

# **A STUDY OF SECONDARY EDUCATION IN VERMONT**

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A Study of Secondary Education in Vermont by Raymond McFarland

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**RAYMOND MCFARLAND**

**A STUDY OF SECONDARY  
EDUCATION IN VERMONT**



A Study of  
Secondary Education in Vermont

Univ of  
California

By  
Raymond McFarland  
Professor of Secondary Education

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## PREFACE.

By an act of the General Assembly of 1908 a Department of Pedagogy was established at Middlebury College for better professional training of teachers for secondary school work. The college soon came to recognize the necessity of a more intimate knowledge of conditions in the high schools and academies of Vermont, their special needs and problems, in order to a clearer understanding of its mission in helping these schools to be more efficient means in serving their constituents. To secure this information, Raymond McFarland, Professor of Secondary Education, was directed to visit the secondary schools of the State, or as many of them as could be reached during the first half of the school year of 1911-12. He was received in a most courteous and kindly manner, both by superintendents, principals, and teachers, and accorded every facility for his examinations, for which both he and the College desire to express earnest gratitude. Study of his report will show that his investigations were conducted in a thorough and impartial manner, with the sole object of acquiring facts which may be found useful in improving educational conditions in the State. Progress must be based upon facts, and as a contribution to the knowledge of conditions in Vermont education this report is sent out to the friends of Vermont schools. While the report is in many respects encouraging, it also suggests the need of advance in several directions, and the facts contained in it have already proved of service in the Middlebury College Department of Pedagogy.

JOHN M. THOMAS.

## SECONDARY EDUCATION IN VERMONT.

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### EXTENT OF INQUIRY.

The results set forth in this paper were secured through a visitation to the schools of secondary grade in Vermont, covering a period of four months from the first of October, 1911, to the first of February, 1912. During the time, 54 high schools, 16 academies, 2 normal schools, the Industrial School and the State Agricultural School were visited. The total number of schools visited represents 88 per cent of the teaching staff and 77 per cent of the secondary school system of the state. Observations were made of the classroom work of 209 teachers in 296 recitations.

### METHOD OF INQUIRY.

The method of procedure in the field work was to send to the principal of the school an announcement of the intended visit usually three or four days before the visit was made. At the school, interviews were held with the principal and, when possible, with the superintendent and teachers, and an inspection of conditions and observation of methods were made in the following particulars:

#### *I. Physical Conditions:\**

- (a) building, (b) grounds, (c) heating, (d) lighting, (e) sanitation, (f) janitor work, (g) ventilation.

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\*This form follows very closely that used by the Inspector of High Schools, State of Maine.

*II. Equipment:*

(a) Library,—

- (1) number of books, value, (2) accessibility, (3) encyclopedias and dictionaries, (4) scientific reference works, (5) reference works in history and literature, (6) deficiencies.

(b) Laboratory,—

- (1) general arrangement of the room, (2) physics,—value of apparatus, condition, storage, (3) chemistry, value of apparatus, condition, storage, (4) other science equipment.

*III. Teaching Staff:*

- (a) Name of teacher, (b) amount of education, (c) experience in teaching, (d) professional training, (e) subjects taught, (f) salary.

*IV. Recitations Observed.*

- (a) teacher, (b) subject, (c) number of pupils, (d) preparation of class, (e) preparation of teacher, (f) methods of instruction, (g) comments.

*V. Organization.*

- (a) admission, (b) special students, (c) 'double' classes, (d) faculty organization,—(1) departments, (2) professional work, (3) supervision by principal.

*VI. Attendance.*

- (a) enrollment: boys, girls, total.  
 (b) regularity of attendance, (c) tardiness.

*VII. Courses of Study:*

- (a) name and number, (b) program of study.



*VIII. Miscellaneous:*

- (a) working spirit of school, (b) management,
- (c) discipline, (d) spirit of community, (e) deficiencies in preparation of the entering class.

**GROUNDS AND BUILDINGS.**

The grounds and sites of the schools of Vermont are on the whole satisfactory. Only about 10 per cent may be classed as poor; about two out of every three schools are located on desirable sites with large grounds, which are usually free enough from trees and adjoining buildings to allow plenty of light to reach the school building and yard. Not enough care is taken in decorating the school grounds. In larger cities it is better to use the school yards as open-air play grounds, but in our communities, generally, there is plenty of space to beautify the grounds with shrubs and flowers and still leave room for children to play and exercise.

The academies have an advantage over the high schools in having their buildings free from grade pupils. It is rare to find an academy in which the high school and grade pupils occupy the same building, while among the high schools proper more than 80 per cent of them have grades in the same building. This is an unfortunate condition both for physical and moral reasons, as well as for class-room efficiency. Grade pupils should not be closely associated with larger and more advanced pupils. The programs of study, recitation and recess are not the same for the two classes of pupils; consequently, there are frequent interruptions during the progress of class-room work by the passing of pupils through the hallways and the noise incident to frequent recesses.

**LIGHTING.**

While two-thirds of the schools have satisfactory grounds, also two-thirds of the buildings are poorly supplied with light through inadequate window space. Teachers do not realize their responsibility in maintaining the best possible conditions for lighting and ventilating rooms. Too often the shades are left where they happen to be, with no consideration for the bright or dull day. Usually two-thirds of the light comes through the upper half of the window. Many cases of severe eye strain could be avoided by raising the shades to the top of the windows, or, what is better, by having shades that may be adjusted from the middle of the window.

There is urgent need of reform in school hygiene. The trend in life today is aseptic instead of antiseptic; that is, effort is expended in preventing bad conditions rather than in remedying them. It is the duty of the school principal to have his teachers attend carefully to the lighting and ventilation of the school rooms in so far as it lies in their power.

**SANITATION AND JANITOR WORK.**

A good janitor is rather to be chosen than great buildings. There are many sweepers, cleaners and dust disturbers, but less than a dozen first-class janitors in the state. Consequently unsanitary conditions were found in about two out of every three buildings that were visited. In some cases conditions exist that would justify the closing of school until the sanitation was made satisfactory. In two instances at least schools were conducted in buildings which, I was informed, had been condemned by the State Board of

**Health.** An abundance of dust in the air of school rooms is a constant menace to teachers and pupils. In too many instances the sweeping of floors is done in the morning before school opens or during the noon recess.

At Morrisville the evil effects of dust have been reduced to a minimum by the installation of a vacuum cleaner plant in the high school building at a cost of about \$600. The plant is connected by under-ground tubes with an adjoining grade building. The janitor removes dust and dirt from floors and chalk rails after the close of school as quickly as by the old method of sweeping and in a much more sanitary manner.

#### VENTILATION.

Probably no phase of the physical side of school hygiene is so important to sound health and clean thinking as adequate ventilation. Yet this subject receives inadequate attention in the administration of our high schools. The fault lies partly in the lack of proper facilities for ventilation and partly in the ignorance of teachers in the subject of school hygiene. In the state there are perhaps seven high schools in which the facilities for ventilation may be considered excellent. One-third of the total number of the schools may be put in the class of "excellent and good" ventilation. There are more schools in which the ventilation is very poor than very good. Two-thirds of the schools may be rated as below the standard required for satisfactory ventilation.

According to certain authorities in matters of vital economy, "the effect of the vitiated air of unventilated schoolrooms is to reduce the work of teachers and scholars to at least 75 per cent of that easily and regularly done in