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FOREWORD

ENOUGH PROGRESS was made in rural education between 1920 and 1930 to warrant considerable optimism with reference to the program in the years immediately ahead. In several states larger and more efficient units of administration had been set up, financial support of rural schools had been improved thru the revision of state equalization and tax laws, rural school terms had been lengthened, more regular attendance had been brought about thru the extension of transportation facilities, obsolete rural school buildings were being replaced with modern well-equipped buildings, and, most important of all, new and vital programs were being introduced and carried out by teachers better qualified for their work. A note of hope and promise was sounded, therefore, in the Research Division's study of rural education which appeared in 1931 under the title, "The Outlook for Rural Education."

Since 1930, however, ten hard years of depression, drought, and general adversity have claimed their toll. How has rural education fared during this period? What improvement has been made in spite of adversity? What promises that seemed bright ten years ago lie as yet unfulfilled? It is to questions such as these that the present issue of the *RESEARCH BULLETIN* is addressed. Thru an examination of trends during the decade now closing, it seeks to point the way both to areas of potential growth and to problems that are now especially acute.

This bulletin should prove helpful to anyone responsible for leadership in rural education, particularly to rural superintendents, supervisors, teachers, and members of boards of education. It is appropriate for study in teachers college classes, not only by those who are preparing to work in rural schools but also by urban teachers who need acquaintance with professional problems that lie beyond the corporate limits of their respective communities. The bulletin will achieve its purpose only to the extent that each reader strives, to the utmost limits of his opportunities and responsibilities, to translate it into vigorous action on behalf of rural schools.

WILLARD E. GIVENS, *Executive Secretary*
National Education Association

I. INTRODUCTION

This bulletin is concerned with recent trends in rural education. It seeks to answer questions such as: How have rural schools fared during the ten depression years just passed? In what areas has progress been checked or thwarted entirely? Do some areas reflect actual or impending retrogression? What phases of the program have shown commendable improvement? What next steps are suggested in rural education in the light of prevailing trends?

The study deals with the period 1930 to 1940 and considers the direction of change and present status of both elementary and secondary rural schools. The term "rural school" is used in this report to refer to any school located either in the open country or in any hamlet or village of less than 2500 inhabitants.

Sources of Data

To obtain the basic data summarized in this bulletin a questionnaire was submitted to all county superintendents of schools and to the

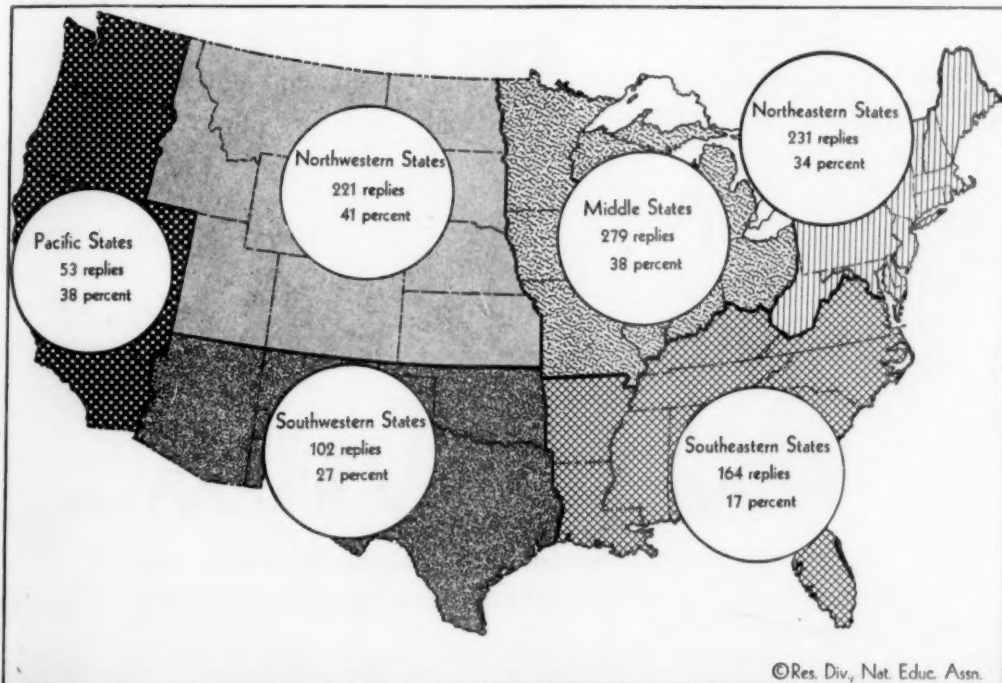
corresponding official in towns, unions, parishes, and other rural districts. The replies, which represent approximately 30 percent of all such districts, are described below.

In addition to the questionnaire data, supplementary facts and related information were drawn from other sources, usually from current publications but occasionally from unpublished data. The review of legislative trends in particular, which forms one part of Section III of this report, was derived entirely from sources other than the questionnaire. Footnote citations thruout the bulletin indicate the sources used.

The Questionnaire Replies

Reports on the rural schools in their respective counties, towns, unions, and parishes were received from 1050 superintendents. The number and percent coming from each geographic region in the United States are shown in Figure I. The smallest number of replies came from the Pacific states but the smallest percent

FIGURE I. NUMBER AND PERCENT OF REPLIES FROM RURAL SUPERINTENDENTS IN EACH REGION



from the Southeastern states. The largest number of replies came from the Middle states; the largest percent, from the adjoining Northwestern region.

A majority of the tables in the bulletin are derived from these reports. The fact that the number of replies shown in a given table usually is less than 1050 is due to omissions with respect to single items. Some questions, for example, were answered by 1000 or more of the respondents; others, by only 900 or fewer. Each table indicates the number of replies on the item or items involved—not the total number of questionnaires returned.

Superintendents who cooperated in the study were asked to report only on the *rural schools* in their respective counties and districts, even tho there were some urban schools within their districts and perhaps under their jurisdiction. As implied in an earlier paragraph the distinction which they were asked to follow was that their report should be based on all schools *located in the open country and in villages and small cities below 2500 in population.* That their replies pertain to schools truly rural in character is assured not only by the foregoing limitation but by the further fact that the districts represented are made up very largely of rural territory. As Table 1 shows, 93 percent

of the replies came from districts in which open country and rural villages occupy from three-fourths to all of the available area.

Organization of the Bulletin

Factual information on the present status of rural education and a general overview of recent trends are considered in the next two parts of this report. Against that background, Section IV takes up the elements of strength and weakness in current rural programs, citing numerous specific examples of grave deficiencies and noteworthy achievements.

TABLE 1.—AMOUNT OF RURAL TERRITORY IN THE DISTRICTS REPRESENTED

Portion of county or school district occupied by "open country" and villages below 2500	Percent of replies
1	2
Entire area of district.....	42
Between 75 and 100 percent.....	51
Between 50 and 75 percent.....	5
Less than half.....	2

The final part outlines a method of attack on rural school problems, including a checklist for the appraisal of individual rural school programs.

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II. THE PROBLEM OF RURAL EDUCATION

Rural School Enrolments

Rural schools are responsible for the early training of somewhat more than half the nation's children. Enrolments in rural and urban schools are substantially the same, in each case approximately 13,000,000 in the combined elementary and secondary schools. Rural enrolments would exceed those in urban schools, however, if the proportion of rural children attending high school were as high as that for urban children.

Figure II broadly defines the task of rural schools by comparing urban and rural enrolments for 1930 and 1940 in both the elementary and secondary schools. Little change in

total enrolment has occurred during the ten-year period either in rural or in urban schools—the numbers in each biennium fluctuating only slightly up or down from 13,000,000. A shift within that enrolment has occurred, however, in both the rural and urban schools, involving in each case the loss of approximately 1,000,000 pupils in the elementary grades and an increase of substantially the same number at the high-school level.

Since rural elementary enrolments were considerably higher than the corresponding urban enrolments in 1930, the proportionate loss in elementary pupils has been the greater in the city schools. Significantly, too, the approxi-

FIGURE II

RURAL AND URBAN ENROLMENTS, 1930 AND 1940

1930



1940



Each small symbol represents 1 million elementary pupils—Grades 1 to 8.

Each large symbol represents 1 million high-school pupils—Grades 9 to 12.

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Source: U. S. Department of the Interior, Office of Education. BIENNIAL SURVEY OF EDUCATION: 1928-30. Bulletin, 1931, No. 20. Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1931. Enrolments for 1940 are estimated, using comparable data from the biennial surveys of the U. S. Office of Education thru 1938 and the enrolment data for 1940 obtained thru questionnaires in the present study.

mately equal growth of enrolments in rural and urban high schools during the past decade leaves the former still behind as to the percent of pupils enrolled among those eligible to attend.

Sizes and Types of Schools

In 1930 there were 221,051 rural school buildings in use in the United States. Altho consolidation has reduced this number to about 200,000, these rural school buildings still constitute more than 85 percent of all school buildings.

Figure III shows the approximate number of rural schools of different sizes and types. Separate elementary schools constitute about 87 percent of the total number, combined elementary and high schools about 11 percent, and separate high schools about 2 percent. Most numerous of any one type are the one-teacher elementary schools, which account for over 60 percent of the total. There are nearly 45,000 elementary schools, however, each having more than one teacher; and there are about 27,000 combined elementary and high schools and separate high schools. These larger schools,

FIGURE III
NUMBER OF RURAL SCHOOLS OF DIFFERENT SIZES AND TYPES, 1940
ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS



ONE-TEACHER SCHOOLS



SCHOOLS WITH TWO TEACHERS OR MORE

COMBINED ELEMENTARY AND HIGH SCHOOLS



SEPARATE HIGH SCHOOLS



Each full symbol represents 5,000 rural schools.

Source: Estimated on the basis of questionnaire reports from 986 counties or other rural districts.

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altho numerically less impressive, occupy an important place in the total rural school program.

Since one-teacher schools represent a large and perplexing area in rural education, they are further described in Table 2. The average enrolment in the 32,763 schools included in the table is approximately seventeen pupils, but one school in four is serving fewer than ten pupils. This brings into clear relief one common fallacy with respect to rural education, namely, that the chief problem in rural teaching is that of the overcrowded school with too many pupils and grades to be managed successfully by one teacher. In some cases, to be sure, this is a major difficulty. According to these data, however, schools with fewer than ten pupils are more than twice as numerous as those with thirty pupils or more.

Marked differences in the usual size of one-teacher schools are shown for the various geographic regions. The average enrolments, ranging from eleven in the Northwestern states to thirty-two in the Southeastern states, indicate the general direction of such differences.

Non-Farm Children in the Rural Schools

The fact that rural education is not identified exclusively with the open country is at-

tested by the mere existence of some 20,000 hamlets and villages which are themselves essentially rural in character.¹ Moreover, recent changes in industrial and agricultural methods together with improvements in methods of transportation have resulted in a marked increase in the non-farm rural population. This situation is reflected in a recent school survey in Massachusetts where a majority of the pupils' fathers were engaged in agriculture in only 24 of the 220 rural communities represented in the study.² Massachusetts is an industrialized state, of course, but it is estimated that for the nation as a whole the rural non-farm population constitutes no less than two-fifths of the total rural population.³

Size of Rural Teaching Staff

Rural schools require the services of about 465,000 teachers, or about 53 percent of the combined rural and urban teaching staff. No material change in the number of rural teaching positions has occurred since 1930 or in the percent of all teaching positions represented by the rural group.⁴

Special Significance of Rural Education

The size of the rural school program has been emphasized in the data just presented—

¹ Brunner, Edmund de S., and Kolb, John H. *Rural Social Trends*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1933. p. 81.

² Broudy, H. S. *Abstract of Findings of a Rural School Survey in Massachusetts*. North Adams, Mass.: State Teachers College, 1939. p. 2. (Mimeo.)

³ Brunner, Edmund de S., and Kolb, John H., *op. cit.*, p. 83.

⁴ The latest published figure on rural teaching positions is 466,642 for the year 1935-36 (see U. S. Department of the Interior, Office of Education. "Statistics of State School Systems, 1935-36." *Biennial Survey of Education: 1935-36*. Bulletin, 1937, No. 2. Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1938. Chapter 2, p. 49. [Advance pages.]). Unpublished data from the same agency for the year 1938 indicate that the number has remained virtually the same.

TABLE 2.—SIZE OF THE ONE-TEACHER SCHOOLS IN VARIOUS REGIONS OF THE UNITED STATES

Size of school	Number of schools	Percent of schools	Percent of schools of each class in the various geographic regions					
			North-east	South-east	Middle states	North-west	South-west	Pacific
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1-9 pupils.....	8,170	25	10	2	23	48	16	27
10-19 pupils.....	13,927	42	39	15	50	44	43	44
20-29 pupils.....	6,565	20	33	31	19	7	24	21
30-39 pupils.....	2,661	8	14	27	6	1	11	7
40-49 pupils.....	944	3	3	16	1	0	4	1
50 pupils or more.....	496	2	1	9	1	0	2	0
Total.....	32,763	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Number of schools reported from each region.....			5,195	3,209	14,029	8,097	1,279	954
Average enrolment (all the one-teacher schools: 17 pupils)			21	32	16	11	20	16

Source: Tabulated from the questionnaire replies of superintendents of schools in 858 counties or other rural districts.

the fact that rural schools must give at least half the nation's children whatever public education they receive. Obviously, any weakness or shortage that exists generally in rural education seriously impairs the effectiveness of the total program. Yet the problems of rural education merit special consideration because of their frequency and severity rather than because of the mere size of the program.

Many characteristic weaknesses and shortcomings in rural education, largely attributable to inadequate financial support, are matters of common knowledge, such as (a) bleak, unattractive school buildings that often are menaces to health and safety; (b) lack of sufficient or suitable equipment and supplies; (c) immature, relatively untrained, inexperienced, underpaid teachers; (d) short school terms; (e) absence of library facilities; (f) lack of supervisory help for teachers and of health service and other remedial care for children; (g) meager school programs confined to traditional academic exercises that are unrelated to the children's experiences, interests, and needs; and (h) lack of a sufficient number of accessible high schools to care for the potential enrolments. Until such defects have been corrected in most rural districts, as they have been already in some forward-looking communities, there can be no slackening of effort in behalf of adequate rural schools.

Keeping in Mind the Total Program

The provision of satisfactory rural schools involves something more than the elimination of a single defect. Indeed one of the hindrances

to more rapid improvement in rural education has been the tendency of many people either to oversimplify the issues involved or to focus attention almost entirely on some one weakness. For example, some have narrowed their concern in rural education to the one-teacher schools ignoring all the larger ones, or perhaps to the elementary grades unmindful of the rural high schools. Some have limited their attention entirely to schools located in the open country and attended by farm children. Others have sought only to improve classroom practices in the very large or perhaps the very small one-teacher schools. Still other enthusiasts have been interested only in the consolidation of small schools.

Each of the foregoing areas is important enough to merit, upon occasion, the strongest possible endeavor. No one of them, however, constitutes the total problem. Data already presented make it clear that rural education involves both elementary schools and secondary schools and that rural schools are of many sizes and types (see especially Figures II and III). Constructive effort in rural education will not be limited therefore to the advancement of simple panaceas or to an approach that sees no farther than a single defect. Desirable as it may be to work for one improvement such as the consolidation of one-teacher elementary schools, better preparation for rural teachers, the creation of larger administrative districts, or curriculum revision, such efforts should not blind rural leaders to other needs, other problems, and other openings for advancement which from time to time appear.

III. MAJOR TRENDS IN RURAL EDUCATION, 1930 TO 1940

General Overview

The questionnaire reports obtained in this study, from county superintendents and from comparable officials in other rural districts, indicate that considerable progress has been made in rural education during the past ten-year period in spite of adverse conditions. Figure IV summarizes the judgments of these administrative officers with respect to fourteen specific aspects of rural education. In some instances, the ten-year gains reported may have represented some degree of unintentional overstatement growing out of the pride and satisfaction which usually attend one's own achievements. But even with due allowance for such optimism on the part of those reporting, the fact that substantial progress has been made can scarcely be denied.

Examination of Figure IV makes it clear, however, that the gains made with respect to some rural school problems have far exceeded those achieved in other areas. For example, 50 percent or more of the counties and districts represented were able to report that *marked improvement* has been made with respect to (a) teachers' classroom procedures, (b) the average amount of professional training for rural teachers, (c) rural courses of study, and (d) the kind and condition of school buildings. On the other hand, fewer than 25 percent were able to report similar improvement with respect to (a) per pupil expenditures, (b) length of school terms, (c) teacher turnover, and (d) the average salary of rural teachers. Indeed, in the matter of rural salaries, 35 percent of the superintendents reported that the average now in their respective counties is actually lower than it was ten years ago. In general, the gains reported have been most satisfactory with respect to the problems least directly affected by school support and least satisfactory wherever additional financial support was necessarily involved.

Several trends in rural education not listed for specific appraisal in the questionnaire form were mentioned in the superintendents' voluntary comments. In the order of frequency of mention, the following improvements were noted: (a) better transportation; (b) better public relations; (c) relief from overcrowded conditions, with recent decreases in enrollments; (d) improved health programs; (e)

marked increase in the percent of pupils going to high schools and colleges; (f) better extra-curriculum programs; (g) increased helpfulness of parent-teacher associations; (h) provision of free textbooks; (i) increased state support; (j) decrease in the average teacher load; (k) improved playgrounds; and (l) stronger county departments of education. The only retrogression similarly reported was abolition of the county superintendency in one state and creation in its stead of the office of county examiner, with restricted authority and opportunity for leadership.

Improvements in rural education have varied considerably from one state and one geographic region to another. Table 3 shows for each state the percent of replies from the districts in which some degree of improvement has been made during the past ten years with respect to each of the fourteen items included in Figure IV. Percents of 75 or lower are set in bold type.

Examination of the percents in bold type will show, generally speaking, where the need for further progress is urgent. The only exceptions would be those rare instances where, even ten years ago, the counties participating in this study had achieved satisfactory status with respect to the problem in question. The bold percents in column 10 show, for example, that less than three-fourths of the districts in sixteen states reported any progress in reducing the number of one-teacher schools. Similarly, column 15 shows that less than three-fourths of the districts in thirty-nine states were able to report any increment over the past ten years in the average salary of their rural teachers. For nine of the forty-three states the percents are in bold type, indicating relatively limited improvement, for as many as half the fourteen items in the table.

The regional differences referred to above are shown in Table 4. The percents again refer to districts in which some improvement is apparent and those of 75 or lower are printed in bold type. From this table it appears that rural schools have made the greatest gains in the Southern states—the Southeastern and Southwestern regions—and the slightest gains in the Northwestern states.

