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The Development of the Local School Administrative Unit in Virginia and the Consequent Enlargement of the Duties of the Local Administrator

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE LOCAL SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT IN VIRGINIA
AND THE CONSEQUENT ENLARGEMENT OF THE DUTIES
OF THE LOCAL ADMINISTRATOR

by

CASHELL DONAHOE

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. INTRODUCTION	1
Historical background	1
Purpose of study	1
Definition of problem	2
Other literature	3
Limitation of study	5
II. THE DEVELOPMENT OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION IN	
VIRGINIA BEFORE 1870	6
Early schools of the Colony	6
The Endowed Free School	7
The Community School	9
Jefferson's influence	10
Literary fund	11
School Act of 1846	13
Summary	14
III. DEVELOPMENT OF LOCAL SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION FROM	
1870 TO 1920	16
Provisions of Act of 1870	17
Development under the first Superintendent of	
Public Instruction	19
Administrative provisions established under the	
Constitutional revision of 1902-1903	22

CHAPTER	PAGE
Increasing interest in education	24
Growth under Superintendent Eggleston	24
The closing years of the first half century of the public school system of Virginia	26
Summary	27
 IV. DEVELOPMENT IN LOCAL SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION SINCE	
1920	29
Administrative changes brought about by action of the General Assembly since 1920	29
Compulsory attendance responsibilities	34
Requirements of the State Board of Education	35
Some of the duties and responsibilities as determined by the State Board	38
Responsibility in connection with the National Youth Administration and Out of School Youth Programs	40
Duties involving other federal agencies	42
Responsibilities relating to the transportation of school pupils in buses	42
War emergency responsibilities	44
Other duties and responsibilities	47
Summary	48
 V. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	
Summary	51

CHAPTER	PAGE
Conclusions	56
VI. BIBLIOGRAPHY	59

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Virginia from the beginning of her educational development has made a progressive contribution to the educational program of America. Unlike the colonies of New England, her settlers came to the new world for economic reasons and did not intend to stay on and colonize. The establishment of schools in Virginia, therefore, by virtue of this feeling, did not take place until some time after the colony was established.

It is the aim of the writer to begin with the meager loosely connected administrative forces responsible for education in the new colony of Virginia, and trace the development of the local administrative unit and the duties and responsibilities of the local administrator through successive periods of growth and change in the historical development of Virginia. The writer believes it possible to evolve from the limited available literature on Virginia's schools, an interesting and informative study on school administration.

PURPOSE OF STUDY

Public school administration in Virginia today bears only slight resemblance to that found in the infant Colony. The changes, developments, and modifications which have taken place in school

administration since the founding of the Virginia Colony in 1607, have had a significant bearing on the educational progress Virginia has made.

The purpose of this study is to bring to light the significant and outstanding developmental changes which have taken place as they relate first, to the unit of local school administration; second, to the enlargement of the duties and responsibilities of the local administrator; and third, to the eligibility requirements of the local administrator.

DEFINITION OF PROBLEM

For purposes of treatment in this study, the problem, The Development of the Local School Administrative Unit and the Consequent Enlargement of the Duties of the Local Administrator, has been divided into five chapters.

Chapter I gives the historical background, and general procedures for treatment of the problem.

Chapter II begins with the establishment of education in the Virginia Colony, and treats the important changes and developments found from this time until the establishment of a public school system in the State in 1870.

Chapter III deals first with the legislative provisions for the establishment of a system of public schools, then brings to light the

conditions, favorable and unfavorable, found in public school administration for the next half century. The principal developments and outstanding people of this period are discussed.

Chapter IV deals with the changes and developments which have occurred in local school administration since Virginia was divided into appropriate school divisions in 1920. The establishment of professional qualifications by the State Board of Education are also treated in this chapter.

Chapter V is the concluding chapter, and contains the summary and the author's conclusions and recommendations.

OTHER LITERATURE

Numerous studies have been made of problems similar to the one selected for this study, but for other states or groups of states. None have been found, however, which dealt with the administrative unit or the duties of the local administrator in Virginia.

Kiplinger,¹ in his study of county superintendents in Ohio, reported a growth of duties and responsibilities which outstripped the growth requirements of the administrator. This led him to conclude that the office of county superintendent of schools is a

¹ Arnold Langford Kiplinger, A Study of the Development of the Office of Local School Executives and County Superintendents Together with Qualifications of Incumbents. (Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University, 1936.)

professional position and should have as a prerequisite for employment, professional training and experience commensurate with the duties and responsibilities of the position.

The author found helpful information and suggestions in a research study made by J. H. Crowgey.² His survey of the requirements for the position of county superintendents indicated that in all states there is a definite trend to professionalize the position of school superintendent and have him recognized as the executive head of the county school system in fact.

Local school administration, according to Cubberley,³ came into existence when education became a state interest in our country. There was a need for some subordinate form of state control. Local school officials needed supervision in their activities and the state needed someone to contact the localities and stimulate interest in education. Hence, a county school officer, the superintendent, was gradually provided. At first his duties were to a very large degree clerical and statistical. However, his duties in reality are only in part clerical, and ". . . if he is to render the most proficient service he must be a professional leader rather than an office clerk."⁴

² John Howard Crowgey, Trends in State Requirements for County and City School Superintendents, (unpublished Master's thesis, George Peabody College, 1937).

³ E. P. Cubberley, Public School Administration, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1929.

⁴ Ibid., p. 44.

LIMITATION OF STUDY

The problem as undertaken in this study is confined to (1) tracing the development of the local school administrative unit; and (2) the consequent growth of the duties and responsibilities of the local school administrator, the local superintendent. It is hoped that the material gathered may be presented in such manner as to make it interesting and informative to the reader.

CHAPTER II

THE DEVELOPMENT OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION IN VIRGINIA

BEFORE 1870

The early settlers of Virginia were predominantly English in origin and brought with them to the new world the customs and traditions of their mother country. Heatwole¹ points out that during the first half of the seventeenth century Virginia settlers set up the same institutions, social, political, ecclesiastical, and educational to which they were accustomed in England. Thus the early schools of the Virginia Colony were patterned after those to be found in England, the country from which her early settlers came.

EARLY SCHOOLS OF THE COLONY

Since there were only a very limited number of children in the Colony to be educated, other than the Indian youth, before about 1619, the problem of schools was not of much concern to anyone, and no one bothered about education to any great extent.

An effort was made, however, as the result of an anonymous gift of \$14,000.00, to establish a school for the Indian youth between the ages of seven and twelve years in 1619, under the direction of the London Company officials. In 1622 a school for white children, the

¹ Cornelius J. Heatwole, A History of Education in Virginia (New York: The Macmillian Company, 1916), p. 27.

first in America, was organized by the Reverend Patrick Copeland, the chaplain of a ship. He was to have served as its first rector or head master. Both of these attempts to establish schools in the new colony were apparently wiped out by the Indian Massacre of 1622.

Also in the year 1619 there were sent over to the Virginia Colony from England one hundred orphans.² They were taken from the so called asylums, or children's homes of that country, and were to serve as apprentices on the plantations of the land owners of the new colony. There were certain provisions made for their education, which will be treated later in the chapter.

