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THE STATUS AND PROBLEMS OF THE
COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT IN MONTANA

by

NEAL G. SULLIVAN

B. S. Western Montana College of Education, 1949

Presented in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Master of Education

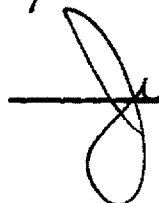
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The county has long served as an intermediate unit in the administration of public education. The founding fathers of our country advocated the establishment of a system of free public schools everywhere in the nation. At first, public education was regarded as a function of individual communities. As time went on, people in the different states came to accept the idea that education was a state function, and they began to make provisions for putting this concept into action.

Among the most important of these provisions was the establishment of a state school officer to represent the state in educational matters. It was the functions and duties of this officer which created a pattern for the emergence of the county superintendent.

It was impossible for the state official to discharge effectively his responsibilities for education without maintaining contact with local district officials and teachers. To meet this problem it was natural to turn to the county, and the county school official, occupying an

intermediate position between the state and the local districts, became an important link between the two.

Although the county superintendency began as an arm of the state department of education - a mere downward extension of state administrative control - it did not long remain such. The Thirtieth Yearbook of the American Association of School Administrators describes the new challenges which have been presented to and, in most cases, met by the county superintendent:

No educational administrative position has remained in a more fluid stage of evolution than the county superintendency. The structure of the legal framework within which it operates and the functions of the office seem to have been continuously in a stage of becoming. Its authority and prestige were subject to frequent change, with the ebb and flow of public opinion regarding the functions of all government, with shifts in the distribution of population and economic income, with modifications in curriculum offerings and activities involved in operating schools and with evolving structures of both state departments of education and local school systems. Standing between the state department on the one hand and the local district on the other, the county superintendency has felt the impact of developments in both.¹

Because of these ever-changing aspects of the office of the county superintendent, it becomes desirable from

1

American Association of School Administrators, The American School Superintendency, Thirtieth Yearbook, (Washington, D. C.: the Association, a department of the National Educational Association, 1952) p. 49.

time to time to make a detailed examination of the problems and present status of the position and the official who holds it. No investigation of this type has been made in Montana since 1936. It was the purpose of this study to bring up to date the statistical data relative to the county superintendency by gathering, compiling, and presenting information concerning the problems and status of the county superintendent in Montana.

HISTORY OF THE OFFICE IN MONTANA

The office of the county superintendent in Montana is about ninety years old. In the first school law of 1865 the county superintendent received more consideration than any other school official. He was to be elected at a general election for a term of three years, or until a successor was duly qualified. No qualifications were indicated. His main duties as listed in the 1864 Laws of the Territory of Montana were (1) to establish districts, and define boundary lines, and make any district alterations deemed necessary; (2) to examine all persons desiring to become teachers, and issue them a certificate for one year if in his opinion he thought the candidate was competent to teach and of good character; (3) to visit all schools once a year; (4) to promote the in-

troduction of a good and uniform system of school books in his county; (5) to collect from the districts statistics on census children, number of school houses, number of districts, school books used, enrollment, and money paid to teachers; (6) to apportion the school fund to the various districts upon the proportionate basis of the number of census children from four to twenty-one years of age; (7) to collect all moneys due the school fund of the county, such as fines, etc.; and (8) to preserve school lands from injury and trespass.²

The salary was fixed at \$100 per year with the provision that the county commissioners could increase this amount to not exceed \$300 per year, and in all cases where the salary exceeded \$200, one-half of the excess should be paid out of the school fund.³

The salary and compensation received for official duties was changed by law in 1872. Legislation of that year provided that the county superintendent receive annually a sum of one dollar for each school census scholar in the county, provided such sum did not exceed \$1250, and, in addition, each superintendent was allowed ten dollars

² Laws of the Territory of Montana, 1864, pp. 434-37.

³ Ibid., p. 437.

for each school district which he visited once a year. Slight changes were made in later years by legislative amendments to the law of 1872, but they did little to change the provisions of the original law.

The second general school law of 1872 provided more adequate school legislation.⁴ In addition to the duties and provisions already noted it made the following changes: (1) the term was lowered from three years to two years; (2) the county superintendent could appoint a deputy who would draw no salary from the public school fund; (3) failure of the county superintendent to report to the superintendent of public instruction would mean a forfeit of \$100 from his salary; and (4) the county superintendent could not serve as a teacher while holding office. The added duties were to distribute all forms, circulars, etc. sent out to him by the state superintendent, to enforce the course of study, and to fill vacancies among trustees and appoint trustees for newly-formed districts.

A special amendment enacted in 1883 provided that all persons, otherwise qualified, should be eligible for the office regardless of sex.⁵ Territorial Superintendent

⁴ Laws of Montana, Codified Statutes, 1871-72,
pp. 621-24.

⁵ Laws of Montana, 1883, p. 53.

of Public Instruction R. H. Howey in the previous year had reported the election of two women, Miss Helen P. Clark of Helena and Miss Alice Nichols of White Sulphur Springs, to the office of county superintendent.⁶

During the territorial period the office of county superintendent was purely political and no professional education was required by law.⁷

The first county superintendents, according to presently available records, were J. B. Patch, of Helena, county superintendent in Edgerton County (later Lewis and Clark) in 1865; and E. Thrasher, of Virginia City, county superintendent in Madison County in 1866.⁸

Montana was finally admitted to the Union in 1889. Article XVI, Section 5 of the constitution provided that there should be elected in each county in the state one county superintendent who should hold office for two years and until his successor was elected and qualified. In the

⁶ Helen Fitzgerald Sanders, History of Montana (New York: Lewis Publishing Company, 1913), I, p. 547.

⁷ Emmet J. Riley, Development of the Montana State Educational Organization, 1864-1930, (Washington, D. C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1931), p. 30.

⁸ John Francis Sasek, "The Development of Public Secondary Education in Montana Prior to 1920," (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Montana, Missoula, 1938), pp. 37-38.

event of a vacancy the county commissioners could appoint some person to hold office until the next regular election.⁹

The State Legislative Assembly of 1895 revised the School Law of 1872 and made the qualifications for the office of county superintendent more than political. The new law specified:

No person shall be deemed legally qualified for the office of county superintendent unless he or she holds a certificate of the highest county grade, is a citizen of the United States, has resided one year next preceding the election in this state and one year in the county in which he is a candidate and has had twelve month's successful experience in teaching in the public schools of this State; provided, that in case a certificate held by any of the present incumbents of the office of county superintendent of schools shall expire during the term of such superintendent, such person may apply to the superintendent of the nearest county for a certificate, as provided by law; and in case a certificate shall be refused, the party feeling grieved thereby may, appeal to the Superintendent of Public Instruction who may, upon examination of said person, determine whether a certificate shall be granted.¹⁰

In 1913 the county superintendent's duties were further increased when the Montana Legislature designated him as truant officer in districts of the third class

⁹
Montana Constitution Codes and Statutes, Sanders Edition, 1895.

¹⁰
Montana Constitution Codes and Statutes, Section 1744, 1895, p. 145.

where no other provision was made.¹¹

The difficulties faced by many superintendents with respect to lack of clerical staff assistance were partially alleviated in 1917 when a law authorized each county superintendent with fifty or more rural teachers under his supervision to appoint one clerk. A superintendent with less than fifty rural teachers could, with permission of the county commissioners, appoint a clerk at a salary fixed by the commissioners. The law further stated that the county commissioners of counties having not less than one hundred public school teachers, in districts of the third class, could appoint one deputy other than the clerk from a list furnished by the county superintendent. The law specified that such a deputy must hold a Montana certificate not less in value than a professional grade certificate and that he would be paid a salary of \$100 per month plus actual traveling expenses.¹²

The Sixteenth Legislative Assembly meeting in 1919 added to the responsibilities of the county superintendents by making it their duty to carry into effect the instruc-

¹¹ Laws of Montana, 1913, p. 213.

¹² Laws of Montana, 1917, p. 180.

tions of the state superintendent; to hold trustee meetings; to attach to contiguous districts other districts whose schools he declared abandoned; to transmit a copy of the school district census to the Bureau of Labor; to keep records of the office, preserve maps, books, and reports of teachers, and school boards; and to report annually to the state superintendent of public instruction.

