

THE FACTORS THAT HAVE INFLUENCED PUBLIC SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

DURING THE PAST THIRTY YEARS IN OKLAHOMA

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DURING THE PAST THIRTY YEARS IN OKLAHOMA

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CHAPTER I  
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE  
World

The first record of compulsory attendance is found with the Jews. The rabbis required, in A. D. 64, that every community should support a school, and that attendance should be compulsory.<sup>1</sup> The child entered school at the age of six. It is apparent that the Jews put into practice eighteen centuries ago a condition of things which is with us today largely an unrealized ideal.<sup>2</sup> Six years later Jerusalem was destroyed and the Jewish nation was dispersed.

Charlemagne, Emperor of Rome, sought to turn the current of thought toward a national program of attendance. Consequently he decreed that monasteries that would not open their doors for school purposes would be closed.<sup>3</sup> He became superintendent of schools, being familiar with the educational interests of his kingdom. He introduced the practice of compulsory education for all children, in 800 A. D., and ordered that truant children be first deprived of food as punishment, and that if that did not suffice, they be brought before him.<sup>4</sup> At death his attempts were forgotten by the people.

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1 Levi Seeley, History of Education, p. 42.

2. Ibid, p. 43.

3 Ibid, p. 127.

4 Ibid, p. 128-129.

It was not until Martin Luther proposed that the Bible should be read and interpreted by each person for himself, that the corollary of universal education was forced upon the minds of the people.

Luther and his followers stood for the education of all, to be supported and enforced by the state.

In 1619 the little Duchy of Weimar made the school attendance of all children, six to twelve years of age, compulsory, and the same idea was instituted in Gotha by Duke Ernest, in 1642.<sup>5</sup>

In Germany the idea of compulsory attendance took deep root, consequently the Germans were the first important modern nation to enforce the education for all.

In 1717, King Frederick William I issued the first attendance law for Prussia. In France the idea awaited the work of the National Convention, which in 1792 ordered three years of education compulsory for all, but these orders have never been successfully executed. Children are required to attend school only until they can pass the primary examination, and brilliant children are often able to complete this requirement before they arrive at the age of twelve.<sup>6</sup> Compulsory attendance did not begin in England until after 1870, but met with opposition, and only recently have comprehensive reforms been provided. Children between the ages of five and fourteen are required, under the law, to attend school regularly, but enforcement of the laws are lax.

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5 Ellwood P. Cubberley, The History of Education, p. 815

6. Paul Monroe, A Cyclopedia of Education, p. 286.

## United States

In the United States the beginning of compulsory attendance legislation dates from the Rhode Island child-labor law of 1840. The first modern compulsory attendance law was enacted by Massachusetts in 1852.<sup>7</sup> It applied to children from eight to fourteen, and compelled them to attend twelve weeks each year. Later the law was amended fixing responsibility for enforcement and setting forth the penalty for violation. In 1867 Vermont followed the lead, and in 1871 New Hampshire, Michigan, and Washington Territory adopted compulsory attendance. Connecticut attempted to profit by the errors in the Massachusetts plan and passed laws in 1872 differing only slightly from the laws of her sister state. From that time on, the spread of this principle was fairly rapid. In 1889, twenty-seven states had acted, including all those in the North except three. The strict conservatism of the South is shown by the fact that Kentucky was the first state of that section to act, and she did nothing until 1896. Thereafter her neighbors began to fall in line, the movement being marked first along the border, but extending gradually toward the Gulf. In 1913 Alabama, Florida, Georgia, South Carolina and Texas alone were without some sort of attendance law.<sup>8</sup>

From 1917 until 1927 there has arisen renewed interest and activity in bettering attendance all over the country. States of the North and West have in many ways widened the application of

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7 Ellwood P. Cubberley, The History of Education, p. 817.

8 William A. Cook, Federal and State School Administration, pp. 237-239.

their laws and increased the severity of penalty for infraction. Those of the South have all enacted some type of law. Four of the lagging six acted in 1915, Georgia followed in 1916, and Mississippi made compulsory attendance universal in this country by her local option law when passed in 1918.

Table I.<sup>9</sup>

## DATE OF ENACTMENT OF FIRST COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE LAW IN EACH STATE

State	Enacted Law	:	State	Enacted Law
Massachusetts	1852	:	Idaho	1887
Dist. of Col.	1864	:	Colorado	1889
Vermont	1867	:	Oregon	1889
New Hampshire	1871	:	Utah	1890
Michigan	1871	:	Pennsylvania	1895
Washington	1871	:	Kentucky	1896
Connecticut	1872	:	West Virginia	1897
New Mexico	1872	:	Indiana	1897
Nevada	1873	:	Arizona	1899
New York	1874	:	Iowa	1902
Kansas	1874	:	Maryland	1902
California	1874	:	Missouri	1905
Maine	1875	:	Tennessee	1905
New Jersey	1875	:	Delaware	1907
Wyoming	1876	:	North Carolina	1907
Ohio	1877	:	Oklahoma	1907
Wisconsin	1879	:	Virginia	1908
Rhode Island	1883	:	Arkansas	1909
Illinois	1883	:	Louisiana	1910
North Dakota	1883	:	Alabama	1915
South Dakota	1883	:	Florida	1915
Montana	1883	:	South Carolina	1915
Minnesota	1885	:	Texas	1915
Nebraska	1887	:	Georgia	1916
		:	Mississippi	1918

\* Including the District of Columbia

The high percentage of illiteracy revealed through the records gathered during the Civil War probably stimulated the various State Legislatures into action. Twelve of the sixteen states that had not adopted some form of compulsory attendance legislation by 1900 were States in which the negro problem was of paramount consideration.<sup>10</sup> From 1890 to 1915 the average school term increased 19 per cent. During the same period the average annual attendance of children between five and eighteen years of age increased 55 per cent, and the per cent of illiteracy among persons ten years of age and over decreased about fifty per cent.<sup>11</sup>

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10 Russell Sage Foundation, A Comparative Study of Public School Systems in the Forty-Eight States, p. 14-15.

11 William A. Cook, Federal and State School Administration, pp. 248-249

TABLE II.

ENUMERATION, ENROLLMENT, AND AVERAGE DAILY ATTENDANCE IN THE  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF OKLAHOMA SINCE STATEHOOD, 1907-1938

Year:	Enumeration: January	Enrollment:	Average Daily Attendance	% A. D. A. of Enroll.
1907	.....	.....	.....	.....
1908	458,481	276,272	175,673	63.58 %
1909	.....	.....	.....	.....
1910	490,165	389,906	229,144	58.77
1911	509,577	405,873	260,018	64.06
1912	488,913	407,482	271,303	66.58
1913	511,231	432,451	284,186	65.72
1914	575,021	459,194	298,200	64.94
1915	541,028	455,767	299,143	65.64
1916	557,318	473,702	299,368	63.20
1917	587,603	496,355	309,705	62.40
1918	601,741	510,139	311,227	61.00
1919	611,089	519,638	324,639	62.47
1920	623,770	544,825	330,285	60.62
1921	647,038	565,201	364,415	64.48
1922	659,733	588,707	399,367	67.82
1923	670,533	607,205	409,773	67.49
1924	656,192	598,912	398,840	66.59
1925	661,201	607,454	427,650	70.40
1926	669,156	601,130	415,337	60.09
1927	677,125	606,960	402,154	66.36
1928	692,457	632,858	427,958	67.62
1929	697,854	627,413	431,151	68.72
1930	704,325	633,369	438,254	69.19
1931	769,897	634,345	457,638	62.15
1932	764,599	622,999	457,430	73.42
1933	765,546	610,004	456,442	74.83
1934	766,615	615,474	455,493	74.00
1935	761,383	658,257	501,890	76.25
1936	751,042	658,969	497,974	75.57
1937	727,734	.....	.....	.....
1938	707,734	.....	.....	.....

\* Source: Biennial Reports of the State Superintendents of  
Public Instruction of the State of Oklahoma.  
Daily Oklahoman, Vol. 47, No. 102, April 20, 1938

..... Authentic material not available.



TABLE III.

## FULLY ACCREDITED HIGH SCHOOLS IN OKLAHOMA, 1914-1936

Year	Number of Units			Total
	Sixteen or More (4 years)	Nine to Fifteen (3 years)	Fewer than Nine (1-2 years)	
1914	104	27	43	174
1916	131	21	31	183
1918	222	32	41	295
1920	301	70	104	475
1922	359	86	133	578
1924	426	175	107	708
1926	432	242	97	771
1928	478	246	118	842
1930	458	294	83	834
1932	510	292	48	850
1934	552	286	30	868
1936	471	247	15	842

\* Source: Biennial Reports of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction in Oklahoma.



TABLE IV.

PROGRESS IN ENROLLMENT AND GRADUATES OF THE ELEMENTARY  
AND HIGH SCHOOLS OF OKLAHOMA, 1910-1936

Year	Elementary 1-8		High School 8-12	
	Enroll.	Graduates	Enroll.	Graduates
1910	417,171	3,725	10,612	
1914	477,494	6,745	19,414	
1918	484,877	9,202	34,761	
1922	517,317	13,327	48,512	7,358
1926	528,820	29,055	77,950	11,417
1930	525,664	30,810	99,956	14,476
1934	497,500	35,024	111,223	18,306
1936	482,420	35,819	120,978	19,186

\* Source: Biennial Reports of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction in Oklahoma.

## CHAPTER II

FIRST ADMINISTRATION OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF  
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION, 1907-1911

The Constitution of Oklahoma, passed in 1907, provided that a system of free public schools, open to all children of the state and free from all sectarian control, should be organized and maintained.<sup>1</sup> The State Superintendent of Public Instruction is made the general administrator for the public common schools of the state. Many of his duties are outlined specifically by law and others involve application of general principles of administration necessary in the effort to improve the general school conditions in the state. The First Legislature passed House Bill number 31. The bill became a law on April 10, 1908:

An act providing for compulsory attendance in the public schools of children between the ages of eight and sixteen years.<sup>2</sup>

This law arranged for exemptions of children with mental or physical disabilities, procedure for complaints, books to be furnished to the needy, scholarships for wage-earning children of widows, and set penalties for violations. In 1910 this law was revised to make numerous minor improvements in the language and attempted to clarify meanings.