Education in Virginia for a number of years following the massacre of 1622 was principally of the tutorial type, carried on by itinerant teachers. The owners of large plantations would employ tutors to teach their children for a period of time each year, usually about three months. Often several plantation owners employed a tutor to instruct the children of the respective plantations at a school building, built by the plantation owners, and located at some spot most convenient to the majority of children. The administration of this type school was the sole responsibility of the land owners, and was separate and distinct from any governmental or church control.

THE ENDOWED FREE SCHOOL

Other types of schools, such as the Symms and Eaton endowed free

² Ibid., p. 28.

schools, sometimes spoken of as parish schools, both paralleled and followed the private tutor school in Virginia. The administration and supervision of such endowed free schools was in the hands of the county courts, or county courts and the church or parish officials jointly. As a general rule the county courts granted teachers' certificates or licenses, while the church furnished most of the teaching staff from among the clergy. These schools survived for approximately two centuries.

The educational training of the orphans spoken of above was not always satisfactory. On the grounds of complaints that some of the colonists were not living up to the agreement regarding the education of the orphans, there was passed in 1643 a law making it the legal duty of those plantation owners, who had taken any of the orphans sent over to Virginia from England, to educate them. These orphans were to be educated in "Christian religion and in the rudiments of learning . . ."³

The plantation owners were required to report annually to the county commissioners as to the progress and general care of the orphans living on their lands. The administration of schools in this connection, was under the supervision of the county commissioners appointed by the courts. Virginia was still a colony of England and was governed by representatives of the ruling body of that country.

³ Henning's Statutes, Vol. I, p. 260.

THE COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Another type of school flourishing in the Virginia Colony about this time is often spoken of as the "Old Field School," because it was usually built in some field close to the community it was to serve.

Schools of this type were a product of community cooperation and enterprise, and were administered by the leading citizens of the community chosen by popular consent of the populace.

It was the duty of those selected to supervise the schools, to see that they were kept in operational condition and also to employ and pay the teachers, the funds being furnished by the entire community. The church nor the state had any administrative connection other than granting certificates to the teachers.⁴

The endowed free school, and the community school, along with the private tutorial school, were the principal sources of instruction in Virginia and existed throughout the remainder of the seventeenth century and most of the eighteenth century. There was very little effort made to establish a state system of public education until Thomas Jefferson recommended a plan for "... a more general diffusion of knowledge," in 1779.⁵

⁴ Heatwole, op. cit., p. 49.

⁵ Ibid., p. 61.

JEFFERSON'S INFLUENCE

Jefferson felt that the administration of schools was a problem that should be left to the community as a popular body. His plan proposed that each county should elect aldermen who should divide the county into districts, or wards for towns, and that the electors of each district should choose a site for the erection of a school building. Each ten schools was to have a superintendent or overseer, whose duty would be to introduce a general course of reading and general instruction for the schools of his district.⁶

Jefferson's political philosophy of local self government, which was expressed in his plan for education, left to the district authorities within the counties the initiative for setting up and administering schools. Since most of the district authorities were the more wealthy land owners, it is not too difficult to follow their reasoning when they prolonged indefinitely the starting of schools; and were reluctant to increase the tax levy on their own property in order to provide funds for building schools from which their children would receive no benefit. His proposed plan was rejected by the General Assembly.

A somewhat amended form of Jefferson's plan for the

⁶ William Arthur Maddox, The Free School Idea in Virginia Before the Civil War (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1918), p. 13.

establishment of schools was included in the Acts of 1796.⁷ The amendment provided that the district officers had the right to say when the public schools should actually begin. Again, those who would be taxed most to provide funds for education were given the responsibility of getting the schools started. These officials, as before, did nothing to bring about the establishment of local schools.

There was no definite responsibility for forcing anyone, or any group, to carry on the schools of Virginia at this time in the development of the State. There was apparently not very much enthusiasm for public education.

"Popular indifference to education also tended," wrote Maddox, "according to other interested observers, to discourage good men from entering so disreputable and poorly paid field."⁸

Jefferson's work and influence, however, did not die out altogether. Virginia had within the State many people interested in seeing a system of education develop, although they were kept from gaining their objective as rapidly as they wished.

LITERARY FUND

The establishment of the Literary Fund in 1810 was a step forward

⁷ Code of Virginia 1803, Chapter CXCIX, cited by A. J. Morrison, The Beginnings of Public Education in Virginia 1776-1860, Richmond: Davis Bottoms, Supt. of Printing, 1917), pp. 22-23.

⁸ Op. cit., p. 113.

in the effort of the state to promote education, as it provided funds from state sources for educational purposes, and in time provided a considerable amount of the total local expenditure for schools. This fund was established mainly for the purpose of providing primary education for the poor of the counties. The county courts appointed commissioners who were to locate the indigent children of the county, and provide instruction for as many as would attend school. Under this system the county commissioners disbursed the money from the Literary Fund, found places for school to be taught, employed teachers, and in reality became the important school administrators of the day. There were times when they experienced some difficulty in spending their allotment, as many of the people refused to be classified as indigents and kept their children at home.

The funds of the Literary Fund were under the general supervision of a board of directors, but the second auditor acted for them as the state official. He apportioned the money to the counties on the basis of population, and the commissioners were required to report to him the expenditure of their portion of the funds. The second auditor became the state official of administration in the handling of school matters in the counties and districts. He received reports from the district commissioners and county superintendents regarding school matters and instructed them in the expenditure of money from the Literary Fund. Superintendents did not always comply with the law in

reporting the required details of their work,⁹ indicating weak administrative practices, and lack of administrative responsibilities on the part of both superintendents and district commissioners.

SCHOOL ACT OF 1846

By Act of 1846, known as the County-Option School Law, provision was made for the division of counties into districts with a school commissioner for each district, who with the other district commissioners formed a board of school commissioners for the county. This board elected a superintendent for the county, who served also as clerk and treasurer of the board, and carried out any other assigned tasks of the board. He was accountable to the board and did not receive his last annual salary payment until he had certified to them that all duties and responsibilities incumbent upon him had been faithfully discharged. His duties were primarily clerical and routine. He disbursed funds, kept minutes of board meetings, gave teachers instructional supplies, and performed other similar tasks. The actual administration of the schools rested with the commissioners, who were required to visit the schools in their district monthly, and examine the register of the teacher, the condition of the school building and any other matter concerned with teaching.¹⁰

There was no organized system for the administration and

⁹ Second Auditor's Report 1853, p. VIII.

¹⁰ Code of Virginia 1849, Chapter LXXXII.

supervision of schools in the counties through the early years of the colony, and very little effective organized administration before 1870. This condition is definitely brought out in the Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of 1885.¹¹ The county superintendents of that year were requested to furnish a history of the public schools before 1860, in order to compare school conditions before the Civil War with those found in Virginia after the new system of public schools was established in 1870. The reports from the county superintendents presented a diversified picture of conditions. Nearly every superintendent who made any comment remarked about the scarcity of school records on file in any of the county offices. This, of itself, seems to indicate poor administrative practices. Some of the reports pointed out that there still existed unfavorable public sentiment toward establishing public free schools, especially from those who still employed tutors, but were taxed to support public schools.