Beginning in 1924 several attempts were made to establish the educational qualifications for the office of county superintendent. This was accomplished in 1929 when a law was passed requiring that

No person shall be eligible to the office of County Superintendent of Schools in any county of Montana who, in addition to the qualifications required by the Constitution of the State of Montana, is not a holder of a State Certificate offered by the State of Montana, granted by endorsement upon graduation from a standard normal school or college, or university; or who is not the holder of a Certificate granted by examination in accordance with the rules and regulations as prescribed by the State Board of Educational Examiners; and who has not had at least three years' successful experience as a teacher, principal or superintendent of public schools. The above qualification shall not prohibit the re-election of present incumbents.¹³

Until a few years ago the short term of office allotted to the county superintendent was a serious

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Laws of Montana, 1929, p. 228.

deterrent to his continuing and effective educational leadership. In 1945, however, this situation was remedied to some extent when the 29th Session of the Montana Legislature extended the term of office from two to four years.¹⁴

The responsibilities of the county superintendent are increasing and will continue to grow in importance to the people he serves. In recent years it has become necessary for him to assume the role of a public relations expert - a role that requires tact, patience, understanding, courage, and vision. More and more the public is measuring the effectiveness of the county superintendent's educational leadership by the quality of the schools under his supervision. Hence, he must constantly strive to create a will to have better schools.

The purpose of this study as suggested above was to inquire into the present status of and the problems faced by the county superintendent in Montana and on the basis of this data to make recommendations for the improvement of the office.

¹⁴
Laws of Montana, 1945, p. 12.

LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This study was concerned primarily with the problems and status of the county superintendent of schools in Montana. The period of time used as the basis of the study was, with certain minor exceptions, the school year 1953-54.

Five counties were not included in the tabulations because of failure of the county superintendents to return the questionnaire.

SOURCES OF DATA

The sources of data which served as the basis for this study of the county superintendents in Montana were: (1) the School Laws of Montana, 1953; (2) data from a questionnaire sent to all county superintendents; and (3) the report of a County Superintendents' Workshop held in May, 1952.

The questionnaire, a copy of which may be found in the appendix, page 87, was sent to all fifty-six county superintendents in the state in February, 1954. Fifty-one, or 91.07 per cent, of the superintendents answered.

Findings on certification and scholastic training, experience, membership in professional organizations,

supervision of schools, tenure, salary, and facilities were compiled from the questionnaire. Data on powers and duties were secured from the School Laws and from a report of the County Superintendents' Workshop, 1952.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Many studies have been made of the office of county superintendent in the various states of the United States. In Montana, however, this subject has been largely neglected. Although the office has been in existence in this state for almost ninety years, only one other survey of the county superintendent has been made. In 1936 Rachel Fay Kirkpatrick presented a thesis, "Study of the Present Status of the County Superintendent in Montana."¹ Miss Kirkpatrick carefully analyzed the office as it existed at that time and supplemented her findings with explanatory tables.

Miss Kirkpatrick used the questionnaire method of securing data. By tabulating the information thus gained she was able to present a clear picture of the office of county superintendent in regard to powers and duties, administrative load, certification and scholastic preparation, experience, tenure, sex, and salary. She made frequent comparisons of the office in Montana with that of the county superintendent in Kansas. Several

¹ Rachel Fay Kirkpatrick, "Study of the Present Status of the County Superintendent in Montana," (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Montana, Missoula, 1936), 86 pp.

problems which confronted the county superintendent were discussed by the author, and she made recommendations for their possible solutions.

In 1951 Howard R. Hill made a study of this subject in North Dakota in his unpublished Master's thesis, "The Problems and Status of the County Superintendent in North Dakota."² Mr. Hill's investigation revealed the educational background of the county superintendents, the teaching and administrative load, the number of educational meetings attended, tenure, and salary statistics. His discussion of the problems of the county superintendent was more complete than that found in the Montana study of 1936.

In 1952 the Minnesota Legislative Research Committee made a study of the office of the county superintendent of schools. This report attempted to provide a summary of the activities of the office in Minnesota and to compare the office as it existed in that state with similar offices in other states. This study showed the salary, duties, qualifications, experience, and recommen-

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Howard R. Hill, "The Problems and Status of the County Superintendent in North Dakota," (unpublished Master's thesis, University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, 1951), 60 pp.

dations of the various county superintendents. A considerable portion of the report was devoted to the status of the county superintendent in other states.³

A survey of the office of county superintendent in Kansas was made by the Kansas State Teachers' Association in 1952. This study was based primarily on questionnaires which had been sent to the 105 county superintendents in Kansas. Data was given on general duties of the office, certification, number of schools supervised, and the number of teachers and pupils served by the county superintendent. A section was devoted to the need for improving and strengthening the office and to how this improvement could be accomplished.⁴

Robert Bruce Walker reported a survey, "A Study of the Educational Functions of the County Superintendent of Schools in California,"⁵ made in 1951. This study was

³ Minnesota Legislative Research Committee, "The Office of County Superintendent of Schools," (Publication No. 42, St. Paul, February, 1952), 47 pp.

⁴ Minter E. Brown, "The County Superintendent in Kansas," (A survey of the office by the sub-committee on county administration, Kansas State Teachers' Association, Topeka, May, 1952), 25 pp.

⁵ Robert Bruce Walker, "A Study of the Educational Functions of the County Superintendent of Schools in California," (A report to California county school superintendents consisting of excerpts from a dissertation presented to the faculty of the School of Education, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, April, 1951), 58 pp.

an effort to sift out the educational functions from the many duties of the county superintendent in California and to bring those functions into alignment with modern trends in education. The chief emphasis was given to the more recently acquired functions of an educational nature.

The 1950 Yearbook published by the Department of Rural Education of the National Education Association gave a composite picture of the office of county superintendent.⁶ The Yearbook analyzed the status, functions and problems of the county superintendent. The content was made more valuable by the fact that the information was produced and supplied by the superintendents themselves.

⁶ Shirley Cooper, editor, "The County Superintendent of Schools in the United States," Yearbook of the National Education Association Department of Rural Education (Washington, D. C.: the Department, 1950), 188 pp.

CHAPTER III

ADMINISTRATIVE LOAD OF THE COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT

Almost from the beginning of organized state public school systems, county superintendents have been charged with the responsibility of improving instruction in rural schools. At the present time county and rural area superintendents have a large measure of responsibility for the educational opportunities of about half the nation's children. Almost half a million teachers, 54 per cent of the nation's total public school teaching force, look to them for supervisory leadership.¹ Rural school board members rely heavily upon the county superintendent's office for advice for the successful operation of their local school districts. Broadly speaking, the supervisory duties of the county superintendent are concerned largely with the special problems of the rural schools.

In 1936 a total of 2145 one-room rural schools was reported for Montana.² Today, through consolidation and

¹ Shirley Cooper, editor, "The County Superintendent of Schools in the United States," Yearbook of the National Education Association Department of Rural Education (Washington D. C.: the Department, 1950), 188 pp.

² Rachel Fay Kirkpatrick, "Study of the Present Status of the County Superintendent in Montana," (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Montana, Missoula, 1938), p. 12.

abandonment, this number has decreased to slightly more than 900. Notwithstanding, the real purpose of the county superintendent continues to be supervising, directing, and overseeing the work of the teacher in the rural school.

Table I shows the distribution by counties of the rural one-teacher schools that exist in Montana today as reported on the questionnaire.

TABLE I
DISTRIBUTION OF RURAL ONE-TEACHER SCHOOLS SUPERVISED BY
MONTANA COUNTY SUPERINTENDENTS, 1953-54

Number of Schools	Counties
1-5	12
6-10	9
11-15	7
16-20	8
21-25	7
26-30	2
31-35	3
36-40	1
41-45	0
46-50	2
Total	51

In the table the number of rural one-teacher schools to a county shown by intervals of five. The median falls

into the 11-15 interval. The lowest number of such schools in a county was one; three counties reported this number. The highest number in the report was fifty. Twelve counties had five or less one-teacher schools. In the 1936 survey the lowest number of rural one-teacher schools was six; the highest was 120. The average number of this type of school per county was thirty-nine. Today this figure has decreased to 15.3 schools per county.

Despite the fact that the rural one-teacher schools are not as numerous as they have been in past years, the administrative duties of the county superintendent have increased to such an extent that the official has less time than ever to give to supervising the rural schools. With each passing year this office has been called upon to provide a greater measure of administrative and supervisory leadership in such features of the rural educational program as pupil transportation, adult education, school lunch programs, vocational and personal guidance, measurement and evaluation, health education services, reorganization of local administrative units and attendance areas, retirement programs for teachers and other school personnel, audio-visual aids, in-service education for teachers, and supervision of attendance. These are ear-

marks of educational progress and at the same time indices of the growing importance of the county superintendency.³

In addition to the rural one-teacher schools, forty Montana counties reported a total of ninety-seven two-teacher rural schools; twenty-four listed a total of forty three-teacher schools; and nine counties had a total of fourteen rural schools with more than three teachers. Table II shows the distribution of rural two-teacher schools.

