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## Proposed Qualifications For Custodians in Certain Kansas Schools

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PROPOSED QUALIFICATIONS FOR CUSTODIANS IN  
CERTAIN KANSAS SCHOOLS

being

A thesis presented to the Graduate Faculty  
of the Fort Hays Kansas State College in  
partial fulfillment of the requirements for  
the Degree of Master of Science

by

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Date May 12, 1949.

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To my wife, who made this study possible by her many sacrifices, this manuscript is dedicated.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. INTRODUCTION	
Introductory Statement . . . . .	1
The Problem . . . . .	1
Definition and Limits of the Problem . . . . .	1
Review of Related Research . . . . .	2
Objectives . . . . .	9
II. REQUIREMENTS OTHER THAN IN KANSAS	
States . . . . .	10
Cities . . . . .	12
III. THE STATUS OF REQUIREMENTS IN KANSAS	
In the State as a Whole . . . . .	15
Cities . . . . .	17
The Survey and its Findings . . . . .	17
Personal Status . . . . .	18
Good Housekeeping . . . . .	27
Building and Grounds . . . . .	30
Specific Qualities . . . . .	32
Salary Schedule . . . . .	39
Proposed Qualifications . . . . .	43
IV. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	
Summary . . . . .	47
Conclusions . . . . .	47

CHAPTER	PAGE
recommendations . . . . .	49
A PLEA . . . . .	50
PUBLIC WRATH . . . . .	56

## LIST OF TABLES

TABLE	PAGE
I. The North Central Association States and their Legal Qualifications for Custodians . . . . .	10
II. Health Factors of the Custodian . . . . .	19
III. Temperate Habits of Custodians . . . . .	20
IV. Custodian Age Group . . . . .	21
V. Citizenship of Custodians . . . . .	22
VI. Educational Level . . . . .	22
VII. Marital Status . . . . .	23
VIII. Cooperativeness . . . . .	24
IX. Required Custodial Reports . . . . .	25
X. Custodial Personnel Factors . . . . .	26
XI. The Per Cent of Superintendents Favoring Good House- keeping Duties . . . . .	28
XII. The Per Cent of Superintendents that Believe Good House- keeping Duties are Necessary and the Time Specified . . .	29
XIII. Maintaining Buildings and Grounds . . . . .	31
XIV. In-Service Training . . . . .	32
XV. The Per Cent of the 110 Superintendents Considering Certain Specific Qualifications for Selection and Requirements of Custodians . . . . .	33
XVI. Disability Distribution . . . . .	35
XVII. The Maximum Number of Rooms for which a Custodian Should Care . . . . .	36

TABLE

PAGE

XVIII. The Distribution of Custodians on the Number of Years  
of Service in the Present Position . . . . . 37

XIX. A Distribution Showing Who Selected the Custodians  
in the One Hundred Ten Schools . . . . . 39

XX. Superintendents' Recommendations on Salary Schedules  
for Custodians . . . . . 41

XXI. Distribution of Salaries for Custodians in Kansas  
Schools . . . . . 42

## CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

In recent years there has been much improvement in the quality of school buildings, equipment, and supplies. Qualifications of administrators, supervisors, teachers, and almost all other employees have been advanced. Requirements and standards for custodians have begun to show a trend upward. In the last quarter of a century, janitor-engineer schools have been held to raise the standards of custodians in the proper maintenance of the school buildings and grounds.

The position of the custodian in previous years has often been given to an aged person, to a cripple, to a political friend, to some incompetent person, or to anyone who could be persuaded to take it. Many of these custodians do not have a broad idea as to the duties of a custodian. As a result they do not do any more than is absolutely necessary to maintain a minimum of requirements.

For several years the writer has been a principal in the elementary schools of four different communities in Western Kansas, observing the work of at least nine custodians in these buildings. He has been able to observe, in a general way, the standards of maintenance that were being met in the high schools of these communities. A need for more competent work was displayed.

From this observance and in courses in School Administration the following problem was decided upon, namely: Proposed Qualifications



for Custodians in Certain Kansas Schools.

Since all of the schools of the state would be difficult to cover in the limited time provided, it was suggested that a limitation be placed upon schools of certain communities. Therefore only the communities in Kansas with a population between 1000 and 10,000 were to be contacted. The Kansas Government Journal<sup>1</sup> was used to check the census of these communities. One hundred thirty-two communities were selected.

Review of Related Research

Although the importance of the custodian has long been recognized by school administrators, the problems pertaining to the selection, supervision, and training of custodians have not received the consideration commensurate with their significance. The following statements explain this:

In any administrative organization every person who contributes to the carrying forward of the program of work to be done is important. It is peculiarly true of a system of public schools that the work of the janitor-engineer contributes to the efficiency of every other person who works in the school system. If the heating and ventilating system is not operated effectively children and teachers suffer as a result. The quality of work done will certainly be diminished if maladjustments are permitted. . . . The good-will of the janitor-engineer who recognizes the importance of his work may prove to be a most significant factor in the morale of the school.<sup>2</sup>

If he keeps the school too warm, the children and teachers

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1. Kansas Government Journal, XXXV (January, 1949), pp. 45-52.

2. C. E. Reeves, and H. S. Ganders, School Building Management (New York: Bureau of Publishers, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1928), Introduction, p. v.

become drowsy and the best-trained of teachers is at a serious disadvantage. If he fails to keep the school clean and sanitary, disease may spread to the entire community. If he does not use proper methods of maintenance the taxpayers are subject to needless expense.

Modern schools and trained teachers have been provided, but relatively little has been done to help the janitor with his problems, and yet they affect the well-being of the entire community.<sup>3</sup>

Another important feature of custodial service often overlooked by administrators is the relationship between the custodian and the pupils.

It is often quite truthfully said that the most important individual about any large school building, after the principal, no one has more influence over the physical well-being of the children in the school than the janitor. It is he who under-heats or over-heats the classrooms, controls the ventilation, cleans the building properly or does not, and keeps the toilet facilities in proper order if they are so kept. He is often a potent influence in the discipline of the school; he knows the good and the poor teachers of the school as few other persons do; and he is often an influential factor in the formation of neighborhood opinion as to the school and the principal.<sup>4</sup>

With all the importance that his position appears to carry, he is the only official in the school who is not required to have any training for his work in a large number of schools.

There is a definite need for the improvement in the qualification of custodians. Ellwood P. Cubberly explains this clearly as he says:

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3. John T. Morris, "A Survey of Custodial Service in Selected Schools of the Panhandle of Texas," Denton, Texas. Unpublished Master's Thesis, North Texas State Teachers College, 1940, p. 1, quoting Leslie W. Malone, Keeping the Schoolhouse Clean, Bulletin 111, Advance page.

4. Ellwood P. Cubberly, The Principal and His School (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1923), p. 209.

In most cases, though, the janitor, man or woman, is just an ordinary individual, unskilled in any line of work, ignorant of sanitary standards and educational needs, sometimes grouchy, sometimes pig headed, but usually quite human, amenable to kind treatment, and willing to do about what seems to him as fair and reasonable for the pay he receives, and not much more. . . . A young man is usually better than an old man, and a married man than one who is single. . . . Janitors, especially men janitors, certainly are not born, but must be made. . . .

It is his duty to assist the principal with discipline, especially as it relates to the basement and toilets. If he understands children he can be very helpful. He is a sort of chore boy for all the teachers. . . . He must work in the dirt of the basement, and yet, if summoned to a teacher's room or to the principal's office, he is expected to present a reasonably good appearance. . . . The position is not an easy one to fill satisfactorily, the janitor often receives little education or training from the principal, and in all is probably more often maligned than understood.<sup>5</sup>

If a business man considered employing an individual whose job was of the same importance to his business as the custodian is to the school, he would be seriously interested in the qualifications of such a person. In our schools, however, there is generally little or no system for selection of custodians, and frequently a person lacking training, references, and necessary qualifications is given the job. Further account should be taken of this problem as discussed by Cubberly.