In the next thirty years much was done to fill in the skeleton of the Oklahoma school system that was provided for by the constitution. Session laws have performed much needed assistance

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1 Thoburn, J. B. and Holcomb, I. M., A History of Oklahoma, p.

2 State of Oklahoma, Session Laws of 1907-1908, pp. 393-395.

as the state has grown in maturity. Legislative actions showed the same notable development as proved by her sixteen revisions of the compulsory attendance law since statehood.

Upon the advent of statehood, the most important work was the organization of district schools in the new counties of the state. The rural district schools were the foundation of all the work. Few of the children, comparatively speaking, would ever attend a higher state institution of learning; therefore, it became necessary to maintain schools in reach of every child in the state.

By 1908, 2,200 school districts were organized in the forty-one counties carved out of the former Indian Territory. There were 140,000 children enrolled, some of whom had never attended a school of any kind. From the original Oklahoma Territory there were thirty-four counties organized into 3,441 school districts.<sup>3</sup>

At an early date, it was felt that the duty of the state was to make these rural schools so strong that they would at least give a glimpse of real education and create a thirst for learning that would stay with the student through life. This viewpoint was maintained through the advancement of the rural public schools, which promoted the movement of providing adequate playgrounds for the use of children. If more playgrounds were provided educational leaders knew that there would be less difficulty for the teacher to maintain order and discipline in the classroom, because the children would be engaged in healthy play

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<sup>3</sup> Second Biennial Report of the State Superintendent, 1908, p. 74.

and recreation, rather than creating disorder.

The gap between the rural district schools and the state schools is shown in the following quotation:

Fully three-fourths of the population of the state live in the country. The people who live in the cities and good towns have a high school in which they can receive an education sufficient for the battle of life if they are unable to attend anywhere more. But the people in the country, with few exceptions, have only the district schools and some of these schools are poorly graded and in charge of one teacher. The work before us is to establish consolidated, or rural high schools, in reach of every child in the state.<sup>4</sup>

A campaign was started to give every child in the state consolidated or rural high school education. This was an important advance toward the slogan that had been adopted a year earlier, "a school in reach of every child in the state". The children could not be sent to the city high school because these high schools were for the citizens of that community and they could not admit people outside of their district without charging them tuition.

In 1908 a special law authorizing consolidated school districts was passed by the legislature. This was Senate Bill number 237:

providing for the formation of consolidated school districts by the voluntary disorganization and consolidation of adjacent school districts; the establishment of consolidated schools in which certain branches shall be taught, the transportation of pupils to and from school, and the disposition of the property and indebtedness of the said disorganized districts.<sup>5</sup>

This law was hindered by small sectional differences that multiplied and asserted themselves, as was shown in the reports of the

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4 Third Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, State of Oklahoma, p. 29.

5 State of Oklahoma, Session Laws of 1907, 1908,

county superintendents. Much of the money for transportation was used for building one-room schools in remote sections of the districts, and left the central high school as the pupils ultimate goal. This developed into our present Union Graded Schools, or more commonly called wing schools. This plan was most popular in districts where roads and bridges had not yet been constructed and where the children had inadequate means of transportation. It was first tried in Rogers County, and included grades from one to five. The superintendent of the central school, at regular intervals, was supposed to visit the wing schools and to have general supervision of them. This plan had the effect of giving the county superintendent several assistants well qualified.

The third plan adopted proved to be the least expensive. The system enjoyed neither public transportation nor wing schools, the school funds being centered upon one building. The tendency was to reduce the size of the district surrounding such buildings, so that children would not be out of walking distance from the school. The non-transportation plan and the wing plan were first carried out by Cecil Forsythe in Rogers County.<sup>6</sup>

Transportation was the rock on which consolidation was most often wrecked. The average farmer was extremely conservative. The farmer saw in the question of consolidation only one thing worthy of consideration, namely, transportation. If this

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6. Third Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, State of Oklahoma, pp. 337-339.

question was answered, almost invariably the battle was won.<sup>7</sup> Farmers usually measured value in dollars and cents. They felt the sting of extravagance when they were asked to abandon three or four school-houses and build a new one. They also knew that they could hire a sixteen-year-old girl to "keep" their school as cheaply as they could hire a wagon and team to haul their children to school. It was necessary to educate the farmer in order that an appreciation of the better system could be felt.

Another step in the progress of the Oklahoma school attendance was the initiation of the feeling that contracts for a five-year term with teachers would more nearly obtain the qualities in teaching which were desirable. Contracts at this time were only valid for a period of three years or less; therefore, the positions lacked the security necessary for long-termed conscientious work.

Honorable E. D. Cameron was the first State Superintendent. During this first administration much substantial progress was made in school attendance through the important school legislation that was enacted. A law providing uniform text-books was enacted, a State Text-Book Commission was created and a compulsory school law was passed and revised. The consolidation of rural schools promulgated better teaching qualification and ultimately better schools. At the close of the first state administration in 1910, Oklahoma had made liberal provisions for all branches of education.

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7 Third Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, State of Oklahoma, p. 522.



TABLE V.

OKLAHOMA'S RANK IN COMPARISON WITH PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEMS IN  
THE FORTY-EIGHT STATES, 1910

Rank	Factor	1910
1	Amount expended for schools for each \$100 of wealth in state.....	.75¢
16	Children enrolled in public schools.....	81.4%
	Children enrolled in private schools.....	.8%
	Children not enrolled in any school.....	17.8%
35	Value of public school property per child.....	\$26
32	Average expenditure per child per year.....	\$13
36	Average days of attendance per child.....	65 days
32	Average number of days public schools open.....	140
34	Average number days attend by each enrolled.....	78.8
	Average per cent of attendance.....	68.1%
33	Cost per child per day.....	15¢
29	Average annual salary per teacher.....	\$408
31	Oklahoma approximate rank in 10 specified* educational features.	

\* Source: Russell Sage Foundation  
"A Comparative Study of the Public School Systems in  
the Forty-Eight States"

## CHAPTER III

SECOND ADMINISTRATION OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF  
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION, 1911-1915.

It has just been shown that the main problem of the first administration was to find the duties of the state toward the schools, and methods for correcting and building the school program for the advancement of school attendance in Oklahoma. The second administration, with R. H. Wilson as State Superintendent of Public Instruction, took steps to legally provide many of the necessary measures.

A study of Table VI shows a substantial growth in almost every phase of school life. The average length of the school term has increased, and the average percentage of pupils' attendance was higher than in previous years. A more practical course of study was being offered in the schools and a larger percentage of the pupils were finishing the eighth grade. There was a larger number of rural schools, more districts offering high school courses and more pupils enrolled in the high schools. A greater desire among the teachers for professional training was created and higher academic standards were being set up, the highest that ever had been known in the state. All of this affords evidences that the progress of the school attendance was being thoroughly studied and treated. These external and internal factors were undeniably greatly influenced by the desires of the public for education.

It seemed that the compulsory attendance law was a good one, but the county superintendents were observing that it was



not being enforced. This was due to the fact that the enforcement of the law was placed in the hands of the school board members who were not naturally inclined to make trouble with any neighbor who was disposed to violate the law. It was recommended that the enforcement be placed in the hands of the state authorities. This was only carried out in part by the Fourth Legislature. The law<sup>1</sup> made it the duty of the school board or any person living in the district to make complaint with the justice of peace of the township. Also, the duty of the teachers were to ascertain any pupils who were absent without proper excuse and to notify the county superintendent. It was then reported to the County Attorney who filed a complaint against the offender.

Pupils in the consolidated districts were benefited in many ways by the graded schools maintained for them. The first state aid was provided for by the passage of the law approved on March 20, 1911.<sup>2</sup> There were at that time 103 consolidated schools located in forty-two counties of the state. This number showed an increase in consolidation, fully vindicating the policy of aiding the schools. The 1911 legislature provided state aid: first, for the union graded or consolidated schools already established; and second, for the district schools of not less than twenty-five square miles in area that were to be established. One of the terms for the state aid was an actual attendance during

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1 State of Oklahoma, Session Laws of 1913, Article 13, pp. 561-563.

2 State of Oklahoma, Session Laws of 1911, pp. 245-247.

six scholastic months of not less than one hundred and thirty scholastic pupils residing within the boundaries of the district. The Session Laws of 1915 added terms for union graded districts having no fewer than forty pupils.<sup>3</sup>

The main problem confronted from the beginning of consolidation was transportation. In 1911, the legislature passed House Bill No. 462:

An Act to provide for the transportation of pupils in consolidated school districts, to and from school for all pupils living one and one-half miles or more therefrom.<sup>4</sup>

With the cooperation of the State Highway Department, the school took a deeper interest in the subject of road building. On the sixteenth of October, 1914, the pupils of the high school at Seminole, Oklahoma, built one mile of road under the inspection of the State Highway Commissioner. Many other schools arranged to do likewise. The road was to be known as "Educational Road". After the road was completed, trees were set out on either side in order that the beauty of the road might be enhanced. With this road as an example to the community, it was hoped that the general condition of all the roads might be improved. Through this improvement might come a more general consolidation of the rural schools by making transportation of the pupils less difficult. A community that had good roads would not be content with an inferior school.

A result of this movement was another step taken by the legislature in 1915, allowing a consolidated school district to

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3 Session Laws of 1915, State of Oklahoma, p. 312.

4 State of Oklahoma, Session Laws of 1911, pp. 265-266.

provide free transportation for all pupils under ten years of age.