³
Shirley Cooper and Charles Fitzwater, County School Administration (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1954), p. 265.

TABLE II

DISTRIBUTION OF RURAL TWO-TEACHER SCHOOLS SUPERVISED BY
MONTANA COUNTY SUPERINTENDENTS, 1953-54

Number of Two Teacher Schools	Number of Counties	Total Number of Schools
1	15	15
2	8	16
3	8	24
4	5	20
5	3	15
6	0	0
7	<u>1</u>	<u>7</u>
Totals	40	97

The county range of rural two-teacher schools was one to seven. The average per county was 2.4.

Table III, page 22, gives the number of rural three-teacher schools. The most reported by any county was three; six counties had this number. Four counties had one each.

Nine counties reported having rural schools with more than three teachers. There were fourteen such schools in Montana at the time this study was made. The highest number reported by any county was three. The distribution of this type of school is shown in Table IV, page 22.

TABLE III

DISTRIBUTION OF RURAL THREE-TEACHER SCHOOLS SUPERVISED BY
MONTANA COUNTY SUPERINTENDENTS, 1953-54

Number of Three Teacher Schools	Number of Counties	Total Number of Schools
1	14	14
2	4	8
3	6	18
Totals	24	40

TABLE IV

DISTRIBUTION OF RURAL SCHOOLS WITH MORE THAN THREE
TEACHERS SUPERVISED BY MONTANA COUNTY SUPERINTENDENTS,
1953-54

Number of Schools With More Than Three Teachers	Number of Counties	Total Number of Schools
1	5	5
2	3	6
3	1	3
Totals	9	14

In addition to the rural schools, all other schools in the county were under the jurisdiction of the county superintendent. Despite the fact that each of these usually had a principal or a superintendent who handled the greater share of the responsibilities of supervision and administration, the county superintendents reported that they did give time to supervising many of the second and third class district schools, while a few supervised schools in first class districts.

A third class district is one with a population of less than one thousand and is controlled by a board of three members. A third class district employing more than one teacher may employ either a superintendent or a principal or both.⁴ Thirty-nine county superintendents reported supervision of village elementary schools in third class districts.

⁴ State Department of Public Instruction, Montana Educational Directory (Helena: The Department, 1953). p. 16.

TABLE V

DISTRIBUTION OF ELEMENTARY THIRD CLASS DISTRICT VILLAGE
SCHOOLS SUPERVISED BY MONTANA COUNTY SUPERINTENDENTS,
1953-54

Number of Elementary Schools	Number of Counties	Total Number of Elementary Schools
1	13	13
2	11	22
3	7	21
4	3	12
5	3	15
6	1	6
7	1	7
Totals	39	96

The total number of elementary third class district village schools as shown in Table V was ninety-six. They ranged from one in thirteen counties to seven in one county. The average per county was 2.46.

In thirty-five counties, third class district high schools were also supervised to some extent by the county superintendents. Thirteen reported only one such high school in the county, and one reported seven. A total of eighty-four third class district high schools was

reported. This was an average of 2.4 per county. The distribution of these high schools is shown in Table VI.

TABLE VI

DISTRIBUTION OF THIRD CLASS DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOLS SUPER-
VISED BY MONTANA COUNTY SUPERINTENDENTS, 1953-54

Number of High Schools	Number of Counties	Total Number High Schools
1	13	13
2	10	20
3	4	12
4	4	16
5	2	10
6	1	6
7	1	7
Totals	35	84

A second class district is one which has a population of one thousand or more and less than eight thousand. It employs a superintendent who has had at least three years of experience in public school work; it is controlled by a board of five members.⁵

⁵ Ibid., p. 8

There appeared to be less need for supervision on the part of the county superintendent in the urban schools because these schools hired superintendents who were often better qualified educationally than the county official. Too, the county superintendent did not have the time for close supervision of such schools. Thirty-two counties, however, reported supervision of elementary schools in second class districts, and thirty reported supervision of second class high schools. Table VII; page 27, shows the distribution of elementary and high schools of second class districts.

TABLE VII

DISTRIBUTION OF SECOND CLASS DISTRICT ELEMENTARY AND HIGH SCHOOLS
SUPERVISED BY MONTANA COUNTY SUPERINTENDENTS, 1953-54

Number of Schools	Counties Reporting this No. of Elem. Schools	Total Number of Elementary Schools	Counties Reporting H.S.	Total Number of H.S.	Total Schools Supervised
1	14	14	14	14	28
2	8	16	8	16	32
3	4	12	5	15	27
4	3	12	2	8	20
5	1	5	1	5	10
6	1	6			7
7	1	7			7
Totals	32	72	30	58	130

The number of second class elementary schools in the various counties ranged from one to seven. Fourteen counties reported one such school, while one county reported seven. The total number of schools in this class supervised by the thirty-two county superintendents was seventy-two. Thirty county superintendents reported supervising a total of fifty-eight second class high schools. Fourteen reported one high school, and one reported five.

A first class district is one which has a population of eight thousand or more, employs a superintendent who has had at least five years' experience in public school work, and is administered by a board of seven trustees.⁶ In 1954 Montana had nine first class districts. Four county superintendents reported supervising elementary schools of the first class; five reported supervising high schools in this class.

TABLE VIII

DISTRIBUTION OF FIRST CLASS ELEMENTARY AND HIGH SCHOOLS SUPERVISED BY MONTANA COUNTY SUPERINTENDENTS 1953-54

Number of Schools	Counties Reporting Elem. Schools	Totals	Counties Reporting H.S.	Totals	Sum Total
1	2	2	4	4	6
2			1	2	2
3					0
4	1	4			4
5	1	5			5
Totals	4	11	5	6	17

⁶ Ibid., p. 5.

The fifty-one county superintendents who answered the questionnaire reported a total of 1259 schools which they supervised. This included the rural schools, and the elementary and high schools of first, second, and third class districts. The average number of schools per superintendent was 24.69. This was a marked decrease from the 1936 figure of 49.89.⁷ It must be noted here, however, that there are many schools, particularly in the first and second class districts which the county superintendents do not directly supervise, and hence, they did not mention them when answering the questionnaire.

This decrease in the total schools supervised has not been characterized by a corresponding decrease in either the number or scope of duties and responsibilities that are delegated to the county superintendent's office. Rather, the functions of leadership and service are assuming a more prominent and exacting role than ever.

Table IX, page 30, shows the distribution of the total number of schools supervised by the fifty-one county superintendents.

⁷ Kirkpatrick, op. cit., p. 19.

TABLE IX

DISTRIBUTION OF TOTAL NUMBER OF SCHOOLS SUPERVISED BY
MONTANA COUNTY SUPERINTENDENTS, 1953-54

Number of Schools	Number of Counties
0-10	8
11-20	15
21-30	13
31-40	9
41-50	4
51-60	1
61-70	0
71-80	1
Totals 1259	51

The number of schools supervised in each county ranged from two in one county to seventy-one in one county. The median was 22.92.

The county superintendent is required by law to visit every public school under his jurisdiction at least once every year.⁸ This gives him an opportunity to observe the teachers at work and to help solve

⁸ School Laws of Montana, Chapter 15, 1953, p. 34.

their problems through discussion and decision. There is no satisfactory substitute for classroom visitation; hence, the yearly visit to each school is a commendable duty. The word "visit," however, involves much more for the county official than merely taking a seat in the back of the classroom and watching the teacher and class in action. The School Laws of Montana state:

He shall at such visits carefully observe the conditions of the school, the mental and moral instruction given, methods employed by the teacher in teaching, training, and drill, the teachers' ability, and progress of the pupils. He shall advise and direct the teacher in regard to the instruction, classification, government, and discipline of the school, and the course of study. He shall keep a record of such visits and by memoranda indicate his judgment of the teacher's ability to teach and govern and the condition and progress of the school, which shall be open to inspection to any school trustee. During his visits to the schools of his county, the county superintendent shall consult with the trustees and clerks of all school districts upon all matters relating to the good and welfare of their schools, and shall instruct them, whenever necessary, in their duties relating to the reports to be made out by them⁹ and forwarded to him annually as the law require.

If the superintendent were to adhere strictly to the provisions of this law, he would give a minimum of one school day to each of the schools in his county.

⁹School Laws, loc. cit.

The great distances and poor road conditions in this state often make this an impossibility. A number of the rural schools are in isolated areas, and by the time the county superintendent has spent two or three hours reaching the school, the time allotted for the visit falls far short of that necessary to fulfill the duties required.