Successful school engineering already requires technical and skillful handling of complicated machinery. . . .

The rapid evolution of janitorial-engineering service from comparatively simple, non-skilled work to that of the skilled and technical type has come so unobtrusively that school authorities are as yet vaguely aware of the change. . . . Boards of education, superintendents of schools, principals, teachers, pupils, and the community at large have not come to a full realization of the amount of work and the technical knowledge and skill that are involved in the care of a

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5. Ibid., pp. 210-212.

modern school building. As a consequence, schools often employ janitors who are untrained and sometimes even unfitted by physical or mental incapacity for the existing and responsible duties which such work involves.

It is natural that the first thought of school officials should be to secure adequate building facilities in which to carry on modern school programs. The next consideration surely ought to be in their operation and care.

Janitors are responsible school officials as well as workmen. The time has passed, with the passing of the little frame schoolhouse, when any unfortunate cripple, moron, or aged man whom industry cannot use can be expected adequately to fill the responsible position of janitor or engineer, or even assistant to such officials. . . . Involved in the janitor's responsibility is the health and safety of the school. . . .

The work of the school janitor will be reflected, to a large degree, in the number of cases of sickness, physical defect, nervous disorders, colds and fatigue prevalent among school children in his building. It is common knowledge that dirt and disease are closely associated.

The custodian often serves as a model to the pupil, and consequently should be of good moral character. He also needs to know how to manage a school building and keep records.

The janitor's personal influence upon children in the elementary school is scarcely less than that of the teacher. He is often the only "school man" with whom elementary pupils have contact. . . .

Ideals are largely formed by the experiences and contacts of the child. . . .

It is important that school janitors and engineers be of good character, willing to work, well mannered, of good disposition, clean and dressed neatly, of a fair education with some special training for their work. Some, at least, should have had previous experiences in the management of school buildings. . . .

It is important that janitors and engineers know how to

keep necessary records and make necessary reports; that they know how to care for the school grounds and walks both in summer and in winter; and that they know how to make minor repairs about the school building.<sup>7</sup>

That custodians frequently fail to measure up to expectations is evident from surveys that have been made in the field. Among the most notable of these is that made by N. L. Engelhardt and published in the Report of the Subcommittee on the School Plant of the White House Conference.

Janitors who push sweepings of the school room under radiators, who neglect dusting and fail to scrub and clean properly, who keep dogs in basements, and who leave the buildings at 3:30 P. M., are not satisfactory to a principal interested in the wholesomeness of his school plant.

When fresh air inlets are clogged with dirt and filth and plenum chambers are used as storage rooms for mops, brooms, dust cloths, and the like, one wonders what excuse can be advanced for such misuse of the provisions that have been made for the health of school children. Dirty window panes, dust laden walls and furniture, basements stored with worn-out equipment, and toilets in the most filthy and degrading conditions, cannot be excused in any school system.

Although school buildings may not conform to desirable standards of construction, there is no excuse for dirty walls or corridors, foul smelling and unclean toilets, closets filled with discarded materials as well as supplies to be utilized, and floors spotted with oil. Many janitors do not even comprehend of what their ventilating system consists, are unaware of the importance of keeping air intake chambers clean and wholesome, and entirely lack standards of cleanliness.

Gymnasiums are dirty and ill kept, shower rooms are unbelievably dirty, room temperatures invariably too high, window shades torn and missing. With an occasional exception, it may be said that there is evidence of absolute neglect of the sanitation of schools.<sup>8</sup>

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7. Ibid., pp. 3-5.

8. White House Conference on Child Health and Protection, Report of the Subcommittee on the School Plant, Section IIIC, (Unpublished), quoting J. F. Rogers, The School Custodian (United States Department of the Interior, Office of Education, Bulletin, 1938, No. 2, p. 3.

The number of studies dealing with custodial service has been rather limited, and in light of the importance of such service to schools and the educational system in general, this condition is difficult to explain. However, it is to C. E. Reeves, who wrote the first book on custodial service, that we owe the real beginning of a more serious and analytical attempt to investigate and scientifically establish standards for this field of service. In his introduction says:

In spite of its importance, studies of school janitor service have been few, and, as a rule, meager. The few studies that have taken account of the janitor's work have stopped with a classification of jobs constituting janitor service. . . .<sup>9</sup>

Reeves made a quality-of-result analysis and a time-and motion study both having to do with specific jobs as performed by the custodian. This analysis, he believes, would contribute to the solution of such problems as: a. Child health; b. Care of school property; c. Maximum use of the school plant; d. Salary schedule for janitors; e. Janitorial cost accounting; f. Amount of janitorial service required; g. Selection of janitorial personnel; h. Rating of janitors; i. Training courses for janitors; j. Rules and regulations for janitors; k. Supervision of janitors; l. Guide to janitors and their supervisors; m. Work schedules for janitors; n. Appreciation of janitor service.<sup>10</sup>

The significance of appropriate janitor training is recognized by Reeves in the following:

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9. John T. Morris, op. cit., p. 5, quoting C. E. Reeves, An Analysis of Janitor Service in Elementary Schools, No. 167, p. 5.

10. Ibid., p. 6, quoting Reeves, p. 182.

Womrath, in 1922, in an address before the National Association of Public School Business Officials described an important contribution to janitor training. This contribution is a laboratory course of training for school janitors which has been successfully worked out and used in Minneapolis.<sup>11</sup>

From 1917 to 1928 Strayer, Engelhardt, et al.<sup>12</sup> made a number of school surveys including Atlanta, Georgia; Port Arthur, Texas; St. Paul Minnesota; Stamford, Connecticut; Tampa, Florida; and Watertown, New York. Part of these surveys brought out certain custodial problems which turned attention upon the need for janitorial standards. Thus, we see that Engelhardt, Reeves, and Womrath made extensive studies in this field, and formulated standards which continue to serve as criteria for numerous surveys.

In 1928 another forward step was taken when Reeves and Ganders became joint authors of a book that to date is the most important book available dealing entirely with custodial service. The book was written with the purpose of aiding school administrators and custodians in the management and performance of building service. For the most part, the work is given over to ways and means of handling specific jobs about the building. However, the first three chapters are devoted to the personnel and management of school janitorial engineering service. These three chapters furnish additional material standards useful in collecting and interpreting the data found in the present survey.

Thus, it can be seen that there is dire need for raising the

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11. Ibid., p. 7, quoting Reeves, p. 9.

12. Morris, op. cit., p. 7, quoting G. D. Strayer, N. L. Engelhardt, et al., Problems in Educational Administration.

qualifications of custodians in the public schools in order to insure proper maintenance of today's school plants equipped with intricate networks of electrical and other expensive equipment.

### Objectives

The purpose of this study is to aid the administrators of schools in the formulation of a more progressive policy concerning custodial service. Some of the specific objectives contributing to a realization of the aims are:

1. To determine to what extent selected schools of the State of Kansas responded to the survey on custodial qualifications in relation to the five divisions of the survey.
  - a. Personal status
  - b. Good housekeeping
  - c. Buildings and Grounds
  - d. Specific qualities
  - e. Salary schedule
2. To propose recommendations that may be of value in improving custodial service in the public schools.



## CHAPTER II

## REQUIREMENTS IN STATES OTHER THAN KANSAS

## A. States

Letters were sent to all states other than Kansas in the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools to find what qualifications were required of custodians in each of these states. Since the Association includes twenty states this should be an equivalent representation of the entire United States. A summary of replies to this inquiry is shown in Table I.