SUMMARY

The early schools of Virginia were fostered by individuals. This type school was known as the private tutor arrangement, and was found on some of the plantations. There were also the group sponsored schools as represented by the community school, and the endowed free school of the Symms or Eaton type. These latter types were operated usually by the officials of the parish in which the schools were built.

¹¹ Report of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1885, Part III, p. 47.

Thomas Jefferson proposed a plan for a system of education in Virginia which would leave local administrative control of schools to the community. His plan was not adopted. Some of Jefferson's ideas were incorporated in the School Act of 1796. They were rendered ineffective, however, because again, control of education in the locality was left in the hands of its opponents.

With the establishment of the Literary Fund, some progress toward systematizing educational administration was evidenced. The county superintendent and district commissioners, under the County-Option School Law of 1846, reported the expenditures of the Literary Fund, and other reports, to the Second Auditor, who was the State's school administrative officer.

The administration of schools in Virginia was not organized into a system until the Acts of 1870 provided for the establishing of such a system.

CHAPTER III

DEVELOPMENT OF LOCAL SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION FROM 1870 TO 1920

At the close of the Civil War the South was faced with the problems of reconstruction under conditions not conducive to much progressive growth and development. War had brought destruction of property, practical exhaustion of natural resources, large State debts, and marked changes in the mode of living of the people.

Virginia having served as the principal arena for the conflict was perhaps in a worse state of destruction than most of her sister states. Poverty existed on every side, and there was much dissension among the people. Such conditions were not favorable for the establishment of a public school system; however, under the conditions of the new Constitution, which permitted Virginia to again become a member of the Union, provision was made requiring that one of the first acts of the General Assembly should be to provide legal means for establishing a system of schools for all the children of the state. This requirement was executed in 1870, and to the courage and foresight of those chosen for this task goes the honor for establishing a creditable system of public free schools in Virginia; one which on the whole was among the best to be found in the United States.¹

¹ Virginia School Report 1871, p. 7.

PROVISION OF ACTS OF 1870

Under the provisions of the Constitution of Virginia, the duty of the legislative body was made clear and it became incumbent upon the General Assembly to establish and maintain a system of free public schools in every county in the state not later than 1876, and earlier when practicable.²

The first General Assembly followed the recommendations and requirements of the Constitution, and enacted the necessary legislation to bring about the realization of a system of public free schools in the state.

The administration of the new system was vested in a board of education, a superintendent of public instruction, county superintendents of schools, and district trustees within each district of the counties.³

The administrative responsibilities of the educational system for the state were organized and clarified by the Acts of 1869-1870. Each administrative group or individual from the state board of education through the district trustees, had his duties and responsibilities prescribed. The new system of public free schools in Virginia began to take shape and expand.

² Virginia State Constitution, Article VIII, sec. 3, 1869.

³ Acts of General Assembly 1869-1870, p. 402;

The state board of education, with the superintendent of public instruction, began the task of selecting and appointing, subject to senate confirmation, the county superintendents, and district trustees. The first meeting of the board of education was held July 29, 1870, at which twelve county superintendents were appointed; however, by January 2, 1871 all the county superintendents and district trustees, more than 1400 of them, had been appointed, and schools were being conducted throughout the state.⁴

County superintendents and district trustees became the local administrative officers, with the county the logical unit of operation. County superintendents were appointed for terms of three years, with stipulated duties and responsibilities designated by the state board of education. Their salaries were also determined by the state board, and in no case was it to exceed \$350.00 annually.⁵ His position required that he explain the school system, and promote education by every proper means. He was to apportion state and county school funds, examine persons applying for teaching positions, promote the efficiency of teachers, visit and examine all schools under his care, decide appeals on complaints concerning the acts of any persons connected with the schools under his supervision, and observe such directions and regulations as the superintendent of public instruction might from time to time

⁴ Virginia School Report 1871, p. 4.

⁵ Acts of Virginia General Assembly 1869-1870, p. 406.

prescribe.⁶

All of the routine and clerical duties of the county superintendent which were provided for by law are not included in those mentioned above, nor is it possible to mention the many details which devolved upon this officer in the initial setting up of his office.

This officer has charge of the entire school interest in his territory. His supervision extends over every subject, including those assigned primarily to district boards and teachers. His cares are boundless, his labors unending. He is the principal of the whole set of schools and is the patron of education in his county or city.⁷

Virginia's first state system of public schools was thus brought into being with appropriate officers and areas of administration, climaxing an active interest on the part of the people of the state.

DEVELOPMENT UNDER THE FIRST SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

The state system of public education was in the process of being established in Virginia under constitutional and legislative requirements, and by the enthusiastic determination of Reverend W. H. Ruffner, the first superintendent of public instruction.

Reverend Ruffner was appointed by the General Assembly to this public office March 2, 1870, and served the state in this capacity

⁶ Ibid., p. 407.

⁷ Virginia School Report 1872, p. 78 of Expository.

until 1882. During the years of his office the public school system was established and strengthened sufficiently to make it capable of survival in spite of the handicap of very limited state and local funds for operation, and the diversion of some of this money to retire the state debt. Another obstacle which stood in the path of progress was general opposition to free schools for both white and colored children.

The state itself was beset with such disintegrating influences as political irresponsibility, general opposition to free education, poverty among its citizens, and the inability of the people to endure a tax rate sufficient to produce any substantial revenue. In spite of these conditions, before the close of the first scholastic year, 1870-1871, there were in operation approximately 2900 schools, employing more than 3000 teachers with 130,000 pupils enrolled.⁸ This is a tribute to both state and local administrative officers of the school system.

The local superintendents received their instruction from the state board of education through the superintendent of public instruction by means of circulars, correspondence, and columns in the Educational Journal.⁹

⁸ Virginia School Report 1871, p. 6.

⁹ Ibid., p. 4. Note: The Educational Journal was established in 1869, as the official organ of the Education Association of Virginia. Eight pages of this magazine were put under control of the superintendent of public instruction every month.

Growth of the public school system was slow and painstaking and at times seemed destined to failure. That it did continue to develop is due, in large measure, to the determination and judgment of the administrative forces, especially the superintendent of public instruction and the county superintendents.

Superintendent Ruffner never seemed to doubt the ultimate success of the public school system. He maintained that the people of the state wanted universal, effective education and were willing to provide funds for its maintenance. His greatness as an educator is borne out not only by the excellence of his plan for a school system which the Legislature adopted as Law in 1870, but also by the ability which he demonstrated in bringing together the many opposing factions to the new Law and converting their opposition, for the greater part, into hearty support and cooperation.¹⁰

The efficiency of the school system depends upon these officers (the superintendents). The duties assigned them by law are many and those which devolve upon them in an active administration of their offices cannot be enumerated. They are the life of the system and it is their providence either to make the schools a power for good in their jurisdiction or to render them obnoxious even to their friends.¹¹

There was little progress made in the schools of Virginia for ten years following Superintendent Ruffner's term as superintendent of public instruction. The system became involved in politics, becoming more and more a political machine, and thus losing much of its force.¹²

¹⁰ Clayton Beverly Phillips, *Education in Virginia Under Superintendent Richard Radcliff Farr 1882-1886* (published thesis, University of Virginia, 1932), p. 15.