TABLE 3.—TEN-YEAR TREND WITH RESPECT TO CERTAIN PHASES OF RURAL EDUCATION IN FORTY-THREE STATES

State	Percent of replies indicating some degree of improvement with respect to:														
	Class-room pro- cedures	Average amount of training for teachers	Courses of study	Equip- ment and supplies	Library service	Rural school buildings	Supervi- sion and in-service training	Regularity of at- tendance	Number of one- teacher schools	Per pupil ex- pend- itures	Methods of financing	Amount of turnover among teachers	Length of term	Average salaries	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	
Alabama.....	100	100	92	93	67	100	89	100	93	60	73	73	33	67	
Arizona.....	86	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	57	66	28	67	28	43	
Arkansas.....	100	100	93	93	87	80	33	80	87	64	80	67	87	20	
California.....	100	95	100	91	71	91	90	62	91	58	67	52	20	86	
Colorado.....	100	96	96	87	84	71	72	84	67	61	44	32	56	28	
Florida.....	100	100	100	80	90	80	80	60	80	88	80	60	50	60	
Georgia.....	100	100	94	100	100	94	93	100	100	92	93	81	87	87	
Idaho.....	100	95	88	90	85	85	90	84	80	74	70	26	69	26	
Illinois.....	98	100	91	100	96	98	88	75	37	72	58	52	54	50	
Indiana.....	94	100	97	81	78	80	84	84	86	57	89	64	13	47	
Iowa.....	98	70	82	96	86	80	73	78	74	50	19	30	68	14	
Kansas.....	100	100	93	93	98	81	78	65	80	62	74	42	18	13	
Kentucky.....	96	100	96	67	82	77	78	96	82	56	63	65	46	43	
Louisiana.....	100	100	87	100	100	100	100	87	87	87	75	62	37	75	
Maine.....	97	97	83	86	77	80	87	72	76	59	47	38	60	37	
Maryland.....	100	100	100	89	100	89	89	89	100	88	33	67	44	100	
Massachusetts.....	93	93	83	93	61	84	80	50	61	57	45	62	16	58	
Michigan.....	92	100	96	96	83	92	83	80	68	70	65	59	21	42	
Minnesota.....	97	100	82	100	78	100	84	97	69	87	75	61	90	35	
Mississippi.....	100	100	100	75	75	75	88	100	88	88	88	38	88	63	
Missouri.....	97	100	100	100	96	88	92	84	67	59	96	65	58	63	
Montana.....	85	95	50	62	71	47	81	76	95	30	47	57	48	14	
Nebraska.....	94	82	97	88	75	57	79	79	52	22	13	44	36	9	
New Hampshire.....	83	92	83	92	67	100	75	50	92	58	58	50	58	58	
New Jersey.....	100	100	91	91	100	91	82	45	73	45	9	91	36	45	
New Mexico.....	100	100	100	95	95	90	95	91	74	88	95	70	43	66	
New York.....	100	98	93	95	93	89	82	78	79	88	68	67	22	62	
North Carolina.....	100	100	100	100	100	100	86	93	93	53	87	87	71	36	
North Dakota.....	93	96	63	48	41	41	69	67	69	12	18	36	41	4	
Ohio.....	97	100	88	97	95	89	82	88	92	69	97	58	69	61	
Oklahoma.....	100	100	96	96	96	92	74	80	85	61	59	74	81	47	
Oregon.....	100	100	100	100	91	82	91	82	82	60	36	64	36	55	
Pennsylvania.....	100	100	97	87	86	76	87	83	90	70	35	94	41	30	
South Carolina.....	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	34	
South Dakota.....	100	82	95	77	62	54	64	68	82	50	37	46	54	14	

Tennessee.....	100	100	100	100	100	80	94	94	52	69	76	59	34	61
Texas.....	95	98	100	100	85	85	83	88	68	70	87	67	82	60
Utah.....	100	100	100	100	100	92	100	91	84	82	70	36	64	67
Vermont.....	100	100	100	100	84	100	100	65	69	72	69	55	80	30
Virginia.....	100	100	100	100	100	100	91	91	81	80	67	57	76	86
Washington.....	95	100	100	84	90	70	80	52	95	84	76	48	33	83
West Virginia.....	100	100	100	94	94	76	94	100	94	75	88	76	94	75
Wisconsin.....	100	97	100	97	76	93	93	83	69	53	49	52	70	49
Wyoming.....	100	100	100	100	82	82	90	82	82	45	72	36	36	45
The 43 states.....	98	97	91	91	85	83	83	80	76	65	62	58	52	46

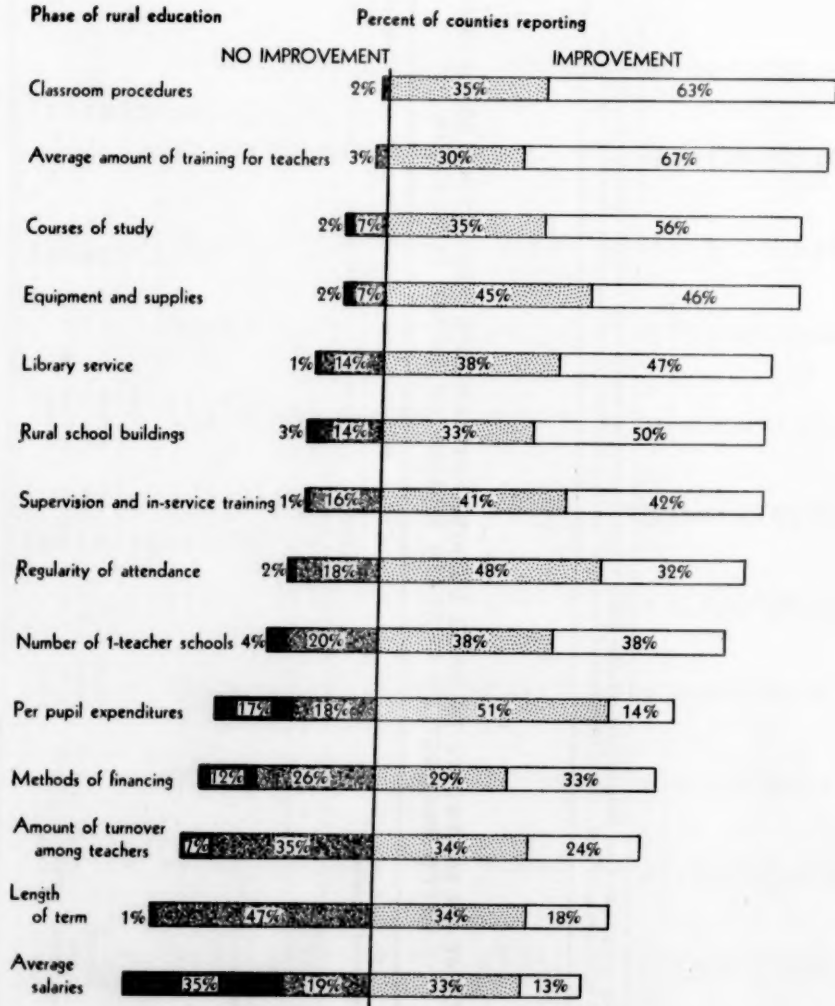
Read table as follows: 100 percent of the replies from Alabama indicated some degree of improvement with respect to (a) teachers' classroom procedures, and (b) the average amount of training for teachers; 92 percent reported better courses of study; etc. (All percents of 75 or lower are set in bold type, to indicate lack of widespread improvement.)

TABLE 4.—PERCENT OF DISTRICTS IN EACH GEOGRAPHIC REGION REPORTING SOME IMPROVEMENT WITH RESPECT TO CERTAIN PHASES OF RURAL EDUCATION

	Percent of replies indicating some degree of improvement, by region						
	Phases of rural education						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Classroom procedures.....	98	98	99	97	96	97	98
Average amount of training for teachers.....	98	98	100	95	94	99	98
Courses of study.....	92	92	96	90	86	96	90
Equipment and supplies.....	92	92	91	95	82	96	90
Library service.....	83	83	91	86	78	92	83
Rural school buildings.....	86	86	90	90	76	90	81
Supervision and in-service training.....	84	84	82	85	78	84	86
Regularity of attendance.....	72	72	92	83	75	87	62
Number of one-teacher schools.....	80	80	84	70	75	73	84
Per pupil expenditures.....	71	71	70	65	46	76	68
Methods of financing.....	54	54	77	67	47	76	64
Amount of "turnover" among teachers.....	69	69	67	54	40	70	53
Length of term.....	43	43	62	57	42	69	29
Average salaries.....	52	52	58	44	19	56	80

FIGURE IV

TEN-YEAR TREND IN CERTAIN PHASES OF RURAL EDUCATION AS REPORTED BY 1000 RURAL SUPERINTENDENTS



LEGEND:
 Situation worse than 10 years ago
 Slight improvement during the past 10 years
 Little change during the past 10 years
 Marked improvement during the past 10 years

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Legislation Affecting Rural Schools

This brief review of trends in legislation affecting rural schools has been derived rather largely from other legislative summaries.¹ As a first step, laws mentioned in these summaries which had some obvious bearing on rural schools were classified and tabulated by state. The school codes and supplements published since 1931 were then examined as a means of interpreting, verifying, correcting, and supplementing the information obtained from secondary sources. The purpose of this analysis is to report major trends during the period 1930 to 1940 rather than to report the provisions of specific laws or to give the exact number of states in which a given class of legislation was enacted. The laws of individual states are sometimes cited by way of illustration and the approximate number of states enacting certain types of laws is sometimes given. No claim is made, however, that the examples used are invariably the best that might have been chosen or that all laws of a given type were included.

Indicative of the important developments in school legislation between 1930 and 1940 is the fact that several states have thoroly reexamined their school laws in some cases for the purpose of issuing new and up-to-date compilations; in others, as a basis for rewriting fundamental parts or perhaps virtually all of the laws pertaining to schools. Among the extensive changes introduced during this period may be cited those in the school laws of Florida, Kentucky, North Carolina, and West Virginia.

Finance Legislation

Among all the school laws enacted during the past ten years, those pertaining to school finance should head the list as far as their effect on rural education is concerned. Not only are these laws more numerous than those of any other single type, but, perhaps in most states, their effect has been most far-reaching. Every state has modified either its laws pertaining to

school taxes, its appropriations toward the support of a minimum school program in all districts, its system of equalization for the benefit of needy school districts, or perhaps its laws in all three of these areas. The tax legislation, by and large, has sought to shift some of the burden of school support from taxation on real estate and personal property to other sources, notably to taxes on personal and corporation incomes and to general and special sales taxes. Appropriations, generally speaking, have been increased and equalization plans liberalized and extended. Among the plans of state aid either newly created or considerably improved are those of California, Florida, Indiana, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Washington, West Virginia, and Wyoming. The plans differ widely in character, from limited state aid distributed on a per-pupil or per-teacher basis to complete state support of a minimum school program as provided by the North Carolina law. Several states set aside special funds, or adopted equalization plans, which guarantee to every district the necessary funds to maintain schools for a specified term of perhaps seven or eight months.

Legislation with respect to budgetary procedures, debt limits, and other business practices and responsibilities of boards of education was passed in approximately two-fifths of the forty-eight states. Other types of financial legislation of particular significance to rural schools include (a) state aid toward the construction or maintenance and repair of school buildings, which was authorized in at least four states; (b) state aid toward the transportation of rural pupils in at least five states; (c) authorization of, or state aid toward the construction of, teacherages for rural teachers and principals in no less than six states; (d) state aid for, or state regulation of, the purchase of school equipment passed in at least four states;

¹ Sources of information: Library of Congress, Legislative Reference Service. *State Law Index and Digest*. Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, biennially since 1925-26. Vol. 4, 5, and 6. National Education Association, Research Division. Mimeographed summaries entitled "Topical Summary of 1931 School Legislation"; "School Legislation in 1933"; "State School Legislation, 1934"; "High Spots in 1935 School Legislation"; "High Spots in 1936 School Legislation"; "High Spots of State School Legislation Passed in 1937"; "State School Legislation" (October 1, 1938). Washington, D. C.: the Association. National Education Association, Research Division. "Five Years of State School Revenue Legislation." *Research Bulletin* 12: 1-40; January 1934. National Education Association, Research Division. "Tax Legislation Affecting State School Revenues, 1934-38." *Research Bulletin* 17: 97-160; May 1939. U. S. Department of the Interior, Office of Education. *A Review of Educational Legislation 1937 and 1938*. Bulletin, 1939, No. 16. Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1939. Cocking, Walter D. "Some Recent Trends in State School Legislation." Mimeographed abstract prepared and distributed for the State School Legislative Reference Service. Washington, D. C.: National Education Association, January 1936.

and (e) state aid for, or regulation of, libraries and library service for rural communities and rural schools in at least eight states.

District Organization

A second broad class of legislation which has directly influenced the course of rural education in recent years is that having to do with the creation, modification, consolidation, and dissolution of school districts, the abandonment of schools for lack of sufficient pupils in average daily attendance, and authorization of joint activity by two or more rural schoolboards in providing certain types of educational service.

Slightly more than half the states during the 'thirties enacted new or revised statutes pertaining specifically to the consolidation of local school districts. In some cases new permissive legislation was passed; in others, the necessary procedures were clarified or changed; and in still others, mandatory consolidations were brought about—as in West Virginia's new county unit plan, one of the most thoroughgoing reorganizations developed on a statewide basis during recent years. Then, supplementing these specific measures on consolidation, there were about an equal number of related acts which affect the problem of consolidation indirectly, tho sometimes quite fundamentally. Laws of this sort, also enacted in about half the states, defined the conditions under which, and the procedures by means of which, school districts may be created and abandoned and those whereby district lines may be shifted. At least seven states fixed new standards with respect to the minimum number of pupils for whom a rural school may be maintained. Nearly a fourth of the states authorized two or more districts to enter into joint or cooperative relationships either for the maintenance of certain schools or in providing certain specified school services. Laws enacted in two states make possible the interstate cooperation of districts adjoining their common boundary line.

Pupil Transportation

A third important class of rural school legislation enacted during the past ten years is that having to do with pupil transportation. State aid, appropriated for this purpose in a few

states, was cited earlier in connection with the discussion of finance legislation. These few laws, however, seem relatively unimportant in comparison with the numerous ones enacted with respect to other transportation problems.

Most numerous of all were laws defining the authority and responsibility of schoolboards in transporting pupils to and from the schools maintained within the given district—laws making transportation permissive or mandatory for pupils living at specified distances from school, or for those subject to other specified conditions. Such laws, of course, have been common in nearly all states, particularly since the turn of the century; but the fact that they have been revised in nearly half the states within the past ten years is not without significance. Furthermore, there was a closely related series of statutes almost equally numerous during the period under consideration, namely, laws defining the powers and responsibilities of boards of education in transporting pupils to schools not in the district, as for example to an outside high school when none is maintained within the district. The unmistakable trend in both of the classes of legislation just described, as well as in the seven state laws authorizing payments for board and room in lieu of transportation when this seems preferable, is toward the extension of school opportunities to an ever larger proportion of rural children.

Another extensive field of legislation pertaining to pupil transportation is that concerned with pupil safety. Several states have adopted comprehensive new school transportation codes. A few have specifically authorized rural boards of education to purchase and maintain school buses when there has arisen some question as to their legal authority to do so. Virtually every state has extended or revised its regulations pertaining either to safety standards for equipment, to the qualifications of school bus drivers, to the inspection and supervision of pupil transportation, or to driving practices and general safety standards.²

School Attendance

Legislation having to do with the school attendance of pupils in districts other than that of their legal residence obviously cannot be

² Regulations found in the several states as of 1936 are summarized in: National Education Association, Research Division, "Safety in Pupil Transportation," *Research Bulletin* 14: 197-240; November 1936. See also: Noble, M. C. S. *Pupil Transportation in the United States*. Scranton, Pa.: International Textbook Co., 1940. 541 p.

identified exclusively with rural schools. And yet many of the laws of this type, which during the past ten years have been enacted in more than half the states, have had important implications for rural education. In this area no clear-cut trend is evident. In some cases the laws have made it easier for pupils to attend school in districts other than those in which they reside but in other cases more expensive or more difficult to arrange. Few problems have defied solution more persistently than this; and few there are whose solution still seems more remote, especially in states where numerous small districts exist. Some states, however, are making progress toward placing rural pupils in the most accessible schools regardless of district boundary lines.

More than a fourth of the states have modified the age limits for compulsory education during the past decade, usually lowering the entrance age, raising the age for leaving school, or both. About fifteen states have likewise modified the length of the minimum school term—usually by extending it. And finally, laws pertaining to compulsory attendance, truancy, and the employment of minors have been enacted in at least a fourth of the states. These laws, while not directed specifically at rural education, have extended the period of schooling for thousands of rural pupils.

Still another type of legislation affecting the school attendance of rural as well as urban pupils is that pertaining to the enumeration of school pupils or census taking. In sixteen states, changes have been introduced with respect to the time or manner of taking the enumeration or the method of keeping school census records. One law provides for a statewide continuous census, which should prove a boon to rural pupils in that state.

Legislation Affecting Teachers

With some justice teacher welfare legislation, such as the laws pertaining to tenure, retirement, and teachers' contracts, might have been included in a summary of this type. With-

out question rural schools have responded to the wholesome influence of many such laws during the past few years. In view of the very large number of teacher welfare laws, however, their general applicability, and the excellent summaries of them already available,³ only changes in certification standards and in minimum-salary laws, which are peculiarly significant in rural areas, will be cited here. Certification standards have been raised in no fewer than fourteen states—nearly all of them states predominantly rural in character. Minimum-salary laws have been enacted or revised in about a fourth of the states since 1930. Several of the laws are new; others have modified earlier provisions, in one case a schedule established in 1922. These laws, altho generally helpful to rural schools, have been characterized as follows:

The most conspicuous defect of the existing minimum-salary laws is the inadequacy of the salaries which they set. . . . Only two set a minimum salary which represents as much as \$16 a week for a calendar year.⁴

Miscellaneous Provisions

A great many laws not included in any of the foregoing categories have left their mark on rural schools during the past ten years. Some of the important or unique types are listed below, together with at least the minimum number of states in which such laws have been enacted.

<i>Nature of the legislation:</i>	<i>Enacted in:</i>
Authorizing or requiring instruction of specified types. . .	At least 18 states
Authorizing or requiring the abandonment of specified courses or procedures.	" " 9 "
Establishing the qualifications, salary, or duties of county superintendents or county boards of education.	" " 17 "
Regulating the manner of election, time of meeting, or procedures of rural district boards of education.	" " 15 "

³ National Education Association, Research Division and National Council on Teacher Retirement. *Analysis of the Statutory Provisions for State Teachers Retirement Systems*. Washington, D. C.: the Association, 1939. 32 p. ¶National Education Association, Committee on Tenure. *The Status of Teacher Tenure*. Washington, D. C.: the Association, 1938. 32 p. ¶National Education Association, Committee on Tenure. *Critical Analysis of Teacher Tenure Legislation*. Washington, D. C.: the Association, 1939. 31 p. ¶National Education Association, Committee on Tenure. *Mandatory State-Adopted Contract Forms*. Washington, D. C.: the Association, 1937. 32 p. ¶National Education Association, Committee on Tenure. *Teachers' Contracts*. Washington, D. C.: the Association, 1936. 32 p. ¶National Education Association, Research Division. "Statutory Status of Six Professions." *Research Bulletin* 16: 181-236; September 1938.

⁴ National Education Association, Research Division. *Minimum-Salary Legislation for Teachers, 1937 and 1938*. Washington, D. C.: the Association, March 1939. p. 23.

<i>Nature of the legislation:</i>	<i>Enacted in:</i>
Authorizing, requiring, or extending the practice of providing free textbooks or instructional supplies	At least 18 states
Authorizing or regulating the state adoption of uniform textbooks	" " 12 "
Defining school building standards or regulating school-house construction	" " 8 "
Providing additional supervision for rural schools	" " 2 "
Requiring names and mail boxes for rural schools	" " 1 "

The following types of instruction are among those authorized or required: (a) effects of alcohol, tobacco, and narcotics; (b) safety education—particularly highway safety; (c) citizenship—including, in one case, instruction on elections and voting; (d) conservation and thrift; (e) physical education; (f) the Bible; and (g) art. Likewise, schools were authorized or directed to abandon the following courses and procedures: (a) statewide sys-

tems of teachers' institutes; (b) some specified foreign language course; (c) health and physical education; and (d) state examinations for graduates of the elementary schools. As noted elsewhere, one state abolished the county superintendency, creating in its stead the office of the county examiner.

It would be misleading to imply that all the legislation mentioned in this analysis has been significantly helpful. Fortunately, only a few laws have been actually detrimental—withdrawing vital financial support, increasing the practical difficulties of consolidation, abolishing or undermining the professional status of the chief county school officers, or otherwise creating obstacles to effective rural school work. Several laws have dealt with minor matters and had virtually no effect either for good or ill. By and large, however, the legislation enacted during the past decade has strengthened or at least given essential reinforcement to the work of rural schools.