TABLE I. THE NORTH CENTRAL ASSOCIATION STATES AND THEIR LEGAL QUALIFICATIONS FOR CUSTODIANS

States	State Statutes	Individual Districts Requirements	Have Training Schools for Janitors	Recommended by State Dept. of Education	Literature Sent on State Programs
Arizona	None	Yes	. . .	. . .	. . .
Arkansas	None	. . .	. . .	. . .	Work Manual
Colorado	None	Yes	. . .	. . .	. . .
Illinois	None	Yes	Yes	. . .	Tr.School
Indiana	Some	Yes	. . .	Yes	. . .
Iowa	None	Yes	Yes	. . .	. . .
Michigan	None	Yes	. . .	. . .	. . .
Minnesota	None	Yes	Minneapolis only	. . .	. . .
Missouri	None	Yes	Yes	. . .	Tr.School
Montana	None	Yes	. . .	. . .	. . .
Nebraska	None	Yes	. . .	. . .	. . .
New Mexico	None	Yes	. . .	. . .	. . .
North Dakota	None	Yes	. . .	. . .	. . .
Ohio *	None	Yes	. . .	. . .	. . .
Oklahoma	None	Yes	. . .	. . .	. . .
South Dakota	None	Yes	. . .	. . .	. . .
West Virginia	None	Yes	. . .	. . .	School Law
Wisconsin	None	Yes	. . .	. . .	. . .
Wyoming	None	Yes	. . .	. . .	. . .

\*Ohio requires a license for engineers handling steam boilers.

Table I shows that eighteen of the nineteen states have no legal requirements. One, Indiana, has some qualifications recommended by the State Department of Education. All of the states that gave any information on the subject stated that the individual districts set their own requirements as well as selecting the custodians. Several mentioned the fact that the larger cities or communities set up standards which custodians must meet in order to qualify for the position in their schools.

Some of the states reported that there were training schools for custodians held during the summer months. These were Colorado, Illinois, Iowa, Missouri, and West Virginia.

Arkansas sent a Janitor's Work Manual compiled by the State Department of Education. This is no doubt supplied to all schools as an aid to custodians. Missouri sent a copy of a program of last summer's training school held for custodians. West Virginia sent a set of State School Laws and also had C. H. Archer send a bulletin compiled by himself and entitled The School Custodian. As an introduction Archer has this message for the custodian:

This handbook is a tool for janitors or school custodians. Take time to become familiar with its contents. Then keep it at hand for reference. It will help you to do your part in having a more attractive and cleaner building. You hold a very important position, one even more important than you realized heretofore, and it is hoped that by studying this manual you will take more pride in caring for the valuable school property which has been entrusted to your care.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Archer, C. H., The School Custodian (Princeton, West Virginia: Mercer County Schools), Introduction page.

This bulletin offers good instructions for any custodian.

### B. Cities

Inquiry was made from several cities outside of the State of Kansas. These cities were of different sizes ranging from small second class cities to first class cities. The best information received was from Minneapolis, Minnesota. From there a pamphlet, compiled in 1935, was sent concerning selection and rating of custodians.<sup>2</sup> This appears to be a good source of information on how the larger cities select and train custodians.

In this pamphlet, methods are given which relate how custodians are selected put on probation, and promoted.

In the selection of custodians the following characteristics are considered for rating by the Minneapolis school system and are recommended for other schools. These factors are dependents, home ownership, insurance, church attendance, motive, appearance, cheerfulness, physical fitness, hearing, speech, voice, courteousness, friendliness, sincerity, tact and poise, dignity, and age.

After the men have been rated, the number of men needed are chosen and put on probation for a specific period of time, six months or a year are suggested, during which time they are under almost constant observation. During the probationary period each man can be trained for the work he will

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2. Carroll F. Reed, and George P. Womrath, Selection of and Rating of Men for Public School Janitorial-Engineering Service (Minneapolis: Board of Education, 1935).

do in his daily routine after he becomes a permanent employee. These men are under observation for the following qualities: dependability, judgment, tactfulness, courtesy, responsibility, confidence, temper, conversation, interest, orderliness, learning, understanding, supervisory needs, team work, effort, physical aptitude, physical fitness, personal appearance, and habits. If he proves satisfactory on these ratings he is usually put on the pay roll as a permanent employee.

Records and ratings are kept of men selected and records and ratings are kept of those on probation. Along with these are a list of further characteristics which are rated for the purpose of giving promotion to custodians at later periods. These are loyalty, dependability, leadership, managerial ability, initiative, disposition, tactfulness, character, judgment, success in winning confidence, success in developing good help, neatness, housekeeping, engineering licenses, and seniority.

File cards of the ratings of each man are kept and when a promotion is available then the man with the highest rating will get first preference. This is a very good plan to use where you have a corps of custodians as employees. However, in a school where only one custodian is employed, it is still desirable that he has the characteristics mentioned in the preceding paragraph.

In Lincoln, Nebraska, they endeavor to get men and women between the ages of 21 and 45. Retirement at the age of 65 is compulsory. Those employed must pass a physical examination and no one is accepted with any serious ailments or defects.

From Grand Island, Nebraska, came a report that they had no

specified list of qualifications, although anyone applying for employment was required to fill an application blank and have a personal interview to determine employment. Younger men were preferred, but due to the shortage of labor since the war period this standard has been difficult to maintain.

Another community of smaller size, Scotts Bluff, Nebraska, writes that it has no specified qualifications for custodians. However, applicants are interviewed by the Chief Engineer, the Superintendent of Schools, and if possible, the Principal. Selection was based on their findings.

This shows that larger cities usually have more stringent qualifications for custodians than smaller cities.

## CHAPTER III

## THE STATUS OF REQUIREMENTS IN KANSAS

## A. In the State as a Whole

In checking the Statutes of Kansas no law provides for any legal qualifications for custodians in the state. Writing to the State Department of Education for information brought an answer citing the Kansas State Board of Vocational Education as the best place to seek information on custodians. A letter was directed to this department asking for information on the qualifications of custodians. From this department a pamphlet was received under this title "The Story of Kansas Janitor-Engineer Schools 1927 to 1938", which had been conducted by the Kansas State Board of Vocational Education under the direction of C. M. Miller. Laurence Parker compiled the material.

This pamphlet is a story of the janitor-engineer schools that had been held in Kansas, the first one being held on December 12-16, 1927, at Pittsburg. A picture of this school shows a total of twenty-seven men which included the students and the faculty. This was the beginning of janitor schools in the state of Kansas. From this beginning at the Kansas State Teachers College, Pittsburg, Kansas, three other cities took up the beginning of janitor schools. They were the Wichita Board of Education, Wichita; the Topeka Board of Education, Topeka; and Fort Hays Kansas State College, Hays. After the first school had been held in December, 1927, the succeeding schools were scheduled during the summer months. Usually a week's school was held to instruct custodians

in the proper methods of cleaning and maintaining school plants.

Laurence Parker, State Supervisor, trade and industrial education man to whom credit should be given for writing this pamphlet, says that at the first session at Pittsburg, M. M. Rose, who was superintendent of schools in Pittsburg at this time, made some statements, two of which greatly impressed him and they are in part as follows:

When we compel boys and girls by law to attend school we are under an obligation to them to provide clean and healthful surroundings for them in which to study.

.....

Not every janitor recognizes dirt when he sees it in his building.<sup>1</sup>

This shows the importance of organized janitor schools and the emphasis on the housekeeping side of his work. Other duties were also taken into consideration at this school.

From this start in 1927 with only a few enrolled, these schools grew until in 1938, after twenty-three schools had been held, they showed an enrollment of 1138 janitors from schools, theaters, post offices, and churches.

Another source of information was from an interview with L. W. Winkel, chief instructor of the janitor-engineer training school set up by the Vocational Education Department.<sup>2</sup> Winkel told of the present

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1. Laurence Parker, "Janitor-Engineer School, Pittsburg, 1927," The Story of Kansas Janitor Engineer Schools 1927 to 1938. (Topeka: Kansas State Board of Vocational Education, 1938), p. 4.

