

**REPORT ON THE
EDUCATIONAL
SITUATION IN MARYLAND**

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Report on the Educational Situation in Maryland by Philip Briscoe & Thomas M. Bartlett & H. Wirt Steele

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REPORT on the
Educational Situation
in MARYLAND by a
Special Committee
of the Board of State
Aid and Charities

CONSISTING OF

Dr. Philip Briscoe
Thomas M. Bartlett
H. Wirt Steele



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1914

REPORT
ON THE
EDUCATIONAL SITUATION
IN
MARYLAND

To the Board of State Aid and Charities:

The REPORT of your undersigned Committee, appointed to consider the Educational situation, respectfully shows:

That the Educational System of this State is, in some respects, antiquated and inefficient. It is the result of a series of Acts beginning in 1798 and running up to 1912. During this time, there have been several more or less complete re-organizations but in a measure these have taken the form of amendments to the law and a "patching up" of the system rather than a complete re-organization. It is the opinion of your Committee that the time has now come for such a complete re-organization, and we beg herewith to outline the conditions as they exist at present and a suggestion for such a re-organization.

That it is the duty of the State to support a system of Education it is hardly necessary to prove but the following arguments have been advanced to show that Maryland should have such a system:

1. The Maryland Constitution provides "that the General Assembly at its first session after the adoption of this Constitution, shall, by law, establish through-

out, the State, a through and efficient system of free Public Schools and shall provide by taxation or otherwise for their maintenance."

2. The Legislature and the State Board of Education have set certain minimum standards which each County system must meet, thereby establishing its authority as well as its responsibility for the efficiency of those systems. These minimum requirements embrace the following:
 - a. Course of study.
 - b. Length of school year.
 - c. Salaries paid teachers.
 - d. Compulsory attendance of pupils.
 - e. Number of pupils required to maintain a school.
 - f. Requiring admission into schools near the dividing line of pupils from other Counties.
3. The power of appointing the officers controlling these systems is lodged in the Governor and not in any local officer or electorate.
4. The duty of the State in this respect is recognized in other States, and in many, has been so decided by the highest courts therein.
5. No County can solely and entirely educate its future citizens. The child educated today in one County, may a decade hence be a resident of the city or another county; and vice versa, the man who is a resident of any given county ten years from the present may now be receiving his education in an entirely different part of the commonwealth.

Any consideration of the School System must include administration, finance and the scope of the courses. Taking this in detail, we find at the present time the Administration consists of the State Board of Education, the State Superintendent of Education, Board of County School Commissioners and the County School Superintendent.

The STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION is composed of six persons appointed by the Governor for a term of six years, two members retiring each year; and in addition, the Governor and the State Superintendent of Education, ex-officio. The duties of this Board are contained in Section 11, Article 77, Code of Public General Laws, which reads as follows:

"The State Board of Education shall, to the best of their ability, cause the provisions of this Article to be carried into effect and may, if necessary, institute legal proceedings for that purpose with the direction and advice of the Attorney-General; they shall enact By-Laws for the administration of the Public School system not at variance with this article, which, when enacted, and published, shall have the force of law; they shall have the power to remove or suspend any County Superintendent who may be found inefficient or incompetent for the discharge of duties assigned him, or guilty of such moral delinquency as unfits him for the office he holds; they shall explain the true intent and meaning of the law, and they shall decide, without expense to the parties concerned, all controversies and disputes that arise under it, and their decision shall be final."

The STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION is appointed by the Governor. He is the Executive Officer of the State Board of Education, and his duties are more completely shown in Section 20 of the above Article, which is as follows:

"It shall be the duty of the Superintendent of Public Education to inform himself and the State Board of Education as to the condition of the Public Schools throughout the State; to diffuse information as to the best methods of instruction; to receive and present to the State Board of Education the reports of the various Boards of County School Commissioners; to examine said County Boards' statements of expenditures of school funds and submit his judgment on the same to the State Board of Education; to have authority to endorse such Normal

School diplomas from other States as he may deem proper, and when so endorsed they shall be legal certificates to teach in any Elementary Public School in the State until revoked; to arrange dates for teachers Institutes; and assist the County Superintendent in the preparation of the program for the County Teachers' Institute and also attend same when in session, when possible and give instruction; he shall devote his whole time to the duties of his office, and in every way conserve the interest and promote the efficiency of the Public Schools of the State; The State Superintendent shall also be the Secretary of the State Board of Education.