¹¹ Virginia School Report 1885, Part II, p. 7.

¹² Dabney, *op. cit.*, p. 162.

One of the major administrative benefits to come out of the decade or two following Superintendent Ruffner was the establishment of an annual meeting for county superintendents and principals for the purpose of discussing and reviewing matters pertaining to public schools. Many important problems were discussed and solved at these conferences, and much professional expansion resulted directly from them.¹³

Relatively few changes were made in Virginia's system of schools before the Constitutional Convention of 1902-1903 revised the school laws of Virginia, and Dr. Joseph Eggleston became superintendent of public instruction in 1905. It was then that the public school system became firmly established.¹⁴

ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS ESTABLISHED UNDER THE CONSTITUTIONAL REVISION OF 1902-1903

Criticism that the schools had been taken over by the politicians to further their own interests by giving jobs to their favorites without concern for qualifications was existent when the Constitutional Convention met in 1902-1903.¹⁵

The educational committee of this convention was instrumental in

¹³ Phillips, op. cit., p. 123.

¹⁴ Dabney, op. cit., p. 162.

¹⁵ Dabney, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 320.

getting the adoption of provisions which revolutionized school administration.¹⁶ For the first time the administration of public schools was to be under the guidance of experienced educators.

Under the new provisions the state was to be divided into appropriate school divisions, by the state board of education, and a division superintendent appointed by the board subject to confirmation by the senate. Each magisterial district became a school district which became the practical unit of school administration.¹⁷

The division superintendent was appointed for a four-year term. No federal officer, except fourth class postmaster, and no supervisor or county or city officer was eligible for this position.¹⁸ This is the beginning of the establishing of qualifications to be met before appointment to the position of division superintendent could take place. Most of the duties of the division superintendent remained routine and clerical, such as making reports, apportioning funds, serving as clerk of school trustee electoral board, and distributing reports and materials to teachers. His appointment was still subject to senate approval.

¹⁶ Dabney, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 322.

¹⁷ Virginia School Report 1905-1906, p. 14.

¹⁸ Virginia School Law 1907, p. 24.

INCREASING INTEREST IN EDUCATION

Interest in better schools was seen to develop in all quarters of the state at the time of the Constitutional Convention. Politicians seeking office were anxious to become allied with the cause of public education to increase their popularity.¹⁹ Speeches were made throughout the state, two hundred thousand pages of literature were distributed, and fifty "citizens" school associations were organized in a month's time. "Never was a state so bombarded in the interest of any cause."²⁰

With this demonstrated interest stimulating people of the state, the school program was off on another period of rapid growth with the corresponding increase in administrative obligations for the division superintendents.

GROWTH UNDER SUPERINTENDENT EGGLESTON

Under the able leadership of Dr. Joseph D. Eggleston the public school system underwent a series of remarkable accomplishments.²¹

During the session of 1906-1907, often spoken of as the building year, two hundred thirty-six new buildings were erected at a cost of \$507,969.04.²² This was nearly three times the amount of money which

¹⁹ Dabney, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 327.

²⁰ Heatwole, op. cit., pp. 315-316.

²¹ Heatwole, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 329-330.

²² Virginia School Report 1905-1906, p. 16.

had been put into buildings during the previous year. This same year brought the passage of the high school act, which permitted the high school to be included for the first time in the state system of public free schools and during which 149 new high schools were built.

The local superintendent was required to approve the location for the new buildings, and notify the state board of the intent to build high schools in his division. He must also supervise, when built, these additional schools in his territory. Thus, additional responsibilities were added to those for which he was already held accountable.

To further improve school administration the state was in 1906 divided into five large divisions with an inspector for each division. He was to help examine and certify teachers, organize systems of supervision, promote consolidation of small schools, and cooperate and work with district and county officers in any constructive manner.

In 1908 a bill was passed permitting two or more small counties to unite and combine their funds in order to employ a full time superintendent.²³

The need for a better basis for securing adequate supervision was expressed by Dr. Eggleston in the Virginia School Report of 1905-1906.

I cannot too earnestly call the attention of the General Assembly and the people of Virginia to the inadequate basis

²³ Dabney, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 331.

upon which the supervision of schools at present rests. Eleven superintendents get \$200; twenty less than \$300; thirty-five receive less than \$400, and fifty-one less than \$500 annually.²⁴

This condition improved, and by the close of Dr. Eggleston's term of office superintendents were more professionally equipped to take over the important work of division superintendent, and the salary average had increased to \$1,445 annually.²⁵

Domestic science and agriculture were included in the high school program by 1910 and these brought new responsibilities to the division superintendent.

THE CLOSING YEARS OF THE FIRST HALF CENTURY OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM IN VIRGINIA

The closing years of this period brought an increase in the emphasis placed on supervision and the improvement of the instruction in Virginia's schools.²⁶ "Our laws had never permitted the county superintendents to supervise and care for schools as they should be supervised and cared for."²⁷ New courses of study were published, by the State Board of Education, for the elementary and high schools, which were helpful to the division superintendents in their limited supervisory work.²⁸

²⁴ Virginia School Report 1905-1906, p. 26.

²⁵ Virginia School Report 1912, pp. 255-270.

²⁶ Superintendent of Public Instruction Report 1915-1916, p. 44.

²⁷ Superintendent of Public Instruction Report 1912-13, p. 28.

²⁸ Superintendent of Public Instruction Report 1915-16, p. 42.

By 1916 no one holding a county or federal office, except fourth class postmaster, or state office, except notary public, was eligible for the position of division superintendent of schools. Also superintendents were required to hold a first grade certificate, or to have been a division superintendent, or to have been a teacher in the schools for a number of years, as determined by the state board of education.²⁹

In 1918 the General Assembly of Virginia enacted the necessary legislation in order to participate in the funds for vocational education made available by the Smith-Hughes Act.³⁰ The state board of education was designated by the General Assembly, as the agency to promote vocational education in the state, and was authorized to provide for supervision of departments of agriculture, trade and industry, and home economics in the schools of the state.³¹

The administration of the vocational education program in the communities was carried out by the division superintendents. They were responsible for employing the teachers of the vocational subjects, and for getting the required reports to the state board of education.³²

SUMMARY

The period of time covered in this chapter is marked with periods

29 Acts of Assembly 1916, pp. 789-790.

30 Acts of Assembly 1918, pp. 131-132.

31 Ibid., p. 132.

32 Superintendent of Public Instruction Report 1918-19, p. 73.

of rapid educational development interspersed with periods of general inactivity. Superintendent Ruffner was instrumental in establishing a sound system of public free schools, on sound administrative principles. His work covered nearly twelve years and is a noble achievement.

Superintendent Ruffner went out of office in 1882, two years after the election in 1880 of a re-adjuster legislature. His contribution to education in Virginia has been considered by some to be the most outstanding made by any superintendent of public instruction.

The next decade or so found educational activities relatively quiet and it was not until the Constitutional Convention of 1902-1903 revised Virginia's Constitution that the educational system was again brought to the forefront.

