

# THE VIRGINIA TEACHER

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## EDUCATIONAL COMMENT

### RECENT FIGURES ON REDUCED SCHOOL COSTS

The extent which schools have cut costs to meet losses in income due to the depression is revealed in the annual study of "Per Capita Costs in City Schools, 1932-1933," recently released by the Federal Office of Education.

Reports from 299 typical cities scattered throughout the nation disclose reductions in per-pupil cost running as high as forty-one per cent in a single year.

Per-pupil costs dropped between fifteen and thirty per cent in one-third of the cities in a single year's time.

The average decrease for all cities for the year is twenty-two per cent.

The average total cost of educating a child for the year 1933 in 299 cities was \$87.65. This compares with \$113.03 for 1932.

Statistics separately organized for four groups of cities ranging from small cities to cities of over 100,000 population show the shift from 1932 to 1933.

In Group 1 cities, 100,000 population and up, average per-pupil cost dropped from \$118.61 to \$91.69. Cities which have a per-

pupil cost close to this average are: Somerville, Mass., \$92.81; Indianapolis, Ind., \$90.60; Grand Rapids, Mich., \$90.18; St. Paul, Minn., \$89.46; Des Moines, Iowa, \$89.04; Minneapolis, Minn., \$89.02.

In Group 2 cities, 30,000 to 100,000 population, the drop was from \$95.55 to \$80.82. Cities which have a per-pupil cost close to this average are: San Bernardino, Calif., \$83.32; Cedar Rapids, Iowa, \$82.72; Chester, Pa., \$82.47; Lansing, Mich., \$81.31; Saginaw, Mich., \$81.31.

In Group 3 cities, 10,000 to 30,000 population, the drop was from \$79.06 to \$68.02. Cities which have a per-pupil cost close to this average are: Fremont, Nebr., \$69.05; Logansport, Ind., \$68.47; Hastings, Nebr., \$67.81; Stevens Point, Wis., \$67.36; Oskaloosa, Iowa, \$67.00.

In Group 4 cities, 2,500 to 10,000 population, the drop was from \$84.90 to \$73.23. Cities which have a per-pupil cost close to this average are: Jerome, Ariz., \$74.12; Rockville, Conn., \$73.78; Columbus, Ind., \$73.57; LaGrande, Ore., \$73.16; Chehalis, Wash., \$70.63.

How widespread the movement to reduce costs has been is shown by the fact that 96 per cent of the cities show a decrease in per-pupil cost between 1932 and 1933.

Largest decreases for cities in the various groups are: Group 1, San Antonio, Tex., 36.1; Akron, Ohio, 33.4; New Bedford, Mass., 30.9; El Paso, Tex., 29.7; Grand Rapids, Mich., 27.8. Group 2, Kokomo, Ind., 34.9; Kenosha, Wis., 34.3; Kalamazoo, Mich., 33.7; Jackson, Mich., 31.6; Shreveport, La., 31.0. Group 3, Great Falls, Mont., 41.7; Selma, Ala., 34.3; Sedalia, Mo., 33.0; Findlay, Ohio, 32.2; Iron Mountain, Mich., 30.5; Group 4, Jerome, Ariz., 36.7; Helena, Ark., 36.6; Andalusia, Ala., 34.4; Bisbee, Ariz., 32.8; Downers Grove, Ill., 31.2.

The averages for all four groups are lower than for all years going back to 1924 when statistics for a selected group of cities were first collected.

The study of per-pupil cost does not indi-



cate in detail what factors are operating to bring about such extensive decreases.

United States Commissioner of Education George F. Zook points out, however, that other reports to the Federal Office of Education show a variety of influences at work; decreases in teachers' salaries; dismissal of teachers with a consequent increase in the size of classes of those teachers still on the rolls; absorption of heavy increases in enrolment on high school levels in much larger classes; reductions in expenditures for supplies; and dismissal of supervisors and special teachers.

"It is evident from this study," declares Commissioner Zook, "that schools have undertaken heroic measures to adapt themselves to the exigencies of the depression. Whether these reductions represent economies or whether they represent a reduction in the service which schools should render to children is an open question. Some of the reduction has come from true economies in which approximately equivalent service is provided at lower cost. On the other hand, the reductions represent in part a lowering of the standards of education in American cities."

Other studies indicate that the current expense for operating American schools, both city and rural, in 1933-34 is approximately \$368,000,000 less than in 1930.

#### THE CALL OF THE HOME TOWN

What this country needs is not by any means fewer educated men and women to serve it through the learned professions and otherwise, but the distribution of the available supply of these educated men and women where there is greatest public need for their service. It is particularly true that in the field of medicine there are large areas which are quite insufficiently supplied with well-trained physicians and surgeons to care for the ordinary ailments of the population. It is partly because of the overcrowding of this class of persons in the cities and larger towns of the United

States that many of them have suffered so severely during the depression through which we have been passing for some four years past. There is probably no quick and certain answer to the question as to how the need for a wider and better distribution of the annual university production can be brought about, but that the question should be carefully studied, primarily from the standpoint of the general public interest, is quite certain.

NICHOLAS MURRAY BUTLER

#### THE READING TABLE

AN INTRODUCTION TO PHYSICAL EDUCATION. By Eugene W. Nixon and Frederick W. Cozens. Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders Company. 1934. Pp. 262. \$2.50.

The philosophy, purposes, and principles back of the "new conception" of physical education are drawn from points of view of many workers in this field. This book concisely interprets the ideas, aims, and objectives.

Students and teachers, as well as administrators interested in physical education as a profession, will find the selected and annotated references placed at the conclusion of each chapter of great value. They will be of especial help to students who wish to make an extended study of the principles, programs, and problems of physical education.

The chapter on Technic in Teaching Skills in Physical Education Activities gives hints to the teacher for helping the beginner in acquiring skills in big muscle activities and in guiding the learner to success.

The last thirty-six pages in the book are devoted to the professional outlook in physical education. The prospective teacher of physical education, we learn, must be far above the average individual in physical vigor and efficiency, and must be trained in an atmosphere that gives a broad outlook on the entire educative process.

D. L. S.