

LECTURES ON SCHOOL SUPERVISION

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Lectures on School Supervision by Lawton B. Evans

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LAWTON B. EVANS

**LECTURES ON
SCHOOL
SUPERVISION**

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ON
SCHOOL SUPERVISION

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INTRODUCTION

School supervision in the United States is recognized to-day as a definite rank of professional service. This profession has come into existence in response to the peculiar demands of our American communities, and owes its origin and character to the genius of our American institutions. In no other country do we find an educational office that corresponds in its duties and requirements to that of the American superintendent of public schools.

It has been only within the last few years that special emphasis has been placed upon the qualifications and duties of the school superintendent. At first it was too commonly the practice to divorce the work of supervision from that of teaching. This was especially true with regard to the supervision of rural schools. But there are few communities in this country to-day, urban or rural, in which the people do not recognize the fundamental principle that real supervision involves real teaching, and that the expert superintendent must first of all be an expert teacher. To the progressive recognition of this principle may be attributed the rapid development of our educational systems during the past decade. Those charged with the inspection and supervision of our schools to-day must be men who have come

from the ranks; they must be fitted by experience and study to lead their teachers, and to develop skill and teaching power in the individual, by practical demonstration as well as by counsel and advice. Besides, the memory of their own trials and difficulties is calculated to make them more practical and sympathetic with the struggling young teacher.

(2) A second principle is also quite generally recognized to-day: While the superintendent must be a teacher, he must be something more. The scope of the teacher's work may be limited to a class or a specific subject. The superintendent's field of vision must include all classes and all the topics of the curriculum. He must be able to comprehend not only things, but relations as well. It is not enough for him to be familiar with subjects; he must have power to correlate these subjects in a consistent course of study, to estimate their specific educational values, and to preserve both in matter and method pedagogical unity and proportion.

(3) The third principle in school supervision involves the business or administrative element. Aside from his professional fitness, the school superintendent must be a man of affairs. Even in his relations to teachers and pupils he must possess a degree of business sense and executive power. He must be able to plan and to bring things to pass. In his relations to the Board of Education and the community he must have business ability of no mean order. The public is far more likely to detect the want of economy in methods which may be measured by dollars and cents, than in the more subtle processes which must be valued by their mental and ethical results.

On the practical side it is assumed that the work of supervision requires a substantial basis of experience in teaching.

The wider the range of this experience, the better and the broader will be the foundation. On the other hand, too much emphasis cannot be placed upon the theoretical side of the superintendent's preparation. The man who shapes the educational policy and moulds the destiny of a community should be a practical student of psychology and of the theory and history of education. In order to inspire and train the teachers under his direction, and in order to develop in them the right spirit and the true ideal of their work, the superintendent must be masterful in theory as well as in practice.

While there are many excellent institutions in which this general preparation for supervision may be obtained, it is to be regretted that there is none in which the young superintendent can get training and instruction in the more specific duties of the profession. Possibly it is too much to expect this species of training from any institution in the present stage of educational development. The fact that the opportunities are offered in a number of our summer schools for this preparation, indicates the growing recognition of its importance. It is somewhat surprising, however, that so few practical hand books have been prepared, embodying in general outline, the ideals and practical duties of the superintendent.

The publication of this course of lectures by Superintendent Evans will be hailed with pleasure by those who are entrusted with the work of school supervision in the smaller cities of this country, as well as by those who are charged with the destiny of our rural schools. The author of these lectures is fortunate in that his long experience includes the supervision of rural as well as city schools. These lectures are admirably sane and suggestive. Much of their value will be found in the author's

conservatism and in his freedom from that dogmatism which seeks, too often, to crystallize educational theory and method into the saneless routine of a mechanical system. The lecturer's zeal and enthusiasm are invariably guided by a wholesome common sense, and his treatment is characterized throughout by such philosophical and ethical considerations as are calculated to render them effective for inspiration as well as for instruction.

JOHN HERBERT PHILLIPS,
Superintendent Public Schools,
Birmingham, Ala.

PREFACE

School supervision, which is so closely related to education, is necessarily receiving greatly increased attention, especially so in this transitional and constructive stage of the great educational movement in the Southern states. By reason of this greater stress on supervision and the increasing difficulties and problems connected therewith, our Southern superintendents will gladly welcome a work that has been the product of Southern conditions, and has grown out of the experience of one who has for many years been serving in the capacity of both a city and county superintendent. Just such a work the Southern Educational Review is offering to the public and especially to the superintendents. The Review is under great obligations to Superintendent J. H. Phillips, of Birmingham, Ala., for writing the introduction; and to Superintendent R. J. Tighe, of Asheville, N. C., for a critical review of the manuscript and for many valuable suggestions.

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