The **BOARDS OF COUNTY SCHOOL COMMISSIONERS** are appointed by the Governor for a term of six years and consists of six persons from each of the following Counties — Baltimore, Carroll, Frederick, Dorchester, Washington and Montgomery; and three persons from each of the other Counties. Its duties are found in Section 25 of Article 77, which reads as follows:

"The Board of County School Commissioners shall have the general supervision and control of all the schools in their respective Counties; they shall build, repair and furnish school houses; they shall purchase and distribute text books; they shall, after advising with the Principal of the school to which the teacher is to be appointed, appoint all Assistant teachers; they shall have authority to consolidate schools when, in their judgment, consolidation is practicable and desirable, and to arrange for and pay charges of transporting pupil to and from such schools, and shall perform such other duties as may be necessary to secure an efficient administration of the Public School system, subject to the provisions of this article.

The **COUNTY SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT** is appointed by the County School Commissioners for a term of two years; is the Secretary and Treasurer of the Board as well as its Executive Officer, and in addition has the duties prescribed in Sections 72 and 76 of Article 77, which are as follows:

72. "It shall be the duty of the County Examiner to examine candidates for the profession of teacher, in the presence of at least one member of the Board of County School Commissioners or one or more of the District Trustees, and to give to such persons as are found qualified, under the sanction of the Board at its next meeting a certificate setting forth the branches such persons are competent to teach; but no certificate shall be granted without satisfactory evidence of the moral character of the applicant."

76. "It shall be the duty of the County Superintendent or his Assistant, at least three times in each year to visit the schools in his County, if it contains sixty teachers or less, and twice a year in Coun-

ties having more than sixty and less than one hundred and seventy-five teachers, and once a year in Counties where there are more than one hundred and seventy-five; he shall observe the methods of the teachers and give him or her such practical suggestions as circumstances may prompt; he shall, whenever possible, attend public examinations and report quarterly in detail the result of his observances through the Board of County School Commissioners. In Counties where the number of teachers shall exceed one hundred and seventy-five, the Board of County School Commissioners may, in their discretion, appoint an Assistant County Superintendent."

This system of County administration has been very highly praised and in our opinion, in the main, is good. There are, however, a few changes which it would seem advisable to your Committee, to have made as follows:

1st. If the School System is to have a State-wide standard, teachers must be of the same average ability, for after all, all systems of administration stop when you get a teacher and a group of scholars facing each other in a room with certain paraphernalia; at the present time, each County Superintendent is free to give his own examination; hence, set his own standard of qualification and training for the Teachers in his County. There are twenty-four different standards for teachers in the State. The only way in which a uniform curriculum may be worked out and applied is to have the standard of teachers uniform. We therefore recommend that no person be allowed to teach in the Public Schools of Maryland without a certificate from the State Board of Education, and that this certificate be given as a result of an examination which shall be uniform in all Counties.

2nd. It seems folly to your Committee to have the State Board of Education fix the curriculum as it is now able to do by law and yet, not be able to prescribe text-books from which this course is being taken. In New York State, for instance, a pupil can lay down his books in Rochester at 3 o'clock Friday afternoon, go to Brooklyn, Buffalo or Albany, and start in Monday morning within four pages of where he left off on Friday. It

would seem then, as highly advisable to give to the State Board of Education, the duty of selecting the text-books as well as fixing the details of the curriculum.

3rd. At the present time the State of Maryland pays out every year some Two Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$200,000.00) to private Institutions mostly of higher earning for the education of its citizens. These schools are not under the supervision of any state educational authority. Their appropriations are made by the Legislature direct and they are not subject to the inspection or supervision of any paid Educator. It would seem to your Committee that supervision of these schools is just as much a legitimate part of the work of the State Board of Education as is the supervision of any other schools supported by the State. We, therefore, respectfully recommend that the Legislature be forbidden to appropriate money to any schools which do not come up to the standard prescribed by the State Board of Education and which are not under its direct control.

FINANCE

No system of education can be carried out unless it is backed by adequate financial support. That the State recognizes its duty in this respect, is shown by the fact that of the thirty-one cents which composes its present tax rate, sixteen and one-eighth cents (16 $\frac{1}{8}$ cts.) goes to the Public School system. That Maryland is not doing all that it can in this respect, however, is clear when we consider that a comparative study of Public School Systems in the forty-eight States by the Russell Sage Foundation, gives Maryland a rank of forty-six in the ratio of amount spent for school purposes to wealth, the same being but twenty-one cents for each One Hundred Dollars (\$100) of wealth. The same Report ranks Maryland thirty-eighth in the amount of thirteen cents spent per day per child. While