

ESSEX COUNTY.

CHARLES M. DAVIS, SUPERINTENDENT.

To Charles W. Fuller, State Superintendent:

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

The schools in Newark city are under the charge of Superintendent William N. Barringer; in Orange, of Superintendent U. W. Cutts; those of the townships are under the immediate supervision of the County Superintendent.

The children are distributed as follows:

	Newark.	Orange.	Townships.	Total.
On census roll	50,847	4,962	12,419	68,228
On school register	23,214	1,768	7,589	32,571
Average attendance	15,687	1,293	5,145	22,125
In private schools	11,301	1,700	2,310	15,311
Attending no school	16,332	1,494	2,520	20,346

The percentage of attendance of the children of school age is as follows:

	Newark.	Orange.	Townships.
On school register	45	35	61
Average attendance	30	26	41
In private schools	22	34	18
In no school	32	30	20

The "private schools" are chiefly parochial, which have steadily increased for several years, the authorities in the Roman Catholic Church insisting that all parents in that communion shall send their children to the parish school.

About thirty per cent. of the children in the county are in "no school." The so-called compulsory law seems to be altogether inoperative.

Permit me to call your attention to the high "average attendance" in the townships. Great efforts are constantly made to prevent tardiness and absence, and with increasing success. I have occasionally mentioned schools that have succeeded in this respect. Another one now deserves this notice. District No. 13, Caldwell, a large country district, reports an average attendance of ninety-five and four-fifths per cent. for the six departments, while the academic department attained an average of one hundred per cent.

The following amounts have been received to maintain the schools during the year:

	Newark.	Orange.	Townships.	Total.
From the State	\$226,798 51	\$23,126 52	\$58,906 62	\$308,831 65
From district and township tax	33,670 58	1,352 13	42,920 00	77,942 71
Total	260,469 09	24,478 65	101,826 62	386,774 36

East Orange is the only township that raises a township tax for the support of schools. It regularly votes five dollars for each child of school age.

For reasons that were not only satisfactory but almost imperative, I used the discretionary power given the County Superintendents regarding balances, and directed the collectors of the several townships to retain to the credit of the districts the balances of State moneys due them. These balances were in all cases small, and the school officers had not managed to save the money by paying small salaries to the teachers. Besides, it is very desirable that a balance should stand to the credit of a district at the beginning of the school year, in order to pay the salaries of teachers until the district tax has been collected.

There are four \$375 districts in this county, and one \$275 district. These are in the outlying parts of the county, where the population has not increased for twenty years. In fact, in two districts the number of children has decreased twenty per cent.

As regards school houses: In the cities they are "very good." In the thirty-five districts there are forty-three houses, none of which are "very poor" or even "poor;" two are "medium;" seven are "good;" thirty-four are "very good." One new one has been built, and one enlarged. All are kept in good condition. But all are not well ventilated. The chronic difficulty of supplying fresh air to school children without inflicting dangerous draughts upon them, is increased in those buildings that are heated by steam pipes. As no fresh warm air is regularly supplied to the rooms, the teacher and pupils breathe the same air over and over again, with results too well known to need description. Successful methods of ventilation have been introduced into a few schools, but the great majority suffer from lack of it more than they do from the winter's cold.

In the schools of the townships there are one hundred and sixty-three teachers employed. Most of these are well educated for their work, as the following statement will show:

Number of graduates from college	21
Number of graduates of New Jersey State Normal School.	19
Number of undergraduates	6
Number of graduates from Normal Schools elsewhere	37
Number of graduates from high schools and academies	47
Number not graduates	33
	163

I have spoken in former reports of the high degree of efficiency in the school-room shown by most of these teachers. I wish to repeat and emphasize this statement, for the past year, and to

express the hope that the day may not be far distant when this efficiency may be recognized in the granting of teachers' certificates.

Mention should also be made of the large number of teachers who are making progress in their profession by special reading and study. They avail themselves of the opportunities offered in New York City, on Friday afternoons and Saturday mornings, for attending lectures addressed especially to teachers, for which they pay regular tuition fees.

Progress has been made in manual training in several of the larger schools. Montclair still leads the van, and is every year making advances. Others of the large schools are progressing finely, while others are conservatively waiting to see what will be the final success of their neighbors.

From this brief report, and from a study of the statistical tables for the county, it will be seen that there is a steady and substantial growth in our school work, while at the same time there are important problems presenting themselves for our solution.