Financing Rural Schools

Urgent Needs in Rural School Support

The basic causes for the flagrant and persistent inadequacies in rural school support are generally known: (a) the relatively unfavorable economic position of the American farmer, (b) inefficient use of tax resources, and (c) disparity in ability to support schools among the several states and particularly among the various districts within any state. Likewise, the long-standing needs in rural school finance are clearly evident:

1. Improvement in the economic status of rural people.
2. The consolidation of school districts in order both to reduce the extreme differences in taxable wealth per child and to effect greater economy in school administration.
3. Improvement in systems of taxation—in methods of assessment and collection; in the allocation of tax sources; in finding tax sources to supplement the overworked property tax.
4. Federal aid for the regular public school program which will help to reduce extreme differences in the ability of the various states to support their schools.
5. Increased state participation in the support of schools, state funds being used to offset extreme differences in ability among the various districts.

Altho easily cataloged, the foregoing im-

provements are extremely difficult to achieve, resting as they so largely do on fundamental revisions in the policies, philosophies, and laws of whole states and the entire nation.

Recent Trends in Rural School Support

Progress in none of the areas mentioned above has been particularly rapid during the ten-year period, 1930 to 1940. Drought conditions and the general situation with respect to world trade have increased rather than alleviated the economic ills of the American farmer. A limited amount of progress in consolidating school districts has been made, as will be pointed out in later paragraphs. Except in a few states, however, no large amount of such consolidation has occurred. In the field of tax revision, the following trends affecting school support more or less favorably in the various states were noted in the summary of finance legislation already given: (a) the attempt to shift some of the excessive tax burden from real estate, particularly farm real estate, to other tax sources, and (b) collection of an ever increasing portion of tax revenues by state governments and a corresponding decline in the relative importance of local units as taxing agencies.

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The federal government has assisted rural schools in a substantial way thru its regular subventions for vocational education including agriculture, the support of special programs such as adult education, and thru loans and grants for rural school buildings. No plan has been adopted, however, for the partial federal support of the regular school program, directly focused on reduction of the inequalities of the states to support their schools.

As noted already, revisions in state equalization plans and modifications in the methods and amounts of state school appropriations have been made recently in nearly all the states. Nevertheless, the problems and needs of rural schools described in other parts of this bulletin show that by and large rural school support still is far from adequate. Had the revisions come when economic conditions were more favorable, their good effect on rural school programs would have been immeasurably greater.

In quite a number of states during the depression years, merely to find ways of keeping the rural schools somewhere near their attained levels was no mean accomplishment. Probably the three outstanding developments with respect to state school support between 1930 and 1940 were: (a) extension of the principle of equalization in the distribution of state funds; (b) distribution of state funds in such a way as to encourage certain desired practices, especially in the matter of school administration; and (c) assumption by the state of a larger percent of the cost of schools.⁵

Trends in State School Support

The percent of school revenue derived from state sources is one trend on which reasonably specific facts can be presented. The extent to which the various states increased their participation in school support between 1928 and 1938, for example, is suggested in Figure V.⁶

⁵ For a review of trends in tax revision see: National Education Association, Research Division, "Tax Legislation Affecting State School Revenues, 1934-38," *Research Bulletin* 17: 97-160; May 1939.

⁶ Since the data for 1938 are the latest available, the decade 1928 to 1938 was chosen for this comparison. As a base year 1928 has the additional advantage of being a predepression year.

FIGURE V. INCREASE OR DECREASE IN THE PERCENT OF SCHOOL REVENUE OBTAINED FROM STATE SOURCES IN 1938 AS COMPARED WITH 1928

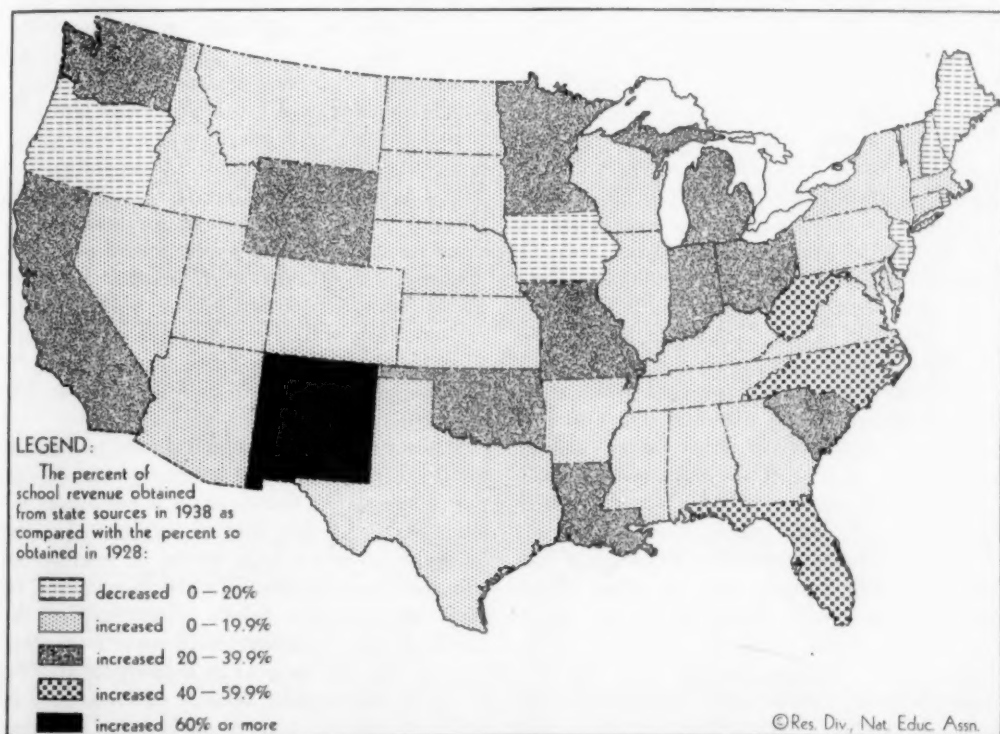
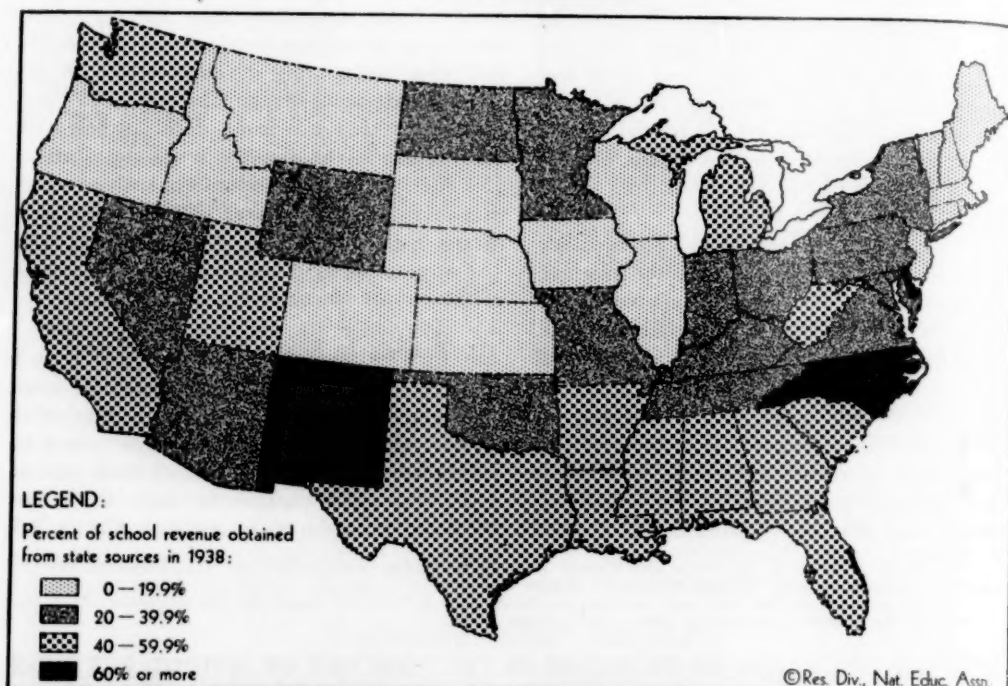


FIGURE VI. PERCENT OF SCHOOL REVENUE OBTAINED FROM STATE SOURCES IN 1938



The increases have been far from uniform and indeed in six states the percent of school revenue coming from state sources has actually declined. For the nation as a whole, however, the amount of school revenue coming from the states has increased 13.7 percentage points—from 16.2 percent in 1928 to 29.9 percent in 1938. The states showing the largest gains during the period were: New Mexico, North Carolina, West Virginia, and Florida.

Quite as important as the amount and direction of change in state school support is the question of what percent of the total school revenue is now actually derived from state sources. Figure VI classifies the states on this basis for the year 1938. In seventeen states, less than 20 percent of the support of schools is borne by the state; in fifteen states, 20-39.9 percent; in thirteen states, 40-59.9 percent; and in three states, more than 60 percent. The states ranking highest are Delaware, New Mexico, and North Carolina, in the order named, with West Virginia as a close fourth, leading the next group of states. The relatively high percent of state support in southern states is shown by this figure, with ten of the fifteen

states in the two southern regions providing 40 percent or more of school support. The prominence of New Mexico, West Virginia, North Carolina, and Florida in both Figures V and VI attests the far-reaching changes in school support recently introduced in these states.

It should be noted of course that the data in Figures V and VI apply not to rural schools alone but to the entire public school program. They are significant with respect to rural school support, however, because only the state can efficiently collect certain types of taxes and adequately equalize the differences in ability to support schools for rural as well as urban districts.

A second limitation which should be kept in mind is the fact that the percent of school support coming from state sources is not a dependable single criterion with respect to either the adequacy of any state's system of taxation or the quality of its plan for the distribution of state equalization funds. Conceivably, the whole of school support could come from state sources, yet that support be inadequate and the tax plan indefensible because of its failure to utilize available sources or because of gross

inequities. Likewise, a high percent of school support might come from state sources, yet be distributed in such fashion that flagrant inequalities among the several districts of the state are perpetuated rather than diminished. Hence, these charts are merely starting points,

reviewing one set of trends in school finance and raising the basic question as to whether or not school support in any given state could be materially improved by transferring a larger percent of school support from local districts to the state itself.

Consolidation

Between 1930 and 1940 many small rural schools were eliminated. The latest available figures for the nation as a whole cover only the years 1930 to 1934 but, even in this four-year period, the number of one-teacher schools showed a decrease of approximately 10,000, bringing the total down to 138,542. This was balanced by an increase of about 2850 in the number of two-teacher and other consolidated schools.⁷

Further information as to the extent of this trend for the entire period 1930 to 1940 is contained, however, in the reports of the county and other rural superintendents who cooperated in this study. Table 5 shows the number of schools of various sizes and types in existence in 1930 and 1940, respectively, in 915 rural counties and indicates the amount of gain or loss involved.

To the extent that these data are reliable, the past decade has seen the abandonment of one in five of the nation's one-teacher schools and of even a larger proportion of the smallest combined elementary and high schools and

separate high schools. Elementary schools with two to four teachers have lost ground also, according to these reports, but with this single exception all of the larger schools have materially increased in number, the largest percent of gain being shown by combined elementary and secondary schools with 20 teachers or more. From columns 6 and 7 of Table 5 it would appear that the consolidation movement has gone forward most rapidly in the Northeast and Southeastern states and least rapidly in the Northwestern states.

Amount of Further Consolidation Needed

Since it is generally recognized that there are limitations beyond which the further consolidation of rural schools would be unwise—that we shall always need a considerable number of one-teacher and other small schools—the superintendents who cooperated in this study were asked to indicate the number of schools of each size and type which they would

⁷ U. S. Department of the Interior, Office of Education. "Review of Conditions and Developments in Education in Rural and Other Sparsely Settled Areas." *Biennial Survey of Education in the United States: 1934-36*. Bulletin, 1937, No. 2. Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1937. Chapter 5, p. 4. (Advance pages.)

TABLE 5.—NUMBER OF SCHOOLS OF VARIOUS SIZES AND TYPES IN 915 RURAL DISTRICTS IN 1930 AND IN 1940

Type and size of school	Number of schools		Difference	Percent of increase or decrease	Geographic region in which the percent of increase or decrease was:	
	1930	1940			Largest	Smallest
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<i>Elementary schools:</i>						
1-teacher.....	41,008	32,664	-8,344	-20.3	Northeast	Northwest
2-4 teachers.....	7,828	7,232	-596	-7.6	Pacific	Middle states
5 teachers or more.....	1,580	1,876	+296	+18.7	Middle states	Northwest
<i>Combined elementary and high schools:</i>						
1-4 teachers.....	1,549	989	-560	-36.2	Southeast	Northwest
5-19 teachers.....	3,227	3,317	+90	+2.8	Middle states	Northwest
20 teachers or more.....	234	392	+158	+67.5	Southeast	Pacific
<i>Separate high schools:</i>						
1-4 teachers.....	298	215	-83	-27.9	Southeast	Northwest
5-19 teachers.....	585	774	+189	+32.3	Middle states	Northwest
20 teachers or more.....	76	104	+28	+36.8	Northeast	Pacific

TABLE 6.—AMOUNT OF FURTHER CONSOLIDATION RECOMMENDED FOR THEIR RESPECTIVE COUNTIES BY 521 RURAL SUPERINTENDENTS

Type and size of school	Number now in operation	Number recommended	Percent of difference
1	2	3	4
<i>Elementary schools:</i>	21,882	10,575	-52
1-teacher.....	16,701	6,108	-63
2-4 teachers.....	4,190	2,659	-37
5 teachers or more.....	991	1,808	+82
<i>Combined elementary and high schools:</i>	2,721	2,267	-17
1-4 teachers.....	544	201	-63
5-19 teachers.....	1,942	1,519	-22
20 teachers or more.....	235	547	+133
<i>Separate high schools:</i>	544	544	0
1-4 teachers.....	105	62	-41
5-19 teachers.....	388	345	-11
20 teachers or more.....	51	137	+169
Total.....	25,147	13,386	-47

consider as ideal for their respective districts. Replies from 521 counties and other rural districts make it possible to compare the numbers recommended as the ideal arrangement with the number of schools actually in existence in 1940. This comparison is shown in Table 6. If the ideal conditions visualized by these superintendents could be brought about, the total number of schools would be reduced by 47 percent. The number of schools in the three largest groups would be approximately doubled; those in the three smallest groups reduced by about 60 percent. The total number of elementary schools would be only about half the present number, combined elementary and high schools would be somewhat fewer in number, and the total number of separate high schools would remain unchanged.

Figure VII shows the effect which such consolidation would have on the proportion of schools of various sizes and types. The upper bar in each pair shows the present percent distribution of schools of various sizes; the lower bar the proportion which would be found if the recommended consolidation could be effected. Generally speaking, the recommended increases in schools of the largest type would approximately offset the decreases in the smallest schools, leaving the proportion of schools in the middle group about the same. It should be noted that, even if all the recommended consolidations were made, one-teacher schools still would account for 58 percent of all the separate elementary rural schools.

The amount of further consolidation recommended by rural superintendents varied considerably from one geographic region to another. Perhaps this was due in part to the amounts of consolidation already effected in the various regions, in part to differences in those conditions which make consolidation feasible, and in part to characteristic differences in the social and educational philosophy of rural leaders in different parts of the nation. Whatever the cause, wide differences in the recommendations did appear as may be noted from Table 7.

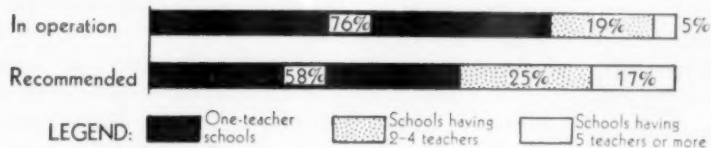
To the extent that these judgments are valid, there is little reason for believing that the consolidation movement is nearing completion. On the contrary, it apparently must go much farther before its advantages are fully realized. The current literature on consolidation emphasizes one point of view, however, that has not always been kept in the foreground. This simple but important truism is that consolidation is only a *means* of providing better education for rural boys and girls—not an *end* to be achieved in rural school administration.⁸ Growing, too, is the conception that there is no single best size and type either of schools or of administrative districts which should be established thruout the country regardless of local conditions. The prevailing counsel now is to conduct careful surveys in advance of proposed consolidations and to make consolidations in terms of existing educational,

⁸ See, for example: Brewton, John E. "The Challenge of Rural Education." *Peabody Journal of Education* 17: 397-403; May 1939. ¹ Washington State Planning Council. *Survey of the Common School System of Washington*. Olympia, Wash.: the Council, 1938. p. 18-24.

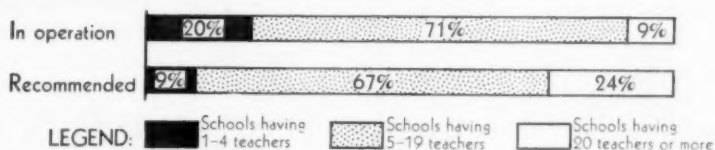
FIGURE VII

PERCENT OF SCHOOLS OF VARIOUS SIZES AND TYPES NOW IN OPERATION AS COMPARED WITH THE PERCENT RECOMMENDED BY 521 RURAL SUPERINTENDENTS

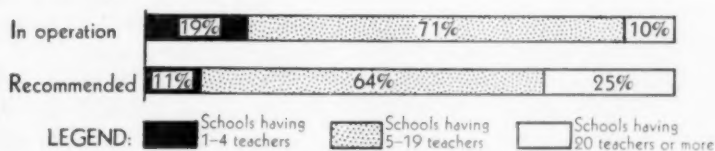
ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS



COMBINED ELEMENTARY AND HIGH SCHOOLS



SEPARATE HIGH SCHOOLS



Research Division, National Education Association

Read chart as follows: If needed consolidations could be made, elementary one-teacher schools would constitute only 58 percent of all the rural elementary schools instead of 76 percent as at present. Conversely, schools with five teachers or more would represent 17 percent of the total instead of only 5 percent as at present.

TABLE 7.—AMOUNT OF CONSOLIDATION RECOMMENDED IN VARIOUS REGIONS IN THE UNITED STATES

Type of school	Percent of increase or decrease recommended by superintendents in the number of schools of various sizes and types, by region						
	North-east	South-east	Middle states	North-west	South-west	Pacific	Entire U. S.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1-teacher elementary schools	-80	-73	-59	-48	-77	-58	-63
1-4 teacher combined elementary and high schools	-74	-69	-79	-16	-63	0	-63
1-4 teacher junior and senior high schools	-43	-67	-67	+18	+100	-50	-41
5-teacher (or larger) elementary schools	+64	+140	+88	+86	+68	+14	+82
20-teacher (or larger) combined elementary and high schools	+147	+85	+125	+147	+136	+533	+133
20-teacher (or larger) junior and senior high schools	+680	+275	+157	+33	+157	+50	+169
Number of counties or other rural districts represented in the replies	137	99	122	91	53	19	521
Percent of superintendents who recommended some reduction in the number of one-teacher elementary schools	82	86	77	67	75	79	78
Percent of superintendents who recommended some increase in the number of elementary schools having 5 teachers or more	45	57	35	20	32	47	39

Read table as follows: The number of one-teacher elementary schools recommended as ideal by rural superintendents in the Northeastern states is 80 percent fewer than the number now in existence, etc.

social, economic, and geographic conditions rather than according to some standard or preconceived pattern.

