

ESSEX COUNTY.

CHARLES M. DAVIS, SUPERINTENDENT.

To E. O. Chapman, State Superintendent:

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

In the city of Newark the schools are under the charge of Supt. William N. Barringer; in Orange of Supt. W. W. Cutts, while those of the townships are under that of the County Superintendent.

The children are distributed as follows:

	Newark.	Orange.	Townships.	Total.
On census roll	45,818	4,672	11,820	62,310
On school register	22,329	1,671	7,236	31,236
Average attendance	15,247	1,139	4,997	21,383
In private schools	6,500	1,300	2,199	9,999
Attending no school	16,989	1,701	2,385	21,075

To educate these children the following amounts have been received:

	Newark.	Orange.	Townships.	Total.
From the State	\$211,616 91	\$21,340 69	\$57,395 16	\$290,352 76
From district and township tax	177,316 09	7,500 00	77,226 31	262,042 40
The value of the school property is	\$1,109,500	\$105,000	\$451,000	\$1,665,500

The increase in the number of children on the census roll, since last year, is 2,926; of those on the school register, 309; of the average attendance, 248; of those in private schools 508; and of those in no school, 2,154.

The townships (for which the remainder of this report is made) are divided into thirty-six districts, with forty-three school houses-thirty-one very good, nine good, two medium, one poor, none very poor. Their total value is \$451,000.00. District No. 7, Bloomfield, has four buildings; No. 8, Montclair, two buildings; No. 28, South Orange, two buildings; No. 37, East Orange, two buildings.

The schools are taught by twenty-five male teachers, with an average monthly salary of \$125.40; and one hundred and twenty-eight female teachers, with an average salary of \$49.42. It must not be inferred from these salaries that men are paid more than women. for the same work. The male

teachers are chiefly principals, only three having charge of schools without assistants, and receiving respectively \$60.00, \$50.00 and \$40.00; while there are many female teachers who receive over \$60.00 each. As a general rule the value of the work decides the salary; not the sex of the teacher.

The certificates held by the teachers are distributed as follows:

First grade State	6	
Second grade State	11	
Third grade State	4	
		21
First grade county	26	
Second grade county	47	
Third grade county	59	
		132
Total		153

It will be noticed that fifty-nine, or more than one-third of the teachers, hold third grade county certificates. But this does not imply poor scholarship. on the part of the teachers. On the contrary the larger part of them are graduates of college, or of Normal Schools in other States, and their scholarship is broad and thorough. But being in graded schools, in the primary or intermediate departments, the work of daily preparation for their Classes is too pressing for them to spend time in reviewing their high school or college studies, so as to pass a creditable examination. They prefer an annual examination on the fundamental subjects. With every year the work in our graded schools becomes greater; better methods of teaching are demanded, requiring increased work of preparation from the teacher. In the cities the teacher having once been examined to the satisfaction of the superintendent, a certificate for life is granted, thus allowing her to give time to preparation for her daily work; while in the townships, the law requires successive examinations of more or less frequency. Consequently teachers of the highest efficiency often content themselves with a third grade certificate, feeling that there is no disgrace attached to it, so long as their work in the school room is successful and acceptable. It would seem that the time had come when efficiency in the school room should be recognized in the certificate.

It gives me great pleasure to express my appreciation of the high character and able and faithful work of the teachers of Essex county, as a body. With almost no exceptions, they deserve this commendation. They strive to train the children to become true and pure, as well as intelligent and courteous men and women, putting character on a platform as high, at least, as that of intellect. In what other way could the State so economically invest the money expended for these services?

The constant effort of officers and teachers for many years past to secure the regular attendance of the pupils has borne its legitimate fruit. Parents are learning to see the importance of these habits, and quite generally support the teachers in their efforts to form them. Various means are used in different schools to encourage the pupils in this line, and all meet with good success. The one used in St. Mark's (No. 39), West Orange, is peculiar, and may be briefly noticed. The

trustees deposit in the Orange Savings Bank one dollar to the credit of each pupil who has not been absent or tardy for one day in the year; and on the last day of school, at the closing exercises, the bank books are handed to the pupils. Some, but very little, allowance is made for unavoidable absence for a day or two. In 1882, the total prizes given were 23; in 1883, 27; in 1884, 35; in 1885, 59; in 1886, 43.

It is desirable, both for the comfort of the teachers and the good of the scholars, that the permanency of efficient teachers in their positions should, in some way, be assured. Every engagement expires at the end of the school year, and sometimes-not often, indeed, but often enough to cause uneasiness-a successful teacher, loved by pupils and approved by the community, fails to be reappointed. This can be done by a board of trustees without giving any reason for it and is virtually a dismissal. This regularly recurring uncertainty deters some, who would be excellent teachers, from entering the profession; and leads others who are already teaching, to look towards leaving the calling. Again, if a board should engage a teacher, agreement is binding on the succeeding board only for three months; and although in practice this works little or no trouble in this county, it sometimes causes anxiety. I do not suggest any remedy; the way out of the difficulty will probably be forthcoming.

In conclusion I would say that the sentiment of the people is in favor of good public schools, and of paying liberally for them.