

**BIENNIAL REPORT OF BOARD OF
MANAGERS AND SUPERINTENDENT
OF THE STATE PUBLIC SCHOOL OF
MINNESOTA FOR THE BIENNIAL
PERIOD ENDING JULY 31, 1906**

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Biennial Report of Board of Managers and Superintendent of the state public school of Minnesota for the biennial period ending July 31, 1906 by Various

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VARIOUS

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MANAGERS AND SUPERINTENDENT
OF THE STATE PUBLIC SCHOOL OF
MINNESOTA FOR THE BIENNIAL
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STATE PUBLIC SCHOOL, OWATONNA.

ELEVENTH BIENNIAL REPORT

OF THE

Board of Managers and Super-
intendent of the State
Public School

OF

MINNESOTA

FOR THE

BIENNIAL PERIOD ENDING JULY 31, 1906.

1907
HARRISON & MITH CO.
MINNEAPOLIS

STATE PUBLIC SCHOOL

REPORT OF THE BOARD OF MANAGERS AND SUPERINTENDENT

FOR THE

Biennial Period Ending July 31, 1906.

*To the State Board of Control,
St. Paul, Minnesota.*

Gentlemen: I herewith respectfully submit the eleventh biennial report of the State Public School for Dependent and Neglected Children.
Yours very respectfully,
GALEN A. MERRILL, Superintendent.

Information in detail as to the number of children received and cared for in the school, the number placed out and supervised in homes, and the cost of the same for each of the two years, and a resume of the work of twenty years, is presented as follows:

August 1, 1904 to July 31, 1905	August 1, 1905 to July 31, 1906
Present August 1, 1904..... 194	Present August 1, 1905..... 266
Admitted First Time:	Admitted First Time:
Boys 150	Boys 145
Girls 112.	Girls 117
262	262
Readmitted:	Readmitted:
Returned from trial—	Returned from trial—
Boys 14	Boys 27
Girls 19	Girls 48
33	75
Returned from indenture—	Returned from indenture—
Boys 70	Boys 50
Girls 58	Girls 55
128	105
161	180
Total number cared for..... 617	Total number cared for..... 708

A-7-17-112
State Public School 4-2-089.

August 1, 1904 to July 31, 1905

Cost	\$43,630.39	
Cost per capita, total number cared for.....	\$70.71	
Average daily attendance:		
Boys	149	
Girls	85	234
Cost per capita, average daily attendance	\$186.45	
Placed Out First Time:		
Boys	118	
Girls	84	202
Replaced—		
Boys	57	
Girls	70	127
Total number placed out....	329	
Average per month	27	
Average Number in Homes:		
On Trial—		
Boys	43	
Girls	32	75
On Indenture—		
Boys	681	
Girls	427	1,108
Average Total Wards:		1,183
Boys	873	
Girls	544	1,417
Cost:		
Of school....	\$43,630.39	
State agency	6,319.83	\$49,950.22
Cost per capita, total wards	35.25	
Largest number present at any time, July 4, 1905	281	
Smallest number present at any time, August 18, 19, 1904.....	187	
Percent of the average number in homes on indenture, returned...	11.6	
Number of Visits:		
To children in homes..	831	
To applicants for chil- dren	557	1,388
Applications for children received	576	
Applications approved, 50% of number received	291	

August 1, 1905 to July 31, 1906

Cost	\$43,494.50	
Cost per capita, total number cared for.....	\$61.43	
Average daily attendance:		
Boys	150	
Girls	71	221
Cost per capita, average daily attendance.....	\$196.80	
Placed Out First Time:		
Boys	156	
Girls	139	295
Replaced—		
Boys	107	
Girls	99	206
Total number placed out	501	
Average per month.....	41	
Average Number in Homes:		
On Trial—		
Boys	65	
Girls	55	120
On Indenture—		
Boys	691	
Girls	457	1,148
Average Total Wards:		1,268
Boys	906	
Girls	582	1,488
Cost:		
Of school....	\$43,494.50	
State agency	6,378.88	\$49,873.38
Cost per capita, total wards	33.52	
Largest number present at any time, November 13, 14, 15, 1905.....	276	
Smallest number present at any time, May 5, 6, 1905	181	
Percent of the average number in homes on indenture, returned...	9	
Number of Visits:		
To children in homes	825	
To applicants for chil- dren	568	1,393
Applications for children received	686	
Applications approved, 43% of number received	295	

RESUME OF TWENTY YEARS.

Received, July 31, 1906		3,234
In homes on indenture	1,244	
In homes on trial	74	
In homes, adopted.....	117	
In homes, restored to parents	148	

Attained majority and self-supporting.....	1,583	
Died in homes and in school.....	1,190	
Returned to counties from which they came because improper subjects for this school.....	124	
	139	
Present July 31, 1906	196	

		3,234
Average age of children when received years....		6
Average time of residence of children in the school before being placed in homes.....		6.5

MOVEMENT OF POPULATION.

The activities of the institution during the two years are indicated by the foregoing figures. In comparison with former years the number of children cared for is considerably larger. It will be noted that the number received for the first time during each of the two years is exactly the same and that the number returned from homes increased slightly the last year. This increase, however, is not larger than should be expected, in view of the larger number placed out. Indeed, the number returned seems small when we consider the large number out in homes and subject to return. The average of yearly returns for ten years has been ten percent of the number out, while for the last year it was only nine percent, an indication that the children are well situated.