It was realized that the rural schools had failed to keep pace with the city schools. The last decennial census showed a marked decrease in the rural population. The vast number of rural citizens that moved to the city could only be arrested by the improvement of the rural schools.

For the betterment of the rural schools, and indirectly the progress of school attendance, there was a rural school inspector connected with the Oklahoma Department of Education. The position was only occupied for eighteen months because the legislature in 1913 made no appropriation for the office.

Another factor in the progress of school attendance was the more accurate scholastic census. It had been the custom among the school boards in the past to take the scholastic enumeration between the fifteenth day of January and the date of the annual school meeting in June. This made possible the enrolling of all children who lived in the district at the time the enumeration was begun and all who may have moved into the district before June. The result of this plan was that many names were duplicated and the districts received a greater apportionment from the state funds than they were entitled to. Senate Bill No. 75 did much to remedy this.<sup>5</sup> This act provided that persons enumerated must be those living within the school district on the date of January 15, and all enumeration must be completed

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5 State of Oklahoma, Session Laws of 1913, Article 9, pp. 542-546.

by February fifth. For the purpose of protecting the enumeration, the "enumerator" had the authority to administer the oath prescribed on the form. Any person having a child of school age under his supervision could be punished as guilty of misdemeanor if he refused to furnish the desired information or to sign the certificate. The enumerator was also guarded, making the scholastic census as accurate as possible. Before this time there was a great inaccuracy, now the state was guarding against any possible duplications or omissions.

Of minor importance, in attracting the students into the public schools were the playground and kindergarten laws. In 1913 kindergartens were permissibly established and maintained in connection with the public schools for all children between the ages of four and six years. This added to the enrollment of the public schools, and their efficiency was to be insured by the establishment of training schools for kindergarten teachers in 1914. The second law, House Bill No. 206, gave the boards of education in certain districts authority to use school buildings and grounds for public recreation and playground purposes.<sup>6</sup>

At the beginning of the second administration the academic record of the teaching force in the public schools was not as high as it should have been. Perhaps it was safe to say that not more than fifty per cent of those teaching in the rural schools had done any creditable work above the first year of

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6 State of Oklahoma, Session Laws of 1915, pp. 41-44.

the high school and a considerable number had never gone beyond the eighth grade.<sup>7</sup> This taken in connection with the immature years of many of the teachers did not promise a total result as should be demanded for the children. By the close of the second administration much progress had been made for the advancement of the teachers' qualifications. The Fourth Legislature of this state set up more definite requirements for the teachers obtaining the First, Second, and Third Grade Certificates.<sup>8</sup> The best authorities realized that the old county summer normal with its mediocre faculty and its annual flock of applicants for certificates had about served its day in Oklahoma. An act was provided for the issuance of life high school teaching certificates to graduates of colleges requiring entrance requirements equivalent to a regular four years' high school course, and requiring a four years' college course for graduation.<sup>9</sup>

An examination of Table VI discloses a sixty-eight per cent increase in the number of teachers holding First Grade Certificates in 1914 over the number in 1910; in comparison to the smaller increase (12.39%) in the number of teachers and the 9.76% increase in salaries paid to them.

It seems apparent to the writer that there will be more enthusiasm for education when the attendance is more regular, the classes larger, and the spirit of emulation, both in study and sport, more keen. One of the first effects of consolidation

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7 State of Oklahoma, Fourth Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, pp. 10-15.

8 State of Oklahoma, Session Laws of 1913, pp. 563-570.

9 State of Oklahoma, Session Laws of 1915, pp. 89-90.

is to hold boys and girls in school, simply because school is more interesting. There is opportunity for community enlivenment by means of the organization of the social interests about the school. By making the farm community more attractive in a social way, it served to keep the young people of the rural population on the farm.

The second State Superintendent, R. H. Wilson, began his administration in January, 1911. Conditions were not the most favorable for rapid progress in education. The financial burdens incident to the launching of a new state were still handing over the people; yet in the face of these obstacles the people rallied to the cause of education and the legislation was reasonably liberal. During this administration a number of important laws affecting the schools were enacted. Among them, a law setting aside 40,000 acres of land sold for the purpose of aiding the establishment of rural consolidated schools. The most important and far-reaching legislation of this administration was the law creating a State Board of Education; which, during the first year did much toward unifying the school system. A uniform course of study for the high schools of Oklahoma was adopted by the Board in 1912 and distributed among the teachers of the state.<sup>10</sup> A look into the future revealed the fact that undeveloped material resources promised abundant aid in building a system of public education commensurate with the growing ideals of a practical and progressive citizenship.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> First Biennial Report of the State Board of Education in Oklahoma, p. 192.

<sup>11</sup> Fourth Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction in Oklahoma, p. 232.



TABLE VI

COMPARATIVE STUDY OF FACTORS AFFECTING THE PROGRESS  
OF SCHOOL ATTENDANCE, 1910-11 and 1914-15

Factor	1910-11	1914-15	Increase	Decrease
Enumeration (Jan.)	509,577	541,028	6.17%	
Enrollment	405,873	455,767	12.29	
Average Daily Atten.	260,018	299,143	15.04	
% A.D.A. of Enrol.	64.06%	65.64%		
Enrollment in H. Sch.	10,612	19,414	82.94	
Enrollment in Elem. Schools	417,171	477,494	14.46	
Eighth Grade Diplomas	3,725	6,745	81.07	
High School Graduates	.....	.....	.....	
Number of Teachers	9,473	11,739	12.39	
No. First Grade Certif.	25%	42%	68.	
Av. Teachers' Salaries	\$408.	\$447.83	9.76	
Av. Length Term-days	100	136	36.	
Amount spent per Child	\$13.	\$13.89	6.84	
No. Centralized Schools	103	109	5.83	

\*Sources: Fifth Biennial Report of State Superintendent of Public Instruction in Oklahoma, 1914.  
A Brief Statement of the Growth of the Schools of Oklahoma for the Past Four Years, 1914, R. H. Wilson.

## CHAPTER IV

THIRD ADMINISTRATION OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF  
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION, 1915-1918

The unprecedented prosperity and growth experienced in the industrial and commercial enterprises of this state were reflected in the educational system during the third administration.

There were more than five thousand districts in Oklahoma that could not provide high school instruction; therefore, the children had no free high school advantages. In 1917, the legislature passed an act regulating the transfer of pupils from these districts.<sup>1</sup> The school board in its annual estimate provided for a fund sufficient to pay the tuition of such pupils that had completed the course of study offered in the district school; such pupils attended a high school in another district. This tuition was paid upon receipt of an itemized statement showing attendance of the child during the term, the certificate of attendance and report of progress sworn to by the teacher or principal of the high school. This transfer law made possible the completion of high school for thousands of pupils, and required an accurate check on the attendance.

Consolidation has been given a trial in this state. The legislature in 1911 made an appropriation to be used in extending state aid to schools meeting certain requirements. Because of the fact that no specific amount was appropriated at that

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1 State of Oklahoma, Session Laws of 1917, pp. 449-452.



time, the attorney general held that no money could be distributed under the act. The legislature in 1913 appropriated \$100,000 to be distributed under the terms of the 1911 act. It was reasonably expected that the legislature would continue the policy of extending financial assistance to districts of this type, as a result, many communities planned to organize. The legislature in 1915 failed to make an appropriation for this purpose. Upon the State Superintendent's recommendation the legislature in 1917 apportioned \$175,000 for the purpose of aiding union graded and consolidated schools.<sup>2</sup>

The biennial report of the department of education for the year 1914 contained a statement of the beginnings of an effort to establish in each county a model school. A plan was developed by which standards necessary to be attained before a school might be classed as a model school was to be placed in the hands of the teachers. It was hoped that plan might exert a wholesome influence over rural school conditions generally.

In July 1914, the State Board of Education issued a course of study for the common schools of the state. This course outlined the work of the first eight grades, arranged to place emphasis on the subjects taught in the rural schools. A revision was made the following year for the purpose of basing the work outlined on the new books adopted by the Board.<sup>3</sup> A revision of

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2 Session Laws of 1917, pp. 124 and 460.

3 Third Biennial Report of the State Board of Education of Oklahoma, p. 82.

the High School Manual, a course of study for the high schools of the state, was also prepared through the State Board of Education.

A marked tendency was observed in the trend of practical instruction. Agriculture became more thoroughly taught, domestic science more popular as a school subject, and elementary physical training offered. In many rural districts, arrangements were made to serve hot lunches. Play and games were more closely supervised and directed. Athletic contests between rural schools were encouraged and county-wide athletic meets were held.

Awakened interest in the school was a result of the Moonlight Schools for adults. The purpose of this movement was threefold: First, to provide instruction for illiterate and near illiterate adults; second, to provide instruction for foreign-born citizens; third, to improve the conditions of the schools by improving the conditions of the community and bringing the parents into a more personal relation with the ideals of the school curriculum.<sup>4</sup> It was found that in every community where these night schools were organized that the regular day schools were benefited.

The number of students who have completed the eighth grade course offered in the rural schools has steadily increased as shown by Table IV. As the length of the term increased the number of pupils who completed the course were multiplied. Table VII will show that the isolated rural districts make an

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4 Sixth Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, p. 31.

exceptionally poor showing. Not only was the shortest term provided, but children attended school the shortest number of days. The attendance in all except the independent districts appears to be below the actual requirements of the compulsory attendance laws.

TABLE VII

ENROLLMENT, ATTENDANCE AND LENGTH OF TERM IN SEVERAL  
CLASSES OF DISTRICTS FOR THE SCHOOL YEAR CLOSING  
June 30, 1918

Classes of Districts	Enroll- ment	A.D.A. 1-12	% of At- tendance Based on Enroll.	Av. Length Term- days	Av. Days each Child Attended	Average Days each Child Absent
Independ.	184,545	127,862	65	180	117	63
Village	69,474	40,567	58	162	94	63
Union Grad.	3,754	2,459	65	150	97	53
Consol.	15,926	8,968	56	154	86	68
Rural	277,637	153,659	55	134	74	60

\* Source: Seventh Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction in Oklahoma, p.

