

ESSEX COUNTY.

CHARLES M. DAVIS, SUPERINTENDENT.

To Hon. E. O. Chapman, State Superintendent:

In obedience to law, I have the honor to present this report concerning the public schools of Essex county, for the year ending August 31st, 1890.

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

The children are distributed as follows:

	Newark.	Orange.	Townships.	Total.
On census roll	55,527	5,420	13,082	74,029
On school register	25,137	1,964	8,243	35,344
Average attendance	16,995	1,287	5,622	23,904
In private schools	8,328	1,800	2,148	12,276
In no school	22,062	1,843	2,504	26,409

The private schools are chiefly parochial. Of the 22,062 reported as attending no school in Newark, 3,147 attended evening school during the winter months.

The amounts received to maintain the schools during the year were the following:

	Newark.	Orange.	Townships.	Total.
From the State	\$314,262 03	\$30,667 81	\$77,011 60	\$394,941 44
From district and township tax	170,836 37	5,500 00	122,394 90	325,731 27
	\$485,098 40	\$36,167 81	\$199,406 50	\$720,672 71

The expenditures have been-

	Newark.	Orange.	Townships.	Total.
For teachers' salaries	\$324,700 00	\$25,700 00	\$111,467 14	\$461,867 14
For fuel and incidentals	71,882 37	4,362 58	30,434 20	106,679 15
Building and repairing (including debt and interest)	87,415 00	5,395 28	38,212 39	131,022 67
	\$483,997 37	\$35,457 86	\$180,113 73	\$699,568 96

This total of \$699,568.96 does not express the whole work done for schools during the year. In addition to the \$131,022.67 spent in the *whole county* for building, repairing, paying bonds and interest, *the townships* have issued their bonds for about \$100,000 to pay for building new school-houses.

For land and buildings Franklin township has expended \$15,000; Bloomfield, \$25,000; Montclair, \$25,000; Livingston, \$1,200; South Orange, \$13,000; West Orange, \$21,000; amounting to \$100,200 in the six townships. East Orange is erecting a High School building to cost about \$75,000. Montclair expects to build one next year. There is a constant demand for more school-rooms. With the exception of two or three districts in the remote parts of the county, there is a rapid increase in the number of children of school age. The school-rooms are full, and in several districts it has been found necessary to hire rooms until new houses can be built.

The value of school property is-

In Newark	\$1,328,375
In Orange	165,000
In. townships	546,450
Total	\$2,039,825

There have been employed 29 male teachers (1 more than in the previous year), at an average salary of \$1,109, and 158 female teachers (13 more than in the previous year), at an average salary of \$488.50. The highest salary paid to a male teacher is \$3,000; the lowest, \$421. The one is principal of a superior graded school; the other, the sole teacher in a country school, with an average attendance of 22 pupils. The schools have been open a little more than ten months on an average.

Only two districts failed to vote a tax for school purposes; one of these had a sufficient balance on hand, the other had a small balance, but not enough to justify its failure, especially as it is a \$375 district. There were four districts which received \$375 each, and one \$275.

The sentiment is becoming more general, that where the size and density of population render such a course practicable, school districts should be made of townships. Accordingly, as announced in my last report, the two districts of Franklin township were united in 1889. During the year for which this report is made, the two districts of Belleville have been consolidated, and the township of East Orange now forms one district, known as School District No. 45. There are four wards in this township, each being represented in the board of trustees by two members. The four handsome school-houses are valued at \$160,000, and a High School building, the foundation of which is already laid, and for which \$75,000 has been appropriated, will be ready for use at the beginning of the next school year.

Manual training, in some of its various forms, is getting an entrance into the schools, soon, it is hoped, to take possession of them all. Reforms, especially educational, move with proverbial slowness; but, like revolutions, they never go backward. All the graded schools have introduced kindergarten methods more or less adapted to the public school system; and several have added

manual work-mechanical for the boys and sewing for the girls. A number of ungraded country schools, also, are working in this line. The industrial work of the Montclair School has made still further progress by the erection of a machine shop with a steam engine, turning lathes and all necessary tools and instruments. The report of Superintendent Spalding gives full information about them. This district has also a cooking school for girls in full operation.

As trustees become better acquainted with what the schools require, not only as to buildings, furniture, books and other supplies, but also as to the qualification of teachers-for on them depends the result of all this expense of money and labor-more pains are taken to secure the services of the most scholarly and efficient teachers. Where the citizens vote liberal supplies, this is easily done; but in the poorer districts (happily quite few in this county) teachers of less capability are employed; yet, there are exceptions even in these places. There is, however, a very general desire among the teachers for higher professional attainments. This is shown, as has been stated in previous reports, by the fact that teachers from a goodly number of our schools, at a considerable outlay of time and money, attend courses of instruction offered in New York city, on Friday afternoons and Saturday mornings. But all who wished could not do this; to accommodate these-to arouse those who were not interested-and for other good and satisfactory reasons, steps towards establishing a County Normal Class were taken early in the year. It gives me great pleasure to report that these efforts were successful, and that an Essex County Normal Class is an established institution. The board of trustees of East Orange have very generously granted the use of the High School rooms in Ashland for the meetings of the class, which numbers about 80 members.

The sessions are held on the second Saturday of each month, from 9 A.M. to 1 P.M., from October to May, inclusive. Instructors of proved ability in their respective subjects were secured.

The course of study for the present year was adopted after careful consultation with those best acquainted with the needs of the teachers; "the outline for study," and the subjects of the respective lectures, were carefully prepared by the instructors; and the members of the classes had sufficient time allowed in which to make preparation for the lectures, when, also, opportunities are given to ask questions and discuss the subjects.

The County Superintendents are directed to "make a statement of the work they have performed in connection with the duties of their office." To do this in my case would require a record of all my work for the year; for my whole time has been given to the duties of my office-in considering the questions of altering district boundaries, consolidating or dividing districts; inquiring into the character of the school buildings, the lighting, ventilating and general convenience of the same; consulting with school officers and principals; keeping acquainted with the financial condition of each district; communicating with the citizens of the respective districts and endeavoring to cultivate in them a warm sentiment in favor of their schools; in examining, selecting, advising and helping the teachers; in visiting and generally supervising the schools; and in doing whatever else would tend to make the public schools of Essex county do what they are intended to do-to train our boys and girls to be pure, true, active, intelligent and useful men and women, and, therefore, good citizens.

It is, then, with great pleasure that I can report a greater readiness of the people to sustain the schools liberally; continued faithfulness on the part of the officers; increased efficiency of teachers; and, therefore, in most respects, a very satisfactory condition of the public schools of the county.