

**REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER
OF EDUCATION OF PORTO RICO,
1910, FROM THE REPORT OF THE
GOVERNOR OF PORTO RICO,
1910, PAGES 153 - 203, INCLUSIVE**

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BUREAU OF INSULAR AFFAIRS WAR DEPARTMENT

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COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION
OF PORTO RICO *Dept. of education*

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BUREAU OF INSULAR AFFAIRS
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WASHINGTON
GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE
1911

REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION,
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER,
San Juan, P. R., August 10, 1910.

SIR: I have the honor to submit herewith my annual report for the fiscal year ended June 30, 1910.

The statistical tables presented cover only the fiscal year, but, in accordance with custom and the instructions of the Secretary of War, in the text are treated matters of educational interest to the date of the submittal of the report.

In further conformity with such instructions, I have the honor to present herewith a summary of statistics of public education in Porto Rico, following the definite questions asked.

Summary of statistics for the school year 1909-10.

Number of different pupils actually enrolled in all schools, including special schools:

White—	
Males.....	53, 131
Females.....	37, 786
Total.....	90, 917
Colored—	
Males.....	17, 450
Females.....	13, 086
Total.....	30, 536
White and colored—	
Males.....	70, 581
Females.....	50, 872
Total.....	121, 453

Number of different pupils enrolled during the year—

(a) In secondary schools (normal department of the university, high and continuation schools).....	970
(b) In common schools.....	111, 537
(c) In special schools (university school of agriculture, night schools, kindergartens, and school for destitute boys).....	8, 946
Average daily attendance for the school year of 176 days (in night schools 137 days).....	84, 258
Number of buildings in use for schools during the year (town, 204; rural, 821).....	1, 025
Estimate value of all insular school buildings *.....	\$701, 716. 09
Rental value of other buildings.....	\$69, 200. 61
Number of different teachers employed in the common schools at the end of the year:	
White—	
Males.....	711
Females.....	837
Total.....	1, 548

* Including entire expenditure made by the insular government under direction of the department of education in connection with the acquisition of property and with the erection of school buildings since the establishment of civil government.

Number of different teachers employed in the common schools at the end of the year—Continued.

Colored—	
Males.....	104
Females.....	91
Total.....	195
White and colored—	
Males.....	815
Females.....	928
Total.....	1,743
Number of different teachers employed in secondary schools at the end of the year ^a	70
Number of different teachers employed in special schools at the end of the year ^b	157
Monthly salary of teachers as fixed by law during the year 1909-10:	
Preparatory teachers.....	\$16
Rural teachers—	
First class.....	\$40
Second class.....	\$35
Third class.....	\$30
Graded teachers—	
First class.....	\$55
Second class.....	\$50
Third class.....	\$45
English graded teachers—	
First class.....	\$60
Second class.....	\$55
Third class.....	\$50
Principal teachers—	
First class.....	\$80
Second class.....	\$75
Third class.....	\$70
Teachers of English and special work teachers.....	\$75
To which amounts were added allowances for house rent as follows:	
Rural teachers, not less than \$3 nor more than.....	\$8
Graded teachers, not less than \$7 nor more than.....	\$15
English graded and principal teachers, not less than \$10 nor more than.....	\$15
Total expenditures for school purposes, 1909-10:	
By insular government.....	\$825, 338. 88
By local government.....	\$419, 161. 89

As a whole the year has been a particularly prosperous one so far as educational advance is concerned. Although less money has been available for educational purposes than for the previous year, 15 per cent more pupils have been enrolled in the schools.

The extension of school libraries, playgrounds, and banks has gone on without interruption.

The teaching force, as well as that of supervision and of administration, has been untiring in its efforts to extend education throughout the island, and I have only the warmest words of commendation for all. Especially am I indebted to Mr. F. E. Libby, the assistant commissioner, for his cordial and sympathetic support, and for many valuable suggestions.

Respectfully,

E. G. DEXTER,
Commissioner of Education.

The GOVERNOR, San Juan, P. R.

RÉSUMÉ OF THE ORGANIZATION OF PUBLIC EDUCATION IN PORTO RICO.

Under the organic act of Porto Rico the public schools of Porto Rico are in charge of a commissioner of education with ample powers and with a seat in the Executive Council or upper house of the Legislative Assembly. Since the date of that act school

^a Fifteen of these are duplicates.

^b One hundred and forty-eight of these are night-school teachers and are duplicates.

laws have been passed and amended from time to time by the insular Legislature, until at the present time the organization is, briefly, as follows:

The commissioner of education, appointed for a term of four years, or at the pleasure of the President, is the head of the insular department of education. He has power of appointment over all the subordinates in the department, with the exception of certain classes of teachers. He is required to supervise education in Porto Rico, to approve all disbursements for educational purposes, to prepare all courses of study, determine the length of the school year (within limitations set by law) and the length of the school day. He is in charge of the examination and certification of teachers. All plans for public-school buildings must be approved by him. Aside from these duties, the commissioner is ex officio president of the University of Porto Rico and of the trustees of the insular library.