The rural school supervisor, E. A. Duke, assumed his duties on December 1, 1916, a position made possible through the financial assistance extended to the State Department of Education by the General Education Board. The unprecedented conditions brought about by the World War interfered very much with the organization of consolidated districts. The conservatism of the rural people was still the chief obstacle. They were quick to seize the opportunity offered them, basing their opposition before on the grounds of inadequate transportation, they now based their opposition on broad patriotic grounds. Although Table X shows

a marked increase of 25.68% in the number of centralized schools, it was realized that the school attendance in the independent districts was better than in rural or consolidated districts, as noted in Table VII. There was a notable increase in the holding power of all schools in the state during the administration.

An investigation was made during 1917 for the purpose of determining the number of common school graduates who finished the course of study under the instruction of first, second, and third grade teachers. It was found that 66.3 per cent of the eighth grade graduates were taught by only 29.7 per cent of the teachers, those holding first grade certificates. At the other extreme, there were 27.4 per cent of the teachers holding third grade certificates and they only had 7.2 per cent of the eighth grade graduates. It was impossible to train teachers rapidly enough. The burden was placed on the betterment of the rural schools by reorganizing it to make possible for untrained teachers to work under the close daily supervision of trained principals and in daily association with trained teachers. This was made possible only through the consolidation of rural schools.

It had been apparent for some time that State Schools did not have the facilities for training all the teachers needed in the common schools of the state. When the standards of the city high schools were raised to meet the entrance requirements of universities, demands were to raise the standards of qualifications required of teachers in the elementary schools of these districts. This elevation had resulted in absorbing practically all of the graduates of the Normal Schools, thus leaving the rural children to untrained teachers. To offset this, the Fifth

Legislature enacted a law, Senate Bill No. 364 authorizing the State Superintendent to issue teachers' certificates to graduates of Districts Agricultural Schools and of fully accredited high schools meeting special requirements.<sup>5</sup> The administration of this law became very satisfactory. Table X shows the number of trained graduates who had completed the course the first year that it was offered. An increase of 22.09 per cent finished by the third year. Practically all of these graduates were employed in the rural schools.

One of the important steps taken by the State Board of Education was setting the requirements for accredited schools, by insisting upon a permanent record, both in the grades and in the high schools. Table III shows the increase in the number of fully accredited high schools in the state during the third administration, as compared with previous years. The increasing number of fully accredited high schools and the decreasing number of one year high schools show an enthusiasm for better training. The requirements for normal training school graduates from four year high schools, with the requirements of university entrance, has been a large influence upon their growth. The total number of high schools were also in step with the number enrolled in the high school, as shown by Table X.

As a final consideration, the enforcement of the compulsory attendance laws was not adequate. Too many of the boys and girls eligible for entrance in the public schools were not regular in

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5 Sixth Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction in Oklahoma, pp. 47-50.

attendance. The law needed amending. A study of Table X shows the number of boys and girls of school age enumerated, the average daily attendance and the enrollment, making the fact clear that the laws were too flexible. Table VIII shows the low compulsion statistics.

TABLE VIII\*

ENFORCEMENT OF COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE LAWS, 1917-1918  
(193 districts)

Cases referred to truant officer.....	4,199
Cases brought before court.....	450
Convictions.....	53
Pupils placed in school by influence of truancy law.....	1,055
Pupils not in school, 1916-1917.....	20,179
Pupils not in school, 1917-1918.....	16,009

\*Source: Seventh Biennial Report of the State Superintendent Of Public Instruction, p. 58.

The third administration shows an improvement in the number enrolled and the regularity of attendance. The increase has been due to several important factors that were brought out in the study of the legislation, consolidation, enforcement of attendance laws and the increasing enrollment of the high schools.

Ayres Index Number for Oklahoma was 44.44 per cent. Table IX, comparing 1910 with that of 1918, shows the remarkable increase that was made in the factors chosen for measuring the effectiveness of the state school systems. All of these figures were brought into relationship with a common basis of one hundred, and related to public day schools only.<sup>6</sup> There has

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6 Ayres, L. P., An Index Number for State School Systems, p. 16



been criticism concerning the ten factors chosen for study, but for use in comparing the progress of school attendance and indirectly the school systems, the figures show the increase that has been made in the eight year period, 1910-18.



TABLE IX

INDEX NUMBERS OF OKLAHOMA FOR MEASURING THE EFFECTIVENESS  
OF STATE SCHOOL SYSTEMS, 1910 and 1918

Data Measured	1910	1918
Per cent of school population attending school daily.....	53.72	45.72
Average days attended by each child of school age.....	32.05	35.75
Average number of days schools kept open.....	70.00	78.50
Per cent that high school attendance was of total.....	9.56	28.45
Per cent that boys were of girls in high schools.....	73.01	68.48
Average annual expenditure per child attending.....	24.18	42.47
Average annual expenditure per child of school age.....	12.99	19.42
Average annual expenditure per teacher employed.....	29.64	41.63
Expenditure per child for other than teachers' salaries..	20.63	36.38
Expenditure per teacher for salaries.....	33.99	47.60
Index Number of Oklahoma.....	35.97	44.44

\* Source: Ayres, L. P., "An Index Number for State School Systems"

TABLE X

COMPARATIVE STUDY OF FACTORS AFFECTING THE PROGRESS OF SCHOOL  
ATTENDANCE, 1914-15 AND 1917, 18

Factor	1914-15	1917-18	Increase	Decrease
Enumeration (Jan.)	541,028	601,741	11.22%	
Enrollment	455,767	510,139	11.92	
Av. Daily Attendance	299,143	311,227	4.03	
% A.D.A. of Enrollment	65.64%	61.00%		7.06%
Enrollment in H. Schs.	19,414	34,761**	79.05	
Enroll. in Elem. Schs.	477,494	484,877**	1.54	
Eighth Grade Diplomas	6,745	9,202	.....	
High School Graduates	.....	.....	.....	
Number of teachers	11,739	14,204	20.99	
No. State Certificates	2,118	3,534	66.85	
Average Monthly Salary	\$62.06	\$68.63	10.58	
Av. Length Term-days	136	162	19.11	
Amount Spent per Child	\$13.89	\$19.42	39.81	
No. Centralized Schs.	109	137	25.68	
No. Normal Train. H.S.	50	60	20.	
No. Normal Train. Grads.	439	536	22.09	

\*Source: Biennial Reports of the State Superintendents of  
Public Instruction in Oklahoma.

\*\* 1919.

## CHAPTER V

FOURTH ADMINISTRATION OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT  
OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION, 1918-1922

It is especially gratifying to note that the enrollment and the attendance has increased much more rapidly than the enumeration of persons between the ages of six and twenty-one years. In 1918 there was only a slight gain in both enrollment and the average attendance. They were both affected by war conditions, but again started to increase by 1921. The epidemic of Spanish influenza also had a decided effect during the years 1919 and 1920.

The number of teachers employed during 1922 was twice as large as the number employed during 1910. (Tables VI and XII.) The number of teachers who held first grade county certificates and state certificates was as great as the total number of teachers employed in the public schools during 1910. The average monthly salaries of all grades of teachers increased more than one hundred per cent during the twelve years.

It is of special interest to note that for the first time in the history of the state more than one-half of all the pupils lived in districts that maintained schools which were more or less closely graded. The percentage of the total enumeration, enrollment and average daily attendance represented an ascending scale in independent districts and a descending scale in the rural ungraded schools, arranged as follows:

## Enumeration Enrollment Av. Attendance

*Independent Districts.....	38.4%	41.3%	48.3%
Ungraded Rural Districts.....	46.4	42.9	36.8

\* Source: Ninth Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction in Oklahoma, P. 16.

Compulsory attendance was again in consideration when the legislature passed Senate Bill No. 167 relating to compulsory education.<sup>1</sup> Children, between the ages of eight and eighteen, were required to attend some school for sixty-six and two-thirds per cent of the term the schools of the districts were in session. There were two exceptions that were retained from the former legislation. The requirement did not apply to a child between the ages of sixteen and eighteen who was:

(1) regularly and lawfully employed and has satisfactorily completed the work of the eighth grade of public schools or its equivalent, or (2) who has satisfactorily completed the full course of instruction provided by the public schools of the district where he resides.<sup>2</sup>

Another provision of the law was for a truancy officer to help enforce the measures. But, the indefiniteness of his salary led to poor cooperation in many districts. An act that provided part time schools for pupils between the ages of sixteen and eighteen was passed. It became the duty of the employer, parent or guardian, and public officials to enforce this attendance.

The practice of transferring pupils was growing in favor. See Table XI. It solved the school problem in many communities and complicated it in others. The number transferred grew

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1 State of Oklahoma, Session Laws of 1919, p. 93.

2 Loc. Cit.

rapidly despite the fact that many communities now maintained their own high schools. But, many districts were paying more money to transfer the pupils to a convenient high school in another district than was spent to maintain the home school.

Wonderful progress, with direct bearing on the rural schools, was made in the matter of the extended sanitation and health. The Seventh Legislature passed an act regulating the lighting, heating, ventilation, sanitation and plans for school buildings.<sup>3</sup> Relating to this, the school board was required to visit the school at least twice each term to inspect these.

While the conditions found in the rural schools were far from ideal, some notable progress had been made. The state had given encouragement in the form of aid to weak districts, and provided for a rural school supervisor to represent the state department in cooperating for the improvement of those schools. The policy of aiding consolidated and union graded school districts to secure suitable buildings was adopted in 1911. Many schools have been aided by this appropriation during the past ten years. Table X as compared with Table XII shows the amount of progress made in the centralizing of the ungraded rural schools into progressive districts.