2. L. W. Winkel, 1001 Harrison, Topeka, Kansas, October 23, 1948.

set-up in training custodians. Schools are held in different sections of the state, principally during the summer months. After the custodians have been to the school, Winkel goes around from town to town and gives personal aid and instruction to each of the custodians who had been in the school. By this method he is able to check on the work of the custodians and offer suggestions that will help simplify the custodian's work. He believes that kind of supervision will tend to raise the quality of work being done by custodians.

#### B. Cities

Inquiries were sent to the first-class cities of Kansas asking about their custodial set-up and what qualifications were used. From the replies received there are not many qualifications stressed. The main ones are that he be less than forty-five years old when he begins employment; be in good physical health; of such type and character that private business would employ him; and that he be interviewed personally. He is usually required to fill out an application blank. Some of the other cities of Kansas seem to follow the patterns of the larger cities in selecting custodians.

#### C. The Survey and Its Findings

In order to learn what the different schools of Kansas were doing about custodial qualifications, a questionnaire was sent to one hundred thirty-two communities. This questionnaire included a proposed set of qualifications and questions pertaining to the present



set-up in each school. From this survey an attempt has been made to get the views of various administrators as to the actual qualifications a custodian should have in order to serve efficiently as the caretaker of the school plant.

The survey is made up of five parts, 1. personal status; 2. good housekeeping; 3. buildings and grounds; 4. specific qualities; 5. salary schedule. Extra space was provided for any comments or suggestions on custodians.

One hundred thirty-two questionnaires were sent to communities over the entire state. One hundred ten of these were filled out and returned. The rest of the communities failed to respond. It was considered that enough had responded, from all sections of the state, to give an adequate and reliable representation for all sections of Kansas. In this survey an attempt was made to find what superintendents of schools considered as desirable qualifications for a custodian.

#### Personal Status

The questions of this part dealt with the personal qualifications that a custodian should possess in order to become qualified for the position. Almost any person who employs other persons to work for him inquires about a man's health, character, and ability to get along with other people. This is especially important for a custodian for he has to deal with groups of people five days a week.

After the questionnaires had been returned, the scores on each question were tabulated. After tabulation had been completed each

answer was figured on the percentage basis with each answer being carried out to the nearest tenth of a per cent.

TABLE II. HEALTH FACTORS OF THE CUSTODIAN

Health Status	Custodians		
	Yes	No	No answer
	Per Cent	Per Cent	Per Cent
Should be in good physical and mental health	100	-	-
Should have no serious physical defects	89.1	8.2	.9

Every superintendent agreed that a custodian should be in good physical and mental health. This was one of the few questions in which all superintendents answered alike. A very large number of superintendents indicated that custodians should not be seriously handicapped physically.

TABLE III. TEMPERATE HABITS OF CUSTODIANS

Use of tobacco and Alcoholic beverages	Superintendents' Replies			
	Yes	No	Other Answers	No Answer
	Per Cent	Per Cent	Per Cent	Per Cent
Should be allowed to use tobacco	73.6	14.6	2.7	9.1
To what extent?	Only in boiler room or outside building			
	76.4		11.8	11.8
Should be allowed to use alcoholic beverages	2.7	93.7	-	3.6
To what extent?		None 14.5	25.5	60

Table III pertains to the right to use tobacco and alcoholic beverages, and to what extent they might be used. A large majority of the superintendents agreed that it was all right to use tobacco, but that it should be used in the boiler room or outside of the building. A very large majority of the superintendents were against the use of alcoholic beverages. A very large number failed to answer to what extent alcoholic beverages should be used. Apparently the superintendents considered a negative vote against alcohol was sufficient for both questions. A few indicated that none should be used. Twenty-five and

and five-tenths per cent gave other answers such as, use it moderately, off duty, or limited use.

TABLE IV. CUSTODIAN AGE GROUP

Age Groups	Superintendents' ratings			
	20-65	30-65	40-65	21-unlimited
	Per Cent	Per Cent	Per Cent	Per Cent
Age Recommended	29.1	64.4	9.1	10.9

A wide range of answers was given for the recommended age group for custodians. This ran from twenty years up to no limit if able to work. Since there was such a wide range, they were grouped into four age groups as shown in Table IV. Group two, 30-65 seemed to be the most desirable age for the largest per cent of superintendents. Apparently superintendents considered this group more stable than custodians under or above this age group.

TABLE V. CITIZENSHIP OF CUSTODIANS

Citizenship	Superintendents' replies			
	Yes	No	Questionable	No Answer
	Per Cent	Per Cent	Per Cent	Per Cent
Should be an American Citizen	89.1	1.8	4.5	4.5

In the citizenship rating of custodians, 89.1 per cent thought the custodian should be an American citizen. Only 1.8 per cent thought it was not necessary, 4.6 per cent questioned the necessity of citizenship, and 4.5 per cent failed to answer the question. Apparently the superintendents thought that if the schools are to train children to be good Americans, the custodian should be one also.

TABLE VI. EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

Amount of Education necessary	Superintendents' ratings
	Per Cent
Elementary	23.5
High School	72.7
College	2.7
Janitorial training	13.6
None	4.5
No Answer	2.7

In Table VI the superintendents indicated by a large majority that custodians should have at least a high school education. Only 4.5 per cent thought there should be no educational requirements for custodians. Two and seven-tenths per cent failed to answer the question. Some of the superintendents indicated one of the first three levels and then also indicated that some form of janitorial training should be required also. Consequently the total percentage was over one hundred per cent.

TABLE VII. MARITAL STATUS

Status	Superintendents' replies			
	Per Cent			
Should be married	83.6			
Should be single	-			
Should be divorced	-			
Other answers	11.8			
No answers	4.5			
Are married men better custodians than single men	Yes	No	Other Answers	No Answer
	70%	5.5%	20.9%	3.6%

The marital status of custodians covered two questions. In the first one a very large majority recommended a married person as custodian. No one recommended either single or divorced custodians. Eleven and eight-tenths per cent gave other answers such as, not significant,

questionable, personal matter, etc. Four and five-tenths per cent failed to answer this question.

When questioned as to whether a married man was better than a single man for custodian the majority considered a married man the better, while only a few did not think so. Twenty and eight-tenths per cent gave other answers such as questionable, no experience with single men, and similar replies. Three and six-tenths per cent failed to answer this one. From these reports it is evident that a married man is considered as a better custodian than a single man.

TABLE VIII. COOPERATIVENESS

Custodians	Superintendents' ratings	
	Yes	No
	Per Cent	Per Cent
Should cooperate with the Superintendent	100	
Should cooperate with the teachers	100	
Should cooperate with the pupils	99.1	.9

If a school system is to be run successfully there must be cooperation with the superintendent, with the teachers, and with the pupils. All superintendents agreed that the custodian should cooperate with the superintendent and the teachers. Only nine-tenths per cent indicated that it was not necessary to cooperate with the pupils. Many stressed

emphatically that there should be cooperation, especially with the superintendent.

Two questions asked whether custodians should fill out work sheets regularly, if so, how often? The other questioned the need for handing these reports to the superintendent. The result of these two questions are shown on the following table.

TABLE IX. REQUIRED CUSTODIAL REPORTS

Custodians	Superintendents' replies			
	Yes	No	Other Answers	No Answers
	Per Cent	Per Cent	Per Cent	Per Cent
Should fill work sheets regularly	34.6	14.5		50.9
How Often	Daily 2.7%	Weekly 18.2%	As Needed 70%	Other Answer .9% No Answer 8.2%
Should reports be handed to the Superintendent	36.4	10		52.7
How Often	Daily 1%	Weekly 14.6%	As Needed 72.7%	

The largest number of superintendents failed to answer the first question, but on the how often part all but one superintendent answered it. From this it is evident that superintendents feel work sheets should be filled out as needed. In the second question the largest number did not answer the first part of the question, but indicated that these reports should be handed in as needed. This would indicate that reports would be expected to be turned in to the superintendent.