Consolidation of School Districts

The discussion up to this point has dealt largely with the consolidation of schools, or, as it is sometimes called, the consolidation of school-attendance units. Another important type of consolidation of vast importance to rural education is the enlargement of administrative units—the merging of whole districts, townships, or perhaps counties. In many states this type of consolidation is prerequisite to the creation of satisfactory attendance units. The brief consideration given here to the consolidation of rural school districts is due to two factors: (a) the excellent, recent studies already available on this problem,⁹ and (b) the fact that no data were obtained by direct inquiry in this study with respect to the enlargement of rural administrative units.

Examples of Consolidation in Various States and Regions

From recent published sources come the following illustrations of the extent and meaning of consolidation in various parts of the United States. Again, the emphasis seems to fall on the elimination of small schools with occasional reference to the consolidation of rural districts.

New England—The "regional" school which is beginning to appear in New England may be illustrated by the Housatonic Valley Regional High School in Connecticut. It represents a six-town consolidation and serves a territory of 277 square miles. Brick and native stone were used in the building, which has a 65-acre site.¹⁰

Three Great Lakes states—Ohio had 2387 one-teacher schools in 1935-36 but only 1094 in 1939-40, a decrease of 1293 in the four-year

period. Indiana is rather consistently closing about 150 one-teacher schools per year. Consolidation has been proceeding slowly in Illinois, but is expected to move forward now that the past session of the legislature withdrew the flat rate state aid to districts with fewer than eighteen pupils as if they enrolled that number.¹¹

Six Northwest prairie states—Relatively little consolidation is being done in Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Nebraska. Ten years ago these states had 25 percent of the nation's one-teacher schools and now about 28 percent. Furthermore, "current statistics suggest that the total number of consolidated schools in these Middle Western states recently has been declining."¹²

Three states in the Pacific Northwest—Consolidation in Washington is reported to be moving slowly with only about fifty consolidations in two and one-half years. In Oregon a reorganization committee is at work in each county on plans scheduled to become effective in 1941-42. Considerable progress is reported in Idaho and is attributed largely to better roads, a state survey, and stronger professional support for the program.¹³

Arkansas—"In 1933 the county boards of education were abolished and the county superintendents were replaced by county examiners. These changes have greatly impaired the educational program by removing all provision for real educational and financial supervision, guidance, and coordination. It seems apparent that the Act of 1933 will tend to retard consolidation of existing school districts and increase rather than decrease the number of school units. During the biennium 1934-36, only twenty consolidations were made, while thirty-one dissolutions of previously consolidated districts were effected."¹⁴

California—High-school consolidation has moved ahead in this state relatively faster than

⁹ See especially: Alves, Henry F., and Morphet, Edgar L. *Principles and Procedures in the Organization of Satisfactory Local School Units*. U. S. Dept. of the Interior, Office of Education, Bulletin, 1938, No. 11. Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1939. 164 p. ¶Alves, Henry F., and others. *Local School Unit Organization in Ten States*. U. S. Dept. of the Interior, Office of Education, Bulletin, 1938, No. 10. Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1939. 334 p. ¶Butterworth, Julian E. "Organization for Local Administration and Support." *Biennial Survey of Education in the United States: 1934-36*. U. S. Dept. of the Interior, Office of Education, Bulletin, 1937, No. 2. Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1937. Chapter 5 of Vol. I. p. 38-60. (Advance pages.) ¶Cyr, Frank W. "Educational Administration in Rural Areas." *Teachers College Record* 41: 339-53; January 1940. ¶Dawson, Howard A. *Satisfactory Local School Units*. Field Study No. 7. Nashville: George Peabody College for Teachers, 1934. 180 p.

¹⁰ Grace, Alonzo G. "New England's First Regional." *Nation's Schools* 25: 20; January 1940.

¹¹ Holy, T. C. "Trends in Great Lakes." *Nation's Schools* 25: 25; January 1940.

¹² Friswold, I. O. "The Middle West Reports." *Nation's Schools* 25: 26; January 1940.

¹³ Roberts, C. E., and others. "Progress in the North West." *Nation's Schools* 25: 39-40; January 1940.

¹⁴ Alves, Henry F., and others, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

the consolidation of elementary schools due to differences in legislative encouragement. The state has 2652 elementary-school districts of which 80 percent have fewer than 100 pupils, 36 percent fewer than twenty pupils, and 15 percent fewer than ten pupils. Half these districts maintain only one-teacher schools and 85 percent employ fewer than five teachers.¹⁵

Kentucky—County units and independent districts are the basic administrative units and there are 300 of these, none with fewer than 50 pupils and half of them with more than 1000. The state had 5249 one-teacher elementary schools and 1086 two-teacher schools in 1935-36. The former have been reduced approximately 1000 since that time.¹⁶

New York—This state has 269 community schools. Of these a typical one is a twelve-year school serving sixteen to eighteen small districts and enrolling about 500 pupils. Usually, too, the school will serve as an important community center.¹⁷

North Carolina—During the past decade the plan of administering and financing schools has been completely reorganized, the state assuming the entire cost of an eight-month minimum program for urban and rural schools alike. Important trends with respect to consolidation and rural education generally in the state are revealed in the following comparisons:

	1929	1938
Total number of school buildings . . .	5,825	4,410
Number of one-teacher schools . . .	2,112	1,220
Number of schools with seven teachers or more	509	1,007
Number of high schools	886	946
High-school enrolment	116,937	181,202
Number of class A teachers	8,181	16,763
Average salary of white teachers . . .	\$845	\$850
Average salary of Negro teachers . . .	\$538	\$650

The state has only about 250 one-teacher white schools, almost all of them located in

fifteen of the one hundred counties. It is planned that these will be further reduced within five years to fewer than one hundred.¹⁸

Oklahoma—Between 1915 and 1935 the number of one-teacher schools in Oklahoma dropped from 4180 to 2488.¹⁹

Pennsylvania—During the past ten years an average of 300 one-teacher schools per year have been closed thru consolidation. There are still about 5000 schools of this type, the number varying from five to more than 200 per county.²⁰

Texas—In 1935-36 there were about 330,000 Texas pupils attending one-teacher schools. In some 900 of these small schools the enrolments were below twenty. There were 7000 school districts in the state, 1020 of them independent school districts.²¹

Utah—Consolidation of small schools in Utah has been carried to the point where there remain only forty-five one-teacher schools and fifty-six two-teacher schools. Consolidation of administrative units was achieved early in this state, by the 1915 law which created five city and thirty-five rural administrative units.²²

West Virginia—The number of administrative units in the state was reduced from 398 to 55 with the introduction of the county unit plan some seven years ago. In the intervening years many small schools have been consolidated and numerous other fine results are attributed to the new plan: "With less money than was formerly available, the average term in the state is longer; the preparation of teachers, higher; the number of boys and girls in high school, larger; the transportation, safer and more extensive; school attendance, better; school administrators have better preparation in academic credits and longer experience; the curriculum is enriched; and education is carried to rural communities—steps all in the ascent toward the goal of universal education."²³

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 62.

¹⁶ Alves, H. F., and others, *op. cit.*, p. 100-105. Also, Department of Education, *School Consolidation in Kentucky*. Educational Bulletin, Vol. 7, No. 6. Frankfort: the Department, 1939. p. 343-44.

¹⁷ Wilson, W. K. "News from New York." *Nation's Schools* 25: 22-23; January 1940.

¹⁸ *School and Society* 50: 586-87; November 4, 1939. Also, Credle, W. F. "Speaking of the South." *Nation's Schools* 25: 28-29; January 1940.

¹⁹ Reynolds, Ivan. "Oklahoma Consolidates." *Nation's Schools* 25: 32-33; January 1940.

²⁰ *School and Society* 51: 410; March 30, 1940.

²¹ McGehee, Tom. "Advantages of Consolidation." *Texas Outlook* 23: 12-14; August 1939.

²² Skidmore, Charles H., and Tippetts, J. R. "It Happened in Utah." *Nation's Schools* 25: 36-37; January 1940.

²³ Trent, W. W. "Is the County Unit the Most Satisfactory Unit for School Administration?" *School Life* 25: 144; February 1940.

School Housing and Equipment

Improvements during the past ten years in school housing facilities and in the amount and quality of school equipment and supplies were prominent among the trends noted at the beginning of this section. No improvement in housing was reported in only 17 percent of the districts represented in Figure IV, p. 142, and no improvement with respect to school equipment and supplies in only 9 percent. In approximately 50 percent of the counties, "marked improvement" in both housing and equipment was indicated.

The stimulus for improvement in rural school housing has stemmed from two important sources: (a) an accumulation of building needs which it was virtually impossible longer to ignore; and (b) the extension of federal loans and grants for school building purposes. Since the urgent school housing needs existing in the early 1930's—many of them identified with rural communities—were pointed out in a previous issue of the *Research Bulletin*, the acute problems which virtually forced some positive action need not be reviewed here.²⁴ Without the encouragement and help of federal loans and grants, however, much of the new construction and modernization work that has been accomplished undoubtedly would have been postponed or done in less satisfactory ways. Thru PWA help alone, it is reported that during the past six years 790 new consolidated rural schools have been constructed, replacing 1580 obsolete one-room structures.²⁵ A specific example of such consolidation is found in Pike County, Ohio, where seven four-room buildings were erected to take the place of forty-one outmoded one-room schools.²⁶ The amount of fundamental construction, repair, renovation, and remodeling of school buildings of all types, rural and urban, with the help of all the various federal loans and grants, has been estimated at 40,000 different projects.²⁷

The wholesome influence of these projects can scarcely be overestimated. In many rural

communities new, carefully planned, attractive school buildings have replaced ramshackle obsolete structures. In others such achievements as the provision of pure drinking water, improvement in sanitary facilities, the elimination of fire hazards, and improvements in lighting and heating have transformed old buildings into reasonably satisfactory school plants.

On the West Coast the strengthening of buildings against earthquake hazards has received special attention. In the prairie states the construction of cyclone cellars—more than 1250 in Nebraska alone²⁸—has brought added safety to several thousand rural children. Provision of facilities for warm noon lunches is still another of the significant improvements in rural school housing recently accomplished in many rural communities. A commendable feature in much of the construction work done in recent years has been the use of local materials, particularly native stone, in ways that can be readily copied in the construction of dwellings in that locality.

Yet the commendable work thus far achieved must not lead to the assumption that rural school housing needs have been substantially met. On the contrary, only a beginning has been made. Since there are approximately 200,000 rural schools as compared with only 40,000 important federal school projects, both urban and rural, it is apparent that the vast majority of rural schools have been untouched by this program. And as to building projects carried out without federal help of any sort, reports indicate that these are in the minority, at least during the past six years. During 1938-39, 2797 of the 4418 one-teacher schools in use in Kentucky were more than twenty years old. Most of these were frame buildings and many were badly in need of repair. There was no water supply on the schoolgrounds in 1618 of these schools, and toilet facilities were lacking in 174 cases. Unjacketed stoves were used in 4082 of these schools, and in 3920 there were too few seats to accommodate the pupils enrolled.²⁹ A

²⁴ National Education Association, Research Division. "The Nation's School Building Needs." *Research Bulletin* 13: 1-36; January 1935.

²⁵ Federal Works Agency, PWA, Division of Information. *Press Release*. No. 44; P. W. 2341. September 8, 1940. p. 2.

²⁶ Niles, David. "W. P. A.'s 27,000 School Projects." *Nation's Schools* 23: 20; January 1939.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

²⁸ National Education Association, Department of Rural Education. *Adjustments in Rural Education*. Bulletin, 1937. Washington, D. C.: the Association, 1937. p. 77.

²⁹ Kentucky Department of Education. "School Consolidation in Kentucky." *Educational Bulletin*, Vol. VII, No. 6. Frankfort, Ky.: the Department, August 1939. p. 350-51.

1937 school housing survey in South Carolina reports such facts as these:

- 1017 buildings used for school purposes that are not publicly owned
- 1828 schools having no water supply on the schoolgrounds
- 720 schools with no toilet facilities
- 3207 schools with no provision for washing hands
- 33 percent of the white and 65 percent of the Negro schools having either bilateral, trilateral, or quadrilateral window lighting
- 1364 schools using homemade benches
- More schools using unjacketed stoves than all other types of heating devices combined.³⁰

Altho there are distinct differences among the states with respect to the number of obsolete rural schools in need of replacement, the illustrations cited above are by no means unique. Needs equally numerous and urgent exist in many states, particularly in the southern and western regions, and virtually every state has a considerable number of obsolete rural buildings. A good beginning has been made; a number of recent state surveys have shown where the needs are greatest; the task at hand is to push forward with the program until all rural school pupils are housed in safe, healthful buildings.

Rural School Attendance

The amount of time rural children spend in school is considerably less than the corresponding average for city children. In the first place, the absence of nursery schools and kindergartens in most rural districts and the factor of distance between home and school result in a later entering age for rural pupils. Second, the attendance of rural pupils during the year is less regular, generally speaking, than the attendance of urban children. Third, school terms are considerably shorter in rural communities. And fourth, a higher percentage of rural than of urban pupils leave school as soon as the compulsory attendance law will permit them to withdraw. The latest national figures with respect to the last three factors are as follows:³¹

	Rural	Urban
Number of pupils attending school daily per each 100 enrolled, 1935-36	83.0	86.1
Number of days in school terms, 1935-36	163.9	181.6
Average number of days attended by each pupil enrolled, 1935-36	131.6	156.3
Percent that school enrolment is of all children five to seventeen years of age, 1935-36	82.5%	90.9%
Percent of children fourteen to seventeen years of age attending high school, 1933-34	60.5%	67.9%

Prominent among the causes of irregular attendance in rural schools is the distance which pupils must travel. This factor is especially significant in communities where school transportation is not available, or is somewhat inaccessible, and where roads are poor and winter weather is severe. For many rural schools any improvement in school attendance cannot reasonably be achieved without the introduction or further extension of school transportation facilities at public expense.

The number of schools with bus transportation facilities has more than doubled during the past decade, rising from less than 20,000 in 1930 to nearly 40,000 at the present time. During the same period the number of school buses in use has grown from less than 50,000 to approximately 90,000 and the one-way daily mileage of bus routes from less than 500,000 to 1,225,000 miles. Nearly 3,500,000 pupils are now being transported daily, 95 percent of them from rural (farm or village) homes.³² This is an impressive record of achievement, but again does not mean that these provisions are adequate. The fact that less than 40,000 of 200,000 rural schools are served by buses and that only one rural pupil in four is now being transported suggests that the program has not yet reached its peak. Furthermore, it is a well-known fact that many of the school buses in use are far from satisfactory as measured by any

³⁰ Hope, James H. *A Survey of School Buildings, Grounds, and Equipment in South Carolina*. Report of the Division of School House Planning assisted by the State Planning Board. Columbia, S. C.: Department of Education, 1937. 182 p. (Mimeo.)

³¹ U. S. Dept. of the Interior, Office of Education. *Biennial Survey of Education in the United States 1934-36*. Bulletin, 1937, No. 2. Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1938. Vol. II, Chapter 2, p. 49, and Chapter 5, p. 7.

³² Noble, M. C. S. *Pupil Transportation in the United States*. Scranton, Pa.: International Textbook Co., 1940. p. 7-10.

reasonable standard of comfort, health, and safety and that many bus routes are unsatisfactory because pupils still must walk long distances and wait, frequently without a shelter, in order to meet the bus. Hence, before the same regularity of attendance can fairly be expected of rural and urban children, transportation facilities must be considerably extended and improved.

Still other causes of irregular attendance include (a) keeping children out of school to help with occasional tasks or seasonal work; (b) pupil illness; (c) uninteresting and unattractive school programs; and (d) ineffective attendance laws. Improvement of public relations programs, the strengthening of child labor laws, better public health and school health services, and the inauguration of vital and at-

tractive school programs are among the steps immediately suggested by these causes.

With respect to weaknesses in attendance laws, several factors should be kept in mind, any one of which may be responsible for their ineffectiveness. First of all, failure to provide for special attendance service in rural areas may annul the effects of a good attendance law. Second, the personal and professional qualifications of rural attendance workers have heretofore received too little attention.³³ Third, there may be exemptions in the laws which tend to undermine their effectiveness. In nineteen states, for example, certain pupils are exempt from the provisions of the compulsory attendance laws if no school is maintained within a reasonable distance of their homes and transportation at public expense is not provided.

³³ For further discussion of these points see: National Education Association, Research Division. "The Outlook for Rural Education." *Research Bulletin* 9: 253-54; September 1931.

TABLE 8.—THE EXEMPTION OF CERTAIN SCHOOL PUPILS FROM COMPULSORY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE BECAUSE OF DISTANCE FROM SCHOOL FACILITIES

State	Age of pupils to whom the exemption applies	Distance beyond which pupils are exempt	Number of rural superintendents reporting some exempted pupils	Number of exempted pupils in these districts	Number actually not in school, 1939-40
1	2	3	4	5	6
Alabama.....	All *	2½ miles from school	14	1,533	624
California.....	All	2 miles from school	10	50	1
Florida.....	6 to 10 years	3 miles from school	9	62	12
Louisiana.....	All	2½ miles from school	..	.....	.....
Michigan.....	Under 9 years	2½ miles from school	12	73	2
Minnesota.....	All	Reasonable distance—at the discretion of the schoolboard	12	135	85
Montana.....	All	Reasonable distance—at the discretion of the county superintendent	4	130	2
Nevada.....	All	Reasonable distance—at the discretion of the deputy superintendents	..	.....	.....
New Mexico.....	All	3 miles from school	14	212	138
North Carolina.....	All	Reasonable distance—at the discretion of local school officers	8	1,090	234
Oregon.....	8-10 years	1½ miles from school	..	.....	.....
	Over 10 years	3 miles from school	9	295	19
Pennsylvania.....	All	2 miles from school	30	7,524	2,533
South Carolina.....	8-12 years	2 miles from school	..	.....	.....
	Over 12 years	2½ miles from school	..	.....	.....
Tennessee.....	All	3 miles from school	13	1,038	280
Texas.....	All	2½ miles from school	28	5,030	422
Utah.....	All	2½ miles from school	11	905	22
Virginia.....	All	1½ miles from school or 1 mile from a school transportation route	22	2,840	925
West Virginia.....	All	2 miles from a school or transportation route	16	989	204
Wisconsin.....	All	2 miles from school	21	910	26
Effect of distance exemptions in 233 of 1369 rural counties or other districts in 19 states				22,816	5,529

* All pupils subject to the compulsory attendance law of the state.

Table 8 summarizes these exemptions and shows how they are actually affecting school attendance in 233 rural counties. In fifteen states the "reasonable distance" is defined specifically in the law, sometimes differing for pupils of different ages. In four states determination of reasonable distance and the authority to grant exemption from compulsory attendance are delegated either to local schoolboards or to

school administrators. If the proportion of pupils affected by such exemptions is essentially the same in all rural counties and districts in the nineteen states as in those cooperating in the present study, some 85,000 pupils are exempt from compulsory school attendance solely because they reside too far from any school; also, more than 20,000 are actually out of school as a result of such exemptions.

The Instructional Program

Any fair appraisal of rural teaching as it is now carried on must necessarily call attention to numerous and extremely serious weaknesses which still exist: (a) to the many schools where memory work and drill, carried out hastily in a series of brief "recitation periods," constitute the total program; (b) to schools where pupil learning is restricted almost entirely to a narrow range of textbook assignments and seldom if ever is vitally related to the children's interests, experiences, and needs; (c) to schools which are apart from, rather than a part of, the communities in which they are located; and (d) to the many rural schools still taught by relatively untrained, inexperienced, and transient teachers. Yet these shortcomings are matters of degree rather than of kind, for they are found in urban as well as rural schools, if not in the same proportion of cases.