In 1918, the work of the rural supervisor had grown to such an extent that one supervisor could not meet all of the requests for assistance made upon the department; therefore, the legislature at the regular 1919 session made an appropriation to pay

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid, pp. 100-101.

the salary of a second supervisor. Efforts were concentrated along the lines of centralization of the schools for the purpose of providing graded school conditions and high school advantages for the rural pupils. The two main lines followed for 1918-1920, besides centralization were: standardization of the rural schools, and vitalization of the work being done in certain schools. The increase in the number of rural supervisors made it possible for the department to devote some attention to revision of the state course of study for rural schools. There had been an urgent need for the modification of the courses so that the schools could offer stronger rural courses.

The subject of text-books was of vital importance to all the people of the state. The persons actually engaged in school work are better judges of the merits of school text-books because their daily work and observation qualify them to pass upon the merits of books from the standpoint of teachable and wearing qualities, as well as from the standpoint of gradation and correlation. Our texts in Oklahoma had never been selected by a board composed exclusively of persons engaged in actual school work. As a result, many inferior texts had been adopted. The duties of the State Board of Education, as the governing body of the state schools and its duties as a Textbook Commission, called for exercise of such dissimilar talents that the group of men could not discharge both sets of duties properly.

The State Board of Education was relieved of its duties, and a Text-book Commission was created by Senate Bill No. 29, 1919 Legislature. It was composed of seven members, requiring



a majority of the members to be active as teachers or superintendents in the public schools of Oklahoma.<sup>4</sup> Before this administration, no progress had been made in the libraries of the schools. The legislature of 1919 created the Oklahoma Library Commission to work in cooperation with the schools.

It is apparent that the closely graded schools of the independent districts had a greater power to attract and hold pupils than the ungraded schools had. The school course in the graded school districts was from one to four years longer because of the high school work. This condition naturally led to a material increase in the enrollment of such schools. The high school furnished an incentive to pupils in the lower grades through encouraging them to complete the common school course and enroll for the high school training.

The total average absence could be reduced if the local school authorities had enforced the compulsory attendance law better. One factor that did improve the attendance in independent districts was the shorter distance that pupils were required to walk to school, sidewalks, the greater amount of time the teacher could devote to each pupil in the graded schools, and the fact that children in the towns and cities had less chores to do.

The public high school enrollment increased from 34,761 in 1919 to 48,512 in 1922, a gain of 39.55 per cent during the three years. This showing was due to the many high schools that had added one or more years to their course and many newly organized

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4 State of Oklahoma, Session Laws of 1919, p. 11



consolidated and union graded districts offered high school work. A comparison of Tables X and XII show that there was almost a one hundred per cent increase in the high school enrollment during the third and fourth administration. During the same period the enrollment of the elementary grades in the public schools increased only six per cent. There was still too great a difference in the number enrolled in the lower and higher grades. Modifications in the course of study have to be made to make these courses appeal to the children and their parents.

TABLE XI

NUMBER OF ELIGIBLE AND AVERAGE DAILY ATTENDANCE IN THE  
INDEPENDENT DISTRICTS OF OKLAHOMA, 1919-1921

	Year 1918-19 222 Districts	Year 1919-20 269 Districts	Year 1920-21 280 Districts
Scholastic Census	201,768	231,384	248,794
Transferred	<u>4,793</u>	<u>5,648</u>	<u>6,981</u>
Total Eligibles	206,561	237,032	255,775
Not Enrolled	18,279	16,267	21,384
A.D.A. 1-8	111,301	130,444	142,399
A.D.A. 9-12	23,007	27,947	34,568
Total A.D.A	134,308	158,391	176,967

In Table XI note the number of persons eligible for school attendance in the independent districts. Observe the number in average daily attendance, as well as the large number that were not enrolled.

One requirement for the formation of an independent district was the maintenance of a fully accredited high school

\*Source: Eighth Biennial Report of the State Superintendent, p. 52.  
Ninth Biennial Report of the State Superintendent, p. 52-53.

recommended by the State High School Inspectors. In this connection it was interesting to note that the first High School Inspector was appointed in October 1911. The records show that for the school year closing 1912, there were twenty-nine fully accredited high schools. The record showing the growth is found in Table III. The increasing number of graduates each year indicates a growth in the attendance of the schools and their holding power (See Table IV.)

TABLE XII

COMPARATIVE STUDY OF FACTORS AFFECTING THE PROGRESS  
OF SCHOOL ATTENDANCE, 1917-18 AND 1921-22

Factor	1917-18	1921-22	Increase	Decrease
Enumeration (Jan.)	601,741	659,733	9.63%	
Enrollment	510,139	588,707	15.40	
Average Daily Attendance	311,227	399,267	28.28	
% A.D.A. of Enrollment	61.00%	67.82%	11.18	
Enrollment in High Schs.	34,761**	48,512	39.55	
Enrollment in Elem. Schs.	484,877**	517,317	6.69	
Eighth Grade Diplomas	9,202	13,327	14.48	
High School Graduates	.....	7,358	.....	
Number of Teachers	14,204	15,441	8.70	
No. State Certificates	3,534	7,232	104.64	
Average Teachers' Salary	.....	.....	.....	
Av. Length School Term Days	162	154		4.94
Amount Spent per Child	\$19.42	\$44.83	130.84	
No. Normal Train. Grad.	536	629	17.35	
No. Normal Training H.S.	60	68	13.33	
No. Centralized Schools	137	378	175.91	
No. Pupils Transferred	4,793**	12,326	147.16	
No. Rural Supervisors	2	1		50.00

\* Source: Biennial Reports of the State Superintendent of  
Public Instruction in Oklahoma.

\*\* 1919.

## CHAPTER VI

FIFTH ADMINISTRATION OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF  
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION, 1922-1926

One of the primary problems in public schools is that of attendance. Oklahoma did not have a creditable attendance record. Federal reports showed that Oklahoma ranked forty-eighth in the Union in percentage of enrollment and average daily attendance. Many extenuating circumstances may be pointed out as explanation. Child labor practised in the cotton belt where children remained out of school in the fall to pick cotton and dropped out of school in the spring to help plant the new crop; the moving of tenant farmers from one school district to another; the large transient element in our population such as was represented by families of "camp followers" in every large oil field; the often apathetic attitude of Indian children; unsettled conditions in mining sections; apathy of parents and guardians; laxity of officials enforcing the present attendance laws; -- all of these factors probably had their influence in decreasing the attendance rate of the pupils.<sup>1</sup>

It has been noted in the preceding administration that, as the number of consolidated and union graded districts increased, the number of children remaining in districts having ungraded schools and no high school work, decreased. More than one-half of the school children resided in districts which maintained graded schools and offered high school training in the local school.

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1 Tenth Biennial Report of State Superintendent of Public Instruction, p. 11.

Reports have shown that the attendance was poorest in the ungraded rural schools, taught by one, two and three teachers, where no work was offered above the eighth grade. An effort was made to stimulate the attendance in all of the schools during the school year closing in 1924. This was made in two ways. Attention was called to the fact that the amount of money apportioned under the Amendment of the Constitution would be based on the average daily attendance. The Amendment was later declared of no effect.

Another effort was made to stimulate attendance in the schools through the wide use of standardization. 539 schools were successful in securing model school certificates during the first year.<sup>2</sup> One of the requirements of a model school was a high percentage of average daily attendance.

The growth in the number of school districts providing opportunity for high school training was remarkable. This resulted from the attainment of required standards by districts adding high school courses to the curricula offered; to the organization of centralized districts in which high school courses could be offered; and to the addition of one or more years of high school work to courses offered in the smaller rural and village schools.

The increase in the number of districts that provided high school training for the children living in the districts had continued over a period of years. The number of pupils transferred from rural districts to high schools showed a similar increase.

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p. 23.

The added cost of high school departments and the growing cost of transfers weighed heavily upon many of the common school districts. The smaller independent districts and the consolidated schools that were striving to provide adequate school facilities needed encouragement and aid in a larger measure than they had received in the past.

In spite of the many advantages of centralization, most of the schools were organized to provide a high school. There was a decrease in the movement as to the number organized, but there was an increase in the number of children served by the attachment of more territory and by the increasing number of transfers allowed to the high schools each year. (See Table XIII.) This is clearly shown by the increase in number of transfers.

It was evident that the high school enrollment was increasing faster than any other division of the public schools. This indicated that pupils were remaining in high schools until graduation in much greater numbers than ever before. An increase of 60.68 per cent in high school enrollment over a period of four years was a hopeful sign and an indication that the high schools were filling the needs of the people. (See Table XIII.)

The rural school supervisors attempted to direct rather than stimulate the movement to organize union graded and consolidated school districts. Since 1916 the General Education Board has made possible one rural school supervisor, and in 1923 this Board made possible an additional supervisor.

A plan of standardization of the rural school was tried in



several counties during the school year, 1922-1923. The result was so successful that standardization was tried on a statewide basis during the following year. This plan of setting up an objective attainable by all schools in rural communities did much to revive interest in the schools. The score card by which they were measured emphasized health conditions, community co-operation, proper equipment and aesthetic surroundings. Later revisions tended to place greater emphasis upon the teaching done in the schools. Table XIII shows the growth of the plan from a few counties as experimentation in 1922 to the statewide growth in 1926.

In 1922 Oklahoma stood seventeenth among the states in literacy, with an illiteracy percentage of 3.8.<sup>3</sup> Challenged by these facts, the beginnings of an adult education program was included. The purpose was the eradication of illiteracy. The teachers did the work without financial recompense, but they did receive better support of the day schools. There was a more favorable attitude in general on the part of adult pupils toward school improvement and school progress.

During this administration there was a 7.57 per cent increase in the number of teachers, and only a 5.62 increase in the total annual salaries of these teachers which indicate that they were practically stationary.

