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PUBLIC SCHOOL COSTS IN U. S.

WHAT PUBLIC SCHOOLS COST

On each pupil enrolled in school in 1921-22 Wyoming spent for all school purposes \$133.70 and ranked first in the United States. Alabama spent only \$20.34 and ranked last of all the states. The rank of the other states is shown in an accompanying table based on information recently secured from the State Superintendents of Public Instruction of the respective states. We have been unable to get a reply from the Superintendent in Mississippi.

The table reveals the fact that public education is most expensive, per unit, in the western and middle western states. These states are sparsely populated, a condition which makes good schools, such as they usually have, expensive. Their per inhabitant wealth is large. Their recent outlay for modern buildings and the high salaries they pay teachers are other factors that go to explain the high cost of education in these states.

The eastern and urban states rank about mid-way. That is, the cost of public schools per child enrolled in school is neither very high nor very low. Such states, because of their density of population, are able to have the best of schools at a moderate cost per unit.

The southern states form a group at the end of the table, which is to be expected. While the South is fairly densely populated, the bulk of the people live in the country, the per inhabitant wealth is small, about one-third of the population is negro, and there is characteristic lack of willingness to tax ourselves for public education, or other public purposes. Most of the southern states have tight-fisted notions about taxation, even for the support of schools.

In North Carolina

The total cost of public schools in North Carolina in 1921-22 was \$21,649,695, distributed as follows: teaching, administration, operation and maintenance, \$15,530,808; outlay payments for new buildings, sites, and repairs, \$6,118,887. In other words the current cost of schools was about fifteen and one half million dollars. The expenditures for outlays come from bond sales largely, which bonds will be retired over a period of years. However, such outlay payments are included in the table of school costs for the year under consideration. The rank of North Carolina would be lower if outlay payments were omitted, because of our relatively large expenditure for new buildings.

Counting all expenditures for school purposes per pupil enrolled in school North Carolina ranked forty-second with \$27.39. This means that it cost only \$27.39 upon an average to send a child to public school for a full school year. If only the current cost of schools is considered, that is if we deduct the money put into new buildings and the like, it cost an average of \$20.60 per pupil enrolled in school to run the public schools of North Carolina. Thus it is seen that public education, when reduced to a unit basis is very inexpensive in North Carolina. It is impossible to conceive how a child could be educated at such a small cost, except on the community or cooperative tax basis. The average automobile license tag costs almost as much as it costs to send a child to school a full school year in North Carolina.

Wonderful progress has been made in public education in North Carolina. Expenditures for school purposes have mounted rapidly, and the impression has become general that we are supporting schools very generously. It is true that we have made remarkable progress, but we must not lose sight of the fact that we started at the very bottom in the support of public schools. We must not be contented with what has been accomplished because as a matter of fact we have only made a very creditable start. The job is only begun.

Let us get too boastful, or before we begin to complain about the tax burden for school support, it is well to compare our rank with that of other states. The net total expenditure for all school purposes, current and outlay

payments, in 1921-22 was only \$27.39 per child enrolled in school. If the cost of new buildings and grounds is omitted, the current cost of public education was only \$20.60. But including the cost of new buildings, the public schools of North Carolina cost only one-third as much per child enrolled in school as the average cost for all the states. In other words, on each child enrolled in school in the United States, an average of about eighty dollars is spent for all school purposes, while the average for North Carolina is \$27.39. If we spent three times as much on public education, 65 million dollars instead of 21 million dollars, we would be spending no more per pupil in school, or per inhabitant in the state, than the average now spent by all the states.

There are three main reasons for the cheapness of public education in this state: short school terms, 139 days upon an average in 1921-22; low annual salaries paid school teachers, \$720 a year for white teachers and \$413 for negro teachers, or an average of \$664 for all teachers, and third the relatively small investment in school buildings and equipment, in proportion to our school population.

Perhaps we rank better in schools than we do in school expenditures. We do not know about that, but we do know that whatever our rank is in the quality of schools, the cost of education is still comparatively very small in North Carolina, and it will have to be considerably larger before we will be able to speak of our schools and our roads with equal pride.—S. H. H., Jr.

WE DO NOT READ ENOUGH

From time to time we have printed facts showing how North Carolina compares with other states as a reading state. These studies have shown that North Carolina ranks very low in the percent of her inhabitants who subscribe to the leading magazines of the country.

The National Geographic Society has recently reported that only one out of every 485 people in North Carolina is a subscriber to the National Geographic, the best magazine of its kind in the world. North Carolina ranks forty-third in proportion of population to subscribers. All Northern, all Western and eight Southern states rank ahead of us. Because of our interest in education and science it would seem that we should have more readers of this as well as other worth-while magazines.

Daily Newspapers

In the percent of our people who take daily newspapers we again rank low. On June 16, 1922, the total circulation of daily newspapers in North Carolina was 188,781, or one paper for every 13.5 inhabitants. Only three states ranked below us in the number of inhabitants per daily newspaper. In Massachusetts there was one daily paper for every 1.9 inhabitants.

