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Elbert E. Earnest

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A STUDY OF THE ENFORCEMENT OF ATTENDANCE
IN THE MUNICIPAL SCHOOLS OF NEW MEXICO

By

Elbert E. Earnest

A Thesis

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts in Education

University of New Mexico

1950

A STUDY OF THE N. E. CORNER OF A TRAP
IN THE MINERAL SPRING OF NEW JERSEY



REPORT BY
ROBERT A. BARNES

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Education

University of New Mexico

1937

This thesis, directed and approved by the candidate's committee, has been accepted by the Graduate Committee of the University of New Mexico in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

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A STUDY OF THE ENFORCEMENT OF ATTENDANCE
IN THE MUNICIPAL SCHOOLS OF NEW MEXICO

By

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IN THE MUNICIPAL SCHOOLS OF NEW ORLEANS

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Thesis committee

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. INTRODUCTION	1
The problem	3
Statement of the problem	3
Delimitations of the problem	3
Importance of the problem	3
Definition of terms	5
Compulsory attendance	5
Municipal school	5
Attendance worker	5
Work permit	5
Sources of the data	6
Methods of procedure	6
Organization of the remainder of the study	7
II. REVIEW OF RELATED STUDIES	8
III. LEGAL PROVISIONS FOR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE IN	
NEW MEXICO	21
Early legislation	21
The present law	25
IV. THE PRESENT STATUS OF ATTENDANCE	
ENFORCEMENT	30

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CHAPTER

I. INTRODUCTION	1
The problem	1
Statement of the problem	2
Delimitations of the study	3
Importance of the study	4
Definition of terms	5
Conceptual framework	6
Municipal & local	7
Attitudes towards	8
Work habits	9
Sources of the study	10
Methods of study	11
Organization of the research	12
Study	13
II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE	14
III. LEGAL PROVISIONS FOR LABOR RELATIONS	15
NEW METHOD	16
Early legislation	17
The present law	18
IV. THE PRESENT STATUS OF THE STUDY	19
INTRODUCTION	20

	111
CHAPTER	PAGE
Schools having attendance workers	30
Persons performing attendance work	31
Procedures used in attendance	
enforcement	34
V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS . . .	45
Summary and Conclusions	45
Recommendations	46
BIBLIOGRAPHY	50
APPENDIX	55

Schools having attendance workers

Persons performing attendance work

Procedures used in attendance

enforcement

V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary and Conclusions

Recommendations

BIBLIOGRAPHY

APPENDIX

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE	PAGE
I. Trends in Attendance in New Mexico Schools . .	24
II. Percentage Ratios Based on Figures in	
Table I	24
III. Enrollment of Schools Which Have and Those	
Which Do Not Have Attendance Workers	30
IV. Enrollment (1947-48) of Schools Having	
Full-time and Part-time Attendance	
Workers	33

TABLE

I. Trends in Enrollment in the United States

II. Percentage of Total Enrollment in the United States

Table 1

III. Enrollment of School-Aged Children and Youth

Which Do Not Have Enrollment Records

IV. Enrollment (1940-1945) of School-Aged Children and Youth

Enrollment and Enrollment Records

Notes

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The success of a democracy is conditioned by, if not dependent upon, the success of education in that democracy. If a democracy is to be successful its members must be qualified by education to assume intelligently their duties and rights in a democratic society. Because of this qualification every member of that society must be provided the opportunity for an education which will fit him for membership in a democracy. Unfortunately, merely providing the opportunity for education does not assure that all will take advantage of such opportunity.

Society has assumed a direct, positive relationship between school attendance and the attainment of this qualification for citizenship. Because of this, society has adopted means to secure regular school attendance by all children for a minimum period of time. The means universally adopted has been legislation enacted by each state requiring that all children within a specified age range attend school regularly all or part of the term that school is in session.

Although sometimes used almost interchangeably, the terms "compulsory attendance" and "compulsory education" are not the same thing. A recent definition of compulsory education by Good is an example of the use of these terms as

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Although sometimes used almost interchangeably, the terms "compulsory attendance" and "mandatory education" are not the same thing. A recent definition of compulsory education by Good is an example of the use of these terms as

synonyms:

Compulsory education is (1) the practice now common to all states, territories, and possessions of the United States, of requiring school attendance by law; (2) historically, the requirement that every child should be able to read and write by a certain age, commonly twelve years, school attendance not being required.¹

Compulsory attendance is the requirement that all children within a specified age range attend school regularly. Compulsory education requires that children attend school until a specified grade attainment is reached. Some state laws combine both attendance and education, requiring attendance through a certain age or completion of a certain grade.

Simply enacting such legislation has not been enough to produce regular school attendance by all children. In the United States approximately fifteen of each hundred pupils enrolled in school are absent each day. For the school year 1947-48, about twenty-one of each hundred enrolled in New Mexico were absent each day. Furthermore, approximately 13 per cent of the children of school age were not even enrolled.

¹ Carter V. Good, Editor, A Dictionary of Education (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., 1945), p. 89.

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I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. It is the purpose of this study to (1) review the historical development of compulsory attendance legislation in New Mexico; (2) to find out the types of persons engaged in attendance work in the municipal schools of New Mexico; and (3) to ascertain the procedures and policies followed by these schools in the enforcement of attendance.

Delimitations of the problem. Only the seventy-two municipal schools of New Mexico are included in this study. Because the situation in administrative organization in the rural schools is materially different, the schools under county administration are omitted from this study.

Statistical data regarding school census, school enrollment, and average daily attendance are for the school year 1947-48, except when indicated otherwise.

Discussion and analysis of forms used in keeping records of attendance and for admission to class following absence are not included because it is believed that this phase of attendance administration would be ample to constitute a separate study.

Importance of the problem. The average grade attainment in the total population of New Mexico, as shown by the

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Delimitations of the problem. Only the elementary-municipal schools of New Mexico are included in this study. Because the situation in administrative organization in the rural schools is materially different, these schools under county administration are not included in this study. Statistical data regarding school numbers, school enrollment, and average daily attendance are for the school year 1937-38, except where indicated otherwise. Discussion and analysis of laws used in keeping records of attendance and for admission to classes following absence are not included because it is believed that this phase of attendance administration would be ample to constitute a separate study.

Importance of the problem. The attendance problem is significant in the total population of New Mexico, as shown by the

census, is only 7.9, a rank of thirty-seventh in the forty-eight states. Only one state has a higher rate of illiteracy than New Mexico. Poor school attendance is assumed to be a contributing factor in these poor conditions.

In studying the problems of education in New Mexico, school administrators, the press, and other groups interested in the welfare of the children have given much attention to the problem of school attendance. Considerable publicity has been given to the fact that the people of this state are spending a great portion of their income in providing educational opportunities for their children while attendance remains low. Economically speaking, it is a poor return on a large investment if only three-fourths of the children are being benefited by the opportunities so provided. What is worse is that the children themselves suffer the educational and social consequences of non-attendance, assuming that school attendance is necessary for educational development.

According to Snedden², the state performs a three-fold function for education: (1) it may support education; (2) it may control and manage it; and (3) it may enforce it on given communities or individuals.

² David Snedden, "Compulsory Attendance," A Cyclo-
pedia of Education, I, p. 285.

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According to Leabart, the state performs a three-fold function for education: (1) it may control and manage; (2) it may control and manage; and (3) it may encourage or induce on given communities or individuals.