Despite the distances, roads, and other adverse conditions, thirty-one superintendents reported that they visited each school in their respective counties more than the one time required by law; some reported making frequent visits. Eighteen counties reported that the official visits were made to each school, but that more frequent visitation was impossible. Factors limiting the number of visits included the distances and roads already mentioned, adverse weather, excessive office work, and inadequate budgets. Six of these eighteen superintendents reported from twenty-five to thirty-seven schools to supervise. Two counties reported that the official was so recently appointed to the county superintendency that as yet no visits to schools had been made.

Of all the numerous and varied functions a county superintendent has to perform, none is more vital to keeping the schools moving forward than his work with the teaching staff. It has been said that if a county

superintendent did nothing more than secure capable teachers to fill vacant positions each year, he would be worth his salary several times over.¹⁰ Although the deplorable paucity of teachers has created a problem which affects the whole nation, it is the rural schools that have borne the brunt of the shortage. All too frequently rural school boards are forced to hire poorly qualified instructors or those with little or no experience. This condition necessitates a great deal more supervision on the part of the county superintendent. The Montana officials reported a total of 186 teachers with no teaching experience prior to the present school year. The major portion of these teachers was in the rural schools. Table X, page 34, gives the number of teachers in Montana with no previous experience.

10

Cooper and Fitzwater, op. cit., p. 358.

TABLE X

NUMBER OF MONTANA TEACHERS WITH NO EXPERIENCE REPORTED
BY THE COUNTY SUPERINTENDENTS, 1953-54

Number of Inexperienced Teachers	Number of Counties Reporting	Total Number of Inexperienced Teachers
0	9	0
1	8	8
2	13	26
3	3	9
4	2	8
5	2	10
6	2	12
7	3	21
8	2	16
9	0	0
10	4	40
11	1	11
12	1	12
13	1	13
Totals	51	186

Supervision of teachers who have had no experience is one of the most pressing duties of the county superintendent. Frequently these inexperienced teachers are very young - recent graduates of a two-year course in teacher training. That such teachers need individual help from

the county superintendent is beyond question. They look to him not only for professional advise and assistance but for the inspiration and courage needed to keep their schools abreast of modern educational levels. It is not alone the inexperienced rural instructors, however, who rely on the county superintendent. Every teacher, regardless of her years in the profession, occasionally encounters classroom situations where the advice of a capable professional counselor is needed.

To carry on this demanding program of service and assistance to the teachers, the county superintendent should be able to spend the greater part of his time with his teachers in the field. Such is not the case in Montana. The ever-increasing technicalities of the office work make it almost impossible for any county official to devote the rightful amount of time to supervision of schools.

Table XI, page 36, shows the percentage of time spent in the field by the county superintendents in this state.

TABLE XI

PERCENTAGE OF TIME SPENT IN FIELD BY MONTANA
SUPERINTENDENTS, 1953-54

Per cent of Time	Number of Counties Reporting
1-10	16
11-20	11
21-30	11
31-40	5
41-50	3
51-60	1
61-70	2
Not Answered	2
Total	51

The table shows that only three superintendents spent more than 50 per cent of their time in the field. The majority spent 30 per cent or less. The questionnaire revealed that the superintendents who spent the least amount of such time had the greatest number of inexperienced teachers; i.e., thirty-seven superintendents who spent less than one third of their time in the field were responsible for the supervision of 139 teachers who had no previous teaching experience. This was almost three-fourths of the total number of inexperienced teachers in the state

at the time this study was made. Fifty-five of these teachers were in counties where the superintendent spends 10 per cent or less of his time in the field.

To facilitate administration and to establish good human relationships, the superintendents held meetings of all the rural teachers in the county. One superintendent reported holding six such meetings a year while another reported that he augmented the meetings by holding small group sessions - usually in the evening. That the county-wide meetings were well attended was indicated by the fact that forty-six of the county superintendents reported that 75 per cent or more of their rural teachers were present at each meeting.

Occasionally the county superintendents met with all of the district superintendents in their counties, and fourteen officials reported that they held an annual meeting for all school trustees in their respective counties.

Table XII, page 38, shows the number of meetings held for rural teachers by counties and the number of meetings held with district superintendents.

TABLE XII

NUMBER OF COUNTY-WIDE MEETINGS FOR RURAL TEACHERS AND
DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENTS HELD BY MONTANA COUNTY
SUPERINTENDENTS, 1953-54

Number of Meetings for Rural Teachers	Number of Counties Reporting	Number of Meetings With District Supt.	Number of Counties
0	2	0	15
1	13	1	13
2	17	2	5
3	8	3	2
4	2		
5	4	Not Answered	16
6	1		<u>51</u>
Not Answered	<u>4</u>		
	51		

One of the major stumbling blocks to strengthening the services of the county superintendent has been the lack of adequate professional and clerical staff assistance. At the time of this study there were eleven Montana counties which reported no office assistance of any kind. There were 161 schools being supervised by the county superintendents in these counties. Two of the counties had thirty-four schools each under the jurisdiction of the superintendent. Nine counties with

a total of 165 schools had office help in the form of a part-time clerk only. One county in this category reported a total of forty-three schools while another listed thirty-four.

The most common form of office assistance, as reported by nineteen superintendents, was the full-time clerk. County superintendents with this kind of help had a total of 505 schools under their supervision. In this class one county alone had forty-six schools.

Table XIII, page 40, shows the number of Montana counties having clerical assistance and the number of schools supervised by the county superintendents in these counties.

Seven county superintendents have the assistance of a full-time deputy only. A total of 172 schools was reported by these counties.

One county with forty-seven schools reported the employment of two full-time deputies. Another county with forty-three schools had a full-time deputy plus a full-time clerk. There were two counties which employed full-time deputies plus part-time clerks. A total of ninety-five schools was reported by these two superintendents. One county had a full-time deputy, plus a part-time deputy, plus a part-time clerk. This

county listed the greatest number of schools, a total of seventy-one, that any Montana superintendent had under his jurisdiction.

TABLE XIII

COUNTIES WITH CLERICAL ASSISTANCE FOR COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT, AND NUMBER OF SCHOOLS SUPERVISED DURING 1953-54

Type of Assistance	Number of Counties	Number of Schools Supervised
Full-time clerk	19	505
Part-time clerk	<u>9</u>	<u>165</u>
Totals	28	670
No Assistance	<u>11</u>	<u>161</u>
Totals	39	831

Table XIV shows the number of counties in this state that have deputy assistance and the number of schools under the supervision of the county superintendents in those counties.

TABLE XIV

MONTANA COUNTIES WITH DEPUTY AND CLERICAL ASSISTANCE
FOR THE COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT AND NUMBER OF SCHOOLS
SUPERVISED DURING 1953-54

Type of Assistance	Number of Counties	Number of Schools Supervised
Full-time deputy	7	172
Two full-time deputies	1	47
Full-time deputy plus full-time clerk	1	43
Full-time deputy plus part-time clerk	2	95
Full-time deputy plus part-time deputy plus part-time clerk	1	71
Totals	12	428

The School Laws of Montana state, "The salaries of deputies and assistants shall be fixed by a board of county commissioners in an amount not to exceed ninety per cent of the county superintendent of schools."¹¹ Thus, a maximum salary for staff and clerical assistance is set, but no minimum is mentioned. The salaries of the full-time deputies ranged from a high of \$3466.80 for two to \$2260.80 for two others. The highest salary paid a full-time clerk was \$3062.40; the lowest was \$1050.00. Table XV, page 43, shows the distribution of salaries of deputies and clerks.

¹¹

School Laws of Montana, 1953, p. 37.

TABLE XV

DISTRIBUTION OF SALARIES OF DEPUTIES AND CLERKS IN
COUNTY SUPERINTENDENTS' OFFICES IN MONTANA 1953-54

SALARIES	NUMBER OF DEPUTIES	NUMBER OF FULL-TIME CLERKS
\$1000-1499		1
1500-1999		5
2000-2499	3	10
2500-2999	8	3
3000-3499	2	1
Totals	13	30

One county reported a part-time deputy at a salary of \$2163.60 while eleven counties indicated that they employed part-time clerks. The salaries of these clerks ranged from \$300 for one county to \$1500 for another.

CHAPTER VI

PROFESSIONAL STATUS OF THE COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT

In 1880 no state specifically required county superintendents to be graduates of colleges or normal schools, and none required any definite amount of experience, although some required him to be "experienced in the arts of teaching."¹ Remarkable progress has been made within the past few decades, however, in establishing the educational requirements for the county administrator. Eleven states now require five or more years of college, while eighteen states require four years. Twelve states have minimum educational requirements of less than four years of college preparation. Five states, Georgia, Florida, Minnesota, New Mexico, and South Carolina, have no educational qualifications.² The office of county superintendent does not exist in Delaware or Nevada.³

Montana county superintendents are required to have

¹
Shirley Cooper and Charles Fitzwater, County School Administration (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1954), p. 157.