Table X will follow and will include the reports on five questions pertaining to personal factors of the custodian. These questions include one on the use of uniforms, another on physical examination, one on insurance, car ownership, and residence distance from the school. Some of the superintendents considered the last three as personal matter and did not indicate them as either yes or no. These subjects are related to the custodian so they were included in the questionnaire that was sent out. All of these questions are found in application blanks examined from various city schools.

TABLE X. CUSTODIAL PERSONNEL FACTORS

Custodians	Superintendents' ratings			
	Yes	No	Other Answers	No Answers
	Per Cent	Per Cent	Per Cent	Per Cent
Should wear uniforms	49.1	38.2	11.8	.9
Should physical examinations be required	72.7	23.7	3.6	-
Should carry life insurance	57.3	10	30	2.7
Should own a car	35.5	17.3	40	7.2
Should live in reasonable distance of the school	90.9	2.7	3.7	2.7

Although there was not a majority of fifty per cent or more in favor of the use of uniforms, the largest number were in favor of the use of uniforms. Some of the other answers considered it a good idea but did not say definitely that it should be required. A large number of superintendents indicated that a physical examination should be required. Over fifty per cent favored the carrying of life insurance, although thirty per cent considered it a personal matter. Ownership of a car was considered a personal matter and not a specific requirement in being a custodian. A very large number of superintendents considered it important that the custodian live within a reasonable distance of the school.

#### Good Housekeeping

The good housekeeping qualities of a custodian have been divided into two sections. Section one pertains to duties that could be answered with positive or negative answers. Section two pertains to the time that some of the duties should be attended to. As indicated before, good housekeeping is considered as one of the most important parts of a custodians duties. In order to be a good housekeeper one has to be clean. Cleanliness is very essential when one has to consider that you have the pupils of the whole community and their health to consider.

TABLE XI. THE PER CENT OF SUPERINTENDENTS FAVORING GOOD HOUSEKEEPING DUTIES

Housekeeping Duties	Superintendents' replies			
	Yes	No	Other Answers	Not Answering
	Per Cent	Per Cent	Per Cent	Per Cent
Should be a Good Housekeeper	96.4	-	-	3.6
Should keep windows and door glasses clean	95.5	-	-	4.5
Should have some knowledge in handling Steam Heating Plants	96.4	-	-	3.6
Simple Carpenter Work	96.4	-	-	3.6
Painting	95.5	-	-	4.5
Plumbing	95.5	-	-	4.5
Electrical Motors, Wiring, etc.	90.9	3.6	-	5.5

As the table indicates, almost all of the superintendents that answered these questions were very much in favor of the custodians' performing these duties. On the extent of knowledge that custodians should have for handling the last five articles mentioned in Table XI, the following results were compiled. Forty-seven and three-tenths per cent indicated the custodian should have a general knowledge about these duties. Thirty-three and six-tenths per cent thought he should be able to make minor repairs, while 19.1 per cent failed to answer this part of

the question.

The superintendents were also requested to indicate the time they considered proper for performing a number of other duties by the custodian. It is to be noted that there is a variety of opinions on the proper time to perform these various duties. It can be seen in the following table that sweeping floors, dusting furniture and woodwork, cleaning lavatories, fountains, rest rooms, and locker rooms are considered by the majority of superintendents to be a daily duty. Scrubbing floors and cleaning windows and glasses are not considered a daily duty but should be done as need calls of this work. Weather conditions would control these duties.

TABLE XII. PER CENT OF SUPERINTENDENTS THAT BELIEVE GOOD HOUSEKEEPING DUTIES ARE NECESSARY AND THE TIME SPECIFIED

Responsibility of duties	Daily Per Cent	Weekly Per Cent	As Needed Per Cent	Other Answers Per Cent	No Answers Per Cent
Sweeping floors	92.7	-	20.9	-	1.8
Dusting woodwork and furniture	83.6	7.3	19.1	-	2.7
Scrubbing halls and restrooms	9.1	47.3	52.7	3.6	2.7
Cleaning lavatories, drinking fountains, restroom facilities	71.8	13.6	16.4	-	2.7
Cleaning locker rooms	66.4	9.1	24.5	1.8	5.5
Cleaning gyms and auditoriums	50.9	3.6	50.9	5.5	3.6
Cleaning windows and door glasses	2.7	13.6	84.5	-	3.6

Cleaning of the gymnasium and auditorium depended a good deal on the number of times they were used. If used daily they should be cleaned daily. Auditoriums are not usually used daily so it was suggested they be cleaned as need called for it. The number not answering these questions ranged from 1.8 per cent to 5.5 per cent of the superintendents.

These two tables on housekeeping indicate that superintendents consider good housekeeping an important part of a custodian's duties.

#### Building and Grounds

Taking care of a school plant is often referred to as "maintenance", which is keeping the school site, the building, and the equipment in as near their original state of repair as possible. Many repairs of an emergency, minor, or non-technical nature can be made by the custodian. Often the custodian has time to make such repairs and often he can make them as efficiently as a skilled artisan. One of the many qualifications which officials should keep in mind in employing a custodian is his ability to make such repairs.

Ward G. Reeder says there are four factors always operating to cause the depreciation of a school plant.

The first, and usually the greatest, cause is the wear and tear of usage. A second cause is physical decay or decrepitude. A third cause is obsolescence, that is, a growing out of educational utility or of up-to-dateness. The fourth cause is accidents -- accidents which may be the result of negligence or of defects in material or construction.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Ward G. Reeder, The Fundamentals of Public School Administration (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1941), p. 336.

During the summer months many schools use the period for certain repairs such as carpentry, plumbing, electric, masonry, painting and refinishing; window cleaning, and any other work necessary on the building as well as taking care of playground equipment and the school grounds.

TABLE XIII. MAINTAINING BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

Custodians repair duties	Ratings of superintendents				
	Daily	Weekly	As Needed	Summers	No Answers
	Per Cent	Per Cent	Per Cent	Per Cent	Per Cent
Time to repair buildings and grounds	2.7	.9	90	13.6	1.8
Should take care of grounds	97.3	-	-	-	2.7
Should take care of playground equipment	89.1	4.5	-	.9	5.5
How often	1.8	-	80.9	2.7	14.6

In the questionnaire two questions were asked, one on building repairs and the other on school grounds and playground equipment. A very large number of superintendents indicated that repairs should be made as needed. Thirteen and six-tenths per cent of the superintendents thought repairs should be done during summer vacations, however, some of these

indicated that repairs should be done either daily, weekly, or as needed.

The second question has three divisions. All but 2.7 per cent of the superintendents indicated that the custodian should take care of the grounds. A very large majority indicated that the custodian should take care of the playground equipment. A large number of superintendents also indicated that the custodian should do the work on the grounds and playground equipment as it needed to be done. This indicates that superintendents consider that custodians should take care of repairs, grounds, and playground equipment.

#### Specific Qualities

This part of the survey contains specific qualifications that refer to custodial schooling, certification, selection, service load, and disabilities.

TABLE XIV. IN-SERVICE TRAINING

Janitorial schooling	Superintendents' reports					
	Yes	No	Other Answers		No Answer	
	Per Cent	Per Cent	Per Cent	Per Cent	Per Cent	Per Cent
Custodians should attend school	92.7	2.7	1.8		2.7	
Has your janitor attended a school	50.9	38.2	-		10.9	
	Yearly	2 years	3 years	5 years	Other Answers	No Answers
How often should this be done	52.7%	8.2%	8.2%	1.8%	9.1%	20%

All but 7.2 per cent of the superintendents indicated that custodians should attend custodial schools. Two and seven-tenths per cent did not think it necessary and 2.7 per cent failed to answer, while 1.8 per cent gave other answers. Fifty and nine-tenths per cent of the schools reported that their custodians had attended at least one of these schools. Fifty-two and seven-tenths per cent of the schools reported that custodians should attend these schools yearly. Some of these same added that this should be done for at least three years or until the custodians had received a custodian's certificate from the training school. Other suggested other periods that they thought custodians should attend.

