

that it is attitudes, skills, interests, and habits that we wish to develop and that teaching through purposeful activities affords the best opportunities for this development, because so far it has been the best means of putting the child in "complete possession of all his powers," which I believe, is the true aim of education.

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AN AMERICAN IDEAL

Prepared by the Research Division of the National Education Association

THE AMERICAN IDEAL," says Secretary Hughes, "is the ideal of equal educational opportunity, not merely for the purpose of enabling one to know how to earn a living, and to fit into an economic status more or less fixed, but of *giving play to talent and aspiration and to development of mental and spiritual powers.*"

How near are we to realizing this ideal? The man in the street will tell you that it has been practically realized—that American children are offered equal educational opportunities and that if anyone does not get an education it is his own fault. That this popular conception of the adequacy of our educational system is far from the truth is shown by an examination of the facts.

An opportunity to get an education that gives "play to talent and aspiration and to the development of mental and spiritual powers" can not be given where schools are not in session. Are all American children offered equal educational opportunities as measured by the length of the terms our schools are in session?

State	Average school session in days
New Jersey	189
New York	188
Arkansas	126
South Carolina	109

Let us grant that the schools of South Carolina are equal to those of New Jersey in everything except the length of the term maintained. Then the child in South Carolina with 109 days of school has 58 per cent of the opportunity to attend school that the New Jersey child has with 189 days of

school. If 59 per cent equals 100 per cent, then the children of those States have an equal educational opportunity.

But the "average school session" does not tell the full story. Because a State maintains an average term of 100 days does not mean that all children in the State are able to attend school for that period each year. If one district maintains no school and another a standard 200-day school the average is 100. Just such inequalities as this exist in many States. In 1920, 120 Arkansas school districts levied no school tax at all; over 70 pursued the same policy in 1921. In at least two States there are some districts where no public school will be held this year, or if any, only the month or so possible with State aid, according to Mr. Alexander of the Educational Finance Inquiry. A bulletin just issued by the Bureau of Education shows that in twenty-four of our States there are 227,570 children living in districts that maintain school less than four school months per year. In these same States there are at the same time over a million children who have an opportunity to attend school over nine months a year.

What is the practical effect of such inequalities? Suppose that a South Carolina child wishes to cover the same amount of work that the New Jersey child covers in the eight years before he graduates from the elementary school. The child in South Carolina must go to school the full term for fourteen years to do this. If he goes to school every day from the time he is six until he is twenty he will just be able to do it. Similarly the quarter of a million children now living in districts with four months of school must go to school the full term for eighteen years to do the same amount of work that is covered in eight years by children living in school districts maintaining school for nine months. Few children are able to continue their elementary school training for eighteen years. The result is that thousands of children receive but half, or even less than half the amount of elementary education that others receive.

Next, let us consider the opportunity that American children have to learn to read and write. Reading and writing has long been looked upon as the very foundation of an education. Do all children have an equal

opportunity to learn to read and write? The figures for illiteracy of the Federal Census of 1920 show that there were 531,077 native-born children between ten and twenty years of age in the United States who have not had the opportunity to learn to read and write. All of these children, had they started to school at six or even eight years of age, would have had more than enough schooling to remove them from the illiterate class in the Census. It should be remembered that the Census classifies only those who have had "no schooling whatsoever" as illiterate. Of our 5,000,000 illiterates, 3,000,00 are native born. Over a million are *white of native-white parentage*.

The percentage of illiteracy in the rural districts is four times as high as in the cities. If our rural schools had been as effective as our city schools in removing illiteracy, there would have been 1,800,000 fewer native illiterates in the country in 1920 than there were. The willingness to tolerate the makeshift rural school is responsible for the existence in our country today of nearly 2,000,000 native-born adults doomed to go through life lacking that most elemental educational attainment, the ability to read and write. Yet the Federal Census is really an under-estimate of the prevalence of illiteracy in our country. The draft indicates that 16.5 per cent of our native-born adult population is illiterate, rather than 5.3 per cent as the census shows, if those who are unable to write a letter home and to read a newspaper in English are classed as illiterates.

No schoolroom is effective unless it is taught by a competent teacher. Do all

American children have an equal opportunity to have instruction by a trained, competent teacher? In some States over eighty-five per cent of the teachers are normal-school graduates. In other States less than ten per cent of the teachers are normal school graduates. The survey of the schools of New York State, just published, states:

The most significant fact regarding the preparation of rural school teachers is the very small proportion of normal school graduates in the one-teacher schools. . . . It would seem that, out of a total of 8400 teachers in one-teacher schools, no more than 420 have had the amount of preparation generally agreed upon as the lowest acceptable minimum for elementary teachers.

