

ESSEX COUNTY.

CHARLES M. DAVIS, SUPERINTENDENT.

To E. O. Chapman, State Superintendent:

In obedience to law, I have the honor to make this report concerning the public schools of Essex county.

According to the census of 1885 there are two hundred and thirteen thousand six hundred and thirty-seven inhabitants in this county, of whom fifty-nine thousand three hundred and eighty-four are between the ages of five and eighteen years. The following table exhibits the population of each city and township, the number of school children and the percentage the latter bear to the former:

Cities and townships.	Census of 1885.	School children of 1885.	Percentage.
Newark	152,858	43,263	28 ½
Orange	15,232	4,415	29
Belleville	3,285	855	26
Franklin	1,602	655	41 ½
Bloomfield	6,502	1,656	25 ½
Montclair	6,327	1,592	25 1/6
Caldwell	3,336	782	23 ½
Livingston	1,275	391	30 2/3
Milburn	2,023	435	21 ½
Clinton	2,833	720	25 ½
East Orange	10,327	2,485	24
West Orange	3,812	1,006	26 ½
South Orange	4,225	1,119	26 ½
	213,637	59,384	27 4/5

The percentage of Franklin, forty-one and one-half, so greatly exceeds the average, twenty-seven and four-fifths, as to cause a suspicion of some error, either in the census of population or in that of school children. The discrepancy is somewhat lessened by grouping Belleville and Franklin, both of which were in one and the same township when the districts were formed. When Franklin was set off from Belleville the district lines were not disturbed, thus leaving a part of Belleville in District No. 4. But when so grouped the percentage, thirty-one, is still high.

During the past school year thirty thousand nine hundred and seventy-two pupils have been enrolled, under the charge of five hundred and forty-three teachers. The average attendance was twenty-one thousand one hundred and thirty-five; not quite forty to each teacher. The average salary to male teachers was \$131.80; to female teachers, \$54.90. The difference between the pay of male and female teachers for the same services is not great. There are but fifty-three of the former, most of whom are principals or assistant principals of large schools, while of the latter

there are four hundred and ninety, mostly assistants. In the ungraded district schools the salaries vary but little. Of these teachers, four hundred are employed in the cities of Newark and Orange, under City Superintendents, leaving one hundred and forty-three under the immediate supervision of the County Superintendent. They may be arranged as follows:

Graduates from college	16	
Graduates from New Jersey State Normal School	16	
Undergraduates, New Jersey State Normal School	4	
Graduates from Normal Schools of other States	29	
Graduates from Academies and High Schools	44	
		109
Not graduates		34
Total		143

CERTIFICATES.

State first grade	5	
State second grade	11	
State third grade	4	
		20
County first grade	28	
County second grade	36	
County third grade	57	
		121
Licenses, special	2	
Total		143

No school district extends into a neighboring county, and, except in cases where great inconvenience would result from too strict adherence to the rule, township lines have been made lines of districts, so that if any time a law should be passed establishing township boards of education, the system could be easily introduced into this county.

All the districts except two voted special taxes for the support of the schools. In these two districts the balance in the hands of the Collector was thought sufficient for the year. East Orange votes a township tax of \$5 for each child on the census list, in addition to the money voted in the respective districts.

After making due allowance for children from five to seven years of age, whose parents think them too young to attend school, and for those from fifteen or sixteen to eighteen, who have left school to engage in work, there are still too many reported as “attending no school during the year.” The County Superintendent does not seem to have any legal power to act in regard to these delinquents.

One new school-house has been built outside of the cities-in No. 7, Bloomfield. This district now has four fine school buildings, all of brick, valued at \$70,000. Ashland district, No. 37, East

Orange has made a large addition to its main school building, at an expense of \$10,000. There are no "very poor" school-houses in the county; but one that is "poor;" two "medium." The rest are "good," or "very good." There is constantly a demand for more room, either by enlarging present buildings, or by erecting new ones. Where the districts are large the tendency is toward additional buildings.

Contributions were made to the New Orleans Exposition by every school that was in session when the blanks were circulated, except the schools of District No. 7, Bloomfield. Gen. C. H. Barney, Commissioner for New Jersey to the Exposition, reported that of twenty-one awards to the State, five were to single institutions, the remaining sixteen for exhibits made by cities or towns. The Newark public school received diplomas of honor for pupils' work, scrapbooks and drawings from high schools. The Orange public school received diplomas for pupils' work. Vernon L. Davey's school, District No. 36, received a diploma for home-made philosophical apparatus.

Of the one hundred and forty-three teachers under my especial superintendence, about one hundred and thirty are in graded schools in which so-called methods are more or less employed. The danger of carrying method to extremes is beginning to be appreciated, and I am happy to say that there is among the teachers a growing effort to make individuality, both of the teacher and the scholar, more prominent, and to use methods as mere means, not an end.

It will easily be gathered from the above statements that the present school system is highly valued by the people of the county, who contribute liberally to its support; that school officers are quite generally faithful and interested in their work, and that we have a body of well-educated, earnest and successful teachers. But we have not attained to perfection; when our children leave school, we find that they are not as well-fitted for self-support as we could wish. How to remedy this is one of our great unsolved problems. But we are working earnestly at it.