supervision in rural districts. Departmental supervision justifies its cost through an increased efficiency in supervision."¹⁷

¹⁶Journal of Rural Education. Vol. 4, p. 29.
"Organization of Supervision in Woods County, Ohio".

¹⁷Ibid., p. 34.

CHAPTER IV

OBSTACLES IN THE WAY OF THE COUNTY SUPERINTENDENTS

In order for the writer to get some reaction of the county superintendents about obstacles in the program of work, he asked three questions of all of them, as follows:

What would help the county superintendent most in improving instruction?

1. Financial aid?
2. Authority to select the teachers?
3. Supervisors?

The authority to select teachers was not mentioned as the most important by any of the county superintendents.

The counties which mentioned the other two items jointly were: Caddo, Cotton, Kiowa, and Washita.

The counties that mentioned the supervisor first were: Commanche, Custer, Greer, Harmon, Jackson, and Tillman, six in all.

It is interesting to note that the county superintendents in the two poorest counties, Beckham and Roger Mills, listed finance as the greatest problem, but it will be recalled that four other counties mentioned it jointly with supervisors.

The results of this investigation might be compared to a study made by Florence M. Stubbs, Head of Rural Education, State Normal School, Farmville, Virginia, in which she has the following to say:

"What are some of the greatest obstacles in the way of developing and extending to every school district in the state instructional rural supervision?"

- "1. Lack of school funds.
2. Indifference on the part of educational leaders.
3. Lack of qualified rural supervisors.
4. Hardships incident to the work itself.
5. Attitude of teachers toward supervision."¹

Finance

Since finance looms up as of so much importance in any investigation, it seems pertinent to give some consideration to that phase of our subject. The need of more finance is so self evident that the need of discussing this subject is almost eliminated. But something said may be the cause of something done, eventually.

This subject falls naturally into two divisions: the understanding of school finance by the county superintendent, and the financing of the work of his office.

Since the financial estimates of the schools are prepared by auditors, it is not necessary for the county superintendent to be a budget expert. He should learn the general principles of checking financial statements, however. Probably the most important part of his work, along this line, is to see that the budget is properly prepared to include the state school financial aid. Many auditors have not understood the state aid program as administered under House Bill 212 or House Bill 6. Especially misunderstood and misinterpreted has been the

¹Journal of Rural Education, Vol. 3, p. 427.

so called local initiative of House Bill 6. The failure of auditors and excise boards to correctly interpret this provision has been expensive to many school districts. Thus, it will be seen, it is necessary for the county superintendent to be an expert on state financial school aid in Oklahoma.

The county superintendent will do well to get school boards of the smaller rural schools to come to the office for the preparation of financial estimates. He can be of service to encourage boards to place proper amounts in the various items. Many of these boards see little necessity in setting up money for library or instructional supplies unless encouraged to do so by explanations of the county superintendents. The schools that have superintendents will be taken care of, by these school heads, in proper budgeting. In general, the county superintendent must see especially to his smaller schools.

Table III shows the salaries of the county superintendents, their deputies, and their operating allowance in each county.

The matter of lack of finance for properly operating his office gives a Southwestern Oklahoma County Superintendent much concern. Not only are the county superintendent and his assistant underpaid, but the amount of finance for office supplies is often appalling. No county superintendent's office in this group receives more than \$750.00 for office supplies. Four receive only \$400.00 each

Table III

THE SALARIES OF THE COUNTY SUPERINTENDENTS AND THEIR DEPUTIES

County	County Superintendent	Deputy	Expense Allowance
Beckham	\$150.00	\$ 75.00	\$400.00
Caddo	175.00	100.00	675.00
Comanche	150.00	100.00	590.00
Cotton	120.00	65.00	400.00
Custer	150.00	70.00	400.00
Greer	120.00	60.00	500.00
Harmon	100.00	50.00	400.00
Jackson	150.00	90.00	600.00
Kiowa	150.00	100.00	700.00
Roger Mills	120.00	None full time	300.00
Tillman	141.66	75.00	750.00
Washita	150.00	75.00	550.00

annually, while one county superintendent receives only \$300.00 for this item. On such amounts it is impossible to buy supplies for the office and dependent districts.

