

North Carolina Giving its Country Children Poorest Chance in America, Except New Mexico

THE COUNTRY boys and girls of North Carolina to-day have a poorer chance for an education than children anywhere else in the United States except New Mexico. That is the fact—the startling, alarming fact—brought to light by an official diagram just published by the United States Government. Our city schools, the schools for city boys and girls in North Carolina, are about up to the American average; but for our country boys and girls, as this startling official table shows, the average school term in North Carolina is yet the

lowest in the American Union with the single exception of wild and woolly New Mexico. Only New Mexico, the land of Indians and Mexican “greasers,” saves us from being at the foot of the whole list.

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And there is no excuse for such a condition—absolutely no excuse.

“Oh, well,” some one may say, “of course, North Carolina is giving its country boys and girls a school term of only 93 days, while some other States are giving 170 and 180 days; but the explanation is that the other States are so thickly populated. We haven’t so many people per square mile, and besides, we have to support schools for two races.”

But this explanation will not do, brethren; it will not hold water.

New Mexico with less than 3 people per square mile, furnishes practically as long a school term as we furnish with 45 people per square mile.

Of the fifteen States in the Union providing the longest school term of all for their country boys and girls, 157 days or more—nine are States which have a smaller population per square mile than ninety-three-day North Carolina. Both California and Nebraska, with an average population per square mile of only 15, less than one-third that of North Carolina, are giving their country boys and girls over 170-days’ school term, while North Carolina, with an average population per square mile three times as great, and a white population over twice as great, is giving only ninety-three days’ school term.

Or there is Washington with less than half as many people per square mile as either North or South Carolina, which nevertheless furnishes her country children 164 days against our ninety-three days.

Moreover, Utah, with only one-fifth as many people per square mile as there are white people alone per square mile in the Carolinas, has a 157-day rural term against our ninety-three days—and yet we think ourselves so much better and so much better civilized than those “heathen” Mormons!

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No, friends, there is no excuse for us. There is nothing to do except first to confess that we have sinned against our own flesh and blood, and then proceed to bring forth fruits meet for repentance.

We have increased our average school term a month and more since 1900, but we are still the foot of the list—along with half-breed New Mexico.

A six months’ school term, even if it must come through a five-cent increase in the State levy to be paid out through the State Treasury (as already advocated by the Farmers’ Union and the Teachers’ Assembly) is imperative.

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It is no time for straddlers. There are a lot of people who will tell you they are in favor a six-months’ school term for all country boys and girls

“if” so-and-so. The only man worth a chew of tobacco in this fight is the man who is absolutely and unqualifiedly for the six months’ term no matter what else happens, without any “ifs” and “ands,” and without any strings whatsoever tied to the proposition.

There are other needed reforms, but we must let them stand on their merits. Other interests have had their way long enough in North Carolina, regardless of what happened to the country boys and girls, and the farmers propose now to demand that the country boys and girls shall have their way regardless of what happens to the other things.

We must all join together in demanding that the Legislature of North Carolina shall not adjourn next spring until it has made absolute and unqualified provision to furnish at least a six-months’ school term for every farm boy and girls in our State, no matter what else happens or doesn’t happen. To no worthier civic task can we dedicate ourselves this New Year’s day of 1913.

CLARENCE POE,

Editor The Progressive Farmer.

1. Rhode Island—190.2 days.
2. Connecticut—181.2 days.
3. Maryland—179.8 days.
4. New York—178.6 days.
5. California—178.0 days.
6. New Jersey—176.7 days.
7. Wisconsin—173.0 days.
8. Nebraska—170.5 days.
9. Iowa—168.6 days.
10. Washington—164.0 days.
11. South Dakota—163.8 days.
12. Michigan—161.6 days.
13. Massachusetts—160.7 days.
14. Kansas—160.0 days.
15. Utah—157.0 days.
16. Delaware—157.0 days.
17. Ohio—155.0 days.
18. Illinois—154.8 days.
19. New Hampshire—149.7 days.
20. Pennsylvania—149.4 days.
21. Vermont—147.0 days.
22. North Dakota—143.2 days.
23. Maine—142.5 days.
24. Georgia—141.5 days.
25. Montana—138.5 days.
26. Missouri—137.7 days.
27. Wyoming—136.0 days.
28. Minnesota—132.5 days.
29. Nevada—131.8 days.
30. Mississippi—131.0 days.
31. Virginia—130.5 days.
32. Indiana—130.3 days.
33. Oklahoma—128.5 days.
34. West Virginia—127.5 days.
35. Louisiana—124.1 days.
36. Colorado—123.8 days.
37. Tennessee—122.0 days.
38. Texas—119.2 days.
39. Oregon—118.7 days.
40. Idaho—112.5 days.
41. Kentucky—110.6 days.
42. Alabama—108.5 days.
43. Arizona—105.0 days.
44. Florida—100.1 days.
45. Arkansas—98.0 days.
46. South Carolina—94.5 days.
47. North Carolina—93.3 days.
48. New Mexico—90.1 days.

LENGTH OF RURAL SCHOOL TERM IN THE VARIOUS STATES AS SHOWN BY DIAGRAM JUST ISSUED BY THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT—See Where North Carolina Stands and Do Your Part to Give the Country Boys and Girls at Least a Six Months School Term