The personnel of the department, aside from the teachers, consists of an assistant commissioner of education, a secretary of the department, a chief of the division of property and accounts, a chief of the division of school-board accounts, three general superintendents, and 40 supervising principals. Besides these, there are the private secretary of the commissioner and other clerical help.

The law provides for a school board in each one of the 66 municipalities of the island, to be elected by the people and composed of three qualified electors, who are chosen for a term of four years. These officers are required to take an oath of office and to elect a treasurer, who shall disburse their funds. They have charge of all buildings occupied by the common schools (not high schools) in their districts, erect and repair school property, rent buildings for school purposes, and pay an amount limited by law to the teachers in lieu of house rent. They have power to hold title to property and, under certain legal restrictions, may negotiate loans. Each board is required to nominate annually, at least three months before the beginning of the school year, to the commissioner of education, the names of the teachers whom they wish to employ, and within a month the commissioner must return this list with his approval or disapproval of each candidate, and then the members of the board may proceed to elect, from the approved list, the teachers for their schools. Each board submits to the commissioner of education before the beginning of each fiscal year a detailed statement of its desired expenditures for the year, and the approval of this budget by the commissioner is the warrant for the expenditure of the school funds as thus set forth. Subsequent transfers of funds from one item to another within the budget must receive separate approval.

Vacancies in the school boards are filled for the unexpired term by the commissioner, the law requiring that appointments to vacancies be made from the same political party to which the previous member belonged.

The teachers of the island are divided into the following classes: Preparatory, rural, graded, principal, teachers of English, special, and high-school teachers. The rural, graded, and principal teachers are elected by the school boards after approval by the commissioner. Graded teachers are divided into two classes—those teaching in Spanish and those teaching in English. Teachers of English, high-school teachers, and special teachers, such as music, art, manual training, domestic science, agriculture, kindergarten, and preparatory teachers, are appointed directly by the commissioner without election by the school board.

The island at present is divided for purposes of administration and supervision into 43 districts. These districts are divided into 3 classes: First, municipalities having more than 100 schools; second, municipalities having between 50 and 100 schools; third, municipalities or groups of municipalities having less than 50 schools. During the past year there were 2 first-class, 3 second-class, and 38 third-class districts. The school law provides for an automatic increase in the number of districts, since no district of the third class may contain more than 50 schools. The immediate representative of the commissioner in each one of these districts is the supervising principal. In districts of the first class this official receives a salary of \$1,050, with an allowance of \$240 for house and office rent, and in districts of the second class \$1,400, with the same allowance for rent. The salary for third-class districts is \$1,200, with the same allowance for rent, and an extra allowance of \$200 for traveling expenses in districts comprising more than one municipality. The supervising principal is ex officio a member of the school board and entitled to participate in its discussions and receive notice of its meetings, but he is not allowed to vote. He is required by law to submit an annual report covering the work of his district and to perform any duties assigned him by the commissioner. He has an office adequately equipped and maintains definite office hours. The greater part of his time is spent in visiting the schools of his district to assist the teachers wherever assistance is needed. He makes monthly reports to the commissioner on the visits made during the month.

PREPARATORY SCHOOLS.

The Legislature of 1906 authorized the commissioner to issue special licenses to not more than 100 young men and women under 22 years of age who were to teach in rural schools in or near the towns, under the immediate supervision of the supervising principals. Seventy-two young persons have been granted special licenses of this class during the year, and they have received regular instruction from a competent person appointed by the commissioner as instructor of preparatory teachers.

The law authorizing the appointment of preparatory teachers was designed to prepare young persons for the position of rural teachers in the smaller communities where no instruction in the higher grades was given and who, consequently, could not be admitted to the examination for rural teachers, which requires the eighth-grade diploma.

During the first term of this school year there were 33 preparatory teachers employed, 16 of whom maintained double enrollments. During the second term there were 56 teachers and 29 double enrollments. During the third term there were 51 teachers and 23 double enrollments, making an average for the year of 47 teachers, 22 of whom maintained double enrollments.

As the full eight grades are maintained at present in a big majority of the towns, and as the number of persons possessing the rural license is in excess of the number of rural schools granted, the Legislature at its last session made no provision for preparatory teachers for the coming school year.

RURAL SCHOOLS

The rural schools are by far the most numerous and, with few exceptions, are located in the country districts. Many of them are in rented buildings entirely inadequate, from the standpoint both of hygiene and pedagogy. In some districts the matter of proper latrines has been overlooked, and bad conditions should be permanently bettered at the first opportunity. These buildings bring a high rental price to their owners, which the local boards pay because they have not the money wherewith to build.