Dr. Eggleston, the energetic superintendent of public instruction just after this revision, was instrumental in bringing about many valuable accomplishments. Actually, Virginia's school system was not firmly established until Dr. Eggleston's active administration "redeemed it from political interference."³³

The administrative duties of the county superintendents were growing, but as yet few requirements regarding qualifications were made of these officers, either by law or by regulation of the state board of education.

³³ Dabaey, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 162.

CHAPTER IV

DEVELOPMENT IN LOCAL SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION SINCE 1920

The public school system of Virginia by 1920, had passed through the critical stages of organization and establishment, and was now beginning its professional and progressive development.

The outlook for the future seemed promising, and indicated growing interest by the public, in the schools of the State. In recent years there has been a marked advance in public support of Virginia's public schools.¹

The changes and developments which have occurred in Virginia's school system since 1920 have brought about a significant improvement in her educational facilities during recent years.²

ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGES BROUGHT ABOUT BY ACTION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY SINCE 1920

The State Board of Education was authorized to redivision the State in 1920 into appropriate school divisions for purposes of administration.

The school division accordingly became the unit of local school

¹ Report of the Virginia Education Commission 1944, p. 7.

² Loc. cit.

administration, and by law is made up of at least one county or city. No county or city was to be divided in the formation of any division.³ Divisions may include more than one county or city or a combination of both. "Virginia is fortunate in this arrangement which provides administrative units large enough to attract and hold competent superintendents of schools."⁴

The State Board was also required to appoint, subject to Senate approval, a division superintendent for each division, who would hold office for a four year term, beginning July 1 next after his appointment.⁵

The salary of the division superintendent was set at sixteen hundred dollars minimum where divisions had a school population of three thousand or more, with ten dollars per hundred given for each hundred over three thousand. In divisions having less than three thousand school population the superintendent received one thousand dollars annually, or if part time, seven hundred fifty dollars, at the discretion of the board.⁶ Local boards, upon approval of the State Board of Education, were privileged to supplement these salaries out of local funds.

By pointing out salary increases as established by law, it is

³ Acts of Assembly 1920, p. 640.

⁴ Report of Virginia Education Commission 1944, p. 64.

⁵ Acts of Assembly 1920, p. 640.

⁶ Acts of Assembly 1920, p. 494.

intended to present a trend toward a realization by the State's law makers that the division superintendent's position is one of importance and trust. To attract the kind of educational and professional leadership needed to best advance the cause of education, it was desirable to make the position financially more attractive, from a state point of view. The people of Virginia are interested in getting better administered and supervised schools and are willing to pay for this increased service.⁷

The position of division superintendent was given another professional boost with the passage of the County Unit Act of 1922. Provision was made in this Act to abolish district school boards and to make the county the unit of school administration.⁸ There was to be one county school board composed of one member from each of the districts in the county. The results of this legislative action are far reaching. The division superintendent became the executive officer of the county board and thus the professional leader of the school system within the county. His position gained in importance and responsibility. He was now responsible to one county board for the management and educational growth of all of the public schools under his supervision.

Not only was simplification in personnel and general administration brought about by this measure (the passage of the County Unit Act) but more directness and promptness of action were encouraged. It is particularly gratifying to

⁷ Report of the Virginia Education Commission 1944, p. 5.

⁸ Acts of Virginia General Assembly, 1922, p. 737.

note the unusually fine personnel of the county school boards under the new act. This combined with the tremendous simplification which has been brought about, promises marked improvement in local school administration.⁹

The duties and responsibilities of the division superintendent were left, under this act, to the discretion of the State Board just as they had been before. The State Board also continued to appoint the division superintendents subject to approval by the senate.

This method of selecting a superintendent was modified in 1928 when the school laws were revised, consolidated, amended and codified by act of legislature.¹⁰ Under the new provisions as established by the 1928 General Assembly, division superintendents were appointed by local school boards from a list of eligibles certified by the State Board of Education.¹¹ This change in method of selection seems a good one because it brings the school administrative officer closer to the people he serves by having them select him, yet leaves to the State Board of Education the professional responsibility of establishing requirements for eligibility for the administrator. In order to become eligible for appointment, there were definite requirements set up by the State Board of Education. These will be treated fully in another section of this chapter. The term of office for the superintendent

⁹ Report of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1921-22 and 1923, pp. 26-27.

¹⁰ Acts of General Assembly 1928, p. 1186.

¹¹ Constitution of Virginia, Section 133 (this amendment ratified June 19, 1928).

remained the same (four years).

In divisions which were made up of more than one county or city, the selection of a superintendent was made by joint action of all the county or city boards in the division.¹² The superintendent in such divisions is in reality a part time employee of each board since he cannot devote all of his time to any one county or city school program.

The Acts of 1928 set the minimum length of the school term at one hundred forty days.¹³ This was increased to one hundred and sixty days by the General Assembly of 1930.¹⁴ The school year reached its present minimum length of one hundred eighty days by Act of 1938.¹⁵ In the same Act, however, provision was made for the shortening of the school term, with permission of the State Board of Education. There has been a general trend toward establishing a longer school year.

In 1942 the superintendents' salaries were raised from sixteen hundred dollars minimum to a corresponding minimum of twenty-two hundred dollars where school population was three thousand or above. Divisions with less than this number received fourteen hundred dollars instead of one thousand dollars as their minimum. Part time superintendents were to get one thousand dollars instead of seven hundred

¹² Bulletin, State Board of Education, Vol. XXVII, August, 1944, p. 18.

¹³ Acts of 1928, p. 1188.

¹⁴ Acts of 1930, p. 879.

¹⁵ Acts of Assembly, 1938, p. 636.

and fifty.¹⁶

Another responsibility of the division superintendent, which was established by the General Assembly, is the issuance of work permits in connection with child labor laws.

The Acts of 1922 designated the chief school attendance officer or the division superintendent of schools as the official to whom children under legal age for unrestricted employment might go to secure a permit to work in a particular type occupation.¹⁷ The majority of these permits are issued through the division superintendent's office and where there is a school attendance officer he usually works under the direction of the division superintendent of schools.

Considerable care must be taken in the issuance of these work permits. The issuing officer must be familiar with child labor laws and keep up with the changes that are made in them. The routine of this job could be handled by some designated authority of the division superintendent, but his responsibility in this important activity would not be lessened.

COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE RESPONSIBILITIES

The superintendent's duty in connection with compulsory attendance is to see that the laws are enforced. Where there are cases

¹⁶ Acts of Assembly 1942, pp. 242-243.

¹⁷ Acts of Assembly 1922, pp. 855-860.

in violation of the attendance law, he or the attendance officer, if there be one, is required to investigate and, if finding no valid reason for absence, to notify parents to have child in school within three days.¹⁸ The superintendent is authorized to make a complaint before the Juvenile Court on all cases of refusal of parents to send children to school after being notified.¹⁹

Before a teacher is permitted to teach privately children within the compulsory attendance ages, she must be certified by the State Board of Education and approved by the division superintendent.²⁰

REQUIREMENTS OF THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

The first professional qualifications for division superintendent established by the State Board of Education were set up in 1924.²¹ The requirements as established by the State Board at this time made it necessary for those wishing to become division superintendents to meet the following conditions:

1. Be a graduate of a four year course of a standard college with at least a degree of B. S. or B. A. or;
2. The successful completion of a two year course of a standard college with at least five years experience as a teacher or school supervisor. (The college course or practical experience prescribed above shall have been completed within ten years immediately preceding the date of the application.)