Some of the other specific qualifications are shown in the following table.

TABLE XV. THE PER CENT OF THE 110 SUPERINTENDENTS CONSIDERING CERTAIN SPECIFIC QUALIFICATIONS FOR SELECTION AND REQUIREMENTS OF CUSTODIANS

Certain Specific Qualifications	Per Cent of Superintendents			
	Yes	No	Other Answers	No Answer
	Per Cent	Per Cent	Per Cent	Per Cent
Should custodians be certified as teachers	54.6	34.5	8.2	2.7
Take civil service exam	16.4	71.8	4.5	7.3
Be responsible to superintendent	96.4	.9	-	2.7
Be responsible to board of education	40.9	31.8	24.6	2.7
Allowed extra help for extra curriculum	81.8	2.7	14.6	.9



TABLE XV. (Continued)

Certain Specific Qualifications	Per Cent of Superintendents			
	Yes	No	Other Answers	No Answer
	Per Cent	Per Cent	Per Cent	Per Cent
Keep up on latest equipment	98.2	-	-	1.8
Require recommendations from other sources	70.9	18.2	1.8	9.1
Responsible for discipline or supervision of pupils	30	58.2	9.1	2.7

In Table XV there was a variety of questions. The most outstanding one that opposed a requirement was over requiring a custodian to take a civil service examination. Sixteen and four-tenths per cent favored civil service examinations for custodians. Seventy-one and eight-tenths per cent were against these examinations. Four and five-tenths per cent gave other answers, while 7.3 per cent failed to answer the question. More were against the custodian's having any control over pupils than were for it. In the responsibility to the Board of Education 24.6 per cent favored this responsibility to the board through the superintendent. Those answering the keeping up on the latest equipment all favored this. This would indicate their willingness to provide the custodian with magazines and literature

from which to do this.

TABLE XVI. DISABILITY DISTRIBUTION

Custodians' Disabilities and Reasons	Superintendents' reports		
	Yes	No	No Answer
	Per Cent	Per Cent	Per Cent
Have disabilities	18.2	78.2	3.6
Old age	9.1		
Poor hearing	3.6		
Hernia	.9		
Bad leg	.9		
Bad arm	.9		
Rheumatism	.9		
High blood pressure	.9		
Asthma	.9		
Palsy	.9		
Glass eye	.9		
Poor eyesight	.9		
Poor mental attitude	.9		
Inability to see dirt	.9		
Too numerous to mention	.9		

A large number of superintendents reported that their custodians had no disabilities. Of the disabilities reported old age seemed to be

the most numerous. A large variety of disabilities were reported but not many custodians for each one.

The maximum number of rooms a custodian should be expected to care for brought forth a variety of answers with a wide range. This can most readily be shown by using a table to list the answers.

TABLE XVII. THE MAXIMUM NUMBER OF ROOMS FOR WHICH A CUSTODIAN SHOULD CARE

Number of rooms for custodian to care for	Superintendents per cent	Number of rooms for custodian to care for	Superintendents per cent
No answer	18.2	10-14	1.8
Depends on Building, rooms, and man	16.4	10-15	4.5
Question as to how many rooms		12	4.5
Varies	4.5	15	10
None	.9	15-20	1.8
16,000 sq. ft.	.9	16-18	5.5
6-8 rooms	2.7	20	2.7
10	9.1	20-25	1.8

This wide variation of the number of rooms to care for indicates that no definite standard has been set up for the correct number to count per person. An ordinary custodian should be able to care for from fifteen to twenty ordinary sized rooms.

The present tenure of custodians in the schools of Kansas has a much wider range than the number of rooms for which he has to attend. The custodian's tenure ranged from one month to thirty-one years. The table will be shown at Table XVIII. The wide variation in the number of years spent in each school indicates that tenure is rather short and there is a wide turnover in this field. One of the reasons for such a turnover is no doubt the low salary that so many custodians receive.

TABLE XVIII. THE DISTRIBUTION OF CUSTODIANS ON THE NUMBER OF YEARS OF SERVICE IN THE PRESENT POSITION

Length of time served	Custodians	Length of time served	Custodians
	Service in present position		Service in present position
	Per Cent		Per Cent
1 month	1.8	10 years	11.8
4 months	1.8	11 years	1.8
5 months	2.7	12 years	3.6
6 months	.9	13 years	.9
1 year	20.0	14 years	7.3
1½ years	.9	15 years	1.8
2	10.0	16 years	1.8
3 years	10.9	17 years	.9
4 years	15.5	18 years	.9
5 years	15.5	19 years	0
5½ years	.9	20 years	9.1

TABLE XVIII. (Continued)

Length of time served	<u>Custodians</u>	Length of	<u>Custodians</u>
	Service in present position		Service in present position
	Per Cent		Per Cent
6 years	14.5	21-25 years	3.6
7 years	3.6	26-30 years	5.5
8 years	10.9	31 years	2.7
9 years	1.8		

The one with the highest percentage was for one year, or 20 per cent. The median number of years in service is twelve.

School custodians should be selected on a more rational basis than most school systems use. S. D. Benbow found in a recent questionnaire that the methods of selecting school custodians in cities of more than 50,000 population is still archaic.<sup>2</sup> Complete data on who selected the custodians in the one hundred ten schools are shown in Table XIX.

2. S. D. Benbow, "How Janitors Get Their Jobs," American School Board Journal, XCV (September, 1937), pp. 31-32, 100.

TABLE XIX. A DISTRIBUTION SHOWING WHO SELECTED THE CUSTODIANS IN THE ONE HUNDRED TEN SCHOOLS

Who selected Custodian	Custodians
	Per Cent
Board of Education	20
Superintendent	30.9
Superintendent and Board of Education	44.6
Unknown	3.6
No answer	.9

This table indicates that the largest group was forty-four and six-tenths per cent. These were the custodians selected through the recommendation of the superintendent to the Board of Education. Three and six-tenths per cent did not know who selected their custodians. The custodian had evidently been there so long that the superintendent did not know who made the selection. If all the custodians were selected this way there would be less friction between the custodian and the superintendent. Too often the custodian thinks he is responsible to only the Board of Education and refuses to cooperate with the superintendent.

#### Salary Schedule

The amount of salary paid the members of the janitorial

personnel largely determines their qualifications. If the qualifications of a janitorial staff are of a poor type, one of the first questions that should be asked is whether the salary is sufficiently high to attract to and to keep in the service amply qualified persons.<sup>3</sup>

An attempt was made to determine the salaries paid to the custodians in the questionnaire and it was found to vary widely. Also questions were asked on salary schedules and if salaries were considered sufficient and what was deemed as justification for a raise in salary.

C. E. Reeves and H. S. Ganders name four important elements to consider in making out salary schedules for the custodian. They are 1. Experience; 2. Training; 3. Merit; and 4. Degree of responsibility.<sup>4</sup>

Complete data is compiled in the following table on salary schedules and raises.

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3. W. G. Reeder, op. cit., p. 323.

4. C. E. Reeves and H. S. Ganders, op. cit., School Building Management, p. 32.

TABLE XX. SUPERINTENDENTS' RECOMMENDATIONS ON SALARY SCHEDULES  
FOR CUSTODIANS

Particular Questions	Custodians			
	Yes	No	Other Answers	No Answer
	Per Cent	Per Cent	Per Cent	Per Cent
Salary Schedule	83.6	11.8	2.7	1.8
Paid Sufficiently	29.1	63.6	7.3	-
Good Work justifiable for a raise	94.6	.9	.9	3.6

Eighty-three and six-tenths per cent indicated that custodians should be on a salary schedule. Sixty-three and six-tenths per cent indicated that custodians were not being paid sufficiently, and 94.6 per cent favored giving a good custodian a raise in salary as a reward for efficient work.

Many superintendents and board members are beginning to value a reliable custodian as an important cog in the school system just as they value the necessity of good teachers.

