ELECTRONIC COMMENT
"HIGH SPOTS" AND "LOW SPOTS"
SURVEY IN THE NEW YORK CITY SCHOOLS

The survey recently inaugurated by William J. O'Shea, superintendent of the New York City schools, makes use of the entire teaching staff of the city system. Superintendent O'Shea is putting into effect a notion frequently enough discussed before teachers' conferences, but too rarely adopted as a matter of practice by school supervisors, that of giving the classroom teacher a say in the matter of conducting the system. The New York Superintendent is finding what any other superintendent will find, that if he gives the teacher a chance to help, his problems will reach a saner and earlier solution. Few of the educational slogans of the day—projects, contracts, Dalton, learning by doing, visual instruction, socialized recitation, intelligence tests, objective measurements, pupil government, or what not—can have much value unless the wholehearted cooperation of the classroom teacher is secured.

Here are some of the "high spots" Superintendent O'Shea is given a chance to think over:

1. Brighter pupils, instead of skipping grades and going ahead with older pupils, stay with children of their own years, but learn more of poetry, history, and manual arts.

2. Each pupil compiles a history of New York, illustrates, types, and binds it in book form.

3. When supervisors see a lesson of particular merit, opportunity is given to all teachers in the school to observe such a lesson.

4. Careful record is kept of the children's intelligence tests and tests are given at different periods. If, as has happened in several cases, children do much better for their age in a second or third test, the principle notes the fact and raises a question whether the intelligence tests give satisfactory evidence of children's native abilities.

5. All textbooks are brought every Wednesday morning to a teacher or principal for inspection as to the care which the pupil is taking of the public's property.

6. Among 25 experiments reported is a kindergarten orchestra.

7. Among methods of promoting teacher happiness at work, one school has groups of teachers visit classrooms to see demonstrations of excellent work.

8. Among ways of promoting teacher participation in school management, they cited a school where teachers rate themselves in efficiency and characteristics for conference with the principal over ways of increasing efficiency.

9. Grammar school graduates are recruited into high school by means of scholarships procured for promising pupils who, if helped even a little, are enabled to continue in school.

10. Individual differences among pupils are recognized in the character and amount of instruction given through a Help Club by which pupils who understand coach other pupils who need help.

11. Learning by doing is furthered by giving pupils experience in radio broadcasting on selected civic topics.

12. Among many ways of furthering student help, one school sends parents balanced diet charts, with special reference to wholesome breakfasts.

13. Free piano instruction is given by a teacher as one way of promoting extra curricular activities.

14. In character training one school concentrates on some special habit each month, and has pupils make progress reports as to undesirable habits broken.

15. In deciding what work to try, pupils about to graduate are aided by the privately supported Vocation Counsel for Juniors.

16. In the study of current national, state, and local problems, one school calls upon pupils in assembly for two-minute speeches.

17. In studying world problems, one school had the Washington Disarmament Conference dramatized at commencement exercises.

18. Among improvements in office firm and devices, one school reports printed directions and suggestions for all substitutes and new teachers.
19. Among ways of securing co-operation of parents, one school reports a chain of letters, typed in Italian and setting forth the need for early and constant correction by parents of pupils' faults discovered in school.

20. Among gifts or other help from citizens, a Coney Island school reports that every prominent civic, social, and philanthropic agency of Coney Island has presented a picture or other gift to that school.

21. Among other advance steps, one school, built in 1908, says it has preserved its original freshness by the untiring care of the custodian-engineer who takes a personal pride in his plant.

But it is just as significant for us to look over some of the "low spots," if this survey is to help us. Here are some from the same source:

1. More nature materials are needed in classrooms, such as many schools now obtain from the Museum of Natural History and the Brooklyn Museum.

2. Once every term, teachers should be provided with simple, printed lists for children to take home so that parents will be reminded to visit our city's many museums, with their wealth of objects of artistic, historic, and scientific interest.