Moreover, rapid strides have been taken in recent years in improving the quality of rural programs. This has been due in part to the various types of progress noted earlier in this section—progress which has been reflected in better classroom procedures. To an important degree, too, improvements in instruction have paralleled a marked advance in standards of professional training for rural teachers. And finally, rural schools have shared liberally in the widespread movement in curriculum revision and development which has recently been witnessed.

Several statewide programs of curriculum revision have enlisted the cooperation of large numbers of rural teachers, as illustrated by the

programs in Arkansas, Georgia, Texas, and Virginia. These and many other states have developed course-of-study materials and teaching suggestions giving new direction and meaning to rural school programs.³⁴ Much of the recent professional literature on rural schools, too, has pointed the way to more effective teaching.³⁵

Foremost among the changes in teaching characteristic of the modern rural school is a shift from textbook-recitation procedures to pupil activities—a shift generally comparable to the one which has occurred in city schools as well. In increasing numbers, rural teachers are providing their pupils with actual learning experiences. Introduction of these newer practices has been accompanied by: (a) the disappearance of some traditional subjectmatter distinctions and the organization of subjectmatter in broad divisions or areas; (b) the subordination of rigid grade-level lines, as pupils engage in projects and activities which appeal to their common interests and needs; (c) instruction in the basic skills, individually or in groups, only as these are not acquired in other group activities; (d) use of a wider variety and of the newer types of teaching materials; (e) longer class periods and more flexible daily programs; and (f) class projects and activities that are definitely and immediately related to the experiences and problems of the pupils in a given community. Many descriptions of noteworthy pioneering along these lines are available in recent books and articles³⁶ and several brief examples are cited in Section IV of this bulletin.

³⁴ Among the newer state bulletins of this type may be cited: *Suggested Plans of Organization and Procedure for One-Teacher Schools*. Charleston, W. Va.: Department of Education, August 1939. 130 p. *An Experimental Study in Organization and Procedure of One-Teacher Schools*. Charleston, W. Va.: Department of Education, August 1940. 76 p.

³⁵ Merely as examples of such materials see: Broady, Knute O. *Enriched Curriculums for Small Schools*. Lincoln, Nebr.: University of Nebraska, Extension Division, 1936. 249 p. *National Education Association, Department of Rural Education. Newer Types of Instruction in Small Rural Schools; and Community Resources in Rural Schools*. Yearbooks, 1938 and 1939. Washington, D. C.: the Association. 144 p. and 109 p., respectively. *Wofford, Kate V. Modern Education in the Small Rural School*. New York: Macmillan Co., 1938. 582 p.

³⁶ Several descriptions are included in the references listed in footnote ³⁵. In addition see: Brunner, Edmund de S., and Kolb, John H., *op. cit.*, p. 197. *Peter, Lily. "An Adventure in Educational Democracy."* *Peabody Journal of Education* 17: 111-14; September 1939. *Schatzmann, I. E. "Schools Unknown and What They Do."* *Journal of the National Education Association* 29: 57-58; February 1940.

In addition to the shift just described, that is, to some form of activity teaching, rural school programs have also felt the stimulus of several administrative adjustments intended to enrich and improve them.³⁷ For example, many schools have worked out new combinations of classes, placing together the pupils of two or more grades for part of their instruction, or perhaps developing some new course that represents a fusion of two or more subjects. Other communities have achieved noteworthy gains by giving certain courses only in alternate years, by adopting some plan of individual instruction, or by introducing correspondence study under the supervision of the local rural school.

Inherent in most attempts to improve rural teaching has been a gradual awakening to the opportunities and responsibilities of rural schools as "community" institutions. Dunn rightly points out that "it would be unfortunate to assume . . . that the local community alone can afford all the educational experiences of rural children,"³⁸ yet one of the extremely hopeful recent trends in rural school development has been the better utilization of community resources, the direct attack upon actual community problems, and the development of rural schools which deserve to be called "community centers." This point of view is reflected not only in the kinds of projects carried out by the pupils in regular day school classes, but also in the introduction of evening schools for adults, provision of recreational and cultural facilities for the entire community, inauguration of community forums, and closer cooperation between the school and nonschool organizations and agencies which, nonetheless, are performing educational functions.³⁹

Instructional programs are being enriched and extended, too, thru the introduction of suitable extracurriculum activities. The 4-H Club program, a well-known activity for rural schools, may be cited merely as one example of the whole area of club activity, a field which

is no less promising for rural pupils than it has been valuable in urban schools. Indeed many rural schools, both elementary and secondary, now have extensive club programs adapted to the varied interests and needs of rural boys and girls. Then in addition to special interest clubs, such enterprises as athletic activities, music, pupil self-government, and school newspapers are finding their way into rural schools.⁴⁰

Another influence which has given strong impetus to the improvement of rural teaching is that resulting from the extension of rural library service. Lack of suitable and adequate children's books has always been one of the most troublesome and baffling problems of rural teachers. In the majority of rural schools it still is a handicap of serious proportions. Yet the fact that library service has been materially improved in many rural districts, as Figure IV has shown, is an encouraging omen. Increased state aid and state supervision for rural libraries; circulating libraries provided by the state, the county, the local public library, or some institution of higher education; and cooperative purchasing with some arrangement for periodic book exchanges are among the devices thru which better service to rural schools is being given.⁴¹ Descriptions of a few specific achievements in library extension are given in Section IV of this report.

Finally, rural teaching is beginning to reflect a new attitude, a new philosophy, on the part of rural teachers. Those who represent this newer point of view still are greatly in the minority, but their number apparently is increasing as well as their influence. This new attitude is simply one of interest and pride in the rural community, combined with a vision of the teacher's potential service in that community. It implies that the teacher will understand and make the most of the numerous advantages and opportunities which are inherent in his own situation, in whatever rural school he is privileged to serve. It implies, too, that the focus of rural teaching will be shifted from

³⁷ American Association of School Administrators. *Schools in Small Communities*. Seventeenth Yearbook. Washington, D. C.: the Association, a department of the National Education Association, 1939. p. 153-60.

³⁸ Dunn, Fannie W. "Planning the Curriculum for Rural Schools." *Teachers College Record* 41: 297; January 1940.

³⁹ For descriptions of promising experiments in rural adult education see: Hoskins, E. R. "Sixty Central Rural Schools." *Journal of Adult Education* 11: 424-28; October 1939. Juckett, E. A. "Night School, Country Style." *Nation's Schools* 24: 21-22; July 1939. For a discussion of cooperation with community agencies see: National Education Association, Department of Rural Education. *Agencies Contributing to Rural Education*. Washington, D. C.: the Association, 1932. 52 p.

⁴⁰ For suggestions on introducing a school paper see: Winegarner, Lewis. "The Newspaper in Rural Schools." *Illinois Teacher* 28: 154; January 1940.

⁴¹ National Education Association, Department of Rural Education. *Rural School Libraries*. Washington, D. C.: the Association, 1936. 112 p. (See especially p. 19-47.)

the all too prevalent notion that if any pupil wishes to make a success in life he must leave that particular community, to instruction that will make it seem intensely worthwhile to remain and make the home community a better one. Such teaching is undoubtedly the best possible preparation for those who thru force of circumstance or opportunity move on to other communities. And for those who do remain to carry on, it provides the ability and the will to help in continuous community

improvement rather than creating in them a defeatist attitude expressed in chafing at the hard luck that prevented their "getting away" and in utter indifference and disdain toward opportunities for community betterment. The need of the hour in rural education is thousands of professionally trained, rural-minded teachers who can effectively black out the limitations and handicaps in rural teaching with its unparalleled opportunities for this kind of guidance, leadership, and service.⁴²

The Teaching Staff

Using the best information available a decade ago, a previous issue of the *Research Bulletin* described the typical rural teacher, in one-teacher white schools, as:

A young woman about twenty-three years of age, of native American stock, and of farm or small-town background. Her preparation includes four years of high-school education with approximately one year of professional training. She . . . remains only one or two years in the same school. Her median annual salary is \$883 and her total service in rural schools averages about three years.⁴³

No recent survey of teacher education makes it possible to give national averages with respect to current standards in professional training, length of tenure, experience, and salaries either for teachers in one-room schools or for all rural teachers. However, information from various sources does suggest with reasonable clarity the direction of prevailing trends.

Professional Preparation of Rural Teachers

In the field of teacher preparation there is unmistakable evidence of improvement in standards. At least forty-three states have now centralized the responsibility for issuing teachers' certificates in some one agency, usually the state department of public instruction—an important step toward higher professional standards for rural teachers. Also, according to the United

States Office of Education, "Requirements for the lowest grade certificates have been increased during the past decade in more than twenty-five states," with the result that two years or more of professional training must be offered for the lowest grade of teaching certificate in no less than twenty-seven states.⁴⁴ Special courses for rural teachers and curriculums differentiated for rural teachers have also shown an increase, particularly the special four-year curriculums for rural teachers.⁴⁵

The foregoing facts check with the progress in teacher preparation shown in Figure IV in this bulletin and with other recent studies of teacher status.⁴⁶ They are also supported by the averages shown in Table 9 representing the

TABLE 9.—THE PROFESSIONAL TRAINING OF RURAL ELEMENTARY TEACHERS

Average amount of professional training	Rural districts from which reports were received	
	Number	Percent
1	2	3
No training beyond high school	6	1
Less than 1 year beyond high school	30	3
1 year but less than 2 beyond high school	133	14
2 years but less than 3 beyond high school	361	38
3 years but less than 4 beyond high school	301	32
4 years or more beyond high school	113	12
Total	944	100

⁴² The point of view referred to here is reflected in: American Association of School Administrators, *op. cit.*, p. 39-43. [Anderson, E. M. "Does Education in Rural Schools Meet the Needs of Rural Boys and Girls?" *Minnesota Journal of Education* 20: 20-21; September 1939. [Dawson, Virginia. "Our Responsibilities as Rural Teachers." *Kentucky School Journal* 18: 23; October 1939. [Stribling, Grace. "Products of the Small Town School." *Journal of Education* 122: 233-34; October 1939.

⁴³ National Education Association, Research Division. "The Outlook for Rural Education." *Research Bulletin* 9: 272; September 1931.

⁴⁴ U. S. Department of the Interior, Office of Education. "Review of Conditions and Developments in Education in Rural and Other Sparsely Settled Areas." *Biennial Survey of Education in the United States: 1934-36*. Bulletin, 1937, No. 2. Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1937. p. 26. (Advance pages.)

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 82.

⁴⁶ See especially: National Education Association, Committee on the Economic Status of the Rural Teacher. *Teachers in Rural Communities*. Washington, D. C.: the Association, 1939. p. 16-18.

standard of training for rural teachers in white elementary schools in 944 of the rural counties and districts included in the present study. The average teacher in rural elementary schools has more than two years' training beyond high school in 82 percent of these rural counties. The six counties in which the average was "no training beyond high school" were located solely in two states. On the same side of the ledger were six states, including the two referred to above, in which the average was less than two years beyond high school for 50 percent or more of all the counties reporting. But, turning again to the brighter picture, there were twenty states in which the average was three years' training or more in 50 to 100 percent of the counties reporting.

Experience of Rural Teachers

Unfavorable working conditions, low salaries, and low entrance requirements have long conspired to keep a disproportionate number of inexperienced teachers among those employed in rural schools. Table 10 suggests that rural elementary teaching careers still tend to be relatively short. In 40 percent of the counties represented in this table the average total experience of rural teachers is between one and five years; in 88 percent between one and ten years. Note that in three counties the average rural teacher is a beginner, acquiring his first year of teaching experience. Significantly, however, the average falls between six and ten years in 48 percent of these counties.

TABLE 10.—THE AVERAGE EXPERIENCE OF RURAL ELEMENTARY TEACHERS

Average number of years total teaching experience	Rural districts from which reports were received	
	Number	Percent
1	2	3
Less than 1 year.....	3	0*
1 to 5 years.....	366	40
6 to 10 years.....	441	48
11 to 15 years.....	92	10
16 years or more.....	12	2
Total.....	914	100

* Less than half of 1 percent.

⁴⁷ National Education Association, Committee on the Economic Status of the Rural Teacher, *op. cit.*, p. 16-17.

⁴⁸ U. S. Department of the Interior, Office of Education, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

Service Period in the Same School

The data presented in Table 11 suggest that rural teachers tend now to remain for a somewhat longer period of continuous service in the same school than was true a few years ago. In more than three-fourths of the counties reporting, the average length of service in the same school is three years or more. It should be pointed out, however, that in twenty-six states 50 percent or more of the cooperating counties reported something less than four years as the average tenure for rural teachers. In another recent study, involving 9605 cases, the median tenure of all the rural teachers was 3.3 years—in one-teacher schools, 2.9 years; in two-or-more-teacher schools in the open country, 3.4 years; and in town schools (towns below 2500 in population), 3.5 years.⁴⁷

TABLE 11.—AVERAGE LENGTH OF SERVICE IN THE SAME TEACHING POSITIONS FOR RURAL ELEMENTARY TEACHERS

Average number of years rural teachers remain in the same positions	Rural districts from which reports were received	
	Number	Percent
1	2	3
Less than 3 years.....	210	23
3 to 4 years.....	397	44
5 to 6 years.....	181	20
7 to 8 years.....	75	8
9 to 10 years.....	27	3
11 years or more.....	21	2
Total.....	911	100

The Salaries of Rural Teachers

In 1930 the average salary for all rural teachers—in both elementary and high schools—was reported by the U. S. Office of Education to be \$979 and for the year 1934 only \$787.⁴⁸ The indelible mark of the depression years is written into this drop in salaries, already meager. Later figures from the same agency indicate that some slight upward turn has been made in many rural areas, enough to push the national average beyond \$800 in both 1936 and 1938. In 1939 the Committee on the Economic Status of the Rural Teacher reported an average of \$867 for 9822 rural teachers—nearly

a fourth of whom were employed in high schools.⁴⁹

In the present study 59 percent of the 951 cooperating counties were paying rural elementary teachers an average salary of less than \$900—15 percent of them, less than \$600. These data and other facts on rural salaries are shown in Table 12. There were four states in which 50 percent or more of the cooperating counties reported average salaries of less than \$600; thirty states in which 50 percent or more of the counties reported averages of less than \$900.

Comparative Status of Rural and Urban Teachers

County and other rural superintendents who participated in this study were asked to report on the average training, experience, tenure, and salaries of the urban teachers in their respective counties, as well as on the averages for rural teachers, if the data on urban teachers could be readily obtained. Nearly half the superintendents were able to report on both groups and these reports are summarized in Table 13.

On every item the advantage lies with urban

teachers in a majority of the counties represented, indicating their generally more favorable status even within the same counties or other administrative districts. Particularly in matters of tenure and salary, the advantage given to urban teachers is pronounced. If any large percent of rural schools are ever to have an acceptable quality of teaching service, ways must be devised for lifting the tenure and salary status of rural teachers to the level attained by urban teachers in the same districts.

TABLE 12.—THE AVERAGE SALARIES OF RURAL ELEMENTARY TEACHERS

Average annual salary of rural teachers	Rural districts from which reports were received	
	Number	Percent
1	2	3
Less than \$600.....	140	15
\$600 - 899.....	423	44
900 - 1199.....	291	31
1200 - 1499.....	87	9
1500 - 1799.....	9	1
1800 or more.....	1	0 ^a
Total.....	951	100

^a Less than half of 1 percent.

Administrative and Supervisory Leadership

Responsibility for Rural Supervision

The administration and supervision of rural education are functions shared in a variety of ways by many different agencies and school officers. The state, thru its department of public instruction and perhaps by means of a

considerable staff of special rural supervisors, retains some measure of control over rural schools. Usually, too, local boards of education and the principals and teachers of rural schools are authorized to perform certain duties and to exercise certain authority over local school affairs rather independently of any state or

⁴⁹ National Education Association, Committee on the Economic Status of the Rural Teacher, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

TABLE 13.—COMPARATIVE STATUS OF RURAL AND URBAN TEACHERS IN THE SAME DISTRICTS WITH RESPECT TO TRAINING, EXPERIENCE, TENURE, AND SALARY

Item for comparison	Number of superintendents reporting comparable data on rural and urban teachers	Percent of counties or other rural districts reporting		
		Higher average for urban teachers	Same for urban and rural teachers	Higher average for rural teachers
1	2	3	4	5
Average number of years of professional training.....	462	65	31	4
Average number of years' experience.....	424	74	15	11
Average tenure in same positions.....	414	86	9	5
Average salary.....	458	88	7	5

county supervision and control. As a result, the county superintendency or its equivalent is an office that differs widely in its opportunities and responsibilities for educational leadership. In some instances, the chief school officer of the county or district is scarcely more than a keeper of records. In others, he is in reality a superintendent of schools responsible for virtually all administrative and supervisory affairs. Consequently, the significance of a superintendent's leadership in any given situation is determined not only by his own personal and professional qualities but also by the recognized functions of his office. Since this is true, improvements must be sought in rural administration and supervision as carried out by both state and local officers as well as thru improvements in the county superintendency. In this study, however, attention will be centered on occupants of this office who, generally speaking, do occupy key positions with respect to rural schools.

The Supervisory Activities of Rural Superintendents

The amount of supervision actually done by county and other rural superintendents is shown in Table 14. Sixty percent of them must do

personally whatever supervision is done in the rural schools of their respective districts; 35 percent do some direct supervision; while only 5 percent give no personal supervision to rural school programs. In twenty-five states, the superintendent is exclusively and personally responsible for all rural supervision in 50 percent or more of the counties from which reports on this item were received. Columns 4 to 9 in Table 14 suggest that there are characteristic differences with respect to this function in various regions of the United States. Note especially the high percent of superintendents who do all the rural school supervision among those reporting from the Northwestern states.

Educational Background of Rural Superintendents

In view of the supervisory leadership actually being discharged by rural superintendents, information with respect to their professional training is of interest. Table 15 indicates the general level of schooling of 1000 rural superintendents, again indicating such regional differences as were shown by the replies. The high percent of superintendents in the Northeastern states who have done some graduate work stands out in these regional comparisons.

TABLE 14.—THE SUPERVISORY ACTIVITIES OF RURAL SUPERINTENDENTS

Amount of supervision	All superintendents		Percent of superintendents, by geographic region					
	Number	Percent	North-east	South-east	Middle states	North-west	South-west	Pacific
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Superintendent does personally all supervision of rural schools.....	569	60	54	32	65	85	61	44
Superintendent does some supervision, but has one or more assistants who also supervise.....	326	35	44	48	34	12	31	48
Superintendent does no direct supervision.....	52	5	2	20	1	3	8	8
Total.....	947	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

TABLE 15.—THE EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND OF RURAL SUPERINTENDENTS

Amount of schooling	All superintendents		Percent of superintendents, by geographic region						
	Number	Percent	North-east	South-east	Middle states	North-west	South-west	Pacific	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
None beyond high school.....	11	1	0	1	1	2	3	0	
Undergraduate work only:.....	431	43	18	44	39	69	44	57	
Less than 4 years.....	200	20	...	...	...	...	...	...	
4 years or more.....	231	23	...	...	...	...	...	...	
Graduate work:.....	558	56	82	55	60	29	53	43	
Less than 1 year.....	121	12	...	...	...	...	...	...	
1 but less than 2 years.....	315	32	...	...	...	...	...	...	
2 years and more.....	122	12	...	...	...	...	...	...	
Total.....	1000	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	

The median amount of schooling for the entire group, as nearly as can be estimated from the data obtained, is approximately 4.5 years beyond high school. Among the replies from six states the median is less than 4 years. In eleven states it is just 4 years; in twenty-five states, somewhere between 4 and 6 years; and in two states, 6 years or more.⁵⁰ Thirty percent of these superintendents hold no college degree, 38 percent the A.B., 30 percent the M.A., and 2 percent the Ph.D. In each of thirteen states the largest single group of superintendents from whom reports were received are those having no college degree; in each of sixteen states, those having the A.B. degree; and in each of fifteen states, those having the M.A. degree.

