

In opening my report to the state superintendent of the condition of our public schools in the township of Belleville, it may not be improper to mention some of the misfortunes which have impeded their progress the present season, in our section of the state.

In the first place I would notice the change of our township superintendent. My worthy predecessor having long been interested in the arrangements of our common schools, was able and willing to bring a large experience, to regulate, improve, and give efficiency to all measures calculated to build up our schools. But he declined being considered a candidate for the office, on account of the anticipation of an early removal from the place. The township feels the loss of his help. A faithful man—a zealous well-wisher of the advancement of education, it will be long before the place of Theodore D. Weld is filled up in the township of Belleville. Another misfortune is that to which your attention was directed in the last report of my predecessor—the entire interruption of the school in our most important district, that of Second River, for want of a house—the one heretofore occupied having been removed in the re-arrangement of some of our public buildings. This difficulty will, however, soon be done away with. Provision has been made by the district, and a large and convenient building is almost completed and ready for the school. The house is built of brick—thirty-three feet by sixty-one, two stories, with a basement—to be arranged in the most improved style, both as it regards warming, seats, &c. The lot and building will cost not less than \$6,000.00. They have a teacher, well recommended and approved, ready to commence the school.

I may mention, sir, as another impediment to our progress this season, the unusual amount of sickness which has prevailed, and has very much interfered with the regular attendance of the children; and on my part, has rendered it impossible to devote that time to the care and oversight of my charge that I otherwise would have done.

Our Catholic neighbors, residing in Second River district, wish to be provided for by themselves. They have petitioned me to apportion to them part of the school moneys in my hands, for the support of their schools. I have found no authority so to do. They again petition me to district them in such a way, that they may manage their own concerns. I find the majority of citizens in the proposed district opposed to the measure. If anything has or may take place touching the state policy on this rather agitating question, will you be kind enough to advise me?

With regard to the situation of all the districts under my charge; it is too true that we may notice too much room for improvement. The three districts—Franklin, North Belleville and Montgomery, have done well, and deserve commendation. The teachers have been punctual in their attendance. The good order and discipline of the schools have been carefully preserved—a care and neatness is to be noticed. But the teachers have not been suitably encouraged; and their labors onerous, being placed in charge of too many pupils.

Our half district—that of South Belleville, which has been heretofore connected with a small district in Bloomfield, is at the present time without a school; and what arrangements the trustees intend making, they, as yet, have not informed me.

I received from the hands of my predecessor,	\$2,746.44
Of town collector, from school fund,	266.27
From township tax, in part,	800.00
	\$3,812.71
Have paid to order of the trustees of the several districts,	3,176.92
Balance in hand,	\$636.79

From the above, sir, you may receive some information of what we are doing. But I do ardently hope, and confidently anticipate, if permitted to make another report to the state superintendent, to present things in a more decided and encouraging state of progress.

Sam'l. J. Ward.