Although the number of rural schools equipped with modern furniture is increasing year by year, not a few are to be found with long tables for desks and benches without backs or seats. The pupils have little or no opportunity for associating with people who can help them in their home study, aid them in acquiring a knowledge of English, or direct them in their school work. Many of the homes count for but little in the facilities they furnish and the influence they exert in supplementing the regular work of the school.

During the past year 36 one-room and 1 two-room buildings have been constructed in the country. This makes a total of 192 one-room and 12 two-room rural-school buildings owned by the local school boards of the island.

The first rural school built in Porto Rico was the one known as the "Columbus Rural School," in Carolina, dedicated April 6, 1901.

During the first term of the school year 1909-10 there were 894 rural teachers, 494 of whom maintained double enrollments in their schools, thus making a total of 1,388 rural schools. During the last term there were 897 rural teachers and 557 double enrollments, making a total of 1,454 rural schools. The average number of rural teachers during the year was 893, and the average number of rural schools 1,428.

More than half of the rural teachers are men and all are Porto Ricans. They are doing a work worthy of great encomium in extending elementary instruction to the most remote corners of the island.

Up to two years ago the curriculum of the rural schools was limited to the first three grades, and in a great many only first-grade work was offered. During the school year 1908-9 the fourth grade was added in a considerable number of rural schools, and this year instruction in the fifth grade has been offered wherever there were pupils enough sufficiently advanced to form a class.

On June 21, 1910, there were 172 pupils enrolled in the fifth grades in rural schools, and of these 115 have been promoted to the sixth grade, which will be offered next year wherever needed.

In the more thickly populated barrios, centralized rural schools have been maintained. In these barrios there are one or two schools giving instruction in the first and second grades, and from these the children go to the centralized school to continue their studies through the third, fourth, and fifth grades. For these rural schools where the higher grades are maintained, the school boards and supervising principals have tried to obtain the services of the best qualified rural teachers. A number of the graduates of the normal school who are not old enough to be granted the license as

graded teacher have been placed in charge of these schools, and in not a few instances the work has been carried on entirely in English, with Spanish as a special subject, following closely the course of study for the graded schools.

In schools where the same teacher gives instruction in all the grades from one to four, or one to five, inclusive, double enrollments have, as a rule, been established, pupils of the first, fourth, and fifth grades receiving three hours instruction in the morning, and those of the second and third grades three hours in the afternoon.

This year 112 rural schools have been taught entirely in English, whereas there was none last year, and 198 have been taught partly in English, as compared with 174 last year. In 573, English has been taught as a special subject, as compared with 149 the year previous, and in only four rural schools was no English taught, as compared with 494 in 1909.

Rural teachers receive a salary ranging from \$30 to \$40 per school month, consisting of twenty days, paid by the department, plus an amount varying from \$3 to \$5 per month, paid by the school boards in lieu of house rent.

Thus far the requirements for the license as rural teacher have been little in advance for those of the common-school diploma, but due to the number of pupils enrolled in the ninth grades in continuation schools and in the first year of the high schools, and in view of the fact that completion of the ninth-grade work in the public schools has been made a requirement for admission to the normal school, it would seem that the day is not far distant when completion of the ninth grade should be made a requisite to admission for the examination for the rural license.

The course of study for rural schools provides for six years' work, the first year being entirely in Spanish. English is begun in the second grade, more and more attention being given to this branch as the child progresses from grade to grade. By the time the pupil finishes the fourth grade in the rural school he should be able to continue his studies entirely in English, as the course of study is designed to make closer articulation between the rural and graded schools.

GRADED SCHOOLS.

The schools in the 66 towns and cities of the island, as well as in quite a few of the more densely inhabited barrios, are carefully graded and compare very favorably with the better school systems in the United States. The whole 8 grades are successfully maintained in 46 towns of the island, and in 65 towns the instruction was carried through the seventh grade. In the remaining towns all grades through the sixth are maintained, with the exception of Dorado and Toa Alta, where the fifth grade is the highest. In connection with the graded-school system, the work of the ninth grade, or first year of the high school, has been maintained in 18 municipalities, not counting the 3 in which there are fully organized high schools with four-year courses.

Almost all the graded schools of the island are well equipped with modern furniture and housed in buildings ad hoc. In 49 towns school buildings containing from 4 to 22 rooms have been constructed since the American occupation of the island. Eleven new school buildings with a total number of 82 rooms have been constructed within the urban limits during the past year. In all, 70 graded-school buildings, with a total of 406 rooms, is the record made since the American school system was established in Porto Rico.