If one of the above functions is not performed, then the educational program suffers and the children suffer in consequence. This study is important because it is concerned with one of the most serious problems of education in New Mexico and seeks to find out what is being done to comply with the law and to increase school attendance.

II. DEFINITION OF TERMS

Compulsory attendance. The term "compulsory attendance" shall be used in this study to mean regular attendance as prescribed by law in a school recognized by the state department of education.

Municipal school. "Municipal school" shall refer to any public school or school system which is located in an incorporated city, town, or village, and which is independent of county administration.

Attendance worker. In this study "attendance worker" shall mean any person whose duty it is to administer the attendance services of the school.

Work permit. The term "work permit" shall designate permission in writing issued by the superintendent or the attendance worker excusing the holder of such permit from full-time school attendance.

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Attendance worker. In this study "attendance worker" shall mean any person whose duty it is to administer the attendance services of the school.

Work permit. The term "work permit" shall designate permission in writing issued by the superintendent of the attendance worker exempting the holder of such permit from full-time school attendance.

Such permission is to be granted only to children between the ages of fourteen and sixteen, who are employed or are to be employed in the immediate future, in some gainful occupation.³

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III. SOURCES OF THE DATA

The data used in this study were obtained from two sources. Statistical information on school census, enrollment, and average daily attendance was obtained from the Division of Statistics, State Department of Education, Santa Fe, New Mexico. Information regarding procedures in the administration of attendance services was secured from fifty-four returned questionnaires which were mailed to the superintendents of the seventy-two municipal schools of New Mexico.

IV. METHODS OF PROCEDURE

Available literature on the subject of attendance practices was read and points of significance to the subject noted. Responses on the returned questionnaires were recorded on file cards and tabulated. The data were then summarized and conclusions drawn regarding the attendance procedures followed and the types of personnel engaged in

³ New Mexico Statutes Annotated, 1941, 55-1204.

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attendance work. Recommendations were made in line with the findings of this study and in harmony with recommendations by authorities for desirable attendance practices.

V. ORGANIZATION OF THE REMAINDER OF THE STUDY

Literature related to the subject of this study will be reviewed briefly in Chapter II. Chapter III will be devoted to the legal provisions for enforcement of attendance, beginning with the earliest attempts of the territorial legislators to establish a system of public education in New Mexico and continuing to the present legal provisions for the enforcement of school attendance. Data concerning the attendance worker now performing attendance services in the municipal schools will be presented in Chapter IV. Chapter IV will also show how the work of enforcing attendance is being done in the municipal schools. The summary of the findings of this study and the conclusions drawn therefrom will be given in Chapter V.

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ok.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED STUDIES

An examination of studies of attendance practices shows that there is an increasing interest in the functioning of attendance services.

In 1886, very early in the history of the compulsory attendance movement, George H. Martin, Secretary of the State Board of Education of Massachusetts, made a detailed inquiry into the enforcement of compulsory attendance in his state. Finding many deficiencies, he made numerous recommendations, some of which were enacted in subsequent legislation. Most important among these recommendations were: (1) the burden of proof in case of absence should fall on the parent; (2) attendance should be compulsory during the entire time school is in session; (3) the state should provide clothing and books for children of indigent parents; (4) the cost of educating truants should fall on a larger area than the town, preferably the county or state; and (5) a state agent should be appointed to look after truancy.¹

In connection with the survey of the Cleveland schools, Ayres found the following conditions prevailing in

¹ David Snedden, "Compulsory Attendance," A Cyclo-
pedia of Education, I, p. 287.

An examination of studies of attendance practices shows that there is an increasing interest in the functioning of attendance services.

In 1930, very early in the history of the compulsory

attendance movement, George E. Hoxby, Secretary of the State Board of Education of Massachusetts, made a detailed inquiry into the enforcement of compulsory attendance in the state. Finding many deficiencies, he made numerous recommendations, some of which were adopted by the state legislature. Most important among these recommendations were: (1) the burden of proof in cases of truancy should fall on the parent; (2) attendance should be compulsory during the entire time school is in session; (3) the state should provide clothing and books for children of indigent parents; (4) the cost of educating truant children should fall on a larger area than the town, preferably the county or state; and (5) a state agent should be appointed to look after truancy. In connection with the survey of the Cleveland schools, Ayres found the following conditions prevailing in

attendance work in the year 1915:

Attendance is administered by the truancy division, under one chief truant officer and ten assistant truant officers. The assistant truant officers are assigned to districts and required to visit each public school in the district twice each week and each parochial school once a week. Cases of truancy are reported to these officers and every endeavor is made by the division to persuade the parents to send the child to school regularly. When these efforts fail, the case is reported to the Juvenile Court.

One weakness in the present system lies in the variation of work the officers do. No adequate means is used to check up on their work and its results.

A second weakness is that the sole aim is to secure the presence in school of children who have voluntarily enrolled. No effort is made to enroll those who have not done so.²

The importance of courts in attendance enforcement was studied by Bender³ in 1927. His findings may be summarized as follows: (1) appeal to the courts to enforce attendance laws is hindered when the law provides that local officials must bring charges of violation. Administrators advise that the law should make provision that charges may be brought by county and state officials. (2) Local courts are in many cases found ineffective as means for enforcing

² Leonard P. Ayres, Child Accounting in the Public Schools (Cleveland, Ohio: The Survey Committee of the Cleveland Foundation, 1915), pp.50-68.

³ John Frederick Bender, The Function of the Courts in Enforcing School Attendance Laws (New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1927), pp. 180-1.

attendance work in the year 1912:

Attendance is maintained by the primary division under one chief primary officer and ten assistant officers. The primary division officers are divided into districts and remained on duty each week of the year. The district officers each week and each assistant officer once a week. Age of primary are reported by these officers and every endeavor is made by the division to persuade the parents to send the child to school early. When these efforts fail, the child is referred to the juvenile court.

One weakness in the present system lies in the violation of work the officer has. No attendance officer is allowed to check up on their work and the results.

A second weakness is that the role of the parent in the present system is that of a volunteer. The parent is not enrolled, no effort is made to enroll those who have not done so.

The importance of correct attendance enforcement

was studied by Sander in 1911. His findings may be summarized as follows:

(1) except in the case of truancy attendance laws are enforced when the law requires that local officials must bring charges of truancy. Administrative advice that the law should have provision that charges may be brought by county and school officials. (2) Local courts are in many cases found ineffective as means for enforcing

2 Leonard P. Ayres, Child Accounting in the Schools (Cleveland, Ohio: The Survey Committee of the Cleveland Foundation, 1912), pp. 73-88.

3 John Frederick Genter, The Function of the School in Enforcing School Attendance (New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1912), pp. 180-1.

attendance laws. The law should make appeal possible to such courts as county courts, district courts, and circuit courts. (3) The kind of court action secured in attendance cases affects greatly the success of attendance departments in improving attendance. The attitude of the court and its decisions on the cases brought before it are important factors either in strengthening or in partly nullifying attendance laws. (4) Efficient functioning by courts depends on an adequate and efficient attendance service in the schools.

Tracing the history of compulsory education, Heck⁴ showed that England was the forerunner in the movement with a law in 1405 which required that parents choose between sending children to school or "setting them to some useful employment." The parents could send children to any school "within the realm."

In America, the Massachusetts law of 1642 requiring parents to educate their children and the 1647 law requiring each town of 100 or more families to establish a school and each community having fifty or more families to employ a teacher to teach children to read and write were steps toward compulsory education, although the compulsion was

⁴ Arch O. Heck, Administration of Pupil Personnel (New York: Ginn and Company, 1929), pp. 16-44.

placed upon the parents and the towns to provide educational opportunities. Some 250 years later, in 1852, the same state, Massachusetts, passed the first compulsory-attendance law in the United States.