¹⁸ Acts of Assembly 1944, p. 30.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 31.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 29.

²¹ Crowgey, op. cit., p. 39.

3. Professional training in educational methods and school organization equal to fifteen percent of the four year college course or its equivalent, the equivalent being regarded as not less than five years of practical experience in school supervisory work.

4. General administrative ability as evidenced by practical experience in business or in the administration of the business side of educational or related work covering at least two years, shall be regarded as the necessary minimum; provided, however, that graduates of a standard four year college course who have completed the required work in school administration may be accepted.²²

By establishing these eligibility requirements, the State Board was providing means for limiting incoming superintendents to professionally trained people. These qualifications do not appear difficult to meet, and must have encouraged better qualified persons to become eligible for positions of superintendents of schools.

Four years later, in May, 1928, the requirements were further revised. It was now necessary for prospective candidates for school superintendencies, in addition to being graduates of a standard four year college, to have completed at least fifteen hours in professional training, and to have had two years of practical experience as a school principal or supervisor, or five years experience as a teacher.²³ The practical business experience requirement was also included in this revision. The requirement that division superintendents must have had the college training or experience within a ten year period immediately

²² Ibid., pp. 40-42.

²³ Minutes of State Board of Education, Vol. IV., May 15, 1928.

preceding the date of application was not included until September 25, 1928.²⁴

Further changes were made in the eligibility requirements for division superintendents by the State Board of Education in 1931.²⁵ The requirement of the Master's degree or its equivalent in graduate study was made a part of the professional training necessary for eligibility. The professional training was to include courses in Finance and Administration.

On October 27, 1932, the State Board again modified these requirements by eliminating the phrase, "or its equivalent in graduate study," and changing the wording so as to make the first paragraph of the requirements read as follows:

Holder of the Master's degree with at least fifteen semester hours in professional training, including courses in Finance and Administration and three years of practical experience as a school principal or supervisor.²⁶

This, together with general administrative ability, as evidenced by practical business experience, and the condition that either the college training or business experience has taken place within ten years from the time application is made for superintendency,²⁷ makes up the present eligibility requirements, as

²⁴ Minutes of State Board of Education, Vol. IV., September 25, 1928.

²⁵ Ibid., Vol. IX, Sec. 4, 1931.

²⁶ Ibid., Vol. III, October 27, 1932.

²⁷ Bulletin, State Board of Education, Vol. XXVII, August, 1944, p. 129.

established by the State Board of Education.

Superintendents already in service are considered to have met all necessary eligibility requirements made during their continuous service.²⁸

Virginia, by establishing rigid requirements for superintendents in 1924, and by increasing these to include the Master's degree with fifteen semester hours in professional training in 1931, shows a very decided trend toward recognition of advanced professional training as essential equipment for school superintendents.²⁹

It is apparent from the developments and changes made in the eligibility requirements for division superintendents by the State Board of Education, that more emphasis was being placed on securing professional leadership for this position.

The recognition that the position of division superintendent cannot be filled by just anyone, but requires professional training and experience as a background, is clearly manifested in these developmental changes.

SOME OF THE DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

AS DETERMINED BY THE STATE BOARD

The duties and responsibilities of the division superintendent as prescribed by the State Board of Education are detailed, important and

²⁸ *Ibid.*, page 129.

²⁹ Crowgey, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

numerous. He is required to explain the school program on all suitable occasions, promote education in his division, give out information and materials to teachers, and see that all school laws are enforced. In addition, he must be acquainted with all matters relating to the management of the schools, the courses of study, methods of instruction, and the use of textbooks. He is also responsible for conducting teachers institutes, inspecting the reports of the clerk of the school board, distributing all report blanks, and making all necessary reports to the superintendent of public instruction.³⁰ It would not be practical or possible to include all of the multitude of duties and responsibilities which devolve upon the superintendent in the carrying out of his job.

As the position developed by Acts of the General Assembly, and under the direction of the State Board of Education, the duties of the superintendent grew proportionally, in increased professional, clerical and routine responsibility. This multiplicity of jobs has limited the division superintendent's time available for one of the most important functions of his position, that of providing professional leadership in his division. The superintendent, in order to render the highest service, must be able to have the time to take the lead in professional matters, rather than being confined to routine office and clerical duties.³¹

³⁰ Bulletin, State Board of Education, Vol. XXVII, August, 1944, p. 129.

³¹ E. P. Cubberley, Public School Administration, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company) 1929, p. 45.

Efficient office management is important and necessary in the sound administration of a school system, as is true in any business. It is not the most important factor, however, in the educational growth of the school system. The above reference to Cubberley points out this fact.

RESPONSIBILITY IN CONNECTION WITH THE NATIONAL YOUTH ADMINISTRATION
AND OUT OF SCHOOL YOUTH PROGRAMS

There were responsibilities which came to the division superintendent for which there was no legal authority or requirement from the State Board of Education.

Division superintendents throughout Virginia were asked by the Superintendent of Public Instruction, or his authorized agent, to cooperate in some of the federally sponsored programs³² during the depression years. Two such related programs were the National Youth Administration and the Out of School Youth programs.

In most cases the division superintendent served as chairman of the local advisory committee for these, and in this capacity was instrumental in devising programs for the youth. In all cases where N. Y. A. projects were conducted in the schools, and where O. S. Y. classes were held in the school buildings, the division superintendent was the final authority for the type of program offered, the securing

³² Interview with Dr. Walter S. Newman, Assistant Superintendent of Public Instruction, July 26, 1945. (Former Virginia State Chairman of N. Y. A.)

of teaching personnel, and the disbursing of funds.³³

The N. Y. A. payrolls, of cooperating divisions, were submitted by the local N. Y. A. director to the division superintendent to be checked, approved, and signed. This was necessary before payment to the youth could be made.³⁴

The division superintendent, or someone in his office designated by him, made up the payroll for the Out of School Youth program, and made payment to the teaching personnel. The superintendent then prepared a requisition for reimbursement of these monies and submitted it to the authorized state agency handling these funds.³⁵

There were a few divisions of the State in which the superintendent and school board did not cooperate in the above programs. Since they represent a very minor percentage of the total number of divisions,³⁶ it seems justifiable to the author to include the duties and responsibilities attendant to the N. Y. A. and O. S. Y. programs among those duties and responsibilities which devolved upon the division superintendent.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Interview with Dr. B. H. VanOot, State Director of Trade and Industrial Education, July 26, 1945.

³⁶ Interview with Dr. Walter S. Newman, Assistant Superintendent of Public Instruction, July 26, 1945. (Former State Chairman of N. Y. A.)

DUTIES INVOLVING OTHER FEDERAL AGENCIES

Other federal agencies which brought responsibilities to the division superintendent were those created to give work to unemployed, and under which the locality might borrow funds if it wished. The Public Works Administration and Works Progress Administration were two of this type.