Public Libraries

In 1920, the latest date for which we have complete data, only one state, Arkansas, had fewer bound volumes in public libraries per 1000 population than North Carolina. We had 66 bound volumes in public libraries of all kinds for every 1000 inhabitants. New Hampshire had 1978 bound volumes for every thousand of her population. Perhaps it is in public libraries that our deficiency in facilities for reading is greatest. This condition is due to the fact that the great masses in this state live in the open country and in small towns. We lack a sufficient number of nucleating centers large enough to support public libraries, in order to rank well as a reader of books.

Traveling Libraries

There is only one efficient way to get books to the people under the population conditions that exist in North Carolina, and that is by establishing county-wide traveling libraries in every county in the state. The books must be taken to the people since the people do not live under conditions that enable them to have ready access to books.

The State has a package library service and it is doing splendid work. It is a good beginning but at best such

CAROLINA DRAMATICS

The Bureau of Community Drama of the University Extension Division was established to encourage the writing and production of original plays and pageants and to raise the standard of dramatic production throughout the state. The work has been received with so much enthusiasm and appreciation that it has seemed advisable to perfect a state-wide organization to co-ordinate the various activities. Thus the curtain goes up on THE CAROLINA DRAMATIC ASSOCIATION.

North Carolina is becoming known throughout the country for its interest in things dramatic and for its contributions to a real native literature. So far these achievements have been largely due to the work of The Carolina Playmakers of the University, yet it is felt that there is much talent throughout the state which should be developed and employed.

The services of Miss Ethel Theodora Rockwell, a dramatic director of wide experience, are available to schools, communities, and clubs. Where practicable she will direct the complete production of a play; or she will assist in the final preparations for a performance, rehearsals, stage settings, demonstration of make-up, and other problems of production. No charge is made for her services but the organization requesting these is expected to pay all traveling expenses and to provide entertainment. There is no fee for information and advice. In making application address: Frederick H. Koch, Director Bureau of Community Drama, University Extension Division, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

Two important features which the Bureau wishes to develop are a Dramatic Institute to be held in Chapel Hill April the 4th and 5th, and a Spring Festival Week throughout the state when all the clubs belonging to The Carolina Dramatic Association will stage in their respective communities an outdoor dramatic program.

Such are the beginnings of a real People's Theatre in North Carolina.

service can reach only relatively a few people.

We need a great state-wide traveling library service with a strong local unit in every county. With such a system the books would be interchangeable between the counties, allowing a maximum of reading service with a minimum outlay for books.

The mind develops by contact with other minds. Books, papers, and magazines are the connecting links. The mental development of our people is retarded because they do not have access to good literature. The traveling library, under North Carolina conditions, is the best way to get good literature into the homes of our country and small-town dwellers. Our children, especially, need access to books.

SHORT IN MEDICAL SCHOOLS

The Tri-State Medical Association is composed of the states of Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina. In these three states there are five medical schools, the two in North Carolina being two-year schools. All these are class A schools, and they enrolled in 1923 six hundred and seventy-seven men, one hundred and ninety of these being from states other than those in which the schools are placed, while on the other hand there are 497 men from these states enrolled as students in schools outside these three, or a total of 966 students from the three states enrolled in the medical schools of the country. In other words, only about fifty percent of students from these states are enrolled in medical schools in their own states. This figure is swol-

lem, of course, by the fact that North Carolina maintains no four-year school. North Carolina, with its two two-year schools, attracts twelve men from other states, and enrolls in other states 260. South Carolina, with one four-year school, attracts six from other states, and registers in other states 89. Virginia, with two four-year schools, attracts 172 and loses 130. About one-eighteenth of the students enrolled in medical schools of the country are from the three states which contain roughly just about the same proportion—that is, about one-eighth—of the country's population. On the other hand Virginia, with its two four-year schools, is the only one of these three states at present bearing its due share of the education of the medical students from the three states.

Shortage of Doctors

In the proportion, too, of practicing physicians to population, both the Carolinas are, with North Dakota, at the foot of the list of states. The figures for North Carolina are one physician to 1,133 population, and those for South Carolina are about the same. The situation in North Carolina is still further complicated by the fact that both its schools are two-year schools, and that it is altogether possible that, aside from difficulties that increasing enrollment in four-year schools all over the country will bring in locating men desiring to enter their third year from two-year schools, the two-year schools may, within the next fifteen or twenty years, find theories of medical education so altered that the two-year school as an independent unit may cease to exist. At present there is a rather sharp separation between the laboratory instruction of the first two years and the clinical instruction of the second two; a separation that, however, is gradually becoming blurred and may sooner or later give way to a more unified type of curriculum in which clinical applications are taught along with laboratory work from the beginning. There seems to be a growing dissatisfaction with the present medical curriculum, and a growing tendency to move in precisely this direction. Should this tendency prevail, the two-year school without hospital facilities would be in the end as unable to maintain itself as was the old type of didactic school as the importance of hospital contacts came to be realized.