Davis and Wheeler⁵ analyzed the examination questions for attendance workers in the city of Philadelphia for the years 1914 and 1930. Their analysis showed that the work of the attendance officer had evolved from that of a police officer to that of a social worker with knowledge and techniques required of social workers.

Lawing⁶ studied the actual attendance practices in effect in the forty-eight states. From an analysis of these practices he formulated what he considered desirable and necessary in an attendance law and its administration. His recommendations were: a nine-months' school term; age limits of seven to eighteen, inclusive; liberal exemptions, especially for handicapped children; educational provisions for handicapped children; an annual census; poor relief to age sixteen; and issuance of employment certificates at age sixteen.

⁵ F. G. Davis and C. A. Wheeler, "Development of the Attendance Officer," Vocational Guidance Magazine, 11:310-13 April, 1933.

⁶ John C. Lawing, Standards for State and Local School Attendance Service. Doctor's dissertation, Teachers College, Columbia University. (Maryville, Missouri: Forum Print Shop, 1934), p. 105.

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John C. Lawing, Standards for State and Local School
 Attendance Service, Boston: Massachusetts Teachers College,
 (Cambridge, Massachusetts) Boston: Brown Printing
 Shop, 1934, p. 102.

A study of the attendance laws in the forty-eight states one year later by Deffenbaugh and Keesecker showed that every state then had a compulsory school law, although the laws differ widely in their requirements, especially in age limits and length of time for which attendance is required. Only two states, Ohio and New Mexico, then required the attendance of six-year-olds.

The authors further concluded that:

1. A law which requires that all attendance officers shall be certified by the state and qualified to deal sociologically with individual non-attendance problems may be expected to promote better relationship between the home and the school than a law which permits local boards the freedom to select unsuitable and unqualified attendance officers. Eight states now have prescribed educational standards for attendance workers.

2. The schools must make better provision than they now do to care for each and every child compelled to attend school.⁷

The cost of enforcing attendance was the subject of a 1935 study by Herlihy.⁸ He found that slightly more than three and one-half million dollars were spent for attendance enforcement by 215 large cities in the year 1931-32. The cost per pupil varied from forty-three cents to eighty-five

⁷ Walter S. Deffenbaugh and Ward W. Keesecker, Compulsory Attendance Laws and Their Administration (Washington, D. C.: U. S. Office of Education, Bulletin, 1935, No. 4, U. S. Government Printing Office, 1935), 96 pp.

⁸ L. B. Herlihy, "What It Costs to Enforce Attendance Laws," The Nation's Schools, 15:28, April, 1935.

cents, increasing in amount as the size of the city increased. He found also that those cities spending the highest amount per pupil also had the highest per cent of attendance.

Noall⁹ studied the administration of attendance in the state of Utah to analyze the operation of compulsory attendance and to determine the degree to which it is practical to account for all children of school age in a state which has a program of compulsory attendance and instruction. Enforcement of the letter of the law was not attempted at first. Instead, a program of education of the public was followed: first, through channels of persuasion, by the press, public gatherings, and the like, then through home visitations by the attendance workers, and finally through the use of the courts.

Conclusions reached in the study were: (1) it is practical on the state-wide basis to secure legal accounting for ninety-nine per cent of all children between the ages of six and eighteen; (2) attendance enforcement requires persons trained in school practices and policies rather than "hooky cops;" (3) attendance in the high school was greatly

⁹ Irvin Simon Noall, Administration of School Attendance (Unpublished Doctor's dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1935), 189 pp.

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dance (Unpublished Doctor's dissertation, University of Cali-
fornia, Berkeley, 1933), 189 pp.

increased by the law; and (4) courts were proved very effective in most cases in securing better attendance.

The correlation between attendance and achievement in the third grade in the San Jose School, Albuquerque, New Mexico, during the years 1930-35 was studied by Cutler¹⁰ in 1936. The conclusion drawn in this investigation was that achievement as measured by standardized tests was only slightly affected by attendance.

Trends in attendance and length of school term from 1899-1900 to 1929-30, inclusive, was the subject of Cummins'¹¹ study in 1937. The New Mexico averages for those items were compared with the United States averages and also with the averages of the Rocky Mountain states. His study revealed that great progress had been made during the period, but that New Mexico was still low in comparison with other states. Her rank was thirty-seventh in the United States and seventh in the nine Rocky Mountain states studied.

Attendance work of sixteen large city school systems which were reputed to have subordinated the compulsory legal

¹⁰ Vera Cutler, Attendance and Achievement (unpublished Master's thesis, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, New Mexico, 1936), 25 pp.

¹¹ John Francis Cummins, Educational Trends in New Mexico Public Schools, as Measured by Pupil Attendance and Length of School Term (unpublished Master's thesis, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, New Mexico, 1937), 80 pp.

increased by the fact that the scores were not very high. The correlation between attendance and achievement in the third grade in the San Jose School, Albuquerque, New Mexico, during the years 1930-31 was reported by C. J. Calkins in 1936. The conclusion drawn in this investigation was that achievement as measured by standardized tests was only slightly affected by attendance.

Trends in attendance and length of school term from 1890-1900 to 1920-30, inclusive, was the subject of Calkins' study in 1937. The New Mexico averages for these items were compared with the United States averages and also with the averages of the Rocky Mountain states. His study revealed that great progress had been made during the period but that New Mexico was still far in comparison with other states. Her rank was thirty-seventh in the United States and seventh in the nine Rocky Mountain states studied.

Attendance work of sixteen large city school systems which were reported to have standardized the compulsory law

10 Vera Ouellet, Attendance and Achievement, Unpublished Master's thesis, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, New Mexico, 1936, 25 pp.

11 John Francis Ouellet, National Trends in the Mexican Public Schools, as presented by Vera Ouellet, Research of School Law, Unpublished Master's thesis, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, New Mexico, 1937, 25 pp.

side of the work and to have emphasized the discovery and correction of the causes of absences was the subject of a study by Schultz.¹² The investigation showed that the personnel had become more professionalized and that the attendance departments were offering a variety of services not previously associated with attendance work. In spite of considerable progress toward better attendance services, much was lacking that is desirable.

An investigation was made in 1939 by Davis¹³ of three non-teaching services in the schools of twelve cities ranging in population from 30,000 to 120,000. Attendance, nursing, and secretarial work were the services studied. Criteria for evaluating each service were developed, applied to each of the twelve cities, and ratings were compiled. The author concluded that the work of the attendance officer seemed to be carried on in some cities almost in isolation from that of other school workers. In other cities it seemed that little was done at all about absences, on the theory that it would create ill will and do more harm than good.

¹² Joseph Le Mars Schultz, An Analysis of Present Practices in City Attendance Work (Doctor's dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, 1938), 188 pp.

¹³ Hazel Davis, Personnel Administration in Three Non-Teaching Services of the Public School (New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1939), 323 pp.

side of the work and to have people look at the situation
in the light of the current of opinion among the people at
large by Schmitt.¹² The survey, however, was not a
survey of the people's opinion, but a survey of the
people's knowledge of the situation. The survey was
conducted by a committee of the National Education
Association, and the results were published in a
report which was distributed to all members of the
association. The report was a valuable contribution
to the knowledge of the situation, and it was
well received by the public. The report was
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knowledge of the situation, and it was well
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the knowledge of the situation.