3. More films and lantern slides should be supplied for the study of geography.

4. Slower pupils should be given different kinds and quantities of matter to study and should be taught by different methods from those used with children able to go faster.

5. For their own sake, and as a social service, bright pupils should be allowed to coach the slower ones during the study period.

6. More opportunity should be given children in their history, geography, and arithmetic courses for the kind of oral expression that is called for in the English course.

7. Make the child a participant in a world of experience, rather than a mere listener in a mature world of talk by having more manual experience.

8. Help teachers realize that the chief business of a school is learning rather than teaching and that when programming children's time more emphasis should be placed in each school on the learning process.

9. The board of education itself should give instruction to teachers in new methods and see that attendance at such instruction is credited toward promotion.

10. There should be itinerant model teachers. Not only young teachers, but also older ones should be given opportunity "to go back to training school for special help where results show they are weak in their actual teaching."

11. More help should be given to pupils with speech defects.

12. There should be more working with the pupils and less working for them.

13. Many teachers do too much work for their children.

14. Ways of finding out what each pupil is like and of fitting instruction to his individual need should be demonstrated in different parts of the city by model teachers.

RECENT RELEASES FROM THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

Few changes were made in the standards for Virginia elementary schools as revised recently by the State Board of Education, it was reported at the State Department of Education recently. Superintendents throughout the state have been notified of the revised standards for 1925-26.

For next session it is provided that teachers in standard elementary schools shall hold an elementary certificate with at least one year's experience, or first grade certificate with at least three years' experience. Hitherto the teacher in the standard elementary school was required only to hold a first grade certificate, it is pointed out.

The standard salary of $85 for a nine-months' term, as previously prescribed, is maintained. The Department of Education, however, is given discretion to accredit schools with teachers' salaries below that amount provided no individual salary in such school is less than $70 per month, and the average salary in the elementary schools of the division seeking standardization is not less than $75 a month for a nine-months' term.

It is said at the State Department of Education that primary emphasis is laid upon the qualifications of the teacher and the character of the instruction in standard schools which must run for at least nine months each session. Another important requirement provides for ample playground facilities of not less than two acres, under the control of the school board, that children may receive as an integral part of their schooling proper physical education. Requirements covering the standards for schoolrooms, lighting, heating, and ventilation, sanitary provisions, and character of equipment have not been changed in the revision recently effected.
The State Board of Education has had printed a bulletin on standards for rural elementary schools for general circulation throughout the state. In the spring of the year the State Department of Education sends out blanks on which reports on elementary schools are made to the State Department. Many of these schools are visited during the year by state school officers. When the proper standards are met the state aid of from $150 to $300 is provided, depending upon the size of the school. These funds are intended as a supplement to local funds in order that the complete standards set up may be reached.

Last year, it is pointed out, the check on standard rural schools was very much closer than it had been possible to make before. The same general policy will obtain for the current session, because it is believed that it is quite as fundamental to provide proper standards for elementary education as it is for high school education.

THE EDUCATIONAL RATING OF COUNTIES

Every county in Virginia last session received a general educational rating of 50 or higher, with an index number of 100 as the assumed standard of excellence, according to ratings just completed at the State Department of Education, it was announced by Superintendent Harris Hart, State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

In 1919-20, the first year of rating the school divisions of Virginia by index numbers, there were 23 counties with general educational index numbers of less than 50, and for the first time last session all counties were able to attain index numbers of 50 or higher. It is pointed out that this record is worthy of careful consideration.

Last session Elizabeth City county was ranked first among the counties, as it was the previous session; Arlington county ranked second as against fifth the year before; Norfolk county ranked third as against ninth the year before; Henrico county ranked fourth as compared with second the year before; Wise county ranked fifth as against tenth the year before; Nottoway county ranked sixth as compared with third the year before; Warwick county ranked seventh as against eleventh the year before; Highland county ranked eighth as against fourth the year before; James City county ranked ninth as compared with sixth the year before; Prince George county ranked tenth as against twelfth the year before.