The number received for the first time during the last two years exceeds that of the preceding two years by 223 and of any preceding like period in the history of the school by 102. The record shows 542 as the largest, and 346 as the average number received annually from all sources for ten years. So it appears that the 542 received from all sources last year is a considerable increase over the number received in any previous year. The efficiency of county commissioners and others in rescuing dependent and neglected children affects the number received at this school. Activity in such work on the part of county authorities who send children to the school results in an increase in the number received and the increase of the last two years need not be taken as an indication that the number of children to be cared for at public expense is unduly increasing in this State, but rather as an indication that such children as are in need of the State's care are receiving it. In Minneapolis, St. Paul and Duluth the Humane Societies are active in rescuing children from abuse and neglect, and many of the children received from the cities come through the efforts of these organizations.

The probation officers of the cities, who are charged with the duty of bringing to the school the children committed to it by the juvenile courts, also investigate many cases and begin proceedings for the commitment of the children.

Notwithstanding the increased number received, the average number maintained in the institution has not increased but slightly decreased

during the last two years, as a result of the efforts put forth to secure homes for the children and place them out. The record of our placing-out work indicates that diligence has been exercised and a larger number placed than ever before in the same length of time, the number placed the last year being 501. While this is true, thoroughness has characterized our investigations of the homes before the children were placed. The fact that no child should be placed with people unfit to rear children has been kept in mind, and under the careful methods of selection pursued less than one-half of the applications received have been approved.

The number of children cared for in the school is large, much larger than the number in daily attendance, so rapidly does the population change. The number that received temporary care last year was 708, an excess of 120 over any previous year.

The attendance necessarily varies from day to day as the children come and go. The number present sometimes varies enough in a month's time to vacate or fill a cottage. As many as 57 children have been placed out in one month. But there is also a constant influx so that we have not always been able to avoid a crowded condition as the figures given indicate, the number present reaching 281 for two or three days in August last year, while the number ought not to exceed 250. Relief from such condition soon follows, however. The number present was reduced to 181 in May of this year, the average number present for the year being 221. The average daily attendance for the last ten years has been 233.

The replacing of children returned to the school after having been placed is often a harder task than to place them in the first instance. However, in many instances it is through no fault of the child that he is returned.

When a child is placed in a home, a trial period is given, during which the foster-parents may return him at will, but after the expiration of the trial period permission must be obtained from the superintendent before he is returned. Such permission is readily granted when conditions in the foster home have become disturbed and are such as to render longer residence there unpleasant or injurious to the child. The right to recall children whenever their interests require it is always reserved as a safeguard against possible ill-treatment. Under these provisions children are returned to the school and replaced or transferred directly to other homes.

The number under supervision in homes has steadily increased until it has reached 1,268, the daily average for the last year, and it will continue to increase until the number that annually pass beyond our guardianship through legal adoption, restoration to parents, becoming of age, etc., equals the number received. That time has not yet come.

The very important work of placing out and supervising the children in homes requires no less time and no less effort on the part of the superintendent than the management of the institution which receives and prepares the children to be placed out.

THE STATE AGENCY.

The State Agency, through which the placing-out work is done has been well maintained. But with so many children to place and with so many in homes to visit, there is much to be done, more than can be perfectly done by our present corps of agents, which consists of three regular agents and one traveling attendant. Mr. Lewis, Mr. Jager, Miss Swindlehurst and Mrs. Lewis continue their services in this department to our satisfaction. Through their labors, which never cease, we have been able to keep the number in the institution down and to give careful supervision to the children in homes in greatest need of attention. Adequate supervision of all of the children now out in homes and the personal investigation of all homes desiring to take children from the school would require more help than we now have. Important as this is, we have no hesitancy in saying that additional help should be provided in this department. Another agent should be at work now. The children in homes should be visited at least once a year until by repeated visits through a term of years it has been determined that such visits are no longer necessary, and more frequent visits to such as need them should be made. A child should receive his first visit during the first few months in the home or soon after he gets acquainted so that speedy removals from all ill-chosen homes may be accomplished. He should also be visited about the time the indenture expires to insure a satisfactory settlement.

The settlement of indentures, the investigation of complaints, the pacification of the discontented and unsettled and similar special work must be done promptly. The special work, now that many of the indentures have run the full term, takes more time than formerly, and on account of this the work of our State Agency is increasing in somewhat greater ratio than the number of children to be visited in homes is increasing.

As has been indicated, our State Agents are also charged with the duty of personally investigating the homes of applicants for children. And after years of experience we think this is of such importance as to require a personal visit by an agent to every family before its application for a child may be favorably passed upon. In this way only can the motive of the applicant and his qualifications for the duties of parenthood be understood.

Ninety percent of the children in homes are at an average distance of about one hundred miles from the school. Ten percent are scattered at greater distances, though most of them are in Minnesota, state lines being observed in placing them, to be consistent with the law restricting non-resident organizations in placing children in this state. Families which take children while residents of this state, and subsequently move to another state, however, are permitted to take the children with them, supervision being continued.

For convenience in assigning work to the several agents, the territory in which our children are placed is divided into eleven districts. The agents are assigned to these districts so that the children in each are visited at intervals by the different agents successively. A written report of each visit, giving the agent's opinion of the home and the condi-