Educational Experience of Rural Superintendents

The educational experience of rural superintendents, before entering upon their present work, is portrayed in Table 16. Nearly all have previously engaged in some type of educational work, but less than a fourth have held rural superintendencies elsewhere similar to their present positions. Nearly all have been teachers and a majority report experience in one-teacher rural schools. A majority, too, have had some type of previous administrative experience.

Terms of Office and Service Periods

On the basis of the same reports, the most common term of office for rural superintendents—typically a uniform term thruout each

TABLE 16.—THE PREVIOUS EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE OF RURAL SUPERINTENDENTS

Type of previous experience	Number of superintendents	Percent of superintendents
1	2	3
No previous experience.....	6	1
Teaching in one-teacher schools.....	622	62
Teaching in schools of all other types.....	901	90
General administrative work (exclusive of rural superintendency of type now held).....	627	63
Rural superintendency similar to present position.....	228	23
Number reporting on this item.....	1,003	..

state—is 4 years, the term generally used in twenty-four states. Next in frequency of use is the 2-year term, prevailing in twelve of the states. A term longer than 4 years is in use in only one state. The median length of continuous service for county and other rural superintendents does not coincide, however, with the length of their terms of office. Table 17 summarizes the service period of 1000 rural administrators. The median for the entire group is 5.4 years, but for regional groups ranges from 3.3 to 9.0 years. Two superintendents in five among those reporting have been in their present positions something less than 4 years, two more have held the position between 4 and 12 years, and the fifth has been in the superintendency more than 12 consecutive years.

Suggested Improvements in the Superintendency

The inquiry form used to obtain the foregoing information also asked rural superin-

⁵⁰ No data on this item were received from four of the forty-eight states.

TABLE 17.—LENGTH OF CONTINUOUS SERVICE IN PRESENT POSITION AS REPORTED BY RURAL SUPERINTENDENTS

Number of years in present position	All superintendents		Percent of superintendents, by geographic region					
	Number	Percent	North-east	South-east	Middle states	North-west	South-west	Pacific
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Less than 1 year.....	83	8	3	2	10	14	10	14
1- 3 years.....	310	31	21	33	24	43	54	17
4- 7 years.....	295	30	21	30	35	29	27	43
8-11 years.....	124	12	19	12	13	8	7	6
12-15 years.....	88	9	16	10	10	3	0	10
16-19 years.....	37	4	5	7	3	1	0	6
20 years or more.....	63	6	15	6	5	2	2	4
Total.....	1,000	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Median.....	5.4 years		9.0 yrs.	6.0 yrs.	5.9 yrs.	3.5 yrs.	3.3 yrs.	5.7 yrs.

TABLE 18.—NUMBER AND PERCENT OF REPLIES RECOMMENDING VARIOUS METHODS OF EMPLOYMENT FOR RURAL SUPERINTENDENTS

Method	All replies		Percent of replies, by regions					
	Number	Percent	North-east	South-east	Middle states	North-west	South-west	Pacific
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Selection and employment by boards of education..	600	64	75	67	75	46	47	50
Election by the people.....	211	22	0	11	21	42	44	48
Selection and appointment by agencies other than schoolboards ^a	110	12	24	19	3	8	8	0
Other methods ^b	18	2	1	3	1	4	1	2
Total.....	939	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

^a The appointive agencies suggested were: (a) state board of education; (b) state superintendent; (c) county court or some civil officer of the county; and (d) the dean of the state college of education.

^b The methods included here were: (a) election by teachers or a representative committee of teachers; (b) a civil service plan; (c) employment by a special ex officio state board; and (d) "any method which will keep the matter out of politics."

tendents for an appraisal of their own status: (a) to recommend the method of employment for superintendents which in their judgment would obtain and keep in office the finest possible type of administrators; and (b) to indicate any change urgently needed in the status of the county superintendency or with reference to his duties and relationships in their respective states. Tables 18 and 19 summarize the superintendents' judgments with respect to these matters.

Nearly two-thirds of the group recommended the employment of county superintendents by boards of education as contrasted with only 22 percent who recommended election by the people. Distinct regional differences appeared with respect to this point, however, more frequent endorsement of the election plan coming from the Northwestern, Southwestern, and Pacific states. The selection of superintendents by agencies other than county or district boards of education was not strongly favored but drew virtually all the support it did receive from the Northeastern and Southeastern states.

The list of recommended changes in the status and functions of rural superintendents summarized in Table 19 includes many suggestions long urged by students of rural school problems. Significantly, the item most frequently mentioned in these comments is "higher qualifications for superintendents." Next in order of frequency are (a) an increase in the authority and responsibilities of the office, and (b) various improvements in the professional status of the rural superintendent thru such

means as larger salaries, longer tenure, and better methods of selection and appointment. In several states, any material improvement of rural schools must wait upon the introduction of changes such as these—changes which will result in a higher quality of educational leadership by county and other rural school administrators. Wherever rural superintendents still are chosen by popular election, transfer of this function to a representative schoolboard, or to some other nonpolitical agency, is a highly practical first step toward improvement in the rural superintendency.

TABLE 19.—CHANGES WITH RESPECT TO THE STATUS OF THE COUNTY SUPERINTENDENCY RECOMMENDED AS URGENTLY NEEDED IN THEIR RESPECTIVE COMMUNITIES BY 637 RURAL SUPERINTENDENTS

Change recommended	Frequency of mention
1	2
Higher qualifications for superintendents.....	123
More authority and responsibility for superintendents.....	96
Larger salaries.....	96
Longer tenure.....	94
Better method of selecting superintendents.....	87
More assistants—secretarial and clerical workers.....	74
Elimination of politics.....	59
More supervisory assistants.....	48
Larger units of administration.....	19
More state aid for the schools.....	17
More power and authority vested in county boards of education.....	9
Full-time employment of superintendents.....	7
Payment of the travel expenses of superintendents.....	7
Smaller areas of supervision.....	7
More cooperation and closer relationship with other counties and with the state department.....	6
Longer term of office.....	3

IV. SPECIFIC EXAMPLES OF STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS IN RURAL PROGRAMS

Many problems in rural education as well as some of the recent accomplishments of rural schools have been sketched in broad outline in the foregoing section of this bulletin. For the most part, however, only general problems and areas of achievement have been discussed, with relatively few examples of what is now happening in individual schools and school systems. Hence the present section, thru brief descrip-

tions of actual school situations, seeks to point out: (a) some of the most serious handicaps and weaknesses of presentday rural schools, and (b) some specific examples of outstanding achievement in rural education. In each case the descriptive statements are drawn from the reports of county superintendents of schools who obligingly described some of their best and poorest schools.

Some Grave Deficiencies of Rural Schools

Descriptions of schools that are "far from satisfactory" were received from only 272 of the 1050 cooperating superintendents. This does not mean that all the others had no unsatisfactory schools in their respective districts, altho several superintendents said just that. Some probably left the question blank merely because it required a written answer instead of the insertion of a check mark or numeral. Still others preferred not to answer the question, offering such comments as: (a) "Too personal"; (b) "Under the circumstances, at this time, do not feel that we should criticize"; or (c) "Some schools very poor, but do not care to describe."

A Summary of the Defects Mentioned

Table 20 represents a tabulation of the kinds of problems and defects enumerated by the 272

TABLE 20.—SOME OUTSTANDING PROBLEMS IN RURAL EDUCATION AS REFERRED TO BY 272 COUNTY SUPERINTENDENTS OF SCHOOLS IN DESCRIBING THE MOST UNSATISFACTORY SCHOOLS UNDER THEIR JURISDICTION

Problem	Frequency of mention
1	2
The school housing situation.....	163
Size of school (extremely large or small enrolment).....	155
Equipment needs.....	104
The teaching service.....	92
The curriculum.....	30
Instructional materials and supplies.....	30
Community attitude.....	29
Lack of funds.....	28
Isolation.....	26
Too many grades for one teacher.....	17
Schoolboard practices.....	11
Short school term.....	8

superintendents who described their most unsatisfactory rural schools. Obviously, because of the limited sampling involved and in view of the nature of the tabulation itself, no high degree of statistical accuracy should be attributed to the frequencies given. They are presented, not to indicate national trends or the actual scope of various rural school problems, but for such general interest and significance as they may have. Each item in the table is singled out for discussion in later paragraphs.

Not more than ten of the 272 descriptive statements can be identified positively with rural schools in which two or more teachers are employed. The great majority refer specifically to one-teacher schools, and apparently so do most of the general statements which, without mentioning the number of teachers involved, merely tell of the need for new school buildings or the solution of other vital problems. Again, many of the statements were made concerning the situation in some specific rural school. Almost as many, however, were generalized statements in which the superintendent would begin by saying, for example, "There are five one-teacher schools in which . . ."; or perhaps, "Several one-room schools are . . ."

The frequencies entered in Table 20 show the number of superintendents who mentioned each problem—not the number of schools mentioned in which the unfortunate situation exists. In other words, the school housing situation—the first problem listed in the table—was referred to by 163 of the 272 superintendents reporting, but is a vital problem in considerably more than 163 schools in the districts represented—probably, in no less than five times that number.

Housing Problems

The urgent need for improvement in rural school housing stands out in bold relief in Table 20. Three of every five superintendents who reported any unsatisfactory situation mentioned this problem. In connection with it, the most frequently named condition was the continued use of obsolete, dilapidated buildings, unattractive in appearance and sorely in need of repairs. Other housing needs, listed in the order of frequency of mention, were as follows: (a) unsatisfactory lighting; (b) improper heating arrangements; (c) overcrowded buildings; (d) improper ventilation; (e) absence of a supply of drinking water on the schoolgrounds or the use of water from questionable sources; (f) unsafe or unsanitary conditions attributable to the condition of the school building itself; (g) the use, for school purposes, of various makeshift structures such as churches, rented halls, or rooms in private dwellings; (h) the absence or unsanitary condition of toilet facilities; (i) undesirable school sites; (j) continued use of buildings much too large for the present school enrolment; and (k) buildings far more costly and elaborate than should have been constructed. The last named problem, so different from all the others, was mentioned in only two of the 163 descriptive statements.

In describing these housing needs, one superintendent referred to the use of "a small, weather-beaten building which is often mistaken for a woodshed." Another told of "a building 16' x 20,' with an 8-foot ceiling; poorly lighted; an old, radiating stove heater; very congested; pupils' desks against three walls to make room for the stove; small amount of blackboard; no bookcase; no equipment—and no room for any." A third described a school in which "96 pupils are taught in one room by two teachers." Still others commented as follows: "building a mere shack"; "a frame building built in 1826"; "building approximately 100 years old"; "buildings in a sad state of repair"; "few windows"; "cross lighting"; "an old box stove with large cracks in it"; "heaters with doors off and holes in stove pipes"; "a small, old, tin heater"; "no space for a real program"; "57 pupils in a one-room school in which two teachers are working"; "34 pupils in a building 16' x 24'"; "no drinking

water, carry it about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile"; "water brought to school in a milkcan"; "five buildings, all condemned by the state board of health"; "school in a log cabin in which the teacher lives"; "school consists of but one room of a none-too-good residence"; "building was originally a bungalow"; "using an old, tumble-down squatter's cabin for a schoolhouse"; "use one room of a two-room cabin"; "school is housed in an old church building, which is badly in need of repair"; "school is held in the waiting room of the _____ depot"; "school in a rented room in a home—dirt floor, dirt roof over lumber-adobe walls, one small window, homemade door"; "lack of sanitary provisions"; "outdoor toilets very unsanitary"; "a small, old, unattractive building located on a high, bleak, barren hill with no other house in sight"; "grounds small; located on a curve on a much-traveled paved highway"; "no playground to speak of"; "play space nil"; "school in one room of an old four-room school building"; and—as if speaking in general summary of the situation—"buildings that are in a run-down condition and antiquated in every respect."¹ After reading 161 reports, of which those above are typical, one is likely to be tolerant—even a bit indulgent—in his attitude toward the two contrasting indiscretions described as follows:

In the _____ district, the board erected a fine rock building, at great cost. The school is on the highway, close to city schools. The average enrolment is only about eight pupils.

In the _____ district, the board erected an altogether too expensive building. The valuation of the district is low and the debt load excessive.

Size of School

The problem which ranked second in frequency of mention in the superintendents' descriptions of unsatisfactory schools was that of enrolment, or size of school. This, in turn, is a twofold problem for a school may be either too large or too small.

Very properly much has been written as to the impossible task of the rural teacher who is responsible for the instruction of 40 to 50 children, ranging in age from five to sixteen years and in school achievement from the first- to the eighth-grade level. Such a situation cannot be too strongly condemned. Forty of the descriptive statements used in this analysis deplored

¹ For a teacher's description of a rural school building more than 100 years old, see: Waltermire, Helen M. "In the Name of Economy!" *New York State Education* 27: 426-27; March 1940.

the educational losses in overcrowded rural schools, various superintendents mentioning one-teacher schools with enrolments of 40 to 61 pupils. In the 61-pupil school, 31 of the children were one or more years over age for their respective grades, and every grade from I to VIII was represented.

The extremely small school, to which relatively less attention usually is paid, figured even more prominently in the superintendents' reports than large schools of the type just mentioned. In fact, 115 of the 155 superintendents who mentioned size of school as a serious problem—a ratio of approximately three to one—were troubled especially, not by large schools, but with the small ones in which too few pupils were, and must necessarily be, enrolled. No less than three one-pupil schools were described. Quite a number of schools with fewer than five pupils were reported as problem situations—several of them maintained for pupils all belonging in a single family. Virtually all of the schools mentioned in this connection had enrolments of not more than ten pupils. Altho such schools approach the ultimate in individual attention, they fail in many respects to meet an acceptable educational standard. Among the specific problems created by such schools the following may be cited from the superintendents' own comments: "too few pupils for real school activities"; "impossible to provide such schools with any but poorly equipped and poorly trained teachers"; "a good teacher will not stay here"; "no chance for discussion or the development of good citizenship habits thru play"; "children are unable to receive proper social training"; "excessive per pupil costs"; and as a more complete description, "only one pupil is enrolled and he could easily attend a school nearby; he is an only child, has no contact with other pupils, and costs the county the highest amount."

Equipment Needs

Third in frequency among the superintendents' comments was mention of various equipment needs. The situation in this connection can best be summarized with the adjectives used repeatedly in the superintendents' reports: "meager in amount"; "antiquated and obsolete in design"; "wholly unsuited to the needs of the school." Three specific types of equipment were singled out for special mention in various reports: (a) seating equipment, (b) black-

boards, and (c) playground equipment. With reference to seating equipment the following quotations tell their own story: "using double desks and seats"; "40 pupils, but only 30 seats"; "no seats—just crude benches for the pupils to sit on"; "old-type desks not adjustable"; "old desks that were made in the community years ago"; "benches for seats"; and, as reported from two different communities, "church pews are used for seats."

Teaching Service

Quality of teaching service, altho fourth in frequency of mention in these reports, is surely a crucial problem in rural education. Moreover, altho outranked in frequency of mention, this problem was discussed by nearly 100 of the 272 superintendents. Significant, too, are the aspects of teaching service on which specific comments were made. Leading the list in this particular, as might be expected, was insufficient preparation for teaching. This was followed in order by many references to (a) teachers who cling to outworn, obsolete procedures, (b) inexperience, (c) salaries so low that satisfactory work cannot reasonably be expected, (d) lack of professional attitude on the part of teachers, (e) rapid teacher turnover in the rural schools, and (f) the procedures followed when teachers' appointments are made on some basis other than merit.

Representative quotations on the foregoing items include the following: "teacher only a high-school graduate"; "a \$40-a-month teacher"; "uncertificated teacher because of low salary"; "teacher is not academically or professionally prepared"; "teacher, as well as equipment, is obsolete"; "can't get or retain a good teacher"; "teacher paid \$30 a month"; "teacher is inexperienced"; "teachers will not cooperate with each other"; "teachers have not qualified themselves—they have obtained certificates"; "teacher has steadfastly refused to change during the fifty years since she began"; "teacher is old, and has not kept up"; "teacher is under permanent tenure and is a total loss"; "teacher clings to antiquated methods"; "teacher is quite set in her ways"; "the teacher herself is a mere child with 'Normal Training' in high school—receives \$30 a month"; and "teacher is the daughter of ____; is interested only in the pay check." To this series the following vivid report may be added: "In ____ school sits a dom-

ineering but ineffective teacher. The room is slovenly kept; the pupils are impolite to each other, to the teacher, and to any visitors who come there."

The superintendents' reports emphasized and reemphasized the fact that better teaching service usually could be obtained were it not for unfavorable situations in the school environment, inadequate salaries, and other related problems. Such phrases as the following were common: "a good teacher, but without a chance to succeed"; "would be an excellent teacher under better circumstances"; and "the teacher does as well as can be expected." On the other hand, many illustrations were given of the fact that a superior teacher can and does succeed in spite of unbelievable handicaps. Says one superintendent of a school which he is describing, "There is a good teacher there; otherwise the condition would be deplorable." Another testifies that "in our poorest equipped school, a well-trained teacher is doing excellent work." Perhaps the most striking illustration of the real meaning of teaching service was the following pointed contrast:

We have a small school, four pupils housed in a shack that is located out where the rattlesnakes can crawl in if the door is left open. But this is an excellent school because we have an excellent teacher there. Our poorest school has a good building, fair equipment, and some twenty pupils enrolled. But the teacher comes late every morning and continually finds fault—with the children and with the supplies. Nothing is ever right for her.

The Curriculum and Instructional Supplies

Two problems closely related to the teachers' instructional procedures and tied for the next lower rank in frequency of mention in these reports were (a) the curriculum; and (b) instructional materials and supplies. Curriculums were described as: "traditional"; "narrowly academic"; "impractical"; "unrelated to the children's interests and experiences"; and "with no provision for individual differences in abilities and needs." Some teachers were mentioned who still "assign the next three pages and keep each subject in its own fifteen-minute compartment." Of such programs one superintendent wrote:

These schools are not lively, happy places. The daily schedule is a matter of routine. Children are not given freedom; their school life is monotonous.

These are the traditional, question-and-answer type of schools.

Instructional materials, as in the case of school equipment, were declared to be "wholly lacking"; "meager in amount"; "antiquated"; or "unrelated to the instructional program." Repeated mention was made of the lack of library facilities and even of text and reference books. One situation was reported in which the textbooks in use were 1911 and 1912 editions. Maps, globes, dictionaries, and reference books were among the other instructional materials for which an urgent need was expressed.

Community Problems

Then ranking close to the foregoing items were three problems sometimes the most baffling of them all: (1) community attitude, (2) lack of funds, and (3) isolation. The influence of community attitude on the quality of the school program was reflected in observations such as these: "the community is provincial, feeling that 'what was good enough for grandpa is good enough for us'"; "there is a complete lack of community interest"; "cannot get consolidation on account of wealthy families in the district who have no children and do not want any increase in taxes"; "a wealthy district but benighted in regard to education"; "needed consolidation is opposed, altho there is a good school only 2½ miles away and the buses now pass thru this community"; and "people argue against 'losing the community,' yet they already attend church and social gatherings at a town twelve miles away."

The second problem in this group, namely, lack of funds, is too generally known and recognized to warrant extended comment here. Perhaps this accounts for the rather surprising fact that it ranked eighth in frequency of mention in these analyses. Low valuation of property in the various districts concerned, the effects of recent and current economic conditions, and tax delinquency were the chief causes assigned to financial stress.