There were 666 teachers working in the graded schools during the first term of the school year, and of these 117 maintained double enrollments, making the total number of graded schools, for the first term, 783. The number of teachers kept increasing gradually throughout the year—the average number for the third term being 677 with 130 double enrollments, making a total of 807 graded schools at the close of the year. The average number of graded teachers for the entire year 1909-10 was 671, and of double enrollments 123, making an average of 799 graded schools for the year.

The new course of study for graded schools, which was put into effect throughout the island at the beginning of the school year 1909-10, requires a separate text-book in English for the pupils of each grade from the first up. In almost every town the strongest English graded teachers were assigned to the first grades by the school boards and supervising principals, at the suggestion of the department, and English graded teachers almost equally as proficient to the second grades. The Spanish graded teachers were, as a rule, assigned to third and fourth grades, where they taught Spanish and possibly one other subject. In order that the pupils of these grades might be permitted to do all or practically all their work in English as the course of study requires, these Spanish graded teachers would exchange rooms with the English graded teachers and the teachers of English in such a way that while they were teaching Spanish in a room other than their own, the English graded teacher, or the teacher of English,

as the case might be, would be teaching a certain subject in English in their room. The teachers of English, who are nearly all Americans, were placed in charge of grades five, six, seven, and eight. It has been our experience that the teachers of English obtain far better results in every way with the pupils in the higher grades than with those in the lower grades, whereas the reverse is true in regard to the Porto Rican teachers. In this way English has been made the medium of instruction in practically the entire graded-school system of the island, enrolling 35,000 pupils. To be exact, 89.5 per cent of all graded schools were taught wholly in English during the past year, as compared with 66.7 the preceding year; 9.9 per cent were taught partly in English, and 0.6 per cent had English taught as a special subject. In 1908-9 there were 127 graded schools in which no English whatever was taught, whereas throughout the year 1909-10 there was not a single one. Thus a pupil entering the school system of Porto Rico receives all his instruction in English from the first grade until he graduates from the high school or the normal school. In addition to the subjects regularly found in the curriculum of the better school systems in the United States, our pupils receive instruction in Spanish throughout the course. Very little difference is to be noticed between the work being done by a pupil in a given grade in Porto Rico, and that being done by a pupil in the same grade in the United States. In this way the predictions made by my predecessors regarding the teaching of English in the public schools of Porto Rico have been fulfilled without any hardships to teachers or pupils, and with very little friction.

During the school year 1909-10, Spanish graded teachers received a salary ranging from \$45 to \$55 per school month of twenty days, plus an amount varying from \$7 to \$15 per month paid by the school boards in lieu of house rent. English graded teachers received from \$50 to \$60 per school month, besides from \$10 to \$15 per month for house rent, and teachers of English \$75 per school month.

The following table shows the number of schools and teachers in our common-school system. The total number of teachers, 1,645, is an increase of 30 over the year 1908-9, while the total number of schools, 2,296, is an increase of 415 over the preceding year. This shows to what an extent the double-enrollment plan was put in force during the year 1909-10:

Schools and teachers.

	Common schools.						Teachers.			
	Graded.		Rural.		Preparatory.		Total.	In charge of rooms.	With-out rooms.	Total.
	Rooms.	Double enroll-ments.	Rooms.	Double enroll-ments.	Rooms.	Double enroll-ments.				
First term.....	698	117	894	494	33	16	2,220	1,693	36	1,629
Second term.....	671	136	897	554	56	29	2,333	1,814	33	1,847
Third term.....	677	130	897	537	51	23	2,335	1,625	34	1,659
Average.....	671	128	893	535	47	22	2,296	1,611	34	1,645

HIGH SCHOOLS

The department maintains at 19 different points throughout the island partial or complete high-school courses. Eighteen of these are known as "continuation schools," and offer only the first or first and second years of the high-school course. These schools are not separated from the graded schools.

At the cities of San Juan, Ponce, and Mayaguez the department maintains first-class high schools, each having a four-year course and sending their graduates to any college or university in the United States without difficulty in entrance. In fact, graduates from these schools are admitted to nearly 50 American colleges upon certificate.

The increase in enrollment in both the high and continuation schools is a source of gratification. On March 1, 1909, there were enrolled in the 3 high schools 298 pupils; on March 1, 1910, 456; and in the continuation schools, March 1, 1909, 28; March 1, 1910, 180. This makes a total increase for the year of 310 pupils in secondary schools.

The following table shows the distribution, by age and sex, of all high-school pupils. It may be noted that in 1909 one-half of the students were 17 years of age or over, while in 1910 over 60 per cent are of this age. No doubt this is due to the fact that the pupils who entered the newly opened continuation schools were above the usual age for entering high school. The average age of pupils enrolled in 1909 was 16.5; in 1910, 16.9.