These records of the ten counties ranking at the head of the list are typical of the ratings of the other counties; a good many shifts of positions are shown among the counties whenever rated, but it does not mean necessarily that when a county takes a different rank its own educational efficiency is lower than that of the previous session, but that it has been outstripped by another county.

Nansemond as an individual county made an unusual gain in total points last session as compared with the year before, it is reported.

The final index number for all the counties of the state last session involving five financial and five academic factors was 75.43, which indicates that the educational efficiency of the schools of the state, outside of the cities, is about twenty-five per cent below the standard set for them. There was a clear gain made last session as compared with the session before, it is pointed out.

In 1922-23, 48 counties received a rating of from 70 to 100 points on a scale of 100; in 1922-23, 58 counties received the same rating. In 1922-23, 37 counties received a rating of from 60 to 70 points; last session 33 counties were so rated. In 1922-23, 12 counties were rated between 50 and 60; last session only nine counties were rated so low. In 1922-23, 3 counties were rated below 50; last session no counties were so rated.
"These ratings," said Superintendent Hart, "give a somewhat rough but significant picture of the educational situation in Virginia at this time. While index numbers to the average individual may not mean as much as to the statistician, nevertheless no better system has yet been devised for measuring educational efficiency. Indeed, it is gratifying that such an effective instrument of revealing actual educational progress has been devised, and it is hoped that educational changes going on in Virginia, as revealed in index numbers, will be carefully scrutinized by every citizen."

CARTER W. WORMELEY

PRIZES FOR ORATIONS AND ESSAYS

The Commission on Interracial Co-operation is offering three prizes, of one hundred dollars, fifty dollars, and twenty-five dollars, for the three best orations or essays on some phase of race relations, submitted by students of Southern colleges on or before June 15, 1925.

The only condition of entrance of any oration or essay is that it shall have been delivered on some public college occasion or printed in a college periodical during the present school year.

The contest is limited to the white colleges of the thirteen Southern states, including Kentucky and Oklahoma. Contestants are free to choose any phase of race relations and to treat it as they see fit. Papers must reach the office of the Commission not later than June 15 and prizes will be awarded as soon thereafter as possible.

For further information, including suggestive topics and reading list, write R. B. Eleazer, Educational Director, Commission on Interracial Co-operation, 409 Palmer Building, Atlanta, Ga.

The briber and the bribed are both lawless, but the worse of the two is the briber—Dr. Chas. W. Eliot.

AMERICA FIRST

Not merely in matters material, but in things of the spirit.
Not merely in science, inventions, motors, and skyscrapers, but also in ideals, principles, character.
Not merely in the calm assertion of rights, but in the glad assumption of duties.
Not flaunting her strength as a giant, but bending in helpfulness over a sick and wounded world like a Good Samaritan.
Not in pride, arrogance, and disdain of other races and peoples, but in sympathy, love and understanding.
Not in treading again the old, worn, bloody pathway which ends inevitably in chaos and disaster, but in blazing a new trail, along which, please God, other nations will follow, into the new Jerusalem where wars shall be no more.
Some day some nation must take that path—unless we are to lapse once again into utter barbarism—and that honor I covet for my beloved America.
And so, in that spirit and with these hopes, I say with all my heart and soul, "America First"—From a sermon by THE Rt. REV. G. ASHTON OLDHAM, Bishop Co-adjutor of Albany.

BOOKS

A JOB ANALYSIS FOR THE TEACHER IN TRAINING


In the work of teacher training no need has been quite so acute as that of a suitable manual for the student teacher. This gap in materials has been admirably provided for by Miss Katherine M. Anthony, who from a long experience in supervision writes an Introduction to Teaching. The manual may confidently be expected to be equally helpful to the student teacher in giving direction and focus to her work, and to her supervising teacher in bringing about more