12 Joseph L. Davis, An Analysis of the
Practice in City Attendance Work (New York: Bureau of
Education, University of Pennsylvania, 1933), 186 pp.
13 Hazel Davis, Personal Administration in the
Non-Teaching Service of the Public Schools (New York:
Bureau of Education, University of Pennsylvania, 1933),
186 pp.

The development of the attendance services in Cincinnati was traced by Nocka¹⁴ from its beginning in 1890. The program began with one truant officer. In 1938 there was a staff of ten full-time attendance workers and one half-time worker. An average of forty-two investigations per officer were made per week. The mean per cent of attendance for the period 1927-28 to 1937-38 was 92.6.

Wilson¹⁵ studied pupil elimination in the public high schools of San Juan County, New Mexico, during the years 1935-38. Reasons for leaving school were established for 212 students. It was found that the largest number of school withdrawals were due to economic reasons and second largest to lack of interest. Of special significance was the fact that 42 per cent of those withdrawing were under sixteen years of age, the top limit for compulsory attendance in New Mexico. No mention was made of the number in this group who held work permits.

¹⁴ Elmer Nocka, Supervision of School Attendance in Cincinnati (unpublished Master's thesis, Teachers College, University of Cincinnati, 1940), 215 pp.

¹⁵ Grace Barker Wilson, A Study of Pupil Elimination in the Public High Schools of San Juan County, New Mexico (unpublished Master's thesis, University of New Mexico, 1940), 76 pp.

The development of the school was rapid. The school was founded by Robert L. Taylor in 1907. The program began with one student. The school was a staff of ten full-time teachers and was a half-time worker. In 1910, the school was a per officer were made per week. The school was a dance for the period 1927-28 to 1937-38 was 23.5. Wilson's studies of education in the public schools of San Juan County, New Mexico, during the years 1935-36. Reasons for leaving school were analyzed for 212 students. It was found that the largest number of school withdrawals were due to economic reasons and second largest to lack of interest. Of special significance was the fact that 12 per cent of those withdrawing were under sixteen years of age, the top limit for compulsory attendance in New Mexico. No section was made of the school and this group who held very special.

14. Elmer Moore, Supervision of School Attendance in Cincinnati (unpublished master's thesis, Teachers College, University of Cincinnati, 1930), 219 pp.

15. Grace Barker Wilson, A Study of School Withdrawals in the Public Schools of San Juan County, New Mexico (unpublished master's thesis, University of New Mexico, 1940), 76 pp.

The administration of high school attendance in Hamilton County, Ohio, was studied by Srofe.¹⁶ Thirteen high schools, administered under the county unit, ranging in enrollment from sixty-one to 345, were included in the study. He found that one attendance officer, responsible to the county superintendent, was charged with administering attendance and census divisions in the schools of the county. The principal or the assistant principal in each school was held responsible for administering attendance in the local school, under the supervision of the county attendance officer who investigated the causes of absences as time permitted. The study revealed that the high schools of the county lost some seven thousand dollars in state aid each year because of non-attendance.

Reporting a survey of the work of the visiting teacher in cities of the United States 10,000 and over Cook¹⁷ stated:

Increasingly the state, as such, is charged with a large share of attendance services, not only through attendance laws and their enforcement, but more significantly, especially in states with well organized

¹⁶ John Garner Srofe, The Administration of High School Attendance in Hamilton County, Ohio (unpublished Master's thesis, Teachers College, University of Cincinnati, 1943), 121 pp.

¹⁷ Katherine M. Cook, The Place of Visiting Teacher Services in the School Program (Washington, D. C.: U. S. Office of Education, Bulletin, 1945, No. 6, U. S. Government Printing Office, 1946), 46 pp.

The following is a summary of the results of the investigation conducted in Hamilton County, Ohio, in 1911, regarding the attendance of children in the public schools. The results show that the attendance of children in the public schools is generally low, and that the reasons for this are many. The principal reasons for the low attendance are the lack of interest on the part of the parents, the lack of interest on the part of the children, and the lack of interest on the part of the school authorities. The results also show that the attendance of children in the public schools is generally higher in the city than in the country, and that the attendance of children in the public schools is generally higher in the winter than in the summer. The results also show that the attendance of children in the public schools is generally higher in the morning than in the afternoon, and that the attendance of children in the public schools is generally higher in the first half of the year than in the second half of the year.

10. For the year 1911, the attendance of children in the public schools was as follows:

Month	Attendance
January	100
February	100
March	100
April	100
May	100
June	100
July	100
August	100
September	100
October	100
November	100
December	100

11. For the year 1911, the attendance of children in the public schools was as follows:

Month	Attendance
January	100
February	100
March	100
April	100
May	100
June	100
July	100
August	100
September	100
October	100
November	100
December	100

departments of education, through a professionally prepared staff assigned to the promotion and stimulation of regular and full-time attendance. Such an organization provides for particular attention to supervision of attendance officials in local systems, to the causes of non-attendance and to the consideration of remedial and preventive measures.

A 1947 study of school attendance and school costs in New Mexico by Mullins and Fixley¹⁸ showed that New Mexico was about 10 per cent lower in average daily attendance than the national norm; that only two of three pupils who enter school enter the second grade; and that only 17 per cent of the school population is enrolled in high school, while the national average is 22.6 per cent. One explanation offered for these conditions was failure to enforce attendance laws.

Spurlock¹⁹ attempted to discover the extent to which four factors influenced school attendance. These factors were: (1) length and condition of school bus routes; (2) the weather; (3) density of population; and (4) educational attainment of the parents. Statistical treatment of the data

¹⁸ R. J. Mullins and E. H. Fixley, Public School Attendance and School Costs in New Mexico, Division of Research, Department of Government, University of New Mexico (Albuquerque, New Mexico: The University of New Mexico Press 1947), 27 pp.

¹⁹ Omer S. Spurlock, Factors Influencing School Attendance in New Mexico (unpublished Master's thesis, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, New Mexico, 1947), 46 pp.

indicated that the four factors studied had no great influence on attendance.

The great amount of progress achieved in the immediate past history of education in New Mexico is shown in Gribble's²⁰ study. In 1918 only 4 per cent of the public school children were in high school. In 1940 the figure had risen to 17.6 per cent. During the past thirty years there has been a noteworthy increase in the percentage of children enrolled in school. Although the percentage graduating from high school is only about one-half the national figure, the number of graduates has increased by more than 500 per cent during the thirty-year period studied.

The report of the New Mexico Educational Survey Board²¹ showed that less than one-third of the counties and less than one-half of the municipal districts employ well-qualified attendance workers. Compulsory attendance is enforced wholly or partially by peace officers in about

²⁰ Stephen Charles Gribble, Teacher Qualifications and School Attendance in New Mexico: 1918-46. University of New Mexico Publications in Education, No. 3 (Albuquerque, New Mexico: The University of New Mexico Press, 1948), 39 pp.

²¹ Public Education in New Mexico. A Report of the New Mexico Educational Survey Board, Division of Surveys and Field Services, (George Peabody College for Teachers, Nashville, Tennessee, 1949), pp 76-9.

one-half of the counties and in about one-third of the municipal districts.

The foregoing review of studies of attendance work shows that there has been an increasing interest in the administrative problems as this phase of school services has expanded. Although the educational profession is acutely aware of the poor attendance record of its state, there is a notable lack of studies of the administration of regulations in New Mexico.

Chapter III will show the development of the compulsory attendance law from its territorial inception down to its present form.

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signal display.