²
Shirley Cooper, editor, "The County Superintendent of Schools in the United States," Yearbook of the National Education Association Department of Rural Education (Washington, D. C.: the Department, 1950), pp. 42-45.

³
Ibid., p. 31.

two years of college, a certificate obtained by college graduation or by passing a special examination, and three years' teaching experience.⁴ The scholastic preparation of Montana's county superintendents who answered the questionnaire is shown in Table XVI.

TABLE XVI

SCHOLASTIC PREPARATION OF MONTANA COUNTY SUPERINTENDENTS
IN TERMS OF QUARTERS OF COLLEGE TRAINING

Quarters of College Training	Number of Superintendents
6	6
7	8
8	4
9	10
10	4
11	1
12	10
13	1
14	1
15	2
16	1
Not Answered	2
No Training*	1
Total	<u>51</u>

*County Manager who acts as ex-officio county superintendent.

⁴
Ibid., p. 179.

Six superintendents reported a minimum of two years, or six quarters of training. Ten reported having completed nine quarters, the equivalent of three years of college work; ten more possessed the bachelor's degree. Two superintendents had from one to three quarters of graduate credit, and three had their Master's degrees.

The fact that the county superintendents have taken the initiative in securing a greater amount of educational preparation than specified by state standards is evidence of the growing professional status of the office holder.

Another of the contributing factors to the development of the county superintendency as a profession has been the establishment of certification standards for the position. All states have certification requirements for teachers, and in many instances one or more of the certificates qualifying a teacher may qualify a county school official as well, no other or additional college courses being required.⁵ Such is the case in Montana.

Prior to 1949 four types of state certificates were issued in this state.⁶ They were the Elementary State,

⁵ Cooper and Fitzwater, op. cit., p. 161.

⁶ School Laws of Montana, Chapter 102, 1937 p. 67.

Elementary Life, Secondary State, and Secondary Life. The Elementary State Certificate was valid in grades one to nine inclusive. It was granted to persons having completed ninety-six quarter hours of academic work of college grade, and thirty-five months of teaching experience, or to diploma graduates of a standard normal school or college. After the completion of thirty-six months of teaching in the state and eight more hours of college work, a teacher could secure an Elementary Life Certificate.

The Secondary State Certificate was valid in grades six to twelve inclusive. It was granted for six years to holders of standard Bachelor's degrees who could show a minimum of fifteen semester hours in education. The holder of this certificate could secure a Secondary Life Certificate by showing satisfactory evidence that he had completed thirty-six months of teaching and eight quarter hours above his Bachelor's degree.

In 1949 a law was passed which changed the types of certificates issued to Montana teachers.⁷ The kinds of certificates now available are Elementary School, Secondary School, Junior College, Administrative and Supervisory, Vocational and Emergency.

⁷ School Laws of Montana, Chapter 102, 1949, p. 95.

There are three types of Elementary School Certificates: Standard, Advanced, and Special. The Elementary School Standard Certificate qualifies the holder to teach in any public school of the state and is issued to any diploma graduate who has completed a two year course in elementary education at one of the units of the University of Montana. The Elementary School Advanced Certificate qualifies the holder to teach in any public school, or, when so designated, in any junior secondary school, or in the first three years of any public six-year secondary school. It is issued to any person who holds a degree of a unit of the University of Montana showing that he has completed a four year course in elementary education. The Elementary School Special Certificate is given to those persons who qualify for kindergarten teaching, or teaching in fine arts, music, physical education, or other special fields.

There are also three kinds of secondary school certificates. The Secondary School Standard General Certificate is granted to any person who holds a degree from any unit of the University of Montana showing that the holder has completed a four year course of secondary school education. The academic field or fields for which the holder has been prepared is indicated on the

certificate, and those academic subjects or related fields may be taught in grades seven through twelve. The Secondary School Standard Special Certificate qualifies any person to teach in special fields in any public high school or elementary school. This certificate is granted to a person who has a degree from a unit of the University of Montana showing completion of an approved four year course in the special field or fields for which the application for certification is made. The Secondary Advanced Certificate may be secured by any person who is the holder of one of the secondary certificates described above and who, in addition, has completed one year of graduate work at any unit of the University of Montana of a kind and character approved by the state board of education.

Teaching certificates may also be issued to teachers trained in institutions other than the units of the University of Montana. The law specifies that the state superintendent of public instruction may grant a certificate to any holder of a diploma or degree of any accredited institution of equivalent rank and standing of this or any other state, provided the applicant has completed a course in teacher education essentially equivalent in content to that required by any of the units of the

University of Montana.

The duration and renewal of certificates is also prescribed by law:

All certificates shall bear the date of the issue and, with the exception of emergency certificates which shall be valid for one year, shall expire after the first issue to any person two years from July 1 nearest such date of issue and may be renewed for periods of not more than five years in accordance with rules and regulations adopted by the state board of education.⁹

The types of certificates held by the county superintendents in Montana are shown in Table XVII, page 51.

⁸

School Laws of Montana, Chapter 25, 1953, p. 91.

⁹

Ibid, p. 93.

TABLE XVII

CERTIFICATES HELD BY MONTANA COUNTY SUPERINTENDENTS,
1953-54

Type of Certificate	Number of Superintendents
Elementary State	6
Elementary Life	35
Secondary State	1
Secondary Life	6
Elem. School Standard	2
Elem. School Advanced	0
Sec. School Standard	1
Sec. School Advanced	0
Sec. Emergency	1
Total	<u>52</u>
Duplicates	<u>-3</u>
Total	49
Not Answered	1
No Certificate	<u>1</u>
Total	51

Six superintendents reported that they held the Elementary State Certificate. One of these six also held the Secondary State. Thirty-five indicated that they had the Elementary Life. Of the six superintendents holding the Secondary Life, two mentioned that their

certificate was good in grades one through twelve; two others reported holding the Elementary Life, also.

The Elementary School Standard was held by two of the superintendents and the Secondary School Standard by one. One superintendent reported holding a Secondary Emergency Certificate. Although one superintendent held a master's degree, he did not indicate whether or not he had any type of certificate. The ex-officio superintendent had no certificate.

Although Montana has a certification requirement, it must be admitted that the certification standards that teachers must meet are not the most satisfactory for school administrators, including county superintendents. Now that there is an administrator's credential available in this state,¹⁰ it seems only reasonable to expect the county school officials to meet the requirements for obtaining one.

According to Cooper and Fitzwater, "The chief value of the administrative certificate is that it becomes a means by which a state can designate the amount and broad areas of professional education its county superintendents ought to have."¹¹

¹⁰

School Laws of Montana, op. cit., p. 93.

¹¹

Cooper and Fitzwater, op. cit., p. 162.

Most states require previous professional experience of county superintendents. While there is a great variation in these requirements, there is widespread evidence that some experience in classroom teaching is regarded as an important qualification. Most states, including our own, require teaching experience only; others specify previous administrative experience as a requirement. Still others require¹² either teaching or administrative experience.

Returns from the questionnaire indicated that Montana's superintendents had exceeded the three years teaching experience required, and many of them had taught in more than one type of school. Table XVIII, page 54, shows the teaching experience of Montana's county superintendents as reported in the questionnaire.

¹²
Ibid., p. 165.

TABLE XVIII

TEACHING EXPERIENCE OF MONTANA COUNTY SUPERINTENDENTS,
1953-54

Type of School	Number of Supts.	Years Experience	Total Number Supts.
Rural	46	1-5	24
		1-10	12
		11-15	5
		16-20	3
		21-25	2
		26-30	0
		Total	46
Elementary	40	1-5	23
		6-10	11
		11-15	2
		16-20	2
		21-25	1
		26-30	1
Total	40		
High School	15	1-5	10
		6-10	2
		11-15	0
		16-20	2
		21-25	0
		26-30	0
		31-35	1
Total	15		
Total Number of Years Taught			738*
Number of County Superintendents			50**
Average number of years per superintendent			14.76

*Three superintendents report a total of eighteen years of college experience.

**The ex officio superintendent has had no teaching experience.

Forty-six superintendents reported teaching experience in rural schools. Only four indicated that they spent as little as one year in schools of this type. At the other extreme, one official listed a total of twenty-five years of experience in rural schools.

Forty administrators reported from one to thirty years of experience in elementary schools. The average was 6.08 years.

Fifteen of the superintendents had experience in high school teaching. Their years in this field ranged from one year for three superintendents to thirty-two years for one. The average was 7.6 years.