The county certificate was practically gone from the accredited schools of Oklahoma. More than ninety per cent of the

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3 Tenth Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction in Oklahoma, p. 77.



teachers in these schools, including grade and high school teachers, held state certificates. Sixty percent of the certificates were life certificates. The average college training of the high school teachers in Oklahoma was 3.56 years. The average college training of the grade teacher in the accredited schools of Oklahoma was 1.58 years.<sup>4</sup>

With the increased number of professionally trained teachers graduated from the colleges in Oklahoma, the need for teacher-training courses in high schools no longer existed. With the advent of new rules and regulations, making fifteen units of high school work pre-requisite to enrolling in the course, few high schools found it possible from a financial standpoint to continue normal training work. In 1925-26 there was only one high school approved for this work; and five state certificates were issued to the students who completed the course. (See Table XIII.)

For the purpose of supplying free textbooks to the children of the state in the first eight grades, the legislature in 1923 appropriated \$950,000. The Tenth Legislature in Senate Bill No. 87, repealed the 1923 free textbook law. A referendum petition was filed, but at the general election the vote cast meant the discontinuance of free textbooks.<sup>5</sup>

One main constructive objective has been set by the department of the State Superintendent for each year.<sup>6</sup> Prior to 1922,

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4 Eleventh Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction in Oklahoma, pp. 43-44.

5 Ibid, p. 67.

6 Ibid, pp. 5-6.

a centralization program was promoted and brought a high school education within reach of many rural children.

In 1923, the department conducted a campaign for the eradication of illiteracy. In 1924, standardization of rural schools on the basis of the "Model School" Score Card was the objective. The standardization proved to be a medium of improvement for rural schools and an objective for better school attendance. For 1925, better teaching of reading in the elementary grades was the objective throughout the state. Health education was the object in 1926.

TABLE XIII

COMPARATIVE STUDY OF FACTORS AFFECTING THE PROGRESS OF  
SCHOOL ATTENDANCE, 1921-22 AND 1925-26

Factor	1921-22	1925-26	Increase	Decrease
Enumeration (Jan.)	659,733	669,156	1.42%	
Enrollment	588,707	601,130	2.11	
Average Daily Attendance	399,267	415,337	4.02	
% A.D.A. of Enrollment	67.82%	69.09%		
Enrollment in High Schs.	48,512	77,950**	60.68	
Enrollment in Elem. Schs.	517,317	528,820	2.22	
Eighth Grade Diplomas	13,327	29,055	118.01	
High School Graduates	7,358	11,417**	15.51	
Number of Teachers	15,441	16,611	7.57	
No. State Certificates	7,232	8,089	11.85	
Average Teachers Salary	\$1,060.57	\$1,001.04		5.62%
Length School Term-days	154	153		.65
Amount spent per child	\$44.83	\$41.18		8.15
No. Normal Train. Grad.	629	5		99.34
No. Normal Train. H.S.	68	1		98.52
No. Centralized Schools	378	432	14.29	
No. Pupils Transferred	12,326	15,373	24.72	

\* Source: Biennial Reports of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction in Oklahoma.

\*\* 1925.

## CHAPTER VII

SIXTH ADMINISTRATION OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF  
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION, 1926-1930

The school laws of Oklahoma<sup>1</sup> contain provision for the compulsory school attendance of all pupils, over the age of eight and under the age of eighteen, for at least two-thirds of the school term in the district where they reside. The law further provides that it shall be administered by truant officers appointed: first, by the Board of Education for cities and incorporate towns; and second, by the county superintendents for all other school districts.

It is the experience of school leaders that compulsory attendance laws which are to be administered locally do not insure either good or regular school attendance. This may be seen from the attendance figures for 1929-30. Of 633,369 children enrolled in the public schools, only 438,254, or sixty-nine per cent, were in average daily attendance. It seemed that the children had taken the law literally and were attending only two-thirds of the time.

The Oklahoma law provided further that children whose parents were unable to purchase the required textbooks should be furnished textbooks at the expense of the county in which they resided. The law required the counties to provide financial relief for widowed mothers dependent upon the wages of their children of compulsory school age.<sup>2</sup> It was found by F. C. Snow

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1 Compiled Oklahoma School Laws, 1929, Sections 224-225.

2 Ibid, Sections 226-227.

that, "the allowances that mothers actually received under these laws in Oklahoma are too small." Mr. Snow stated further that, "It is not generally known in many counties of the state that these laws exist."<sup>3</sup>

The rural schools in the common school districts are the largest factor in the public school problem of our state. Numerically these districts and schools were more than half of the problem. 1930 was the first year in the history of Oklahoma that there were more pupils enumerated and enrolled in the independent districts than in the rural districts. The enumeration, enrollment and average daily attendance records of the two groups of districts, for a period of five years, show how steadily the independent districts had gained numerically and the rural districts had lost. (See Table XIV.) More than seven years before, 1923, the independent districts passed the rural districts in average daily attendance. This gradual decrease in enumeration of scholastics in the rural districts was not due solely to a decrease in the rural population, although that may have been one contributing factor. The larger common school districts became independent, and moved their classification automatically.

The rural schools have always made a poor record in attendance when compared to the urban schools. The ungraded schools employed the unprepared teachers and maintained the short terms that did not hold the pupils. Economic conditions in the poor districts detracted from school attendance, as did

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<sup>3</sup> Snow, F. C., The Administration of the Widow's Compensation Clause of the Compulsory Attendance School Laws of Oklahoma. Master's Thesis, University of Oklahoma, 1929.

TABLE XIV\*

A COMPARISON OF THE ENUMERATION, ENROLLMENT AND A.D.A. IN THE  
INDEPENDENT DISTRICTS AND THE RURAL DISTRICTS  
1925-1934

Year	Independent Districts			Rural Districts		
	Enumer.	Enroll.	A. D. A.	Enumer.	Enroll.	A. D. A.
1925-26	327,120	308,127	236,127	394,402	340,819	208,118
1926-27	343,209	324,491	241,881	386,580	330,874	190,178
1927-28	361,975	339,241	254,241	384,404	342,918	203,495
1928-29	373,936	347,906	264,368	377,073	327,891	197,440
1929-30	385,515	359,428	272,825	372,683	323,222	197,440
1930-31	359,807	335,719	263,415	355,469	298,626	194,268
1931-32	350,961	334,835	263,756	358,038	288,164	193,673
1932-33	355,278	324,679	262,219	354,959	285,325	194,223
1933-34	357,473	338,356	265,723	352,492	277,118	189,770

\* Source: Biennial Reports of the State Superintendents of Public Instruction in Oklahoma.

the great distance children walked in going to and from school. Many of the children had to work on the farms during certain seasons of the year and this reflected in the total attendance. Many families, residing in districts where summer schools were taught, went on vacations during the summer months taking the children with them, that took its toll in attendance. There were many factors in the attendance problem of common school districts, not all of which could be controlled by the school authorities.

The enrollment represents the drawing power of the school and the average daily attendance represents its power to hold the pupils. The average daily attendance has grown in proportion to the enumeration and enrollment over a period of years. Table Two shows the increase over each preceding year with few exceptions.

Some improvement had been made in both the independent and common school district as revealed by comparing the distribution of the enrollment in the elementary grades. During the year ending June 30, 1921, the enrollment in the eighth grade of common school districts was approximately one-fourth as great as the enrollment in the first grade. During 1927, the eighth grade enrollment was more than one-third of the first grade enrollment.<sup>4</sup> The independent districts showed a corresponding improvement in this respect. There is little doubt that this was accomplished because of the better training of

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4 Twelfth Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction in Oklahoma, p. 17.



teachers who held the pupils in school and advanced them more uniformly. Increase in the length of school term was helping to make this improvement.

A great handicap to the progress of the rural schools lay in the lack of supervision. The division of the Rural School Supervision cooperated with the county superintendents and local school authorities to improve the rural schools. The rural supervision department initiated the plan of bringing the physical equipment of the schools in the state up to a desirable standard through the Model School Score Card. During the fifth administration the main objective was the improvement of the teaching done in the elementary grades. To guide the teachers and to establish a standard of measurement, an Instructional Score Card was prepared. Schools that met the standards set up by these two score cards were recognized by giving an elementary accredited rating.

Over a period of years it has been impossible to ascertain the exact figures on the consolidated schools. The numerical figures show a slight decrease in the number of centralized schools. (See Table XV.) A large number of the existing districts had enlarged through annexation of adjacent districts or parts of districts. In several instances two or more consolidated schools have united into one large district. Several of the union graded and independent districts, many pupils from common school districts were transferred to the centralized districts for high school instruction.

The primary consideration of the consolidated school was

the financing of a system of transportation for pupils and at the same time maintaining an adequately efficient school. The organization of consolidated and union graded districts in Oklahoma had reached that stage in which the movement proceeded on its own momentum without stimulation from the state.<sup>5</sup>

In 1916-17, twenty-two cities and towns in Oklahoma reported junior high schools. Ten years later, the school officials in one-hundred-fourteen towns and cities reported 132 junior high schools. This was an increase of five-hundred per cent. The generally accepted desirable plan of organization included the seventh, eighth and ninth grades departmentalized.

The junior high school represented one of the more recent movements in the development of the American educational system. This movement had remarkable growth in Oklahoma in spite of the lack of recognition by law or regulation. The junior high school was expected to accomplish the following purpose: (1) provide a suitable educational environment for adolescent boys and girls; (2) bridge the gap between the elementary grades and the senior high school; (3) increase the holding power of the school; (4) discover the interests and capacities of adolescents; (5) develop those interests and capacities along worthwhile channels; (6) provide educational and vocational guidance; (7) give those pupils who are likely to drop out of school some vocational training; (8) provide for individual differences; and (9) economize.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Thirteenth Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction in Oklahoma, p. 36.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, p. 62.

Encouragement was given to the junior high school through proposed changes in the plan of college entrance by releasing the ninth grade from specific college entrance requirements. It gave the junior high school more freedom in caring for the needs and interests of its pupils.