Isolation, the third problem in the group, is perhaps more nearly inherent in the rural situation than either of the others. Several instances were cited where: "consolidation is impossible because of bad roads"; "our smallest and least satisfactory school must be maintained for children living in that isolated region, for it is fifteen miles from the next school district;

some of the pupils must come to school by boat, or on the ice"; "children are transported by boat to the _____ school on _____ Island; the school is isolated and very difficult to visit"; "this typical mountain school is very much isolated; road very bad in winter"; "the _____ school is ten miles from the highway; roads are impassable at times"; "isolated territory; community feud"; and, finally, "the school is miles from any center—almost inaccessible."

Too Many Grade Levels

Seventeen of the descriptive statements called attention to a problem closely related to, but withal different from, that of having too many pupils in a one-teacher school. These superintendents contend that, even with a normal enrolment, one teacher can scarcely do justice to his work if pupils at all grade levels are enrolled. In other words, too many school grades as well as too many pupils often contribute to poor work in rural schools.

Schoolboard Practices

Usually a reflection of community indifference, to which reference has already been made, is the problem of indifferent or even malicious schoolboard members. Eleven of the descriptive statements attributed some direct responsibility for the unfortunate conditions described to the unwise policies of boards of education. Typical comments suggest the nature of this problem: "very negligent about doing even the repairs that are absolutely necessary"; "will not cooperate with the teacher, with the county superintendent, or with each other"; "board members are disinterested in the improvement of this school—which is a discredit to the state"; "this year an excellent teacher—B.S. degree, with high honors, long tenure—was let out to make way for a young girl without college training or teaching experience"; and "the board never hires a teacher until a week or two before school opens and therefore generally has poor teachers."

Short School Terms

The final item in this ugly picture of the rural school at its worst is the short school term. In one district, "due to lack of funds

it has been necessary to reduce two one-teacher schools to a half-time basis, which means that they will have only four and one-half months of school during the year." In another district the report was, "they can have only four months of school this year—no revenue." Several seven-month school terms were mentioned, including the report that in one state a "school term of 137 days is found in 79 counties."

Regional Differences

The descriptive reports on unsatisfactory rural schools were tabulated separately for each major geographic region of the United States.² Only a few marked differences in relative frequency of mention were apparent, however, and it is quite possible that chance factors alone were responsible for them. The four fairly clear-cut regional differences thus disclosed had to do with the prominence of (a) housing problems in the reports from the Northeastern states; (b) excessively large one-teacher schools in the Southeastern states; (c) equipment and supply problems in the Middle states; and (d) extremely small schools in the Northwestern states.

The Outlook for Underprivileged Schools

When the fundamental purposes of public education are projected against the background of limitations and handicaps described above, the temptation to assume a defeatist attitude must be vigorously opposed. With this array of weaknesses and defects in mind, one can readily note the genuineness of, and the sense of achievement implied by, the superintendent who reported: "No school entirely unsatisfactory!" Yet the situation is by no means hopeless, except for those unwilling to put forth their own best efforts on behalf of rural schools.

Among the leavening elements to be kept in mind is the fact that, after all, the unsatisfactory schools are greatly in the minority; also, that conditions by and large are improving, that the past decade has witnessed the elimination or material improvement of numerous situations just like those which have been described. There is assurance, too, in the oft-repeated testimony of these superintendents, to

² The number of replies from the six districts were: Northeastern, 50; Southeastern, 58; Middle states, 61; Northwestern, 62; Southwestern, 28; and Pacific, 13.

the effect that many competent rural teachers are doing excellent work in spite of deplorable handicaps. And finally, there are encouragement

and fruitful suggestion in such reports of specific accomplishment as those summarized in the following paragraphs of this bulletin.

Some Noteworthy Achievements of Rural Schools

Descriptive statements of definite and unusual achievements in one or more of their own rural schools were supplied by 454 county superintendents. Table 21 indicates the areas in rural education represented in these descriptions of exceptional work and shows how frequently each area was mentioned. As is true of all such tabulations, the frequencies are of interest chiefly in relation to one another and must not be interpreted as actual measures, or indices. The very phrase, "unusually fine work," is a relative term. Practices and developments, which in one community and in the opinion of one individual are "outstanding," seem but commonplace when appraised by another individual under another set of circumstances. Some of the examples included in Table 21 perhaps poorly deserve the special mention they received. On the other hand, many achievements similar to if not even more significant than some here described probably were passed over without mention by these and other superintendents. Hence, there is no basis here for determining either the proportion of rural communities in which some type of outstanding work in education is being done or the prevalence of good work of any given type in the nation's rural schools. Instead, this table

merely suggests several areas of achievement which one rather large group of superintendents identified as the high lights of their respective school programs. By implication it suggests, in broad outline, some of the current emphases and trends in the improvement of rural education.

Instruction in Specified Departments or Subjects

Descriptions of unusually successful work in some designated department, special area, or subjectmatter field were more numerous than those of any other type, coming from 142 superintendents or nearly a third of those reporting. This, in itself, is a gratifying result, suggesting as it does that recent developments in classroom teaching have been significant enough to rank foremost in the thinking of rural superintendents. But perhaps even more significant are the areas of instruction and the kinds of classroom work specifically described.

When the specific phases of the instructional program mentioned in the 142 descriptive statements were tabulated, the area of rural school music far outranked all others. Fifty-one superintendents—36 percent of those who referred to any instructional field—described some new development or outstanding achievement in music education. Several cases were cited where now for the first time special teachers or music supervisors are at work in rural schools and are achieving remarkable success. In other cases, reference was made to the outstanding work of some individual teacher, as in the following examples:

- a. Mrs. — has taught every child in her rural school to play a violin and is developing fine orchestral work. Incidentally, her pupils also have a workshop in which they work with woods, varnish, battery sets, etc. Ordinary classroom work is above average.
- b. In — district the teacher of a one-room school has carried out an unusual program in music, including the organization of a harmonica band.

Ranking next to music, but considerably below it in frequency of mention, was instruc-

TABLE 21.—AREAS OF OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT IN RURAL EDUCATION MENTIONED BY 454 SUPERINTENDENTS OF RURAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Area of outstanding achievement	Frequency of mention
1	2
The instructional program in some specified department or subject field.....	142
Health services.....	92
Library services.....	88
Classroom procedures.....	74
Technics of organization or administration.....	67
Upgrading of the teaching staff.....	66
The general instructional program at some specified grade level or in a given area of service.....	51
Recent or current revision of curriculum.....	50
Improvements in school housing.....	45
Instructional materials and supplies.....	37
Extracurriculum programs.....	30
Public relations.....	24
Cooperation with colleges or with neighboring school districts.....	9

tion in the field of health and physical education. There were 39 references to achievements in this area. Then ranking next in order, and with frequencies ranging from 25 down to 10, were: (3) vocational education (especially vocational agriculture); (4) reading; (5) social studies; (6) industrial arts (nonvocational); (7) visual education; (8) home economics; and (9) art. Subject fields and areas mentioned in fewer than ten of the descriptive statements included: (10) safety education; (11) speech work (including choral reading); (12) science and nature study; (13) education by radio; (14) dramatics and rhythms; (15) conservation; and (16) commerce. Noticeably lacking in this list was even a single mention of outstanding work in the areas of mathematics and foreign languages. Selected examples of significant or more or less unique departures in some of the foregoing areas include the following:

In health education

- a. In the middle of the day there is a rest period for first- and second-grade pupils who come to school on buses and must remain all day. Individual cots are provided in a quiet room with plenty of fresh air.
- b. A checklist was recently developed and used in formulating a new program based on child, school, and community needs.
- c. An experimental and developmental course of study in health education is in use. The study, which will run two, three, or four years, is in cooperation with the state department of health and the state department of public instruction.

In safety education

- a. A countywide safety program has been developed and is directed by a county council made up of students and teachers.

In radio and visual education

- a. Systematic use of radio in the school program has been introduced on a countywide basis this year. It is meeting an enthusiastic response.
- b. In _____ County a musical semiweekly broadcast is given over a local station to rural schools. The programs are designed to help with the teaching of singing and music appreciation. The county superintendent assists with the broadcast.
- c. Since 1935, the _____ school has been using the first sound-on-film projector owned by any school system in the state.

In conservation education

- a. The building of feeders and shelters for songbirds and animals, in cooperation with the Isaac Walton League, has been used as an educative activity.

- b. As a result of the work in conservation in the _____ County schools, a state committee is now working on an outline for all the schools.

In vocational agriculture and home economics

- a. Vocational agriculture and home economics are gaining a foothold in this county—now being taught in each school. These studies are especially practical for our farm boys and girls.
- b. In the _____ high school, a home economics cottage is being constructed at a cost of slightly less than \$1000. Interior decoration and the selection and arrangement of furniture and equipment are being done as a class project.

In reading

- a. In the _____ County schools for two years a good standardized reading test has been used in trying to appraise, coordinate, and unify teaching procedures. Teachers are becoming reading-readiness conscious; the program shows results.
- b. In cooperation with the _____ State College about 95 rural teachers in the county are working on a project to improve reading instruction.

In social studies

- a. The teacher in the _____ one-room school has worked out some especially interesting social studies units.
- b. Excellent pioneer work in social studies is being done in the _____ rural junior high school.

Health Services

The extension or improvement of health services in rural schools was the area ranking second in frequency of mention in the reports on unusual achievements. Within this general area, reference was made most often to the provision or extension of the professional services of doctors and nurses, sometimes thru cooperation with public health agencies or local associations of doctors and nurses and sometimes as an independent school service. Ranking high, also, among these descriptions was mention of the provision of hot lunches, often under conditions where regular school cafeterias could not be established. Then, according to frequency of mention, should be listed: immunizations; dental service; vision tests; hearing tests; tuberculin tests (occasionally supplemented by X-rays); and tests to discover speech defects. In two of the counties represented, the vision and hearing of every child is tested by means of the telebinocular and audiometer. In connection with various accomplishments of the foregoing types, generous credit for helpful

cooperation was given to local community organizations, such as the P.T.A., the Red Cross, the service clubs, and the fraternal organizations.

Library Services

The type of improvement in library service which predominated in these reports was the establishment of some type of circulating library for the rural schools. Only 17 of the 88 reports described improvements in the libraries of individual schools and classrooms. The remaining 71 spoke of plans such as the following:

- a. A traveling library has been established with deliveries each six-week period, which means that each one-teacher school will have at least 125 books during the school year.
- b. Bookmobile service is available to all rural schools.
- c. Ten years ago 3000 children in the _____ County schools were without supplementary material. Today a system is in operation whereby each school has access to 1000 or more good books and at least three sets of supplementary readers for each grade.
- d. Fifteen circulating libraries of 20 books each are made up at, and distributed by, the county superintendent's office.
- e. Each district pays \$5 per school year and receives each month a box of 19 books, giving them at least seven times as much reading material as they otherwise would have.
- f. The local Kiwanis Club sponsors a traveling library housed in the county superintendent's office.
- g. Under a cooperative agreement, the six-year school has the use of the town library for three days each week. The school department spends about \$200 yearly on books for this library.
- h. Seventy-four counties in the state now have circulating libraries, many with library trucks to transport books from the central library to the schools.
- i. Under the traveling library system now in operation here, hundreds of books are used in comparison to tens used previously.
- j. All schools in the county have access to 25 boxes, each containing 30 books, for the postage to and from _____ which amounts to about \$1.
- k. Schools withdraw 10 to 15 books for a period of three weeks, with renewal privilege if they are needed longer. Schools use, on an average, 75 to 125 books a year. Pupils may, and often do, withdraw books during the summer months.

Teaching Procedures

The fourth area of outstanding achievement included in Table 21 is that of improvement in classroom procedures. Here the strong emphasis in the reports was on the substitution of "activities," "meaningful experiences," "projects,"

and "units of work," for the standardized academic routines once so generally followed. No fewer than 51 of the 74 references to improved procedures told of the shift to these newer devices. One superintendent described the practices of his staff as follows:

Several schools are experimenting with activity programs. We are not taking at face value everything that the Progressives tell us; but we do a little free lancing, still trying to keep one foot on the ground all the time. We are conservatively progressive here, as it were.

Several superintendents told of outstanding activities, or units, involving such things as participation of the school in community enterprises, the beautification of the school building and grounds, local history, local industries and resources, and school gardening projects. Other comments worthy of summary deal with improvements in testing procedures, controlled experiments to evaluate different procedures, completely individualized instruction using a modification of the Winnetka plan, effective use of school excursions, and the integration and correlation of work in various subject fields.

Administrative Changes and Reorganizations

Achievements with respect to various aspects of school organization and administration, which collectively ranked fifth among the comments summarized in Table 21, covered a variety of specific problems. Only two, however, were mentioned more than twenty times, namely, significant achievement in effecting needed consolidations of rural schools and development of more suitable pupil reports or cumulative record systems. Six superintendents reported outstanding achievement in the safe, efficient, and economical transportation of pupils. The same number pointed with pride to experimental or accomplished reorganizations for the elimination of grade lines. In this connection the following account is of interest:

In all the rural schools of _____ County the first, second, and third grades are replaced by a primary division. There are eight reading levels in the primary division, which a child may complete in three or four years. On completing the work in this division he receives his first promotion, to the fourth grade.

Among the other types of reorganization described were: two "modified platoon" plans;

and in one high school a single-subject study plan, in which each pupil studies one subject intensively for nine weeks, then another, instead of carrying four subjects simultaneously. Achievements with respect to attendance departments included: one case in which the work of attendance officer and school nurse has been combined; and another in which an all-time high for the county in school attendance has been achieved—a record of 95 percent in attendance, with perfect attendance by 28 percent of the pupils enrolled. Two moveable or so-called “wheels” schools were reported, to serve itinerant or isolated families.

Improvements in Personnel

Upgrading of the teaching staff appears in sixth position in Table 21 perhaps because the schools for which outstanding achievements can be reported are those, generally speaking, in which the caliber of the teaching staff has been relatively high over a period of some years. In speaking of improvements in the teaching staff, the contributing factors mentioned were: extensions and improvements in supervisory service; special projects looking to the in-service growth of teachers; additional training; higher standards of certification; improvements in salaries or in living conditions; and effective work on the part of teachers organizations. The last named factor was mentioned in nine of the superintendents' statements, drawn from four of the six major geographic regions of the United States.

Special Types of Educational Service

Fifty-one superintendents spoke of achievements identified with some specified grade level or area of educational service. In the order of frequency of mention these specific levels and areas were: pupil guidance; adult education—including public forums; remedial instruction of various types; the primary grades; the intermediate grades; the separate schools maintained for minority racial and national groups; the senior high-school program; and, in one case only, the junior high-school program. By way of special education, one superintendent reports that seventy-five handicapped pupils are being cared for in four centers: a sight-saving center, a center for the hard of hearing, and two centers for crippled children.

Curriculum Development

Improvement of the curriculum as a whole is the eighth area of outstanding achievement appearing in Table 21. Several statements referred to improvements which had come as a result of the recent adoption of new courses of study; several, to curriculum projects at present under way. Community surveys, as the basis for curriculum revision, were mentioned in two reports. Several countywide projects in curriculum development now in progress were reported—one of them “under the direction of the state department of public instruction.” One superintendent described a countywide organization for continuous curriculum revision, with committees in each major subject area, such as arithmetic, English, reading, science, and social studies. In another county, reviewing committees in each of four major subject-matter areas select the best units developed each year in their respective subject fields. These are mimeographed in the county superintendent's office and distributed to all teachers concerned. Still another report told of efforts to “ruralize” the curriculum and to encourage teachers to develop an adequate rural philosophy.

Improvements in School Housing

Significant improvement in rural school housing was an area of achievement emphasized in just 10 percent of the progress reports. More than half of these statements told of new buildings, describing them with such enthusiastic phrases as “the finest rural building in the state,” and “the last word in rural school construction.” A noticeable emphasis in connection with these new buildings was the use of materials obtained from local sources. In one county, for example, “Twenty-three new, rock buildings have been constructed during the past five years, most of them modernly equipped. Before this program was started pupils were in temporary quarters—in churches, ‘shacks,’ and many inadequate buildings.” Monolithic concrete, pine logs, and “rammed earth,” in addition to native stone, were mentioned as materials peculiarly adapted to the situation in which they were used. The “rammed earth” building was made of native clay, tamped into block form. It was finished with modern fixtures and furnishings. Finally, in addition to the construction of new buildings, several re-

ports described the transformation achieved in school environments thru improvements in sanitation and lighting, remodeling and refurbishing of school buildings, and thru redecorating and landscaping operations. Pupils, parent-teacher associations, and other local organizations were credited with important help in connection with such renovations.

Equipment and Supplies

Improvement with respect to the quantity or quality of either school equipment or instructional materials and supplies was referred to in approximately one in twelve of the descriptive statements. As in the case of library service, probably the most significant feature of the work here reported was the frequent reference to centralized systems of obtaining and distributing materials and supplies. The general "materials bureau," where all types of teaching aids and supplies are made available to all teachers in the county, is proving effective in a limited number of rural counties. Similar bureaus, except limited to certain types of materials or teaching aids, were mentioned even more frequently, and apparently constitute an intermediate step toward the complete centralization of the instructional supply service. Among the limited-service plans which were described should be mentioned: (a) the county textbook exchange; (b) a collection of portable dioramas and other visual aids used in connection with units in reading, biology, geography, and history; and (c) projection equipment and film service. The following brief quotations indicate the services of centralized visual education departments when established in rural communities:

- a. We have developed a cooperative program of visual education, operating the equipment on a circuit basis.
- b. A central library is maintained of films, film strips, and other visual aids. At the end of the first year more than 300 films had been acquired.
- c. The individual in charge of our visual education service selects and obtains educational films, operates the projector, and helps to correlate the work with the classroom teaching.
- d. Battery type film and slide projectors are used. Films are obtained from the state university. Equipment is in constant use, making a complete circuit of all schools twice during the school year.
- e. The bookmobile also carries projection equipment and motion picture, educational films.

The sound projector is used daily in the schools and practically every night in giving educational shows in the various rural communities.

Extracurriculum Activities

The outstanding achievements mentioned in connection with the extracurriculum program of rural schools had to do chiefly with inter-school festivals and contests; the work of 4-H Clubs; activities of the Young Citizens Leagues; plans of student government; school papers; and countywide systems of honors or awards. All six of the references made to the work of Young Citizens Leagues came from the Northwestern states. An interesting variation of a common extracurriculum activity was "a county, literary magazine, *The Amateur Pen*, open to high-school contributors from all the schools." It is mimeographed in the county superintendent's office. Another interesting departure is the general club program of one rural school, where pupils who have finished elementary school but cannot go on to high school are encouraged to participate with upper-grade pupils in their clubs—a series which includes art, music, crafts, dramatics, and science clubs.

Public Relations

Work in the field of public relations is said to have been outstanding in twenty-four counties. Participation in community projects and activities of various kinds and the work of parent-teacher associations were most frequently mentioned in this connection. Systematic home visitation by teachers was reported from two widely separated counties as an effective way of maintaining wholesome public relations. American Education Week programs, newspaper publicity, and unified commencement exercises for all high-school graduates in the county were other devices described.

Cooperation of Colleges with Rural Schools

The final item in Table 21 refers to the outstanding work being done in rural schools in active cooperation with a neighboring college—usually a state teachers college or state university. Most of the schools mentioned in this connection are used as practice schools for cadet teachers. Typically, they are under the immediate supervision of the college, are staffed

with teachers of unusual ability, and have better than average financial support. Nearly all these schools serve not only as practice schools for cadets but also as demonstration schools where teachers in service gather to observe new developments in curriculum, class organization, and teaching procedures.

Numerous Types of Achievement in a Single County

The following report of what is actually being done in a single rural school system illustrates the wide variety in achievement which is possible when, under reasonably favorable circumstances and supported by an informed public opinion, an able administrator and a competent staff set their hand to the task of improving rural schools:

School A, a two-teacher village school—An excellent program of music instruction, including band instrumentation.