Three of the county supervisors listed experience as college teachers. One had taught two years at this higher level; a second had taught three years; and the third listed thirteen years.

A few of Montana's county superintendents reported a background both of teaching and administrative experience. However, the number with administrative experience, other than that gained as a county superintendent, was almost negligible when compared with the number having had teaching experience. Thirty-nine superintendents reported no administrative experience

outside of their present position. Of the twelve who did indicate administrative experience, four had served as elementary principals, and one had served as a combination high school and elementary principal. One superintendent had served three years as a supervisor, and two had been district superintendents. Of these two, one had had twenty-five years experience and the other four years. Five superintendents indicated experience as deputy county superintendents. One superintendent reported four years experience as a county superintendent in a state other than Montana. Table XIX shows the kinds of supervisory experience, other than their present position, reported by the Montana county superintendents.

TABLE XIX

SUPERVISORY EXPERIENCE OF MONTANA COUNTY SUPERINTENDENTS
OTHER THAN PRESENT POSITION

Elem. Prin.	H.S. Prin.	Supervisor	Dist. Supt.	Deputy Co. Supt.
5*	1*	1	2	5

*One superintendent had served as a combination high school and elementary principal.

The voluntary efforts county superintendents are making to improve the quality of their leadership is becoming an increasingly important factor in up-grading this office. One of the most significant of these activities is participation in professional organizations.

The county superintendents in this state reported a number of professional organizations in which they held membership. Forty-eight were members of the Montana County Superintendent's Association; forty-two indicated that they belonged to the Montana Education Association and to the National Education Association. Twenty superintendents reported membership in the Rural Education Department of the National Education Association. Six were members of Delta Kappa Gamma, the honorary education sorority; three belonged to the International Council for the Improvement of Reading Instruction; and three others reported membership in the Montana Association of School Administrators. Table XX shows the professional organizations to which the county superintendents belonged and the number of officials holding membership in each organization.

TABLE XX

MEMBERSHIP OF MONTANA COUNTY SUPERINTENDENTS
IN PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, 1953-54

Name of Organization	Number of Superintendents
Co. Supts. Association	48
M.E.A. and N.E.A.	42
Rural Ed. Dept. of N.E.A.	20
Delta Kappa Gamma	6
Int. Council Imp. Reading Instr.	3
Mont. Assoc. School Administrators	3
Nat'l Society for Study of Educa.	1
Classroom Teachers' Local	1
Mont. School Board Association	1
American Federation of Teachers	1

With increased participation of county superintendents in their state and national organizations, more and better ways to serve the educational interests of the people will be found, and the upsweep of county educational leadership will continue.

CHAPTER V

TERM OF OFFICE, TENURE, AND METHOD OF ELECTION

Montana's county superintendents are elected by popular vote every four years. The superintendents of nineteen other states have this same length of term. Nine states prescribe a two-year term of office, and six states have no set number of years. Five states specify a range of from one to five years. Of the remaining states two indicate three-year terms, one specifies a one-year term, and in three states, a two-year term is applicable for some counties and a four-year term for others.¹

These short terms, coupled with popular election, constitute a serious barrier to continuity of educational leadership. It takes time for any administrative leader to develop a sound and smoothly functioning program, and he must have the assurance of a relatively stable tenure in his position if he is to do his most effective work. The county superintendent should be able to look forward to an uninterrupted period of service as long as he provides leadership of commendable quality.

¹ Cooper and Fitzwater, County School Administration (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1954), p. 154.

The tenure of the fifty-one superintendents who answered the questionnaire ranged from twenty-five years for one official to one-half year for two others. These two were among six superintendents who had been appointed to the office since the last election in 1950. Eleven of the superintendents were completing their first term of office. The number of years that the county superintendents have held office in Montana is shown in Table XXI.

TABLE XXI

TENURE OF MONTANA COUNTY SUPERINTENDENTS

Years in Office	No. of Supts. Reporting
Under 1	2
1-4	15
5-8	18
9-12	10
13-16	1
17-20	4
21-24	0
25-28	<u>1</u>
Total	51

In this state county superintendents must file for election every four years. Historically, the selection of the county superintendent by vote of the people has been more widely used than any other method. Today a total of twenty-four states use this method, eighteen of them exclusively. In these twenty-four states the number of county superintendents elected by popular vote is more than half the total for the entire country. The geographic distribution of the states where election is by popular vote merits observation. None is located east of Illinois, or north of the Mason-Dixon Line. In twenty-two states the appointive method is used exclusively. Generally, in those states in which the superintendents are appointed, the terms of office are for a longer period than in the states where the superintendents are elected.²

There are a number of instances among states using the popular vote method where plans have been adopted to help keep the selection of county superintendents from becoming involved in partisan politics. Only six states provide for election on a non-partisan ballot.

²
Ibid., p. 144-48.

The Montana superintendents were given an opportunity in the questionnaire to express their preference for the method of selection for the office and also to state reasons for their choice. Four methods of selection were listed: partisan ballot, nonpartisan ballot, appointment by a county board, and appointment by the state department. Forty-two superintendents indicated the nonpartisan type of selection as their first choice. The second most popular choice was the method now used, the partisan ballot. Appointment by a county board was the superintendents' third choice, while appointment by the state department was fourth.

These data indicated that the popular vote method of selection was preferred. However, the superintendents definitely stated that politics and education should be divorced completely and that the nonpartisan ballot was desirable.

The four methods of selection and the choices of the county superintendents in this state as determined by the questionnaire are shown in Table XXII, page 63.

TABLE XXII

METHOD OF SELECTION PREFERRED BY MONTANA COUNTY
SUPERINTENDENTS, 1953-54

Method of Selection	Choice of Superintendents				
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	No Answer
Partisan Ballot	5	26	3	6	11
Nonpartisan Ballot	42	3	3	0	3
Appointment by County Board	2	5	19	7	18
Appointment by State Dept.	2	3	8	20	18

CHAPTER VI

SALARY AND OTHER PROBLEMS OF THE COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT

Every school administrator has a wide range of problems, but those confronting the county superintendent are varied enough and sufficiently important to challenge the best efforts of any educational leader. They range from inadequate salary and lack of office assistance to overlapping of bus routes and irate parents. Despite the fact that he is overworked by a multiplicity of duties, the county administrator must strive constantly for harmony not only with his teaching personnel but with the voting public and the board of county commissioners.

In return for his innumerable services, his attention to responsibilities, and his public relations program he receives a salary hardly commensurate with his worth to the county as a whole. This is one of the most serious shortcomings of the office.

There are great differences among the states in salaries paid county superintendents. During the 1947-48 school year, eight states had one or more county superintendents with salaries of \$10,000 or above.

Twenty-four states reported a total of 252 county superintendents receiving \$6,000 or more. Every state in the highest salary group has set a minimum requirement of four or more years of college education, and nine specify a definite number of semester hours of graduate or undergraduate work in education. Ten of the states select the county superintendent by appointment rather than by election, and nine states in this high salary class select their superintendents for four-year terms or for indefinite periods of tenure.

At the other extreme, during the 1947-48 school year five states had superintendents paid \$900 or less; one state (Colorado) had a part-time superintendent who was paid \$100 a year. Twelve states had a total of 191 superintendents receiving less than \$2000. All twelve selected the superintendent by popular vote; only three stipulated four years of college as a required minimum; and seven elected their superintendents for two-year¹ terms.

The salary of a Montana county superintendent is based on the population and taxable valuation of his respective county in accordance with the schedule shown in Table XXIII, page 66.

¹ Shirley Cooper, editor, "The County Superintendent of Schools in the United States," Yearbook of the National Education Association Department of Rural Education (Washington: the Department, 1950), p. 49.

