

**A PRELIMINARY, SECOND,
THIRD REPORT UPON A
COURSE OF STUDIES FOR
ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649497935

A Preliminary, Second, Third Report Upon a Course of Studies for Elementary Schools by John T. Prince

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

JOHN T. PRINCE

**A PRELIMINARY, SECOND,
THIRD REPORT UPON A
COURSE OF STUDIES FOR
ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS**

copy

Ed. no. 2540.17

REPORTS

UPON A

**COURSE OF STUDIES FOR
ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS.**

PREPARED FOR THE SIXTIETH, SIXTY-FIRST AND SIXTY-
SECOND REPORTS OF THE MASSACHUSETTS
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION.

BY

JOHN T. PRINCE,

AGENT OF THE MASSACHUSETTS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION.

BOSTON:

WRIGHT & POTTER PRINTING CO., STATE PRINTERS,
18 POST OFFICE SQUARE.

1899.

A PRELIMINARY REPORT

UPON A

COURSE OF STUDIES FOR
ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS.

BY

JOHN T. PRINCE,

AGENT OF THE MASSACHUSETTS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION.

BOSTON:

WRIGHT & POTTER PRINTING CO., STATE PRINTERS,
18 POST OFFICE SQUARE.

1897.

REPORT.

A course of studies is intended as a guide in determining (*a*) the subjects of instruction that shall be pursued, (*b*) the time — both relative and absolute — which shall be given to the various subjects, (*c*) the order in which the subjects and parts of subjects shall be presented and reviewed and (*d*) the distribution of subjects that shall be made in the program in respect both to a proper correlation of studies and to the teaching force of the school.

The questions here involved must be determined by considerations which relate to the child's nature and capacity, and by the ends which are sought to be secured in education. It is fair to presume that these considerations have been the guide of persons in making the courses of studies now in use, and any intelligent presentation of a new course or revision of an old one should be governed, in some degree at least, by the opinions of wise educators everywhere, as embodied in the courses of studies which they have made. With this thought in mind I caused to be sent to various places in this country blanks calling for the following facts in relation to the courses and programs now in actual operation: —

1. The age at which children are permitted to begin the prescribed course and the length of the course.
2. The number of exercises or recitations in each subject and grade and the average length of recitation.
3. Facts in relation to elective studies, including (*a*) the names of studies that are elective, (*b*) the grades in which they are pursued, (*c*) the proportion of the whole number of schools in which some of the studies are elective and (*d*) a statement of results observed.
4. Facts in relation to departmental instruction, including (*a*) the proportion of teachers (except teachers of music, drawing and manual training) that teach one or more subjects in two

or more rooms, and (b) details of plans pursued and results observed.

5. Facts in relation to the correlation of studies, including (a) the names of subjects that are grouped in the course and the groupings that are made, (b) the proportion of teachers that follow a systematic plan of correlation, and (c) methods pursued, with some statement of results observed.

Blanks calling for this information were sent to all cities in the country having more than one hundred thousand inhabitants, to the practice departments of twenty typical normal schools situated in various parts of the country and to the cities and larger towns of Massachusetts. Replies, complete or partial, from the following places have been received:—

Cities outside of Massachusetts.

Allegheny, Pa.	Indianapolis, Ind.	Providence, R. I.
Brooklyn, N. Y.	Louisville, Ky.	St. Louis, Mo.
Cincinnati, O.	New Orleans, La.	St. Paul, Minn.
Cleveland, O.	Omaha, Neb.	
Denver, Col.	Philadelphia, Pa.	

Normal Schools (Practice Departments).

Bridgewater, Mass.	New Britain, Conn.	Trenton, N. J.
California, Pa.	New York Teachers' College.	Warrensburg, Mo.
Cedar Falls, Iowa.		Westfield, Mass.
Chicago, Ill. (Cook Co.).	Oshkosh, Wis.	Winona, Minn.
Emporia, Kan.	Oswego, N. Y.	
Framingham, Mass.	Terre Haute, Ind.	

Cities and Towns in Massachusetts.

Amherst.	Fitchburg.	Northampton.
Atbol.	Gardner.	North Attleborough.
Belmont.	Gloucester.	Pittsfield.
Boston.	Greenfield.	Quincy.
Braintree.	Haverhill.	Somerville.
Brockton.	Lawrence.	Springfield.
Brookline.	Lowell.	Stoneham.
Cambridge.	Lynn.	Taunton.
Canton.	Malden.	Walpole.
Chelsea.	Marlborough.	Waldham.
Chicopee.	Medford.	Watertown.
Clinton.	Middleborough.	Wellesley.
Concord.	Milton.	Weymouth.
Dedham.	New Bedford.	Winchester.
Everett.	Newburyport.	Woburn.
Fall River.	North Adams.	Worcester.