The independent districts are as much entitled by law to secure supplies from the county superintendent's office as the dependent districts. Since their taxes help support county offices, their tax payers should be entitled to the saving that may be made as the result of large quantity purchases.

The greatest handicaps caused, however, by the lack of finance are the shortage of personnel for conducting efficiently the work over the county. Three fields mentioned here are typical.

(1) Health. This has been somewhat discussed under activities. The need of a county school health program is great. Caddo County should have at least one full time medical doctor and nurse to give attention to this program. In more sparsely settled areas, two counties could combine for such a program. It is better to have a doctor give his full time to two counties than for him to give only a part of his time to one county and then use the remainder of his time practicing private medicine.

(2) Compulsory Attendance. It is impossible for the county superintendent to devote much time to this problem. His other duties are too numerous. It is true that the larger districts have seen to it that their attendance is much better in recent years. This has been caused by the fact that school maintenance aid, under House Bill 6, was paid in accordance to school attendance. Generally, the enforcement of the compulsory attendance law is very weak. An attendance officer could render very valuable service.

(3) Supervision. If the county superintendent could employ even one reading supervisor, a distinct service would be rendered the rural pupils of his county.

Mr. A. L. Crable, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, has repeatedly recommended that provision be

made for county supervisors in state school aid bills. It seems to the writer that such provisions should be made for health, attendance, and supervisory officers. The failure of counties to have these officials can usually not be laid at the feet of county commissioners and excise boards. The present resources of Western Oklahoma Counties will not permit the employment of such officials.

It appears that state support for the county superintendent's office is as reasonable an assumption and as necessary, as state aid for schools generally. The office of county superintendents exists solely as a school office. A national point of view is given as follows:

"A typical county cannot hope to get the most efficient service from its county superintendent until it provides him with assistance of the amount and nature needed. To do so is good economy."²

²The County Superintendent in the United States.
Office of Education, Washington, p. 41.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Much has been said about the county superintendent's qualifications and the details of his office.

"It is said that the office is too much mixed with politics; that the personnel lacks academic and professional training and experience and is below the standards of district and city superintendents; that the powers, duties, and responsibilities of the county superintendent are not sufficiently definite; that the superintendent lacks clerical assistance and traveling expenses; that the salary attached to the office is insufficient to secure high-grade professional service; and that the position is uncertain due to the political nature of the office."¹

Some of these allegations are due to legal restrictions which need to be removed. In the matter of trained county superintendents, Southwestern Oklahoma is fortunate in having forward looking individuals. All have at least Bachelors Degrees from college and years of successful school experience, while more than one-half of these county superintendents are doing work towards a Master's degree in their professional field. This, coupled with the fact that the State Department of Public Instruction is doing much to add importance to the office of county superintendent, adds greatly to the outlook for this important office in Southwestern Oklahoma.

After the writer has made a personal visit to each

¹The Legal Status of the County Superintendent,
U. S. Office of Education, Washington, p. 1.

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office for investigation and research, it is found that the county superintendents are limited for time, finance, help, and equipment for carrying out a helpful program for the teachers of their counties.

Studies of the work of the county superintendents were made in the following fields of activities:

Adult Education

Bulletins to the Teachers

Demonstrations

Festivals and Contests

Health Program

Libraries

Meetings

Publicity

State Supervisors for help

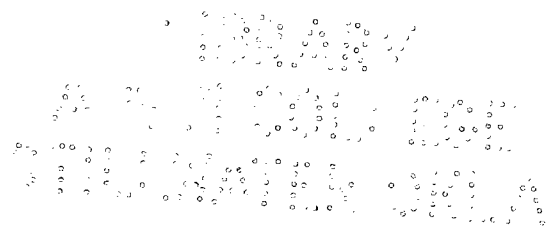
Tests and Testing Visitation

Visitation

Visual Aids

The results show that there is a lack of utilization of these activities to help the teachers.

The obstacles in the way of help are: finance, professional and skilled supervision, time, and interest on the part of the tax-paying public. Perhaps the greatest obstacle is that of finance for with that need satisfied there would be additional help.



Typist: Mildred Pruett