Courses of study and textbooks determined to a great extent what was taught in the classroom. For this reason, more attention was given to the preparation of courses of study and textbooks during this period. The course of study was prepared by classroom teachers working under the direction of a central state committee.

For the past few years the State of Oklahoma had been gradually making some definite and well-planned organization in the fields of specific vocational training. The Division of Vocational Education was made a regular part of the State Department of Education by an act of the Twelfth Legislature.<sup>7</sup> The divisions consisted of Agriculture, Home Economics, Rehabilitation, and Trades and Industries. The Vocational Educational programs in the local communities of the state were financed jointly by the local communities and the Federal and state governments. The ultimate aim was to train rural people for a satisfactory farm life. Such training involved not only the development of manipulative skills and operative ability, but also the establishment of correct habits of thinking, industry, thrift and the ideal of service and rural life leadership.

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<sup>7</sup> State of Oklahoma, Session Laws of 1929, .

The problem of attendance is somewhat more difficult in the case of the Indian children than of the white. In addition to the usual handicaps many of the Indian children live an unusual distance from school, do not speak English, or do not fit in well with the public school environment. Some of them were over age when they began school. In order that the non-attending Indian child might be induced to enroll and attend regularly, the Indian Office at Muskogee established ten county truant officers.

The period has witnessed the enactment of legislation: one, insuring that all teachers will be given certificates on the same conditions; two, unifying and making less expensive the organization of the State Department of Education; three, providing for the construction of a common school course of study by the classroom teachers of the state; and four, furnishing additional financial aid to the weak rural districts.

The holding power of the elementary school has increased. The increase of 28.23 in percentage of graduates showed that the holding power of the high school was improving. (See Table IV.) Practically every boy and girl in the state were now within reach of an accredited high school. The best evidence of the popularity of the high school education in Oklahoma was shown by the increasing number of accredited high schools, pupils enrolled and graduates. Table III is a summary of the number of accredited high schools in Oklahoma from 1912. There were nearly five times more of them in 1930 than in 1916. The chief problem remained to bring about greater efficiency and economy in the

operation of these schools.

TABLE XV\*

COMPARATIVE STUDY OF FACTORS AFFECTING THE PROGRESS OF  
SCHOOL ATTENDANCE, 1925-26 AND 1929-30

Factor	1925-26	1929-30	Increase	Decrease
Enumeration (Jan.)	669,156	704,325	5.24%	
Enrollment	601,130	633,369	5.36	
Average Daily Attendance	415,337	438,254	5.52	
% A.D.A. of Enrollment	69.09%	69.19%	.14	
Enrollment in High Schs.	77,950**	99,956	28.23	
Enrollment in Elem. Schs	528,820	525,664		5.96%
Eighth Grade Diplomas	29,055	30,810***	6.04	
High School Graduates	11,417**	14,476	26.79	
Number of Teachers	16,611	21,396	28.81	
No. State Certificates Iss.	8,089	10,940	35.25	
Av. Teachers' Salary	\$1,001.04	.....	.....	
Length School Term-days	153	.....	.....	
Amount Spent per Child	\$41.18	.....	.....	
No. Centralized Schs.	432	394		8.79
No. Model Schools	1,965	2,303	17.20	
No. pupils transferred	16,682	22,418***	34.38	
No. Accredited Elem. Schs.	354'	1,109	13.28	

\* Source: Biennial Reports of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction in Oklahoma.

\*\* 1925.

\*\*\* 1929.

' 1928.

## CHAPTER VIII

SEVENTH ADMINISTRATION OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF  
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION, 1930-34

The year 1932 marked the close of a quarter of a century of public education in Oklahoma. The growth and progress of the public schools during the twenty-five years were phenomenal. When Oklahoma became a state, 257,000 children were being taught by 6,300 teachers in 5,600 school houses worth five and one-quarter million dollars. Only fifty per cent of the children were ever enrolled in school in any one year prior to statehood. Those that did enroll had the opportunity of only three to seven months of school each year. Many of the teachers were only eighth grade graduates; practically all of them had less than two years of high school work. In 1932, 675,000 children were taught by 20,000 teachers in 5,450 school plants worth more than eighty-six million dollars. Ninety percent of all children were reached by the schools. The average school term was eight months. The average elementary teacher had four years of high school, plus one year of college work.

The model school movement resulted in rural school houses and equipment equal to that of any other state. The high school has been called the people's college. When statehood came, only a few of the larger towns had high schools. In 1932, there was a high school in reach of every boy and girl in Oklahoma. Both the Model Score Card and the Instructional Score Card were revised from time to time to meet the needs as demonstrated by their use.



Oklahoma schools have been provided with excellent courses of study for the elementary and high school grades.

The independent districts suffered a loss in the number enumerated during 1932; while the rural districts increased their enumeration. The trend during the past years has been toward a steady increase in the enumeration of the independent districts. The reversal of the trend was temporary, and probably due to recent unsatisfactory conditions affecting employment of labor in urban centers. The enrollment and the average daily attendance in the independent districts continued to exceed the enrollment and average daily attendance in the rural districts. For the year 1930-31 the enrollment in the independent districts represented ninety-three per cent of the enumeration. (See Table XIV.) In rural districts the enrollment represented eighty-five per cent of the enumeration. This difference in percentage was due in part to the large number of pupils transferred from the rural to the independent districts.

Improved means of transportation made possible the centralization of schools on a larger scale than formerly would have been possible. The most notable development in transportation was the increasing number of children transferred to independent districts for high school education. By this means, secondary advantages were being made available and accessible for rural children.

Special rural supervisors were employed in six counties during the school year 1930-31, this was a greater number than was employed during any preceding year. The following year

only three of these counties employed special supervisors for the rural schools. During this time only one state supervisor, paid by the General Education Board, was appointed. This made it impossible to visit all schools for the purpose of accrediting them, so the county superintendents were delegated the duty of inspection.

Superintendent Hohstadt made an intensive study of the effect of the consolidation of schools upon the attendance.<sup>1</sup> He found that the average length of term was increased by fourteen days after consolidation. The gain in days attended the first year after consolidation was 38.2 per cent.

Table III gives a detailed picture of the increase in number of accredited high schools in Oklahoma. The number of small one and two year high schools has decreased sharply since 1928. Many of these have added the third and fourth year of work.

The junior high school movement in Oklahoma was temporarily arrested due to general economic conditions. 1929-30, there were eighty-one high schools applying for approval; while in 1934-33 there were only thirty-four that applied. In spite of this, the average enrollment in each school increased. There was an average increase of 167 pupils per school.<sup>2</sup>

As a result of the additional aid rendered, approximately eighty-five per cent of the Indian children in Oklahoma were enrolled in the public schools.

<sup>1</sup> Hohstadt, L. M., Attendance in Consolidated and Unconsolidated Schools in Ten Counties of Oklahoma. Master's Thesis, University of Oklahoma, 1934.

<sup>2</sup> Fifteenth Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction in Oklahoma, p. 81.

TABLE XVI\*

COMPARATIVE STUDY OF FACTORS AFFECTING THE PROGRESS  
OF SCHOOL ATTENDANCE, 1929-30 AND 1933-34

Factors	1929-30	1933-34	Increase	Decrease
Enumeration (Jan.)	704,325	766,615	8.84%	
Enrollment	633,369	615,474		.028%
Average Daily Attendance	438,254	455,493	3.93	
% A.D.A. of Enrollment	69.19%	74.00%	6.95	
Enrollment in High Schs.	99,956	111,223	11.27	
Enrollment in Elem. Schs.	525,664	497,500		5.35
Eighth Grade Diplomas	30,810**	35,024	13.68	
High School Graduates	14,476**	18,306	26.46	
Number of Teachers	21,396	14,789		30.87
No. State Certif. Issued	10,940	5,702		47.87
Average Teachers' Salary				
Length school term-days				
Amount Spent per Child		\$35.14		
No. Centralized Schools	394			
No. Model Schools	2,303	2,472	7.34	
No. pupils transferred	22,418**			
No. Accredited Elem. Schs.	1,109	1,971	77.73	
No. Rural Supervisors	8	3		62.50

\* Source: Biennial Reports of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction in Oklahoma.

\*\* 1929.

## CHAPTER IX

EIGHTH ADMINISTRATION OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF  
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION, 1934-36

1934-36 includes the first half of the eighth administration. Material has not been completed in the State Superintendent's office for 1937 and 1938.

During the school year, 1935-36, the independent districts of Oklahoma increased to 400. During the same period the dependent districts decreased from 4,428 to 4,360, a loss of 68. The loss was due to consolidation, and districts centering in incorporated towns. As a result, the total enumeration, enrollment and average daily attendance in the dependent districts decrease and the same items, reported for independent districts, increase each year. The average daily attendance during 1935-36 is greater by 5,952 than was reported for the previous scholastic year.<sup>1</sup>

The large school has the benefit of close supervision by the school principal or superintendent. One of the weaknesses of the small isolated schools is the lack of this helpful supervision by a trained supervisor. During recent years there has been an unusual increase in the work required or demanded of the county superintendents. This has been occasioned by new responsibilities imposed under House Bill 212. It has been practically impossible for effective supervision of the rural schools to be done under the present plan of organization. Few

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1 Sixteenth Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction in Oklahoma. pp. 18-19.

of the superintendents have had previous experience or training for the work of supervisor. Their administrative duties prevent their devoting the amount of time and effort to the work that should be allowed.

Under the present plan of organization only the wealthier counties, operating under special statutes, have provided supervisory assistance. Oklahoma and Tulsa Counties have employed special supervisors during this biennial period. During the second year of the biennium, Osage County employed a supervisor. With such a limited number of county supervisors, and only two state supervisors it is obvious that no real supervision could be done. The county superintendents continued to rate their schools by the Model School Score Card and the Instructional Score Card.