In the responses to the circulars of inquiry, one significant fact was brought out, namely, the transient or unsatisfactory character of present courses in the estimation of many superintendents and teachers. Several State and city superintendents gave as a reason for not filling out the blanks relating to time schedules that they were about making out new courses and, therefore, preferred not to submit a report. The extent to which a revision of the course is going on indicates a widespread dissatisfaction in the courses in general use, both in respect to subjects of instruction and to time allotments. This fact alone would seem to justify an attempt to investigate present conditions, and to ascertain the opinions of advanced educators as to certain changes which have been proposed.

The following facts are collected from the replies received and from the courses of study accompanying them. Reference also is made to the courses of study, either suggested or prescribed, issued by State superintendents, to the reports of the Committee of Ten and of the Committee of Fifteen and to the courses of study prescribed in foreign countries.

AGE OF ADMISSION AND LENGTH OF COURSE.

The earliest age at which children are permitted to attend school in most of the western and central States is six years. In most cities and towns of Massachusetts and in some other eastern States it is five years. In most places where the earliest age of admission is six years, the length of the elementary course is eight years, and where the earliest age is five years, the course is generally nine years in length. Exceptions to this are found in several cities of New England whose elementary course is eight years in length for pupils who are permitted to enter school at five years of age. It should be said that in all places where the earliest permitted age of admission is five years, the actual average age of the admission of pupils into the lowest grade is much higher. For example, Somerville reports the average age of admission of pupils into the lowest grade for the past three years to be five years, seven and one half months. It is believed that this is a fair average of the age of pupils admitted to the first grade in most cities which permit children to attend school at five.

In the public elementary schools of England children may begin at three years of age and must begin at five, remaining in the infants' school until the age of seven. The length of the subsequent course is seven years.

In France and Germany the earliest age of admission to the primary school is six years, and the length of the elementary course is from six to eight years. In France, however, nearly half of all the children from two to six years of age are enrolled in the mother schools (*écoles maternelles*) or lower primary classes (*classes enfantines*). Many cities of Germany and of this country also provide for children under the age of six in the public kindergarten.

It is possible that the differences in this country in the earliest age of admission to the elementary schools and in the length of the course of such schools will disappear when the kindergarten becomes universally a part of the public school system. It may be fairly questioned, however, in any event, whether much of the formal intellectual work now carried on in many first year primary classes should be demanded of children before the age of six. If, where children are permitted to enter school at five, a sub-primary course could be pursued, consisting largely of manual and observational work, advancement in subsequent work required would be likely to be quite as rapid as it is at present where pupils are required to read and write much during the first year. In case there is a kindergarten course which children can begin at three or four years of age, the work of this sub-primary class could be supplementary to the work of the kindergarten and preparatory for the more formal work of the primary school. According to many of our best kindergartners and primary school teachers this connection between the two schools is very much to be desired. Further details of this plan will be given later in this report.

SUBJECTS OF INSTRUCTION.

The following table shows what subjects are taught in the various grades of schools in 60 of the cities and towns reporting. On account of incompleteness in the time schedules reported the other 16 places above named are not included. In a comparison of the figures it should be borne in mind that in 44

of the places there are nine grades in the course, and that in the other 16 places there are only eight grades.

TABLE I. — *Showing the Number of Cities and Towns (out of 60 Places reporting) in which the Various Subjects are taught and in what Grades the Subjects are taught.*

[Grade 9 in 44 places.]

BRANCHES.	Grade	Grade	Grade	Grade	Grade	Grade	Grade	Grade	Grade
	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.
Reading,	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	59	43
Writing,	60	60	60	60	60	59	55	52	36
Spelling (lists),	34	46	53	58	58	58	56	54	38
Language and composition,	51	57	60	60	58	55	51	47	41
Grammar,	-	-	-	2	4	15	34	51	40
Latin,	-	-	-	-	-	1	4	5	12
French or German,	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	3	3
Arithmetic,	53	59	60	60	59	60	59	57	41
Algebra,	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	11	22
Geometry,	-	-	-	2	4	5	6	8	6
History and biography,	9	12	15	22	29	32	47	57	39
Geography,*	9	14	23	38	40	40	41	39	24
Elementary science or nature study,	50	51	52	52	52	51	50	47	37
Singing,	57	58	59	59	59	59	56	56	42
Drawing,	58	58	58	58	59	59	59	58	43
Manual training or cooking,	7	5	5	10	13	14	15	13	38

* Forty-one places reporting, twenty-nine of them having nine grades.

From the above table it appears that the three R's still hold the most prominent place in all the grades. Singing and drawing are taught in nearly every grade of all schools reported, while spelling and language have almost as good a showing. Geography and history are almost universally taught in the upper grades, and their elements are not neglected in a large proportion of the lower grades. If the supplementary reading in these subjects had been counted there would doubtless have been a better showing in all the lower grades.

The most surprising figures are those given in connection with elementary science or nature study. That more than five sixths of all the grades below the eighth and a scarcely less proportion in the eighth and ninth grades are receiving instruction