There was a wide variety of salaries reported on the amount paid to custodians in the various schools. A few schools reported that some of the custodians were paid for only nine or ten months but the rest all reported salaries on a twelve month's basis.

The custodian has a work that should be a year around job for it is during the summer months that the custodian has a chance to



redecorate the walls, refinish the floors, and make any general repairs to the buildings, grounds, and equipment that are needed.

The salary of a custodian should be such that he may live in a respectable manner in the community in which he resides. This means that the salary would depend upon local conditions and the standard of living in his community. It is sometimes a custom that a custodian's salary equal that of an elementary teacher but not exceed that of a principal.<sup>5</sup>

In the survey it was found that the range of pay was from \$450.00 as a part time custodian to \$3600.00 for a twelve month's period. The complete data is shown in Table XXI.

TABLE XXI. DISTRIBUTION OF SALARIES FOR CUSTODIANS IN KANSAS SCHOOLS

Salary of Custodians	Custodians
	Per Cent
\$450*	.5
\$900*	.5
\$1100-1200	1.6
\$1400-1450	2.1
\$1500-1680	6.4
\$1700-1880	15.0
\$1900-2070	14.4

5. John T. Morris, A Survey of Custodial Service In Selected Schools of the Panhandle of Texas (Unpublished thesis at North Texas State Teachers College, Denton, Texas, 1940), p. 40.

TABLE XXI. (Continued)

Salary of Custodians	Custodians
	Per Cent
\$2100-2298	20.3
\$2300-2460	19.3
\$2500-2680	10.7
\$2700-2880	4.3
\$2900-3000	2.7
\$3100-3300	.5
\$3400-3500	1.1
\$3600	.5

\* Indicates part time work, and for nine months.

The median salary of custodians would be \$2200. This would not be a salary to be shunned if all custodians were allowed a salary of this amount and from there on up, but many schools are not able to pay this amount.

#### D. Proposed Qualifications

After reading about the qualifications of custodians in various books, from cities, and after tabulating the results of the questionnaire, the following qualifications are submitted as a list of proposed qualifications for custodians in the schools of Kansas. At least fifty per cent favorable reports were used in arriving at the

qualifications picked from the questionnaire or will be otherwise stated.

#### I. Personal Status

1. The custodian should be in good physical and mental health.
2. He should be required to pass a physical examination and be disqualified if he has any serious physical or mental defects.
3. The custodian should be an American citizen.
4. The custodian should have at least a high school education.
5. A married man is preferred as a custodian.
6. The use of tobacco should be prohibited in the school building unless used in the boiler room.
7. The use of alcohol should be prohibited while on the job and not be tolerated in excess away from the job.
8. Custodians should be willing to cooperate with the superintendent, the faculty, and the pupils.
9. The custodian should plan and follow a work sheet schedule and fill it out regularly.
10. Reports required by the superintendent should be filled out and handed in to him as he calls for them.
11. Uniforms are recommended for neat appearances of custodians.
12. The custodian should live within a reasonable distance of school.
13. Although not absolutely necessary in all cases, the writer would recommend the custodian own a car.
14. The custodian should carry insurance if possible.
15. The age limit for starting custodial work should be from 25 to

45 years and continue until 65 if in good health.

16. Many superintendents recommended that the custodian should not be a tale bearer or gossip.

## II. Good Housekeeping

1. The custodian should be a good housekeeper.
2. Floors should be cleaned, and woodwork and furniture dusted daily.
3. Halls and restrooms should be scrubbed weekly or as needed.
4. Lavatories, drinking fountains, and restroom facilities should be cleaned daily.
5. Lockers, if used daily, should be cleaned daily.
6. Gymnasiums and auditoriums should be cleaned as regularly as used.
7. Windows and door glasses should be cleaned as needed.
8. The custodian should have a general knowledge of handling the heating plant and ventilating system, of carpentry, painting, plumbing, and electrical equipment and wiring. He should be able to make minor repairs as needed.

## III. Building and Grounds

1. The custodian should keep the buildings and fixtures in good repair. Major repairs can be done during the summer months unless it is necessary that this be done at once.
2. Grounds should be kept in excellent condition by the custodian.
3. Playground equipment should be kept in safe condition for children to use at all times.

## IV. Specific Qualities

1. Custodians should attend custodial schools at least once every

three years. Beginners should attend these for at least three consecutive years.

2. Custodians should be required to meet some standard of qualifications and be certified on the same basis as teachers.
3. The custodian should be allowed extra help for extra-curricular activities of large scale capacity.
4. The custodian should be responsible to the Superintendent and also through him to the Board of Education.
5. The custodians should be approved by the Superintendent for selection the same as teachers are.
6. Magazines and literature should be provided so the custodian can keep up on the latest equipment.
7. Custodians should not be expected to discipline or supervise the students, but should report any incidents necessary to teachers and the superintendent.
8. The writer believes that custodians should be assured of a long tenure as long as satisfactory work is done.
9. The writer believes an attractive retirement plan should be established.

#### V. Salary Schedule

1. There should be a salary schedule for custodians as well as for teachers.
2. Good work should be a prerequisite for salary raises.
3. Custodians should be paid sufficient salary to live on the same standard as similar laborers in the community.

## CHAPTER IV

## SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## Summary

An attempt has been made to find out what qualifications were obligatory for custodians in the schools of Kansas. It was found that there were no statutes in Kansas specifying any particular qualifications necessary to become a custodian. The majority of the states in the North Central Association have no specific qualifications for custodians in their statutes.

Since there were no legal qualifications for custodians an attempt was made, through a questionnaire, to find out from certain schools what the administrators considered as necessary qualifications for custodians in the state of Kansas.

In the appendix is a copy of the questionnaire and the letter to the superintendents of the selected schools in Kansas used in the study to obtain the opinions of school men pertaining to what should be desirable custodial qualifications.

After studying the results from this survey and other data compiled in studying the problem of the thesis, the writer derived conclusions and offers certain recommendations on qualifications for school custodians.

## Conclusions

It was found that all administrators who returned the question-

naires were definitely of the opinion that custodians should have specific qualifications that would make them more efficient and expert caretakers of school plants. In too many instances the custodian is an individual who cannot obtain employment in industry and hold a position due to a lack of training and experiences, as a result too many boards of education employ such individuals at less cost even though they have little or no training as to what they are required to do except to sweep floors and build fires.

Today the custodian must be an able-bodied man who has the knowledge and the ability to handle and operate modern equipment and maintain the school plant in as highly a satisfactory condition as possible.

School administrators and boards of education realize the importance of well qualified custodians in order that there may be assured health and safety of pupils and efficient school plant operation and maintenance. They also realize the need of keeping the custodian on the job the year round instead of the nine months that school is in session. Furthermore, it is an accepted fact that custodians should attend training schools to help them become better acquainted with the great variety of duties and responsibilities that properly belong with the position.

Salaries offered and paid to many custodians are not sufficient to attract men who have the ability and qualities to carry on such work as it should be done. If schools are to get qualified custodians salaries must be comparable to that of other qualified school

employees. If custodians are to receive such salaries and they should they will meet required state standards in training because they are in a profession, namely the school custodian craft.

The writer realizes the need for further research in qualifications for well trained custodians. It is his hope that the study offers some assistance to boards of education in an effort to raise the standard for custodians in the Kansas schools.

#### Recommendations

The writer believes that the proposed qualifications, page 43, under the five main divisions should be carefully studied by any board of education and that, personal status, good housekeeping activities, caretaking of buildings and grounds, other specific qualities, and salary schedule should be used as a base for formulating a permanent set of qualifications for custodians to meet and thus give more dignity to the calling of "school custodianship." Since nearly all other employees in school systems have certain standards to meet, custodians should also be required to meet standards. The writer also believes that if the qualifications he recommends were adopted in Kansas, better school custodians could be employed. With well trained custodians, the cost of maintenance for school plants would be more economical and the physical conditions of the school plant more conducive to more effective learning on the part of pupils.