A Four-Year Medical School

We at the University of North Carolina, keeping all these facts in mind, have felt that we should press for the expansion of the present two-year school into a four-year school at the earliest possible moment, and we propose to continue in our efforts toward this end. A territory which, like these three states, is only caring for half of its medical students in its own schools, is certainly not overloaded with facilities for medical education, and should the two-year North Carolina schools some day be forced to discontinue, the situation will become very difficult.

To sum it all up, it seems clear that medical education has succeeded without undue disarrangement of conditions, considering the country as a whole, in placing itself on a basis which enables medical schools today to deal with a group of men with sufficient preliminary training to profit by thoroughly scientific methods of instruction in the modern sense of the term. It is now the medical curriculum itself, rather than standards, on which attention is becoming focused, and it is without doubt in this region that the next great advance in medical education is due to come.—The concluding remarks of President H. W. Chase in his recent address before the Tri-State Medical Society.

A LAND OF CHILDREN

One of the most interesting facts that has come to our attention in recent years is that although North Carolina ranks thirteenth in total population, there are only six states that have more children enrolled in their public schools. We do not think that this is due to the fact that our enrollment rate is high, but rather it is the result of an excessive birth rate, and our large number of children of school ages in proportion to our population. Having the highest birth rate in the United States, a rate which two years ago was thirty percent above the average for the United States, means that we have more children of school ages in proportion to our population than any other state. Twenty-nine percent of our total population was enrolled in public graded schools in 1921-22. Truly North Carolina is a land of children.

However, in school attendance on enrollment we show up miserably. Of the children enrolled only 72.5 percent were in daily attendance and attendance was poorer in only ten states, mainly southern. A very large part of the money spent on public schools in North Carolina is absolutely wasted because 27.5 percent of the school children are absent every day upon an average. Evidently our compulsory attendance law is misnamed.

THE COST OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

Per Pupil Enrolled in School 1921-22

The following table showing the total school expenditures per pupil enrolled in school is based on information secured from the Superintendents of Public Instruction of the respective states.

In 1921-22 Wyoming spent for all school purposes an average of \$133.70 on each pupil enrolled in her public schools. The average cost of public education per pupil enrolled was smallest in Alabama where it amounted to only \$20.34.

North Carolina spent a total of \$21,649,695 on public schools, and she had enrolled in school 768,698 pupils. The total expenditure averaged \$27.39 per pupil enrolled, and it was less in only five states. The average cost in North Carolina per pupil enrolled in school is about one-third the average for all the states, and one-fifth the average for Wyoming.

A most interesting fact is that North Carolina ranks 13th in total population, yet only six states had more children enrolled in school in 1921-22. They were New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Illinois, Texas, and California.

S. H. Hobbs, Jr.

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| Rank | State | School Expenditure per pupil enrolled | Rank | State | School Expenditure per pupil enrolled |
|------|---------------|---------------------------------------|------|----------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1 | Wyoming | \$133.70 | 25 | New Hampshire | \$72.83 |
| 2 | Arizona | 125.80 | 26 | Michigan | 71.81 |
| 3 | Nevada | 124.44 | 27 | Idaho | 71.45 |
| 4 | Montana | 123.81 | 28 | Rhode Island | 70.09 |
| 5 | South Dakota | 116.80 | 29 | Vermont | 66.22 |
| 6 | New Jersey | 114.95 | 30 | New Mexico | 65.27 |
| 7 | California | 109.77 | 31 | Delaware | 63.73 |
| 8 | Minnesota | 106.08 | 32 | Maryland | 60.25 |
| 9 | New York | 103.60 | 33 | Louisiana | 57.17 |
| 10 | Iowa | 101.30 | 34 | Missouri | 55.00 |
| 11 | Oregon | 100.86 | 35 | Maine | 54.17 |
| 12 | Indiana | 99.17 | 36 | West Virginia | 51.60 |
| 13 | Ohio | 95.06 | 37 | Oklahoma | 47.83 |
| 14 | Washington | 94.67 | 38 | Florida | 41.05 |
| 15 | Nebraska | 93.35 | 39 | Virginia | 36.59 |
| 16 | Wisconsin | 91.85 | 40 | Texas | 30.52 |
| 17 | Connecticut | 90.06 | 41 | Kentucky | 30.00 |
| 18 | North Dakota | 89.16 | 42 | North Carolina | 27.39 |
| 19 | Massachusetts | 87.07 | 43 | Tennessee | 24.65 |
| 20 | Utah | 84.82 | 44 | South Carolina | 24.10 |
| 21 | Illinois | 83.77 | 45 | Arkansas | 21.27 |
| 22 | Kansas | 81.48 | 46 | Georgia | 21.10 |
| 23 | Colorado | 75.16* | 47 | Alabama | 20.34 |
| 24 | Pennsylvania | 75.00 | | Mississippi | no data. |

* 1920