The foregoing review of the situation in the

shows that there has been an increasing interest in the
administrative problems as this phase of social activity has
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aware of the poor attendance record of the state, there is
a notable lack of interest of the administration of the
institutions in New Mexico.

Chapter III will show the development of the general
very attendance law from the original intention down to
its present form.

CHAPTER III

LEGAL PROVISIONS FOR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE IN NEW MEXICO

I. EARLY LEGISLATION

New Mexico has not been negligent in providing laws requiring school attendance. As early as 1856 a law was passed by the territorial legislature establishing a school system and requiring that parents send children to school who were between the ages of seven and fourteen. This law was so strongly opposed by the people that it was repealed by the same legislature which had passed it.¹

Subsequent attempts to establish a public school system were made by the legislature in 1860, 1863, and 1867. Each school law required that parents send their children to school. However, the good intentions of the lawmakers never became a reality because none of the laws was put into effect.² Although the legislation was enacted, the people were seemingly not ready to accept it and enforce its provisions.

¹ C. E. Hodgin, The Early School Laws of New Mexico, (University of New Mexico Bulletins, Educational Series, Vol. 1, No. 1, Albuquerque, New Mexico: University of New Mexico Press, 1908), pp. 10-13.

² Ibid., pp. 18-24.

LEGAL PROVISIONS FOR SCHOOL LAW

1. EARLY LEGISLATION

New Mexico has not been noted in general for requiring school attendance. As early as 1890 a law was passed by the territorial legislature establishing a system and requiring that parents send children to school who were between the ages of seven and fourteen. This law was so strongly opposed by the people that it was repealed by the same legislature which had passed it.¹ Subsequent attempts to establish a public school system were made by the legislature in 1893, 1895, and 1897. Each school law realized that parents send their children to school. However, the good intentions of the lawmakers never became a reality because none of the laws were put into effect.² Although the legislation was enacted, the people were seemingly not ready to accept it and enforce the provisions.

¹ I. C. E. Hovatta, The Early School Laws of New Mexico (University of New Mexico Bulletin, Educational Series, Vol. I, No. 1, Albuquerque, New Mexico: University of New Mexico Press, 1938), pp. 10-11.

² Ibid., pp. 12-13.

It was not until 1891 that a law was passed which actually resulted in a system of public schools in New Mexico. That law was very explicit regarding attendance. It provided:

1. A three-month's term.
2. Compulsory age limits of eight to sixteen inclusive.
3. A penalty of \$1 to \$25 or ten days in the county jail for failure of parents to comply with the law.
4. Free textbooks for poor children.
5. Exemption from attendance of children physically disabled or living more than two miles from the school.
6. Definition of the school month as four weeks of five days each, six hours each day.³

The extent of the enforcement of the above conditions is not ascertainable.

The 1903 school code carried the same provisions for compulsory attendance as the 1891 Act, except that the ages were changed to seven through fourteen.⁴

It was not until 1909 that any change in the 1903 law was made. Under the new act children were required to attend

³ Territory of New Mexico. School Laws of New Mexico, Session 1891. Ch. XXV, Sections 42, 43, 44, 45, pp. 16-17.

⁴ Territory of New Mexico. School Laws, 1903, Section 1555, pp. 20-21.

It was not until 1903 that a law was passed which actually resulted in a system of public schools in New Mexico. That law was very similar to the one provided:

1. A three-month term.
2. Compulsory age 11 to 18 of both sexes, inclusive.
3. A penalty of \$1 to \$25 or ten days in jail for failure of parents to comply with the law.
4. Free textbooks for poor children.
5. Exemption from attendance of children who are disabled or living more than one mile from school.
6. Definition of the school month as commencing on five days each, six hours each day.

The extent of the enforcement of the above provisions is not ascertainable.

The 1903 school code carried the same provisions for compulsory attendance as the 1901 act, except that the laws were changed to seven through fourteen.

It was not until 1909 that any change in the 1903 law was made. Under the new act children were required to attend

³ Territory of New Mexico. School Laws of New Mexico. Session 1901. Ch. XIV, Section 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100.

⁴ Territory of New Mexico. School Laws. 1909. Section 1552, pp. 10-21.

school "during the entire time school is in session." The quality of the instruction given by the private and denominational schools was to be equal to that of the public schools. The distance limit for exemption from attendance was raised from two to three miles.⁵

No further changes in attendance regulations were made until after statehood. In 1919 several changes and additions were made. The present age limits, six to sixteen, both inclusive, were established at that time. Provisions for exemption from attendance through certificate of employment and for establishment of part-time schools or part-time classes were made in the 1919 enactment.⁶

Inasmuch as a school for the deaf and dumb and a school for the blind had been provided for in the state constitution, parents of such children of school age were required by the 1919 law to send their children to the schools established for them.⁷

⁵ Territory of New Mexico, School Laws, 1909, Section 1555, pp. 70-71.

⁶ State of New Mexico, School Laws, 1919, Ch. 7, Art. 2, pp. 72-75.

⁷ Ibid., p. 75.

TABLE I
TRENDS IN ATTENDANCE IN NEW MEXICO SCHOOLS

Year	1905	1911-12	1919-20	1935-36*	1947-48
School census	70,319	100,045	121,834	164,145	157,086
Enrollment	37,760	61,027	81,399	120,944	140,836
A. D. A.	25,705	40,018	59,442	93,500	119,901

*Prior to the year 1941 the school census included all unmarried persons between the ages of six and twenty-one. Ages covered by subsequent censuses are six to eighteen, inclusive.

Note: Data for enrollment and attendance in private and denominational schools were not given in the Superintendent's Reports for the above years except 1947-48; consequently, figures for those years may be slightly below the true picture.

TABLE II
PERCENTAGE RATIOS BASED ON FIGURES IN TABLE I

	Year				
Percentage of ratio of:	1905	1911-12	1919-20	1935-36	1947-48
Enrollment to census	53%	61 %	66.8%	74 %	89.6%
A. D. A. to enrollment	69	66.5	73	77.4	85.1
A. D. A. to census	35	40	48.8	57	76.3

This table should be read as follows: in 1905 53% of the children enumerated in the census were enrolled in school; 69% of those enrolled were in average daily attendance; 35% of those enumerated in the census were in average daily attendance, etc.

TRENDS IN ATTENDANCE IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Year	1905	1911-12	1918-19	1925-26	1931-32
School census	70,310	100,042	121,834	128,712	137,000
Enrollment	37,760	61,027	61,377	120,944	121,000
A. D. A.	25,702	40,010	50,118	77,001	110,000

* Prior to the year 1901 the school census included all unenrolled persons between the ages of six and twenty-one, ages covered by subsequent censuses are not included, inclusive.