The country child in New York State who attends a one-teacher school has one chance in twenty of coming under the instruction of a teacher who has met this minimal standard; the child living in a village has more than one chance in four of having such a teacher; while the child living in a typical city of the third class has less than one chance in five of not having such a teacher.

The results found in New York are not unusual. Studies have revealed the same condition in over a score of States. Thousands of children are being taught by immature, incapable transients in the profession who possess no training in addition to that given in the elementary school. Other children receive instruction from capable, well-trained, competent teachers—graduates of both a high school and a standard Normal school.

The money available to obtain teachers in different districts reveals another inequality. The average salary paid Massachusetts teachers in cities over 100,000 population in 1922 was \$1,589. At the same time at least eighty

Typical Inequalities in the Training and Compensation of Teachers

State	Training		Average annual salaries paid elementary teachers	
	Per cent with inadequate training	Per cent normal school graduates	Large Cities	One-room rural schools
1	2	3	4	5
California.....	14	86	1879	1257
New York.....	18	82	2600	883
Massachusetts.....	14	86	1589	391
Nebraska.....	96	4	1731	869
Mississippi.....	96	4	842	328
Florida.....	99	1	841	399

teachers in this State were receiving annual salaries of less than \$500. It is estimated that 40,000 teachers in thirty-six States of the country were similarly underpaid in 1922. Teachers in the large cities of the country in 1922 received an average salary of \$1,848. Does anyone believe that the qualifications of the teacher who is willing to accept a salary of less than \$500 are to be compared with those of a teacher who is receiving an annual salary of \$1,848? Certainly there is no equality of educational opportunity as far as the type of teacher instructing our children is concerned, and nothing is so fundamental in the effectiveness of a schoolroom as the teacher who presides over that room.

Do all children have an equal opportunity to attend an adequately supported school? The average expenditure per pupil attending in one State in 1920 was \$136—in another State \$21. Once again averages are misleading. The situation as it actually is can be ascertained only by studying in detail the conditions within individual States. Inequalities are great even when one city is compared with another. In Massachusetts, for example, the city of Dover spent in 1920 \$150.84 per pupil, while another, Somerset, expended \$42.24 per pupil. The recent New York school survey gives data for one thousand common school districts in which the annual expenditure per pupil varied all the way from \$20 to \$185. Forty-three common school districts expended less than \$35 per pupil and twenty-two districts expended more than \$185 per pupil. Can the educational opportunity offered in the school where the yearly expenditure is \$20 per pupil be compared with that offered where the average yearly expenditure per pupil is \$185? Once again the facts are clear—equality of educational opportunity as evidenced by expenditures for school support does not exist.

If there is nothing like equality of educational opportunity in such fundamental educational provisions as those described, can there be educational equality in any phase of our educational system? It is clear that there can not be. Our learned Secretary of State was right when he placed equality of educational opportunity among America's ideals—an ideal far from realized. "The investigator finds the richest Nation on the earth denying multitudes of her children any educational

opportunities and herding thousands upon thousands of others in dismal and insanitary hovels under the tutelage of wretchedly underpaid and proportionately ignorant, untrained, and negative teachers; finds hundreds of communities able to provide luxurious educational facilities with almost no effort, while thousands upon thousands, despite heroic exertions, can not provide even the barest necessities."¹

How long is the United States willing to keep equality of educational opportunity among its unrealized ideals?

¹U. S. Bureau of Education Bulletin, 1922, No. 6, page 54.

WHAT SHOULD A COURSE IN CLOTHING INCLUDE IN HIGH SCHOOLS? IN NORMAL SCHOOLS?

*In which clothing is interpreted in its broader
modern aspects*

THE name High School may mean either the old four year high school or the high school organized on the new basis of the three-three plan, the junior and senior high school.

In planning a course of clothing each organization has a somewhat different situation to cope with. A course can be planned much more wisely for the six-year high school than for the four-year, since in the junior and senior high school we have control of more of the years of work and can proceed more logically and psychologically. Whereas, in the four-year type we are not certain of the previous preparation or training of the children.

The most important factor which should influence us in planning the content of a clothing course is the aim of the girl. Based on their aims the high school girls may be divided into these most common groups:

1. Those preparing for college or normal school who take the Academic or Classical course.
2. Those preparing to enter the business