School B, a one-teacher school—An unusually fine playground and health program.

School C, a one-teacher school—Good program in safety education. Also gives regular public demonstrations of schoolwork.

School D, a consolidated rural elementary and high school—The P. T. A. in cooperation with the home economics department furnishes hot lunches for all pupils at the nominal price of 10 cents.

School E, a one-teacher school—The teacher, experimenting with the newer classroom procedures, has worked out some interesting and successful units of work—especially social studies units.

Schools F and G, both one-teacher schools—Are now operating in recently constructed buildings which represent about the last word in rural school construction. One is a monolithic concrete building. Both schools are carrying out progressive educational programs.

School H, a 15-teacher village school—The principal is working toward a modified platoon or-

ganization, recommended to him by the _____ Teachers College.

School I, a rural high school—Selected in January 1940, as one of 16 in the state to be studied as a model by a committee of the North Central Association.

School J, a one-teacher school—Carried out a project for beautifying the schoolgrounds. Children drew up a landscaping plan. Woodworking and sewing are other activities directed by this busy teacher in a school of more than 20 pupils.

School K, a 23-teacher village school—In an ultramodern plant, having all safety devices and with radio and public address equipment, the speech department specializes in creative projects and an outstanding program in music has been developed, especially the band ensemble. This school is also experimenting with a new system of pupil reports.

School L, a 25-teacher village school organized on the 6-3-3 plan—Has also done pioneer work on school marks and grading; is an experiment base for the state board of education in the field of home economics; maintains the only Smith-Hughes course in vocational agriculture in the county; and is doing especially fine work in health and physical education, English, and dramatics.

School M, a one-teacher school—Has a rhythm band for the younger pupils.

School N, a two-teacher school—Instruction in part singing is exceptionally fine.

School O, a one-teacher school—Another remarkable program in music is being carried out, including the organization of a harmonica band.

Implications for Rural Administrators

The effective practices and unusual procedures summarized in the foregoing paragraphs are rich in practical suggestions for the improvement of rural schools. In comparing them with the achievements of their own schools, most superintendents will find some common ground of similarity but will find also a number of areas where further pioneering is suggested.

V. NEXT STEPS IN RURAL EDUCATION

Information with respect to the status of rural schools and the direction of current trends in rural education is of little avail except when applied in the solution of the problems revealed. What then are the practical problems suggested by the foregoing description of rural schools? To what tasks must the leaders and friends of rural education set their hands in the decade that lies ahead?

The Advice of Rural Superintendents

A significant answer to the foregoing questions was given by the rural superintendents who cooperated in this study. As requested in the inquiry form, each of 864 superintendents listed from one to four things which he would do first in his own county, if he were free to correct only a few of the most flagrant weaknesses of the rural schools under his direction. These suggested next steps in rural education are summarized in Table 22. The formation of larger attendance units thru the consolidation of small schools was mentioned far more often than any other single proposal. Improvement of school buildings, more adequate preparation of rural teachers, curriculum revision, and better supervision were next in frequency of mention. The list as a whole reemphasizes many of the imperative needs referred to in earlier sections of this bulletin. In it most communities will find one or more problems which can be successfully attacked and at least a partial solution found for their own rural schools.

Improving Rural Schools thru Legislation

Several of the proposals listed in Table 22 and many of the needs of rural schools discussed in earlier sections of this bulletin lie beyond the reach of individual communities. The abolition of small districts and substitution of satisfactory units for purposes of taxation and school administration may be cited as one such basic problem. Effective removal of all school affairs from the control of partisan politics, adequate systems of equalization and state financial aid, satisfactory minimum standards of training for rural school teachers and administrators, welfare legislation which makes rural education inviting to competent teachers, and the creation and support of effective state edu-

TABLE 22.—CHANGES IN RURAL EDUCATION BELIEVED TO BE MOST URGENTLY NEEDED IN THEIR RESPECTIVE DISTRICTS BY 864 RURAL SUPERINTENDENTS

Change recommended	Frequency of mention
1	2
More consolidated schools (larger attendance units)	434
New, improved, or larger school buildings (including better lights, sanitation, and grounds).....	271
Better supplies and equipment.....	266
Better trained teachers.....	261
Broader curriculum.....	207
More adequate and effective supervision.....	197
Higher salaries for teachers and other school employees.....	189
Improved transportation facilities.....	170
Larger administrative units.....	162
Better financing.....	150
Improved library facilities.....	126
Better methods of certification and/or teacher appointment.....	78
Improved classroom procedures.....	67
An adequate health service program.....	58
Improved textbooks (free, uniform, etc.).....	46
Better organization and administration of individual schools.....	42
Longer tenure for rural teachers.....	39
Longer school terms.....	29
More enlightened public opinion.....	25
Improved school lunch facilities.....	19
Improved professional attitude on the part of teachers (including participation in teacher associations, meetings, etc.).....	19
A larger staff and lighter teacher loads.....	17
Improved living conditions for rural teachers.....	17
Improvement in the status of the county superintendency.....	15
A central purchasing authority or agency.....	13
Improved educational opportunities in the separate schools maintained for Negroes or other racial or national groups.....	12
Elimination of politics from all phases of school management.....	11
Revision or more strict enforcement of attendance laws.....	11
A satisfactory retirement system for teachers.....	10
Introduction of community-school, social, and recreational programs.....	10
Improved janitorial service.....	8
Development of adequate and vital programs of adult education.....	8
Payment of teachers on the 12-month plan.....	4
Other changes*	4
Number of replies.....	864

* Includes: research on rural needs; simplification of the system of records and reports now in use; elimination of high-school teacher-training departments; and the adoption of minimum standards which must be met by all rural boards.

cation departments and teachers colleges are other areas where fundamental revisions in school legislation must be made in many states before their rural schools can approach any reasonable standard of efficiency. Not the least of the legislative changes which should be sought in several states are those which would make the county superintendency, or its equiva-

lent, a truly professional office manned by those who have both the authority and the ability to give real leadership in rural education. When changes such as these are prerequisite to any material progress, statewide cooperation to secure the necessary laws may prove considerably more fruitful than the best local efforts to improve rural schools within the various districts.

State Leadership

Important, too, for the consistent progress of rural schools is the assumption of genuine leadership by the state departments of public instruction and state education associations. In a special way rural workers look to state departments for supervision, guidance, and suggestion. Generally speaking, the authority delegated to state departments over rural schools is broader and more direct than their corresponding control over urban schools. Furthermore, in the absence of the same measure of local leadership, workers in rural education naturally turn more often to state school officials for guidance than is generally true of city school employees. Hence, state departments are peculiarly responsible both for the continuation of promising trends already under way in rural schools and for the stimulation of other types of achievement. Thru such devices and procedures as the formulation of requirements and suggested standards, the distribution of helpful materials, leadership in curriculum study and revision, extension and improvement of rural school supervision, and more frequent and direct contact with actual rural school programs, state school officials can do much to improve the status of rural schools within the framework of existing legislation.

Where basic changes in legislation are essential, initiative and full cooperation on the part of both the departments of public instruction and the state education associations usually are essential to satisfactory accomplishment. On

these state leaders the local communities must chiefly rely for the development of and later management of timely legislative plans.

Local Initiative in Improving Rural Schools

Altho the point of view expressed above is unquestionably true, it is a mistake for rural leaders to assume that all improvements in rural education must wait upon legislative changes or upon state department leadership. Within the limitations of current regulations and entirely apart from any form of external assistance each district has its own opportunities and its own responsibilities for lifting the standards of its rural schools. Until such time as desirable consolidations can be effected, for example, effort can be focused on the best possible school programs in existing schools. In the absence of statewide curriculum study programs, local groups can study their own curriculum problems. Lacking statewide provisions for school-health or library services, cooperative effort among adjoining school districts and with non-school agencies within a given area may result in commendable achievements.

As a means of suggestion and help to rural administrators and others in positions of responsibility for rural schools, a checklist on rural education concludes this bulletin. With this checklist current practices can be brought to mind and evaluated, and the areas noted where timely improvement should now be sought. Items in the list will be checked "Yes" when any practice suggested or one equally good is being carried out already. They will be checked "No" when any proposal reveals an unsatisfactory situation in the school or schools under review. Altho the checklist is designed especially for rural school administrators, it should prove helpful when used either by teachers or by laymen in the study and discussion of rural school problems.

A Checklist on Rural Schools

Answer the following questions for the rural school, or schools, in your district:	Yes	No
<i>Organization and Administration</i>		
1. Is the school district large enough for maximum efficiency and economy in both fiscal and educational administration?.....	—	—
(a) If not, is the district as large as it can be made without the modification of state laws?.....	—	—
2. Has every school in the district too small for effective work been eliminated thru consolidation except for those where consolidation is obviously impossible?.....	—	—
3. Are school opportunities provided for all who should have access to them:		
(a) all children of elementary-school age?.....	—	—
(b) all children of high-school age?.....	—	—
(c) handicapped children?.....	—	—
(d) children of minority racial and national groups?.....	—	—
(e) out-of-school youth and adults?.....	—	—
4. Is home teaching service, or perhaps a "moving school," provided for isolated or shut-in pupils?.....	—	—
5. Is transportation at public expense provided for all pupils living more than a specified distance—e.g., 1½ miles—from the school attended?.....	—	—
6. Is transportation provided for all handicapped pupils, regardless of distance?.....	—	—
7. Do all conveyances used in pupil transportation meet the generally approved standards for health and safety?.....	—	—
8. Are satisfactory cumulative pupil records being maintained and used?.....	—	—
9. Is experimentation being carried out with reorganization plans adapted to the needs of individual schools—e.g., modified platoon; elimination of grade lines; or the rescheduling of school activities?.....	—	—
10. Is the attendance officer primarily a social worker rather than a police officer?.....	—	—
11. Are the compulsory attendance laws effectively and sanely enforced?.....	—	—
12. Do the school funds raised in the district show a genuine effort to support the schools according to the taxpaying ability of the people?.....	—	—
13. Is the district taking full advantage of state and federal financial aid by qualifying for, and requesting, such aid?.....	—	—
14. Have all possibilities been exhausted for cooperation among neighboring districts in purchasing equipment and supplies or effecting similar economies?.....	—	—
<i>Personnel Administration and Supervision</i>		
15. Are school employees chosen solely on the basis of merit?.....	—	—
16. Are the minimum qualifications of employees as high as could be maintained in view of the funds available?.....	—	—
17. Are salaries adequate? Or, if not adequate, do they represent the maximum which the district can afford?.....	—	—
18. Whether by law or administrative policy, are rural teachers made to feel secure in their positions so long as they render efficient teaching service?..	—	—
(a) Are teachers regularly selected and appointed well in advance of the opening of schools?.....	—	—
19. Are living conditions and working conditions for rural teachers as attractive and wholesome as can be arranged?.....	—	—
20. Are teachers encouraged to remain year after year in the same school and to become real leaders and builders of the community?.....	—	—

A Checklist on Rural Schools (Cont.)

Answer the following questions for the rural school, or schools, in your district: Yes No

21. Are teachers encouraged to continue their professional training?.....
22. Is a helpful program of in-service growth for teachers regularly carried out?.....
23. Is full advantage taken of the teacher help which colleges in the area might give—cooperative experiments, demonstrations, etc.?.....
24. Are teachers helped and encouraged in developing a local teachers association with a vital program?.....
25. Are there supervisory officers from whom every teacher can obtain sufficient help and guidance with general teaching problems?.....
26. Are supervisors available to give sufficient help with music, art, and other subjects requiring special training and special skills?.....
27. Is some reasonable amount of musical ability expected of all applicants for teaching positions in nondepartmentalized rural schools?.....

The Instructional Program

28. Does the teaching emphasis fall on living in and improving the rural community rather than on leaving it at the first opportunity?.....
29. Are teachers making sufficient use of the local environment, local resources, and local history?.....
30. Is the course of study built in terms of local needs?.....
31. Are teachers now studying the curriculum with a view to adapting and strengthening it?.....
32. Are experimental courses and projects being carried out and evaluated?....
33. Is special effort being made to strengthen the work at some grade level or in some department or area where it has been especially weak?.....
34. Are the schools now cooperating actively in one or more of the normal affairs or enterprises of the community?.....
35. Are pupils taught by means of firsthand experiences, activities, and projects whenever possible, with the minimum use of textbook-recitation procedures?.....
36. Is suitable opportunity provided for excursions and other chances to observe real objects, processes, and relationships?.....
37. Is a genuine and successful attempt being made to correlate the work in various subjects and departments and to minimize subjectmatter lines?..
38. Does the daily schedule consist of a few periods for carefully integrated activities rather than numerous 5- to 15-minute "recitations"?.....
39. Are frequent and regular contacts with good music and some music instruction provided for all rural pupils?.....
40. Are health instruction and physical education included in the school experiences of all rural pupils?.....
41. Does the health program deal primarily with local health problems and health needs?.....
42. Are the health services of the schools used as vital experiences in health education?.....
43. Is safety instruction given to all pupils—instruction dealing primarily with local school and community hazards?.....
44. Are pupils being taught to conserve natural resources, particularly the resources of the local community and region?.....
45. Is maximum use being made of visual aids—maps, pictures, and specimens as well as slides and motion pictures?.....

A Checklist on Rural Schools (Cont.)

Answer the following questions for the rural school, or schools, in your district:		Yes	No
46. Is effective use being made of the phonograph in rural classrooms?.....	—	—	—
47. Is full advantage taken of radio facilities and programs?.....	—	—	—
48. Are new courses organized and offered as soon as the need for such courses is discovered—e.g., courses in vocational agriculture, home economics, commerce, or forestry?.....	—	—	—
49. Can any pupil pursue correspondence courses arranged for and supervised by the school when such courses are not offered locally?.....	—	—	—
50. Is provision made for individual help and remedial work for those who need it?.....	—	—	—
51. Is every teacher a "guidance worker," interested in and capable of giving help to pupils with their personal and educational problems?.....	—	—	—
52. Do teachers make good use of objective tests in evaluating pupil achievement?.....	—	—	—
53. Are pupils interested primarily in what they have learned rather than in the marks they have received?.....	—	—	—
<i>Special Services for Pupils</i>			
54. Are doctors and nurses available for the adequate health inspection and health care of all rural pupils?.....	—	—	—
55. Are the general health examinations as thoro and as frequent as seems feasible and desirable?.....	—	—	—
56. Does the immunization work being done reach all pupils?.....	—	—	—
57. Does it protect against the maximum number of contagious diseases?....	—	—	—
58. Are tuberculin tests provided for all pupils, with X-ray follow-ups as needed?.....	—	—	—
59. Are special tests given to discover vision, hearing, and speech defects?....	—	—	—
60. Have all possibilities been exhausted for helpful cooperation between the schools and local health workers—private practitioners as well as public health officials?.....	—	—	—
61. Is cafeteria or hot lunch service available for all pupils who do not go home for lunch?.....	—	—	—
62. Is there a psychologist or special guidance counselor to assist with difficult guidance problems?.....	—	—	—
<i>Housing and Equipment</i>			
63. Has every obsolete, unsafe, and unhealthful building been replaced or its use discontinued?.....	—	—	—
64. Have all urgently needed alterations and remodelings been carried out?....	—	—	—
65. Has everything possible been done by way of needed repair and redecoration of buildings?.....	—	—	—
66. Is full advantage being taken of state and federal aid in the construction and repair of school buildings?.....	—	—	—
67. Is the help of the state department sought in planning school buildings?...	—	—	—
68. Is use generally made of building materials found locally?.....	—	—	—
69. Have all obsolete fixtures and equipment been replaced?.....	—	—	—
70. Are equipment and supplies provided in sufficient quantity for all the pupils?.....	—	—	—
71. In selecting materials and supplies is their educational value the first consideration?.....	—	—	—

A Checklist on Rural Schools (Cont.)

Answer the following questions for the rural school, or schools, in your district: Yes No

72. Does the library in every rural school meet at least the minimum standard suggested by the state department of public instruction?.....
73. Does some good type of circulating library bring each rural school a supply of books in addition to its own?.....
74. Is every school provided with suitable maps, dictionaries, and other standard reference materials?.....
75. Is every school equipped with some type of musical instrument?.....
76. Are the schools getting as much material and help as possible from state, county, or local libraries?.....
77. Are suitable visual and auditory aids obtained and made available to all the rural schools, preferably thru a centralized agency or bureau?.....

Extracurriculum Programs

78. Do all pupils have maximum opportunity to participate in effective plans of pupil self-government?.....
79. Is each school sponsoring a reasonable number of successful special interest clubs?.....
80. Have at least a few clubs for older pupils been opened also to the out-of-school youth in the community?.....
81. Are the schools cooperating with established agencies—the 4-H Club, Y.M.C.A., Y.W.C.A., Boy and Girl Scouts, etc.?.....
82. Does the extracurriculum program include developmental projects such as the preparation of a school paper?.....
83. Are the schools cooperating, neither too little nor too much, in interschool festivals, joint programs, and contests?.....
84. Does the extracurriculum program help to make the school a genuine community center?.....
85. Do the extracurriculum activities contribute directly and helpfully to classroom work?.....

Public Relations

86. Is there an active and constructive parent-teacher association in each rural school?.....
87. Do teachers systematically visit the homes of all their pupils?.....
88. Is American Education Week observed so as to interpret the schools to the public?.....
89. Are school aims and activities explained and demonstrated thru commencement exercises and other special school programs?.....
90. Are the resources of the local press and radio used effectively in interpreting the school program?.....
91. Are fraternal organizations, service clubs, and other local organizations encouraged to devote their energies and funds to worthy school projects such as obtaining health, guidance, or library services?.....
92. Are frequent invitations and opportunities given to the public to share in developing school policies and planning school activities?.....
93. Is each school a genuine cultural and social center for the community which it serves?.....

PUBLICATIONS ON RELATED TOPICS . . .

The Outlook for Rural Education. *Research Bulletin*, Vol. 9, No. 4; September 1931. 76 p. 25¢.

The Rural Teacher's Economic Status. *Research Bulletin*, Vol. 17, No. 1; January 1931. 64 p. 25¢.

A Policy for Rural Education in the United States. Committee Report, Department of Rural Education, 1940. 48 p. 25¢.

Community Resources in Rural Schools. Yearbook of the Department of Rural Education, 1939. 109 p. 50¢.

Newer Types of Instruction in Small Rural Schools. Yearbook of the Department of Rural Education, 1938. 144 p. 50¢.

Adjustments in Rural Education. Yearbook of the Department of Rural Education, 1937. 120 p. 50¢.

Rural School Libraries. Yearbook of the Department of Rural Education, 1936. 112 p. 50¢.

Schools in Small Communities. Seventeenth Yearbook, American Association of School Administrators, 1939. 608 p. \$2.

All orders for publications should be accompanied by funds in payment for same and must be so accompanied when orders for material amount to \$1 or less. Orders not accompanied by funds in payment are subject to transportation charges. Discounts on quantity orders of the same publication: 2-9 copies, 10 percent; 10-99 copies, 25 percent; 100 or more copies, 33 1/3 percent. Make checks or money orders payable to the National Education Association of the United States, 1201 Sixteenth Street, N. W., Washington, D. C.

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RURAL PEOPLE are organizing their efforts toward the reconstruction of their institutions. They will advance the cause of rural education if they will concentrate their efforts on (1) the development of larger administrative and attendance units, (2) securing more adequate financing for the rural schools thru state and federal aid, (3) employing better educated and better paid teachers, and (4) securing improved library and recreational services. As these objectives are achieved, rural life will have a sound educational basis on which to build for the future.—Educational Policies Commission, *Educational Policies for Rural America*, 1939, p. 18.