Note: Data for enrollment and attendance in the District of Columbia are not given in the District's Reports for the years 1905-1906, 1906-1907, 1907-1908, 1908-1909, 1909-1910, 1910-1911, 1911-1912, 1912-1913, 1913-1914, 1914-1915, 1915-1916, 1916-1917, 1917-1918, 1918-1919, 1919-1920, 1920-1921, 1921-1922, 1922-1923, 1923-1924, 1924-1925, 1925-1926, 1926-1927, 1927-1928, 1928-1929, 1929-1930, 1930-1931, 1931-1932, 1932-1933, 1933-1934, 1934-1935, 1935-1936, 1936-1937, 1937-1938, 1938-1939, 1939-1940, 1940-1941, 1941-1942, 1942-1943, 1943-1944, 1944-1945, 1945-1946, 1946-1947, 1947-1948, 1948-1949, 1949-1950, 1950-1951, 1951-1952, 1952-1953, 1953-1954, 1954-1955, 1955-1956, 1956-1957, 1957-1958, 1958-1959, 1959-1960, 1960-1961, 1961-1962, 1962-1963, 1963-1964, 1964-1965, 1965-1966, 1966-1967, 1967-1968, 1968-1969, 1969-1970, 1970-1971, 1971-1972, 1972-1973, 1973-1974, 1974-1975, 1975-1976, 1976-1977, 1977-1978, 1978-1979, 1979-1980, 1980-1981, 1981-1982, 1982-1983, 1983-1984, 1984-1985, 1985-1986, 1986-1987, 1987-1988, 1988-1989, 1989-1990, 1990-1991, 1991-1992, 1992-1993, 1993-1994, 1994-1995, 1995-1996, 1996-1997, 1997-1998, 1998-1999, 1999-2000, 2000-2001, 2001-2002, 2002-2003, 2003-2004, 2004-2005, 2005-2006, 2006-2007, 2007-2008, 2008-2009, 2009-2010, 2010-2011, 2011-2012, 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, 2015-2016, 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, 2019-2020, 2020-2021, 2021-2022, 2022-2023, 2023-2024, 2024-2025, 2025-2026, 2026-2027, 2027-2028, 2028-2029, 2029-2030, 2030-2031, 2031-2032, 2032-2033, 2033-2034, 2034-2035, 2035-2036, 2036-2037, 2037-2038, 2038-2039, 2039-2040, 2040-2041, 2041-2042, 2042-2043, 2043-2044, 2044-2045, 2045-2046, 2046-2047, 2047-2048, 2048-2049, 2049-2050, 2050-2051, 2051-2052, 2052-2053, 2053-2054, 2054-2055, 2055-2056, 2056-2057, 2057-2058, 2058-2059, 2059-2060, 2060-2061, 2061-2062, 2062-2063, 2063-2064, 2064-2065, 2065-2066, 2066-2067, 2067-2068, 2068-2069, 2069-2070, 2070-2071, 2071-2072, 2072-2073, 2073-2074, 2074-2075, 2075-2076, 2076-2077, 2077-2078, 2078-2079, 2079-2080, 2080-2081, 2081-2082, 2082-2083, 2083-2084, 2084-2085, 2085-2086, 2086-2087, 2087-2088, 2088-2089, 2089-2090, 2090-2091, 2091-2092, 2092-2093, 2093-2094, 2094-2095, 2095-2096, 2096-2097, 2097-2098, 2098-2099, 2099-2100, 2100-2101, 2101-2102, 2102-2103, 2103-2104, 2104-2105, 2105-2106, 2106-2107, 2107-2108, 2108-2109, 2109-2110, 2110-2111, 2111-2112, 2112-2113, 2113-2114, 2114-2115, 2115-2116, 2116-2117, 2117-2118, 2118-2119, 2119-2120, 2120-2121, 2121-2122, 2122-2123, 2123-2124, 2124-2125, 2125-2126, 2126-2127, 2127-2128, 2128-2129, 2129-2130, 2130-2131, 2131-2132, 2132-2133, 2133-2134, 2134-2135, 2135-2136, 2136-2137, 2137-2138, 2138-2139, 2139-2140, 2140-2141, 2141-2142, 2142-2143, 2143-2144, 2144-2145, 2145-2146, 2146-2147, 2147-2148, 2148-2149, 2149-2150, 2150-2151, 2151-2152, 2152-2153, 2153-2154, 2154-2155, 2155-2156, 2156-2157, 2157-2158, 2158-2159, 2159-2160, 2160-2161, 2161-2162, 2162-2163, 2163-2164, 2164-2165, 2165-2166, 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2257-2258, 2258-2259, 2259-2260, 2260-2261, 2261-2262, 2262-2263, 2263-2264, 2264-2265, 2265-2266, 2266-2267, 2267-2268, 2268-2269, 2269-2270, 2270-2271, 2271-2272, 2272-2273, 2273-2274, 2274-2275, 2275-2276, 2276-2277, 2277-2278, 2278-2279, 2279-2280, 2280-2281, 2281-2282, 2282-2283, 2283-2284, 2284-2285, 2285-2286, 2286-2287, 2287-2288, 2288-2289, 2289-2290, 2290-2291, 2291-2292, 2292-2293, 2293-2294, 2294-2295, 2295-2296, 2296-2297, 2297-2298, 2298-2299, 2299-2300, 2300-2301, 2301-2302, 2302-2303, 2303-2304, 2304-2305, 2305-2306, 2306-2307, 2307-2308, 2308-2309, 2309-2310, 2310-2311, 2311-2312, 2312-2313, 2313-2314, 2314-2315, 2315-2316, 2316-2317, 2317-2318, 2318-2319, 2319-2320, 2320-2321, 2321-2322, 2322-2323, 2323-2324, 2324-2325, 2325-2326, 2326-2327, 2327-2328, 2328-2329, 2329-2330, 2330-2331, 2331-2332, 2332-2333, 2333-2334, 2334-2335, 2335-2336, 2336-2337, 2337-2338, 2338-2339, 2339-2340, 2340-2341, 2341-2342, 2342-2343, 2343-2344, 2344-2345, 2345-2346, 2346-2347, 2347-2348, 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In 1923 only two minor changes were made in the school laws affecting attendance. A minimum term of seven months was fixed, and the school day was to consist of not less than five nor more than six hours, exclusive of the noon intermission, in all levels above the primary grades.⁸

It is evident that throughout the struggle for a public school system the legislators were ever anxious that children have educational opportunities and that they take advantage of those opportunities. It is also evident from the figures in Tables I and II that many children have not attended school regularly. It was not until the school year 1935-36 that as many as one-half of the children enumerated in the census were in average daily attendance. Even in 1947-48 only slightly over three-fourths of the children enumerated in the census were in average daily attendance.

II. THE PRESENT LAW

The compulsory school attendance law now in effect contains the following provisions:

Compulsory attendance--exceptions. Children between the ages of six (6) and sixteen (16), both inclusive, shall attend public schools of the state for as many weeks as the public schools in the district in which such children reside shall be in session, except that

⁸ State of New Mexico, New Mexico School Code, 1923, Chapter XII, Sections 1213 and 1214, p. 29.

In 1923 only two minor changes were made in the school laws affecting attendance. A certain form of report was fixed, and the school day was to consist of not less than five nor more than six hours, exclusive of the noon interval, in all levels above the primary grades. It is evident that throughout the country for a long time the school system the legislators have ever since that children have educational opportunities and that they take advantage of those opportunities. It is also evident from the figures in Table I and II that many children have not attended school regularly. It has not been the school year 1935-36 that as many as one-half of the children enumerated in the census were in average daily attendance. Even in 1947-48 only slightly over three-fourths of the children enumerated in the census were in average daily attendance.

II. THE PROBLEM

The compulsory school attendance law now in effect contains the following provisions:

Compulsory attendance--exceptions. Children between the ages of six (6) and sixteen (16), both inclusive, shall attend public schools of the state for as many weeks as the public schools in the district in which such children reside shall be in session, except that

children actually attending private or denominational schools maintaining courses of instruction approved by the state board of education, those physically or mentally unfit or incompetent and those residing more than three (3) miles from public school houses and to whom no free public means of conveyance to and from school are furnished, shall be exempt from the provisions of this act. The governing bodies of private and denominational schools shall monthly report to the governing authorities of the public schools wherein such private and denominational schools are situated, the children enrolled in such private and denominational schools who fail to attend the same. (Laws 1923, ch. 148, paragraph 1203, p. 290. C. S. 1929, 120-1203)⁹.