School boards were permitted under the Public Works Administration to borrow funds for the erection and repair of school buildings. The division superintendent was the agent for the school board in making the necessary contacts with federal representatives and arriving at an agreement suitable to both federal and local authorities.³⁷

The Works Progress Administration operated similarly to the Public Works Administration, in so far as the duties of the division superintendent were concerned. In the W. P. A. he acted as the sponsor's representative in getting loans negotiated and requirements met.³⁸ Both of these programs were beneficial to school divisions in getting new buildings, but they carried with them considerable work for the superintendent of schools.

RESPONSIBILITIES RELATING TO THE TRANSPORTATION OF SCHOOL PUPILS IN BUSES

One of the more complex problems encountered by most division

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

superintendents, especially those in counties, is that of transporting children to and from schools by means of school buses. The division superintendent is required to chart routes and make schedules for the drivers that will be most convenient to the children and most economical to the system.³⁹ To do this he has to know where the children in his county live and the condition of the roads over which the buses must pass to render the service needed in getting these children to schools. He needs to be familiar with all regulations governing the transportation of pupils and be able to instruct the drivers concerning them.⁴⁰ It is also necessary for the superintendent to receive periodic reports from the drivers, through the principals, as to the general condition of roads traversed, repairs needed to be made to buses, and any other information which from time to time is required.

When rough or dangerous places develop in the roads over which buses must travel, the superintendent, in the interest of safety, usually reports these conditions to the resident engineer of the State Highway Department, and asks that they be repaired. The superintendent has had many such requests to make, especially during the last two or three years when the minimum amount of work has been done on public roads, and new school buses have been difficult to

³⁹ Bulletin, State Board of Education, Vol. XXVII, August, 1944, p. 139.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 138.

obtain.

There are specification requirements established for buses by the State Board with which he has to be familiar when purchasing this equipment.⁴¹

All accidents involving a school bus in which any person receives an injury, or when there is a damage to property of ten dollars or more, must be reported in writing to the Superintendent of Public Instruction by the division superintendent, within five days after the accident.⁴²

New duties for the superintendent were added to the bus problem when rationing of tires and gasoline became effective. There were forms, reports, inspection of tires, and greater need for planning the conservation of equipment.

WAR EMERGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES

The present war has brought to the school system and thus to the division superintendent, many problems and responsibilities. Most of these have required prompt action, and the division superintendent usually received his instructions in memo. form from the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

⁴¹ Bulletin, State Board of Education, Vol. XXVII, August, 1944, pp. 133-138.

⁴² Ibid., p. 138.

Division superintendents throughout the State were requested by the Superintendent of Public Instruction to cooperate with the leaders of the communities in their divisions, in furthering the war effort. They were asked to set up an advisory council on education for defense,⁴³ and to initiate an adult civic educational program for national defense.⁴⁴ Funds for any national defense program, for which reimbursement from federal or state funds were forthcoming, were required to be kept in accounts separate from the general school operating fund.⁴⁵ This requirement increased the amount of accounting and bookkeeping work for which the superintendent was responsible.

When selective service began, division superintendents were requested to make available school buildings in their divisions as places for registration, and to have the teachers volunteer their services in this national undertaking.⁴⁶

Superintendents were also asked to organize a defense savings committee,⁴⁷ and make payroll deductions for war bonds purchased by the teachers.⁴⁸ In addition, they were expected to encourage, in every

⁴³ Superintendent of Public Instruction Memo. 1190, September 13, 1940.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 1187, September 13, 1940.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 1195, October 1, 1940.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 1202, November 12, 1940.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 1289, December 17, 1941.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 1396, August 21, 1942.

practical way, the sale of war savings stamps and bonds in the schools of their divisions.

As a member of the County Agricultural Planning Committee, the superintendent was responsible for helping acquaint the rural population of his division with a program to prevent inflation.⁴⁹

Again, superintendents were urged to have all of their schools take part in the various salvage campaigns, "to get in the scrap,"⁵⁰ such as the collection of paper and milk weed pods.⁵¹

With the institution of the rationing program, superintendents were confronted with problems requiring considerable time to work out. Certificates of war necessity for all buses were required by the office of Defense Transportation,⁵² and there were many time taking details involved in getting gasoline and tire allotments for school bus operation.

In rural areas where there was a labor shortage, superintendents were required to arrange the school day so as to permit high school pupils to aid in the harvesting of crops without losing too much time from school work.⁵³ It was also a duty to help make it possible for

49 Ibid., 1367, May 15, 1942.

50 Ibid., 1414, September 21, 1942.

51 Ibid., 1637, July 24, 1944.

52 Ibid., 1441, November 30, 1942.

53 Ibid., 1448, December 16, 1942.

high school seniors, who were eighteen or older, to complete their high school courses before being inducted into the armed forces.⁵⁴

Plans for aiding the returning veteran and the war worker to make vocational adjustments were to be worked out in each division by the superintendent and the school board, and were to cover at least a five year period.⁵⁵ Superintendents were also to aid in the veterans' training program,⁵⁶ and to select educational advisors to work with the returning veteran.⁵⁷

OTHER DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

There are other duties which fall upon the division superintendent, which are not brought about by emergency conditions, but which are important and come from requests from the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Superintendents are required to certify all applicants wishing to take high school completion examinations,⁵⁸ to furnish lists of all teachers doing work in fine arts to the State Board of Education,⁵⁹ to arrange for administering of standard tests to all seventh grade

⁵⁴ Ibid., 1449, December 16, 1942.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 1615, April 19, 1944.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 1726, July 21, 1945.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 1691, February 16, 1945.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 1227, March 6, 1941.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 1277, October 20, 1941.

pupils,⁶⁰ stimulate, through encouragement, bus drivers to attend Bus Drivers' Training Centers,⁶¹ see that school buildings are in proper repair, abate nuisances when they interfere with a school's progress,⁶² and be responsible for the handling of teacher retirement funds and records.⁶³

Almost every day there seems to be a change in, or addition to the detail of duties of the division superintendent of schools.

SUMMARY

The school division was established as the unit of local administration when the State Board of Education divided Virginia into appropriate divisions in 1920, under the Acts of Assembly of that year. A division included at least one county or city, sometimes combinations of both. This made the division large enough to be able to pay for the services of a professional leader as division superintendent of schools. The opportunity to exercise this leadership was better afforded him with the passage of the County Unit Act of 1922. District school boards were abolished, and county school boards

⁶⁰ Ibid., 1508, May 13, 1943.

⁶¹ Ibid., 1516, May 20, 1943.

⁶² Bulletin, State Board of Education, Vol. XXVII, August, 1944, p. 129.

⁶³ Superintendent of Public Instruction Memo. 1381, June 25, 1942.

were established. Administration procedures were simplified and made more direct as a result of this legislation.

In 1928 the method of selecting division superintendents was modified. He no longer was appointed by the State Board of Education, subject to senate approval; but was chosen by the local school board from a list of eligibles certified by the State Board of Education. The revision of the method of selection brought greater simplification and more directness to local school administration. It was a definite step forward.

Minimum annual salaries of \$1,600.00 were established by the State in 1920 for division superintendents, and this minimum was increased to \$2,200.00 in 1942.