417-1111

Superintendent of Schools:

Under the Department of Education at Fort Hays Kansas State College I am making a study of the qualifications of custodians in the schools of the state of Kansas. A questionnaire is included in this letter with a stamped, self-addressed envelope for your convenience in returning the completed questionnaire.

No doubt you are very busy, but it will take only a few minutes to fill this out and return it to me. It will be of much value to me as material from which to further the study of this problem.

I shall appreciate it if you will send to me a copy of any rules and regulations you may have for your school regarding custodians.

If it is possible, will you please return this report to me not later than January 17.

Sincerely yours,

*Herbert Barkley*

Herbert Barkley  
Lewis Field, Apt. 101  
Hays, Kansas

*Robert T. McGrath*

Robert T. McGrath  
Head of Department of Education  
Fort Hays Kansas State College

## SUGGESTIONS FOR CUSTODIANS

## QUALIFICATIONS

Dear Sir:

A proposed set of qualifications for custodians in the schools of Kansas are listed below. Please fill in the blanks with what you think would be the desirable qualifications for the ideal custodians.

I. Personal	Yes	No
1. A custodian should be in good physical and mental health.	—	—
2. A custodian should not have any serious physical defects, especially hernia.	—	—
3. Should he be allowed to use tobacco? To what extent? _____	—	—
4. Should he be a user of alcoholic beverages? To what extent? _____	—	—
5. What age group would you recommend for the custodian? _____		
6. Should he be an American citizen?	—	—
7. What educational requirement would you recommend? (Check one) Elementary _____ High School _____ College _____ Any other (name) _____		
8. Should he be married, single, divorced? (Underline one)		
9. Should he be willing to cooperate with the Superintendent	—	—
The Teacher?	—	—
The Pupils?	—	—
10. Should a work sheet schedule be filled regularly? How often? (Underline one) Daily            Weekly            As needed	—	—

- |   | Yes | No |
|---|-----|----|
| 11. Should reports be handed in to Superintendent?<br>When? (Underline one)<br>Daily                  Weekly                  As needed | —   | —  |
| 12. Should custodians wear uniforms?  | —   | —  |
| 13. Should custodians be required to get a physical examination?  | —   | —  |
| 14. Should he carry any life insurance?   | —   | —  |
| 15. Should he own a car?  | —   | —  |
| 16. Should he live within a reasonable distance of school?  | —   | —  |
| 17. Are married men better custodians than single men?  | —   | —  |

II. Good Housekeeping

- |   | Daily | Weekly | As Needed |
|---|-------|--------|-----------|
| 1. Should he be a good housekeeper?<br>Yes ____ No ____   |       |        |           |
| 2. When should floors be swept?   | —     | —      | —         |
| 3. When should woodwork and furniture be dusted?  | —     | —      | —         |
| 4. How often should halls and rest-rooms be scrubbed?   | —     | —      | —         |
| 5. How often should lavatories, drinking fountains, and restroom facilities be cleaned?   | —     | —      | —         |
| 6. When should locker rooms be cleaned?   | —     | —      | —         |
| 7. How often should gymnasiums and auditoriums be gone over?  | —     | —      | —         |
| 8. Should windows and door glasses be kept clean? Yes ____ No ____  |       |        |           |
| 9. How often should this be done?   | —     | —      | —         |
| 10. Should he have some knowledge in handling steam heating plants? _____ Simple carpenter work? _____ Painting? _____ Plumbing? _____ Electrical motors, wiring, etc.? _____ To what extent? _____ |       |        |           |

## III. Building and Grounds

- |  | Daily | Weekly | As Needed |
|--|-------|--------|-----------|
| 1. When should repairs be made on the buildings and fixtures?  | ___   | ___    | ___       |
| 2. Should he take care of grounds?<br>Yes ___ No ___<br>Of playground equipment?<br>Yes ___ No ___<br>How often? | ___   | ___    | ___       |

## IV. Specific Qualities

- |  | Yes | No  |
|--|-----|-----|
| 3. Do you think custodians should attend custodian schools?<br>How often should this be done? _____<br>Has your custodian attended one of these schools? | ___ | ___ |
| 4. Should custodians be certified as well as teachers?   | ___ | ___ |
| 5. Should custodians be required to pass civil service exams?  | ___ | ___ |
| 6. Should the custodian be responsible to the Superintendent?  | ___ | ___ |
| 7. Should the custodian be responsible to the Board of Education?  | ___ | ___ |
| 8. Should custodians be allowed extra help for extra curriculum such as banquets, conventions, tournaments, etc.?  | ___ | ___ |
| 9. Should custodians keep up on the latest equipment and methods?  | ___ | ___ |
| 10. Do you require recommendations from other sources?   | ___ | ___ |
| 11. Does your custodian have any disabilities?<br>Please list _____  | ___ | ___ |
| 12. What should be the maximum number of rooms to care for? _____  |     |     |
| 13. How long has your custodian been in the system? _____  |     |     |
| 14. Should the custodian be responsible for any discipline or supervision of pupils?   | ___ | ___ |

15. Who selected your custodian? \_\_\_\_\_

yes no

#### V. Salary Schedule

1. Should there be a salary schedule for custodians?      \_\_\_ \_\_\_

2. Do you think custodians are paid sufficiently?      \_\_\_ \_\_\_

3. Should good work be justifiable for a raise in salary?      \_\_\_ \_\_\_

4. What salary do you pay your custodians? \_\_\_\_\_

Any suggestions that you have on qualifications that have not been touched, but you think should be mentioned will be appreciated. Please write any of these below or any other comments you wish to contribute.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

## Books

Cubberly, Ellwood P., The Principal and His School. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1923. 566 pp.

This book discusses the importance of a good custodian.

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New York: The Macmillan Company, 1941. 783 pp.

The connection between the administrator and custodian is well described.

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## Periodicals

Benbow, S. D., "How Janitors Get Their Jobs," American School Board Journal, XCV (September, 1927), 31-32, 100.

Methods of selecting custodians were discussed.

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## Pamphlets

Archer, C. H., The School Custodian, Princeton, West Virginia: Mercer County Schools, 1 48. 12 pp.

A handbook as a tool for custodians to follow. Good advice.

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History of janitor-engineer training schools in Kansas.

Reed, Carol R., and George F. Womrath, Selection of and Rating of Men for Public School Janitorial Engineering Service, Minneapolis: Board of Education, 1935. 40 pp.

Rogers, James Frederick, The School Custodian, Bulletin 1938, No. 2, Washington, D. C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1938. 44 pp.

Information is given on qualifications and duties for custodians in cities of different sizes.

## Theses

Lentfer, Arthur R., "The Scope and the Growth of the Janitor-Engineer School." Unpublished Master's Thesis, Fort Hays Kansas State College, Hays, Kansas, 1939. 75 pp.

This describes the growth of training schools for custodians in Kansas.



Morris, John T., "A Survey of Custodial Service in Selected Schools of the Panhandle of Texas." Unpublished Master's Thesis, North Texas State Teachers College, Denton, Texas, 1940. 72 pp.

Much information was gained on custodial service and its importance to schools.

Olson, Olger Marvin, "A Janitorial Survey of the Classified High Schools of North Dakota." Unpublished Master's Thesis, University of North Dakota, Bismark, North Dakota, 1939. 78 pp.

A comparison of what is being done in other states about custodians.

Stons, Henry Clarence, "A Study of Janitors and Janitorial Services in the Public Schools of North Carolina." Unpublished Master's Thesis, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina, 1939. 83 pp.

Considerable information gained from conclusions and recommendations.

#### Personal Interview

Winkel, L. W., 1001 Harrison, Topeka, Kansas, October 23, 1948.

Much information gained on how the present training schools are run and many hints on how to make custodians' work easier and more efficient.