Responsibility of parents. Parents, guardians, and persons having control of children subject to the provisions of this act are hereby made responsible for the public school attendance of such children, and any parent, guardian, or person aforesaid who shall violate any of the provisions of this chapter, after any school authority shall have given public notice of the substance of the provisions of this act, upon conviction, shall be fined not less than five dollars nor more than one hundred dollars or imprisoned in the county jail for not less than five nor more than ninety days, and in addition to the penalty aforesaid any parent, guardian or person having control of children subject to the provisions hereof shall be subject to the writ of mandamus issued out of the district court of the county at the instance and in the name of the county or municipal boards of education or county or city superintendents of schools, without consent of the attorney-general. Justices of the peace shall also have jurisdiction in prosecutions under this section. (Laws 1923, ch. 148, paragraph 1210, p. 290; C. S. 1929, 120-1210)¹⁰.

Certificate of employment. Children subject to the provisions of this act, between the ages of fourteen (14) and sixteen (16) years, may be excused by issuance of certificate of employment, from full-time public

⁹ New Mexico Statutes Annotated, 1941, 55-1203.

¹⁰ Ibid., 55-1210.

children actually attending private or denominational schools maintaining courses of instruction approved by the state board of education. Such children shall be fully entitled to instruction and those residing near their three (3) miles from public school houses and to whom no free public means of conveyance to and from school are furnished, shall be exempt from the provisions of this act. The governing bodies of private and denominational schools shall monthly report to the governing authorities of the public schools wherein such children and denominational schools are situated. The children enrolled in such private and denominational schools shall be attend the same. (Laws 1927, ch. 110, paragraph 1202, p. 290, c. 2, 1929, 120-1203).

Responsibility of parents. Parents, guardians, and persons having control of children shall be responsible of this act and are hereby made responsible for the public school attendance of such children, and any parent, guardian, or person otherwise who will violate any of the provisions of this chapter, shall be subject to a fine of not less than five dollars nor more than one hundred dollars to be imposed in the county jail for not less than five nor more than ninety days, and in addition to the penalty aforesaid any parent, guardian or person having control of children subject to the provisions of this act shall be subject to the writ of habeas corpus issued out of the district court of the county in the instance and in the name of the county or municipal boards of education of county or city superintendents of schools, without consent of the attorney-general, and officers of the peace shall also have jurisdiction in proceedings under this section. (Laws 1927, ch. 110, paragraph 1210, p. 290; c. 2, 1929, 120-1210).

Certificate of employment. Children subject to the provisions of this act, between the ages of fourteen (14) and sixteen (16) years, may be excused by issuance of certificate of employment, from full-time public

school attendance, by the city or county school superintendents within whose jurisdiction such children reside or are employed, upon assurance that said children are then or in the immediate future shall be definitely employed in some gainful trade or occupation. The certificate of employment shall contain the name, age and residence of the child excused, by whom employed or to be employed, the last grade attended by the child and a recitation that the child is excused from full-time public school attendance until the certificate shall be revoked. (Laws 1923, ch. 148, paragraph 1204; C. S. 1929, 120-1204)¹¹.

The present law also provides for the establishment of part-time schools or classes in districts in which fifteen or more certificates of employment have been issued in a given year. However, this provision is then practically nullified by allowing such districts to be excused from establishing such schools or classes upon petition to and approval by the state superintendent of public instruction.¹² It is not known to what extent this provision of the law is complied with. However, in the experience of the writer in several municipal schools of New Mexico, it was not being observed.

Search of the school laws from 1891 to 1941 fails to reveal any provision for a truant officer or authorization for such a position. The law requires that the persons

¹¹ Ibid., 55-1204

¹² New Mexico Public School Code, 1938, Chapter II, Sections 136 and 138, p. 61.

charged with enforcing attendance shall also enforce part-time attendance. The only mention made of the term "truant officer" was found in an opinion by the attorney-general to the effect that

. . . a truant officer is under the direction and authority of the board of education and it is the duty of the board to delegate such powers as necessary for the enforcement of the school law in connection with attendance to their truant officer. Boards generally leave this matter to the superintendent for his supervision the same as the supervision over teachers.¹³

An annual school census is required between the dates of March first and May first. Each school board is charged with the responsibility for seeing that the census is made. The census shall include all unmarried persons residing in the district who will be six years of age or over and not over eighteen years of age on the first day of January of the year following the census.¹⁴ It is primarily for the purpose of distributing the current school fund that the census is made, rather than for purposes of enforcing attendance.

5 for Chapter III has shown the historical development of attendance laws in New Mexico and the present regulations governing compulsory school attendance. Chapter IV will

¹³ Report of the Attorney-General of New Mexico, January 1, 1939 to December 31, 1940, Santa Fe, New Mexico. p. 24.

¹⁴ New Mexico Statutes, Annotated, 1941, 55-1501, p. 1049.

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the effect that

... a parent officer is under the direction and
authority of the board of education and it is the
of the board to enforce such laws as necessary for
the enforcement of the school law in connection with
attendance to their common schools. The board shall
leave this matter to the superintendent of the school
division the same as the superintendent of the school
division.

An annual school census is required between the dates
of March first and May first. Each school board is required
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13. Report of the Attorney-General of New Mexico,
January 1, 1919 to December 31, 1919, New Mexico,
p. 24.
14. New Mexico Statutes, Annotated, 1919,
p. 1049.

show how effectively these regulations are being enforced as well as describe the persons engaged in attendance work in the municipal schools having attendance workers.

show how effectively these conditions are being met as
well as describe the persons engaged in the work and
the municipal schools having attendance records.

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CHAPTER IV

THE PRESENT STATUS OF ATTENDANCE ENFORCEMENT

I. SCHOOLS HAVING ATTENDANCE WORKERS

Fifty-four of the seventy-two questionnaires mailed to the superintendents of the municipal schools were returned, three-fourths of the number sent.

Thirty-two superintendents reported attendance workers for their school systems. Twenty-two reported no attendance worker. Table III shows the enrollment of schools which have and those which do not have attendance workers.

TABLE III

ENROLLMENT OF SCHOOLS WHICH HAVE AND THOSE WHICH DO NOT HAVE ATTENDANCE WORKERS

Enrollment	: Number having attendance worker	: Number without attendance worker
Less than 500	8	13
500 to 1,000	8	5
1,000 to 1,500	4	3
1,500 to 2,000	3	1
2,000 to 2,500	2	0
2,500 to 3,000	3	0
Over 3,000	4	0

CHAPTER IV

THE PRESENT STATUS OF THE SCHOOLS IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

Fifty-four of the seventy-two public schools in the District of Columbia are now open to the students of the District of Columbia. The remaining eighteen schools are closed, three-fourths of the number being turned, three-fourths of the number being turned, thirty-two students are reported attendance workers for their school system. Twenty-two workers in attendance worker. Table III shows the enrollment of schools which have and those which do not have attendance workers.

TABLE III

ENROLLMENT OF SCHOOLS WITH AND WITHOUT ATTENDANCE WORKERS

Enrollment	Number having attendance workers	Number without attendance workers
Less than 500	6	12
500 to 1,000	8	2
1,000 to 1,500	1	5
1,500 to 2,000	3	1
2,000 to 2,500	2	2
2,500 to 3,000	3	6
Over 3,000	1	3

In response to the question, "If you do not have an attendance worker, why?", three-fourths of the responses gave "insufficient funds for his salary" as the reason. Three superintendents reported that the students already attend voluntarily. One gave as a reason that the school is already overcrowded, and eight reported no felt need for an attendance worker.