Eligibility requirements for superintendents were established by the State Board of Education in 1924, and increased to include a Master's degree with fifteen semester hours in professional training, with courses in Finance and Administration, by 1932.

The duties and responsibilities which have come to the division superintendent have expanded until they almost defy enumeration. They are wide in variety and are of varying degrees of importance. Some duties are recurring, others are not. There are duties imposed upon the division superintendent by law, by regulation of the State Board of Education, by local boards, and those which just seem to be there. Many of these duties have been intensified by the present war and new

ones have been added.

It is often hard to conceive of the quantity and variety of responsibilities which have devolved upon this office and officer in recent years.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

SUMMARY

Education in Virginia has undergone many and varied changes in its development since the founding of the Colony at Jamestown in 1607.

Continuous progress has taken place, sometimes in spite of great handicaps. There have been periods of rapid growth and periods of slow growth. On the whole, the changes which have occurred have been progressive in character. There have been no marked periods of stagnation or retrogression in Virginia's educational development.

The early inhabitants of Virginia were not sympathetic to free public education, hence the rate of progress during the formative years of the Colony were slow. As the years passed, however, the desire for good educational opportunities for the children of the State grew until it swept as an avalanche across Virginia about the beginning of the twentieth century. Since that time education in Virginia has grown steadily and surely.

The early settlers in Virginia were English in origin and planned their educational institutions after those found in the mother country.

There were few children in the Virginia Colony before 1619, and these were tutored in the home by their parents or an itinerant instructor employed by the family. For advanced education children

were returned to England or the continent of Europe.

The first schools established in the new Colony were administered by the county or parish officials, and served the children of the parish or community in which they were located. The endowed free schools and the community schools represent these types. They, together with the tutorial plan of schooling, provided the principal means of instruction in Virginia from the middle of the seventeenth century until the latter part of the eighteenth century.

Thomas Jefferson proposed a plan of public education for Virginia in 1779 which left the responsibility for the establishment and administration of schools to the community. The county was to be divided into school districts with district school commissioners whose duty it would be to see that schools were established and operated. Every ten such schools were to have a superintendent or overseer. Although this plan was rejected by the General Assembly, Jefferson's idea did not die out altogether, in the minds of those interested in education.

The Literary Fund was established in 1810, for the purpose of furnishing money to educate the children of the poor of the county. The handling of this fund was left in the hands of the second auditor of the State. He apportioned funds, on the basis of population, to the county commissioners to be used by them for the education of indigent children within their respective districts. The county commissioners became the important local school administrators, having the

responsibility of locating indigent children, providing school buildings, and employing teachers.

Virginia's first system of public education came into existence in 1870 as a result of legislation by the General Assembly of that year. A complete organization was effected and put into operation. Under the legislative provisions, local school administration was vested in the county superintendents and the district trustees, the county being considered the logical unit of administration.

The public school system faced severe handicaps during its formative years in lack of funds, general opposition to the whole idea, and the poverty-stricken condition of the State following the Civil War. The system was well planned, however, by Superintendent Ruffner, and survived all hazards. Considerable credit for this survival belongs to the county superintendents.

Public interest in education began to grow more rapidly throughout the State, becoming widespread and intense about 1900.

The Educational Committee of the Virginia Constitutional Convention of 1902-1903 was instrumental in getting adopted provisions which revolutionized public school administration.

Under the Constitutional provisions, the State Board of Education was authorized to divide the State into appropriate school divisions and appoint, subject to senate approval, division superintendents

of schools. Each magisterial district became a school district and also the practical unit of school administration.

The duties and responsibilities of the superintendent prescribed by the State Board of Education, were becoming more professional but still remained primarily clerical.

The salary offered superintendents was not enough to attract those best qualified for the position. The average salary in 1912 was between \$1,000.00 and \$1,100.00 annually from state and county funds, this excluding supplements from local school funds.

In 1920 the State Board of Education was again authorized to divide Virginia into appropriate divisions and appoint, subject to senate confirmation, division superintendents. The divisions as established then are approximately the same as at the present time.

The passage of the County Unit Act in 1922 brought greater simplification and promptness of action to local school administration. District school boards were abolished and in their places were established county school boards, composed of one representative from each district in the county. The division superintendent became the executive officer and educational leader of his division. His position was becoming more important and required the services of trained and qualified persons.

The State Board of Education in 1924 established professional eligibility requirements for division superintendents, which made

professional training and practical educational experience prerequisites for eligibility. The requirements that a superintendent must be a graduate of a standard four year college, with at least fifteen percent of his training in professional subjects, plus practical experience, established at this time, were increased by 1932 to include the Master's degree with special courses in Finance and Administration, plus practical experience.

These regulations made it possible for only those interested and trained for the job, to become superintendents.

Local school boards were given authority to select their own division superintendents in 1928. The State Board of Education furnished local school boards with a list of eligibles from which the local board made its selection. This brought the local school system closer to the people it served, which was a desirable step in improving school administration.

Financially the position of division superintendent has developed from one paying a maximum of \$350.00 annually in 1870, to one paying \$2,200.00 annually in 1942, as a minimum, (for divisions with school populations of 3,000 or over).

The duties and responsibilities of the division superintendent have multiplied until they now almost defy enumeration. Present war conditions have added many emergency duties to the already burdened superintendent. These duties and responsibilities are varied,

including supervisory, administrative, clerical, routine, and miscellaneous responsibilities; involving federal, state, county, and community problems. The division superintendent is looked upon as a leader in his division, and is often obliged to take active part in many activities not related to the educational program of his division.

CONCLUSIONS

The position of division superintendent of schools is one of the most important positions in the educational structure of Virginia. On him rests the responsibility of a successful school program in the division, therefore, it is imperative that he be given sufficient time to properly supervise the schools under his direction. To make this more nearly possible it is recommended that the superintendent be permitted to employ an assistant to take care of a part of the work now carried by him.

This will have two desired effects, first, the division superintendent will be free to perform the important function of his office, that of providing professional leadership; and, second, an in-service training program will be established, that will eventually furnish trained personnel for superintendent's positions.

Divisions composed of more than one county or city require the division superintendent to divide his time between or among the several school boards represented. It is believed a better arrangement

would be to have one school board for each division. Further simplification in administration and better educational advantages would result.

Supervision is recognized as an important factor in the proper administration of schools. The division superintendent needs more time for this activity and also needs the services of other personnel trained in supervisory work. It is recommended that to further improve the administration of the division, additional supervisors be employed to help the superintendent in special fields.

The office of division superintendent of schools has grown in responsibility and trust. The superintendent is considered one of the more important and responsible officials in the educational system of the State. Since this officer is in a position of importance and trust, it is recommended that his salary be increased above the now existing minimums established by the State, the increase to be sufficient to assure the divisions the ability to pay for the services of competent, well-qualified, and professionally-minded superintendents.

Public education in Virginia has developed from the individualized instruction prevalent in the early days of the Colony into the well-balanced uniform system found in Virginia today. Improved administrative and supervisory practices, together with the conscientious efforts of better qualified administrators, have been the responsible forces throughout this development. It is expedient that

Virginia make every effort to establish her place among the educational leaders of the Nation by offering her youth the best planned and administered school system within her ability to afford.

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