TABLE XKIII

SALARY SCHEDULE OF MONTANA COUNTY SUPERINTENDENTS

Population of County	Salary Col. A	Taxable Valuation of County	Salary Col. B
Below 3,000	\$1,310	Below \$2,000,000	\$1,310
3,000 to 3,999	1,358	\$ 2,000,000 to \$ 2,999,999	\$1,358
4,000 to 4,999	1,406	3,000,000 to 3,999,999	1,406
5,000 to 5,999	1,454	4,000,000 to 4,999,999	1,454
6,000 to 6,999	1,502	5,000,000 to 5,999,999	1,502
7,000 to 7,999	1,550	6,000,000 to 6,999,999	1,550
8,000 to 8,999	1,598	7,000,000 to 7,999,999	1,598
9,000 to 9,999	1,646	8,000,000 to 9,999,999	1,646
10,000 to 12,499	1,694	10,000,000 to 11,999,999	1,694
12,000 to 14,999	1,742	12,000,000 to 13,999,999	1,742
15,000 to 17,499	1,790	14,000,000 to 15,999,999	1,790
17,500 to 19,999	1,838	16,000,000 to 17,999,999	1,838
20,000 to 24,999	1,886	18,000,000 to 19,999,999	1,886
25,000 to 29,999	1,934	20,000,000 to 22,499,999	1,934
30,000 to 39,999	1,982	22,500,000 to 24,999,999	1,982
40,000 to 49,999	2,030	25,000,000 to 29,999,999	2,030
50,000 to 59,999	2,078	30,000,000 to 34,999,999	2,078
60,000 to 69,999	2,126	35,000,000 to 39,999,999	2,126
70,000 to 79,999	2,174	40,000,000 to 44,999,999	2,174
80,000 and over	2,222	45,000,000 to 49,999,999	2,222
		50,000,000 to 54,999,999	2,270
		55,000,000 to 59,999,999	2,318

The total salary paid to county superintendents is the sum of the salary shown in Column A based on population, when added to the salary shown in Column B based on taxable valuation. Beginning in January 1954, the minimum salary to be paid under the foregoing schedule

is to be not less than \$2908² per year.

There is a wide range among the salaries paid to county superintendents in this state. Five officials reported receiving the lowest salary of \$2368 while only one superintendent received the top salary, \$3852. Forty-eight of the officials were paid less than \$3500, and thirty-seven of these received less than \$3000. The median for the fifty-one Montana superintendents reporting was \$2776.92. The figures indicated that in many cases the county superintendent received less than the poorest paid teacher in his county. The range of salaries paid to Montana's county superintendents is shown in Table XXIV, page 68.

² School Laws of Montana, Chapter 15, 1953, p. 33.

TABLE XXIV

SALARIES OF MONTANA COUNTY SUPERINTENDENTS,
1953-54

Salaries	Number of Superintendents
\$2300-2499	13
2500-2699	7
2700-2899	13
2900-3099	8
3100-3299	5
3300-3499	2
3500-3699	1
3700-3899	1
Total	<u>50*</u>

Although there has been a marked enhancement of the salary status of Montana's superintendents since

*The ex-officio superintendent is not included as he received a County Manager's salary.

1936 when the median was given as \$1904.16,³ it must be considered inadequate when compared with the 1950 national median of \$4551.⁴

The question arises: Does more training insure a better salary? In Montana it does not. To check this a table was set up showing the salary of the county superintendent in relation to his professional training.

³ Rachel Fay Firkpatrick, "Study of the Present Status of the County Superintendent in Montana," (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Montana, Missoula, 1936), p. 61.

⁴ American Association of School Administrators, The American School Superintendency, Thirtieth Yearbook, (Washington, D. C.: the Association, a department of the National Education Association, 1952), p. 460.

TABLE XXV

SALARY AND PROFESSIONAL TRAINING OF MONTANA COUNTY
SUPERINTENDENTS, 1953-54

Salary	No. of Quarter's Training by Supts.				
	6-8 (2 yrs.)	9-11 (3 yrs.)	12 No.B.A.	12-14 (B.A.)	15-16 (M.A.)*
\$2300-2499	6	5	0	2	0
2500-2699	3	0	0	3	1
2700-2899	5	5	1	2	0
2900-3099	3	3	0	2	0
3100-3200	2	2	0	1	0
3300-3499	1	0	0	0	1
3500-3699	0	0	0	0	1
3700-3899	0	0	0	1	0
Totals	20	15	1	11	3

The figures revealed that the highest salaried superintendent held a Bachelor's degree, and the next highest had a Master's degree. It was interesting to note that the third highest salary interval was shared by a superintendent with a Master's degree and one

*Years are approximate in terms of quarters of training reported.

holding a two-year diploma. Another superintendent with a Master's degree was in the second lowest salary interval, while two superintendents with Bachelor's degrees were among the lowest paid officials. One superintendent in the third lowest interval reported the equivalent of four years of training, but she did not have a Bachelor's degree.

From this tabulation it is evident that the salary paid a county superintendent in this state is little incentive for further educational preparation on the part of the individual himself. No one can expect a county school system to attract and hold the most capable administrators unless the position offers a reasonable salary.

Men do not seem to be attracted to the office in this state, and the salary probably has some bearing on this situation. Of the fifty-one superintendents reporting, only six were men, and one of these was the ex officio superintendent. Two others were appointed to the position within the last year - both succeeding women.

The problem of providing an adequate salary for the county superintendent should be the direct concern not only of the superintendent himself and the lawmakers,

but also of the people of the county and the state as well.

By means of the questionnaire a list of other problems most pressing to Montana's county superintendents was compiled. The most frequently mentioned problem was lack of qualified assistance and office help. Eighteen of the officials submitted problems in this field. Other problems receiving high frequency of mention were routine office work, inadequate budget (including insufficient allowance for mileage), and lack of qualified teachers. The most pressing problems of Montana's superintendents and the number of officials who reported these problems are shown in Table XXVI, page 73.

TABLE XXVI

PROBLEMS REPORTED BY MONTANA COUNTY SUPERINTENDENTS

Problems	Number of Superintendents
Lack of assistance; office help	18
Inadequate teacher supply	13
Routine office work	11
Insufficient budget	9
Better qualifications for incumbents	5
Public relations	4

The superintendents also mentioned other problems such as transportation, tuition, in-service training for teachers, lack of cooperation on the part of county commissioners, and need for more backing from the state department and school boards.

Nine of the superintendents indicated that they would like more power in the hiring and discharging of teachers. Five stated they would like time off to further their education.

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to ascertain the present status and problems of the county superintendent in Montana. Data from a similar study made by Rachel Fay Kirkpatrick in 1936 and from the Thirtieth Year-book of the National Education Association, Department of Rural Education, have been used to make comparisons and to give a clearer picture of the present situation.

The office of county superintendent has been in existence in Montana for about ninety years. At first no qualifications were indicated. Through the years the office has gained status, and a constant effort has been made to professionalize the position.

Although all of the schools within the county are under the jurisdiction of the county superintendent, the rural schools are his primary concern. In the fifty-one counties answering the questionnaire the superintendents reported supervising 932 rural schools, 180 village elementary and high schools in third class districts, 180 schools in districts of the second class

and 17 schools in districts of the first class. This was a total of 1259 schools. The county administrators, who must give special attention to the teachers with no previous experience, reported 186 inexperienced teachers in the state during the present year.

Routine office work kept the county superintendents so occupied that many of them were unable to devote sufficient time to work in the field with their teachers. Thirty-eight of the officials spent 30 per cent or less of their time supervising their schools; only three spent more than 50 per cent. To offset this lack of time spent in the field, many of the superintendents held meetings of all of their rural teachers, and many met with the district superintendents in their county.

Lack of staff assistance and office help was one of the major problems of the county superintendent. Only twelve counties had full-time deputies; nineteen employed full-time clerks; nine had part-time clerks; and eleven reported no assistance of any kind. Four of the counties employing deputies also had clerical assistance. The salaries of the deputy county superintendents are set by law.

The professional status of the county superintendent has been raised through the establishment of educational

requirements and certification standards. All of Montana's county school officials (with the exception of the ex officio superintendent) had at least six quarters of training, the equivalent of two years of college. The majority had furthered their education and had more training than the minimum number of years required. The median for scholastic preparation was nine quarters, or three years, of professional training.

The county superintendents held teaching certificates issued by the state. The most common among the administrators was the Elementary Life Certificate, held by thirty-five superintendents. No county supervisor reported holding an Administrator's Certificate.

Three years' experience as a classroom teacher is a prerequisite to becoming a county superintendent. The incumbents had exceeded this minimum, and many of them had taught in more than one type of school. The average number of teaching years per superintendent was 14.76.

Although a background of administrative experience would be beneficial to the officials, only twelve of the county superintendents indicated previous experience in this field.

Montana's county superintendents held memberships in a number of professional organizations. Through this medium they were able to improve their educational

leadership which should result ultimately in an upgrading of the status of the office.

Every four years the voters of this state elect their county superintendents on a partisan ballot. Through the questionnaire it was determined that the superintendents themselves preferred a nonpartisan ballot. Many stated that politics and education should have no connection. As a group they were not in favor of the appointive system because they believed the selection of the official should be in the hands of the voting public. The tenure of office in this state was not long; the median was 6.89 years, the equivalent of slightly better than one and a half terms.

The county superintendents in Montana felt that they were underpaid. Very often they received a lower salary for twelve month's work than a beginning teacher did for nine. The median salary was \$2776.92. The amount of education and experience of the superintendent had little bearing on his salary. Those with a two year diploma and those with a Master's degree could be found in the same salary bracket.