The physical improvements that were made by the schools during the early years of the Model School movement have not been kept up to the standard during recent years. The drastic reduction of the Rural School Division in the State Department of Education has made it impossible for the state to develop and stimulate this improvement except through printed bulletins and circular letters.

The enactment of House Bill No. 29, by the Special Session of the Legislature in 1933, made it necessary for the State Board of Education to establish a Transportation Division. Intense rivalries developed between various districts concerning their respective boundaries in establishing transportation routes beyond district boundaries for the service of transferred students.

The State Board was called on by the district officials, and required by law, to serve as an arbiter in these disputes. Transportation service has increased materially in extent because of the change in law that enables districts to provide transportation for students who live more than one mile from the school building, where the distance prior to 1935-36 was two miles.

The higher institutions of learning have exercised a marked influence upon the development of secondary education. This influence has operated through the establishment of requirements for college entrance. These requirements have gradually crystallized into statements of standards and regulations for accrediting. A study of the trends in the total number of accredited high schools in Oklahoma show little or no change since 1928. (See Table III.) The increase in enrollment in Oklahoma high schools have paralleled approximately the increases for the nation since 1910. The enrollment in secondary schools has doubled each decade since 1900. These increases in enrollment, directly and indirectly, have been the cause of other important trends in secondary education.

The courses of study and the textbooks under the present system of public education determine largely the content and the methods of instruction in the classroom. The State Board of Education is required by law to formulate courses of study for the common schools.<sup>2</sup> The Division of High School Inspection is responsible for preparing and publishing courses of study for use in the high schools.<sup>3</sup> In 1935 the State Board formulated plans

<sup>2</sup> School Laws of Oklahoma, 1935, p. 24.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p. 6



for revision of the elementary program. The courses are being planned primarily for use in the rural and town graded and ungraded elementary schools organized in the eight-four plan.

The program of public education is being greatly expended in Oklahoma. The state's participation in the financing of public schools has called attention to large wastes which had previously existed in the maintenance and operation of small schools. As the program of increased opportunities becomes available to all children, the school building requirements will be changed to accommodate these needs. Even though the Division of Schoolhouse Planning has rendered service on hundreds of school buildings in Oklahoma, it is quite evident now that there should be as much service rendered within the next few years as has been rendered the last ten years. At least, the records show that the school building needs are becoming greater each year.

One of every twenty school children in Oklahoma is an Indian. The tendency of Indian children to drop out of high school is marked. Reports from public schools throughout the state indicate that 5,982 Indian children were enrolled in 1935.<sup>4</sup>

Secondary aid was provided for in House Bill 212, passed in 1935.<sup>5</sup> Equalization support was now realized, and general support for districts regardless of their financial ability was continued.

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4 Sixteenth Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction in Oklahoma, p. 120.

5 Oklahoma School Law, 1935.



## CHAPTER X

## SUMMARY

The reports of the State Superintendents of Public Instruction in Oklahoma show that many problems pertaining to the school are yet to be solved. Yet the growth and progress of the public schools during the thirty years is phenomenal, but we know that growth is not the only measure of progress. Many factors have influenced the public school attendance.

One of the most important influences on attendance is the compulsory attendance law that has been legally enacted in Oklahoma. The need for compulsory education is found in the aversion of some parents to obtain educational advantages for their children when they are easily attainable. The power of the state is enlisted to secure for neglected children their rights to a protected childhood and a suitable training. Industrial exploitation is a principal cause for education.

Oklahoma passed its first compulsory attendance legislative enactment in 1907, applying to children between the ages of eight and sixteen years. As the state grew in maturity the legislative actions showed the same notable development. In the first thirty years, Oklahoma has revised her compulsory attendance laws at six different times. In 1910, there was a revision to make numerous minor improvements in language. The session laws of 1919 show that the compulsory attendance law was again completely revised. It now applied to all children of the state over the age of eight and under the age of eighteen, unless they were exempted by mental or physical disabilities. Two exemptions of the law

are made for those children over the age of sixteen: first, a child how is regularly and lawfully employed and has satisfactorily completed the work of the eighth grade of public school; second, who has satisfactorily completed the full course of instruction provided by the public school of the district where he resides. The law was again revised in 1921, requiring children to be in attendance sixty-six and two-thirds percent of the term. There was no more major legislative enactment until 1937. On May twenty-second, 1937, a law was passed providing:

An act amending Section 7002, Oklahoma Statutes, 1931, so that the compulsory education laws of this state shall apply to all children over the age of seven years and under the age of eighteen years.

Experience has found that compulsory attendance laws which are to be administered locally do not insure either good or regular school attendance. It is noted in Table II that the children were attending only two-thirds of the time. This leads one to believe that a literal interpretation of the law had been practically applied.

Of importance in the progress of school attendance was the more accurate scholastic census. It had been the custom among the school boards in the past to take the enumeration over a period of five months. The law passed in 1913 provided that persons enumerated must be those living within the school district on the date of January 15, and all enumeration must be completed by February 5.

The dependent district schools in rural communities form the weakest link in the educational system of this state. The rural schools have always made a poor record in attendance when compared to the urban schools. 1930 was the first time in the history of Oklahoma that there were more pupils enumerated and enrolled in

the independent districts than in the rural districts. The rural school supervisors attempted to direct and stimulate the movement to organize union graded and consolidated school districts. It will be noted during the school year, 1922-23, a plan of standardization of rural schools was tried in several counties. The results were successful and standardization was tried on a statewide basis during the following year. The score card, by which the schools were measured, showed that health conditions, community co-operation, proper equipment, and aesthetic surroundings had been improved. Later emphasis was placed upon improvement of teaching. Schools that met the standards were recognized as elementary accredited schools. Many of the children did not have high school advantages. Therefore, in 1917, the legislature passed an act regulating the transfer of pupils from these districts that did not offer the high school course. While the conditions found in the rural schools are far from ideal, some notable progress has been made.

Pupils in the consolidated districts were benefited in many ways by the maintenance of graded schools. During the second administration decided encouragement was given to rural school consolidation. The first state aid was provided for by the passage of the law in 1911. It is impossible to ascertain exact figures on the consolidated schools due to the fact that a large number of the existing districts have enlarged through annexation. It seemed apparent to the writer that there will be more enthusiasm for education when the attendance is greater, the classes larger, and the spirit of emulation, both in study and

sport, more keen. One of the first results of consolidation is to hold boys and girls in school, simply because school is more interesting. There is opportunity for increased community association by means of the organization of the social interests about the school. By creating a greater interest in the farm community, consolidation served to keep the young people of the rural population on the farm. This condition led to a material increase in the enrolment of schools affected. High Schools furnished an incentive to pupils in lower grades through encouraging them to complete the common school course and enroll for high school training.

A primary consideration of the consolidated schools was that of financing a system of transportation for pupils and at the same time maintaining an adequately efficient school. The organization of consolidated and union graded districts in Oklahoma has reached a stage in which the movement advances on its own momentum without further stimulation from the state.

The movement to establish high schools within the state reached its maximum during the period from 1917 to 1920, during this time the number of accredited high schools more than doubled. In this connection it was interesting to note that the first high school inspector was appointed in October 1911. The records show that for the school year there were twenty-nine fully accredited high schools. (See Table III.) The high school has been called the people's college. Upon the advent of statehood, only a few of the larger towns had high schools. For most children the completion of the eighth grade was the end of school.

Today there are over 851 accredited public high schools, enrolling 111,000 pupils. There is a high school within reach of every boy and girl in Oklahoma. It is evident that the high school enrollment is increasing faster than any other division of the public schools.

At the beginning of the second administration the academic record of the teaching force in the public schools was low. Not more than fifty per cent of those teaching in the rural schools had done any creditable work above the first year of high school, and many had never gone beyond the eighth grade. This taken in consideration with the immature years of many of the teachers did not promise a total result such as should be demanded for the children. By 1926 the county certificate and the normal-training high schools were gone from the schools of Oklahoma. More than ninety per cent of the teachers in the accredited schools, including both grade and high school teachers, held state certificates. The average college training of the high school teachers in Oklahoma was 3.56 years in 1926. The average college training of the grade teacher in the accredited schools of Oklahoma was 1.58 years.

Upon the advent of statehood the Illinois course of study was used. In 1912 the State Board of Education adopted a uniform course of study for the high schools of Oklahoma and a marked tendency was observed in the interest in practical instruction. In 1920 the increase in the number of rural supervisors made it possible for the department to devote some attention to revision of the state course of study for rural schools.

It was realized that the course of study determined to a very great extent what was taught in the classroom. For this reason more attention was given to the preparation of a course of study during 1926-30. The course was prepared by classroom teachers working under the direction of a central state committee.

The subject of text-books was of vital importance to all the people of the state. The compulsory attendance law allowed that children whose parents were unable to purchase the required textbooks should be furnished textbooks at the expense of the counties in which they resided. During the first administration the State Board of Education was delegated the duties of State Text-Book Commission. The legislature of 1919 created a separate Text-Book Commission, a majority of the members to be active as teachers or superintendents in the public schools of Oklahoma.

For the purpose of supplying free textbooks to the children of the state in the first eight grades, the 1923 legislature appropriated \$950,000. The Tenth Legislature repealed the free textbook law. A referendum petition was filed, but, at the general election the vote cast meant the discontinuance of free books.

Since 1930 Oklahoma has been making some definite and well-planned organization in the field of specific vocational training. Such training involved not only the development of manipulative skills and operative abilities; but also the establishment of correct habits of thinking, industry, thrift and the ideal of service and rural life leadership. The ultimate aim was to train rural people for a satisfactory farm life.



The enrollment represents the drawing power of the schools and the average daily attendance represents its power to hold the pupils. Through a comparison of the growth of the average daily attendance to the enrollment and the scholastic enumeration of the public schools of Oklahoma, it would seem to the writer that the factors that have been discussed in this paper have exerted a considerable influence on the public school attendance during the past thirty years.



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