The office of county superintendent in Montana was not attractive to men. Only six of the fifty-one

superintendents who answered the questionnaire were men.

Although the low salary scale was a major problem of the county school administrator, he had many more in the form of lack of staff assistance and office help, an inadequate supply of teachers, excessive office work, and an insufficient budget.

Some superintendents would like more power in the hiring and discharging of teachers; others indicated they would like an occasional leave of absence so that they might have an opportunity to further their education.

The future of the county superintendency as a professional position in Montana can be predicted only in the light of its past. This study of the present status of the county school administrator revealed many limitations and shortcomings which will have to be corrected before the office and its personnel can attain the full stature which the importance of the position warrants.

One of the major weaknesses of the office in this state is its involvement in partisan politics. A school administrator whose chief concern is the capable supervision of education in his county should not have to identify himself with a political party every four years

and lose time that is already at a premium by attending rallies, making speeches, and pretending, for a time, to become a politician. The schools suffer because the attention of their supervisor is elsewhere; the county superintendent suffers because his status as an educational leader is weakened.

The present incumbents agreed that the method of their selection should be democratic, yet completely divorced from partisan politics. Their appointment either by a county board or by the state department was not recommended by the Montana officials. The first method would necessitate the election of a county board by popular vote, and the board, in turn, would appoint the county superintendent. Again the nonpartisan ballot would be essential if political pressures are to be eliminated. Appointment at the state level would place the county superintendent as a representative of the people too far removed from their control. The remedy lies in the nonpartisan ballot. The institution of this ballot would require no radical change in the present method of selection. States using this method have achieved a large measure of success, and Montana could well benefit by their example.

A second weakness of the position is the low academic

and certification standards of the personnel. The fault lies not with the county superintendents who have very definitely met the requirements prescribed by law but rather with the legislators who set the standards and who have not raised them to a par with those required for other administrators. A county school supervisor should have at the least professional training equal to that of the teachers and superintendents under his jurisdiction. Under present conditions it is not uncommon for a county superintendent with two years of college training to have a teacher with a Master's degree under his supervision. After 1954 anyone signing a contract to the position of district superintendent, elementary or secondary principal, or supervisor must have the Administrator's Certificate, unless after that date he stays on in the same administrative position he held on July 1, 1954.

It is only reasonable to expect a county superintendent to have the kind of professional training which will prepare him for the realities of the situation he will encounter while holding his administrative position. Thus, he, too, should be required to hold an administrator's certificate.

On the other hand, the county superintendents are not paid a salary sufficient to warrant the acquisition

of more professional training. The salary scale is so low that those teachers who possess a Master's degree are not interested in running for the office. If the county superintendents would receive a salary comparable to that of a district superintendent, it would be only natural to assume that an up-grading of certification standards would follow.

Under the present system the county superintendent is able to spend only a small percentage of his time in the field. His supervisory duties often have to take second place to the routine office work. Every superintendent should have a full-time clerk and, where necessary, the assistance of a full-time deputy. Also, allowances should be made for a reasonable salary to attract qualified staff and clerical help.

Still another shortcoming of the office is the low mileage rate accorded the county superintendents. They are expected to provide their own transportation, and many superintendents reported that the seven cents per mile allowed them barely paid the gas and oil expense.

By means of the questionnaire it was determined that many of Montana's county school officials lack adequate office facilities. It is not too much to

expect this educational leader to have sufficient room for private counseling purposes as well as adequate space for library and audio-visual aid equipment, exhibits, and instructional materials.

County superintendents are unable to attend school to improve their educational status while they are in office. Hence, it is recommended that some provision be made whereby the office holder might be given an occasional leave of absence for the purpose of furthering his professional training.

This study suggests topics for further investigation. Among them are: in-service training for county superintendents; detailed survey of the duties and responsibilities of the office including budgets, reports to the state department and the like; the county superintendent's role as a public relations officer; and an analysis of common legal problems confronting the county superintendent.

The role of the county superintendent in the educational scene is an important and vital one. His past record of achievement in educational leadership has been remarkably good under existing conditions. The present interest in improvement of conditions affecting education and its leaders promises to pave the way for advancements

of great import. By getting in stride with these advancements the county superintendent can strengthen his status and assure himself a place among the educational leaders of the state.

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APPENDIX

32 Ravalli
Missoula, Montana
February 27, 1954

Dear County Superintendent:

I am making a study of the present status of and the problems faced by the county superintendent in Montana. This study has the approval of the State Department of Public Instruction at Helena, the president of the Montana Association of County Superintendents, and the School of Education at Montana State University. The questionnaire, a copy of which is enclosed, is being sent to all Montana county superintendents.

The data, as reported by the county superintendents, will be tabulated and analyzed. You may rest assured that your anonymity will be fully protected. No names will be used in any of the tabulation or in reports of this study.

A summary of this study will be available. If you desire a copy, please sign your name and address in the spaces provided in the lower left-hand corner below.

I sincerely solicit your co-operation in this study and ask that you fill out the questionnaire as accurately, completely, and promptly as possible. It may be returned in the enclosed self-addressed envelope.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours truly,

Neal G. Sullivan

Name _____

Address _____

QUESTIONNAIRE

Name of Superintendent _____ County _____

A. Certification and Scholastic Training

1. Number of quarters of college training _____
2. Do you hold a two year diploma? Yes ___ No ___
3. Do you hold a degree? Bachelor's _____
Master's _____
4. What type of certificate do you hold? _____

B. Experience (list number of years)

1. As a teacher, rural elementary _____
town or city elementary _____
(1-8) _____
high school (9-12) _____
college _____

C. Membership in Professional Organizations (check those to which you belong)

1. _____ M.E.A. and N.E.A.
2. _____ County Superintendents' Association
3. _____ Rural Education Department of N.E.A.
4. _____ Others (name them)
5. _____

D. Supervision

1. Indicate below the number of schools of each kind which you supervise:

Rural One teacher	Rural Two teacher	Rural Three teacher	Rural More than three teachers

Supervision (cont'd)

Village 3rd Class		2nd Class		1st Class	
Elem.	H.S.	Elem.	H.S.	Elem.	H.S.

2. Number of teachers employed in your county who had no teaching experience prior to the present school year _____
3. Number of schools visited only once during 1952-53 term _____
4. Factors operating against more frequent visitations: (explain below)

5. How many times a year do you hold meetings of all the rural school teachers in your county? _____
6. Does the attendance at these called meetings exceed 75% of your rural teachers? Yes _____
No _____
7. How many meetings of district superintendents do you hold each year? _____
8. Do you hold an annual meeting of all school trustees in the county? Yes _____ No _____
9. Approximately how much of your time is spent in the field with your rural schools and teachers? (please check)
 _____ 10% _____ 20% _____ 30% _____ 40% _____ 50%
 _____ %

E. Tenure

1. Give total number of years you have served as county superintendent: _____
2. Check below each of the years you have been in office:

Tenure (cont'd)

_____1953	_____1948	_____1943	_____1938	_____1933
_____1952	_____1947	_____1942	_____1937	_____1932
_____1951	_____1946	_____1941	_____1936	_____1931
_____1950	_____1945	_____1940	_____1935	_____1930
_____1949	_____1944	_____1939	_____1934	_____1929

3. Indicate your preference for the following four methods of selection of county superintendent. (Use 1, 2, 3, and 4 to indicate 1st choice, 2nd choice, etc.)

- _____ a. The method now used in the election of a county superintendent
- _____ b. The election of a county superintendent on a non-partisan ballot
- _____ c. Appointment of the county superintendent by a county board
- _____ d. Appointment of the county superintendent by the state department
- _____ e. Give reasons for your first choice:

F. What is your annual salary? \$ _____

G. Assistance (please check any that apply to your situation and indicate salary of each)

- 1. Full time deputy _____ Annual Salary \$ _____
- 2. Part time deputy _____ Annual Salary \$ _____
- 3. Full time clerk _____ Annual Salary \$ _____
- 4. Full time clerk _____ Annual Salary \$ _____
- 5. Part time clerk _____ Annual Salary \$ _____
- 6. Part time clerk _____ Annual Salary \$ _____

H. Facilities

1. Are your office facilities adequate (office space, furniture, instructional materials, etc.)? Yes _____ No _____
2. If not, list needed or desired improvements:

3. Do you have an adequate budget for the efficient running of your office? Yes _____ No _____

I. As you see it, what are the most pressing problems you face in successfully operating the office of county superintendent?

J. What additional powers should be given to county superintendents that would help to improve the schools under their supervision?