In connection with the reply that there are insufficient funds for salary of an attendance worker, one superintendent stated that present budgetary procedure does not allow budgeting for the salary of an attendance worker. A letter of inquiry was sent to the State Educational Budget Auditor requesting verification or denial of the statement. A copy of the letter and the reply by the Budget Auditor is found in the appendix. The implication of the reply is that funds can be budgeted for attendance services if the need for such services can be shown and the funds are demanded.

II. PERSONS PERFORMING ATTENDANCE WORK

Fifteen per cent of the superintendents reported that truant officers perform the duties of enforcing attendance. In approximately one-fifth, 18.5 per cent, of the schools the person performing attendance services is called "attendance officer." One-tenth of the schools use a "visiting teacher" for attendance work, and three schools

In response to the question, "Why do you not have attendance workers, why?" the superintendent of the school gave "insufficient funds for this salary" as the reason. Three superintendents reported that the students already attend voluntarily, one gave as a reason that the school is already overcrowded, and eight reported no funds need for an attendance worker.

In connection with the reply that there are insufficient funds for salary of an attendance worker, one superintendent stated that present budgetary procedure does not allow budgeting for the salary of an attendance worker. A letter of inquiry was sent to the State Educational Department. Another requesting verification or denial of the statement. A copy of the letter and the reply of the budget director is found in the appendix. The implication of the reply is that funds can be budgeted for attendance services if the school such services can be shown and the funds are committed.

II. PERSONS PERFORMING ATTENDANCE WORK

Fifteen per cent of the superintendents reported that present officers perform the duties of attending students. In approximately one-fifth, 19.2 per cent, of the schools the person performing attendance services is called "attendance officer." One-tenth of the school systems "visiting teacher" for attendance work, and three schools

employ a "home visitor" for this purpose. In fourteen schools the superintendent has charge of attendance work, while in thirteen others the principals perform this duty.

Only ten superintendents reported full-time attendance workers. No school system reported having more than one attendance worker. Of those superintendents reporting part-time attendance workers, two use a school janitor. In five systems local policemen serve as attendance workers. Four systems use school bus drivers as part-time attendance workers. The school nurse aids in attendance work in two schools. One superintendent reported that a public welfare worker aids considerably in his attendance program. In one school a classroom teacher is used as part-time attendance worker. Two athletic coaches are attendance workers in their respective schools. Two superintendents reported use of a deputy sheriff as attendance worker. Two superintendents reported that they themselves do the attendance work.

The following table shows that size of the school largely determines whether the attendance worker is full-time or part-time. As the school enrollment increases, the number of part-time workers decreases and the number of full-time workers increases. With one exception, only the larger schools have full-time attendance workers.

employ a "home visit" system. The school
schools the superintendent has charge of attendance
while in this case the superintendent is in charge.
Only ten superintendents reported full-time
attendance workers. No school system reported having
one attendance worker. Of those superintendents reporting
part-time attendance workers, two use a school
five systems local policemen serve as attendance workers.
Four systems use school bus drivers as part-time attendance
workers. The school nurse also is an attendance worker in
schools. One superintendent reported that a public health
worker also considerably in his attendance work. In two
schools a classroom teacher is used as part-time attendance
worker. Two athletic coaches are attendance workers in two
respective schools. Two superintendents reported no
deputy sheriff as attendance worker. Two superintendents
reported that they themselves do the attendance work.
The following table shows that nine of the schools
largely determine whether the attendance worker is full-
time or part-time. In the school superintendent indicates the
number of part-time workers assigned and the number of full-
time workers increased. With one exception, only the law
schools have full-time attendance workers.

TABLE IV

ENROLLMENT (1947-48) OF SCHOOLS HAVING
FULL-TIME AND PART-TIME
ATTENDANCE WORKERS

Enrollment	Full-time worker	Part-time worker
Less than 500	0	8
500 to 1,000	1	7
1,000 to 1,500	0	4
1,500 to 2,000	2	1
2,000 to 2,500	2	0
2,500 to 3,000	2	1
over 3,000	3	1

In educational attainment, sixteen of the thirty-two attendance workers have not reached college level. Eleven of the part-time and five of the full-time workers have no college preparation. One did not complete the eighth grade, four completed the eighth grade, and eleven completed high school. Of the remaining sixteen workers six have some college preparation, five are college graduates, and five hold master's degrees. Five of the full-time attendance workers are high school graduates, three have some college work, and two have master's degrees.

TABLE IV

ENROLLMENT (1914-15) OF WORKERS HAVING
FULL-TIME AND PART-TIME
ATTENDANCE RECORD

Enrollment	Full-time workers	Part-time workers
Less than 500	0	1
500 to 1,000	1	1
1,000 to 1,500	0	1
1,500 to 2,000	2	1
2,000 to 2,500	2	0
2,500 to 3,000	2	1
over 3,000	3	1

In educational attainment, sixteen of the full-time
attendance workers have not reached college level. Eleven
of the part-time and five of the full-time workers have no
college preparation. One did not complete the eighth grade,
four completed the eighth grade, and eleven completed high
school. Of the remaining sixteen workers six have some
college preparation, five are college graduates, and five
hold master's degrees. Five of the full-time attendance
workers are high school graduates, three have some college
work, and two have master's degrees.

III. PROCEDURES USED IN ATTENDANCE ENFORCEMENT

A visit to the home of the absentee is the most common type of investigation of the causes of absences. Twenty-two schools reported using this means alone. Ten superintendents combine a telephone call to the parents and a visit to the home. Eight schools use both a letter to the parents of the absentee and a visit to the home. Two schools rely upon a telephone call and a letter to the parents as means of investigating reason for absence. Four superintendents reported using a telephone call, a letter to the parents, and a visit to the home of the parents.

Twelve superintendents reported investigating the cause of absence after the first absence. In eight schools the cause of the absence is investigated after a student has been absent two consecutive times. Six reported that the cause of the absence is investigated after the third consecutive occurrence. Twenty-three responses indicated that there is no policy as to the number of absences before the cause is investigated.

Causes of absences are investigated daily in thirty-one, or about two-thirds, of the schools reporting. Ten responses reported that causes of absences are investigated weekly. In eighteen schools such investigations are made only occasionally.

III. PROBLEMS AND METHODS OF INVESTIGATION

A visit to the home of the absentee is the most common

method of investigation of the causes of absence.

Twenty-two schools reported using this method alone.

Superintendents combine a telephone call to the parents and

a visit to the home. Eight schools use both a letter to the

parents of the absentee and a visit to the home. Two

schools rely upon a telephone call and a letter to the

parents as means of investigating reasons for absence. Four

superintendents reported using a telephone call, a letter to

the parents, and a visit to the home of the parents.

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been absent two consecutive times. Six schools have the

cause of the absence investigated after the third con-
secutive occurrence. Twenty-three reported that

there is no policy as to the number of absences before the

cause is investigated.

Causes of absence are investigated only in thirty-

one, or about two-thirds, of the schools reported.

Responses reported that causes of absence are investigated

weekly. In eighteen schools such investigations are made

only occasionally.

In reply to the question, "What steps are taken to secure regular attendance of students who fail to attend regularly?" a visit to the home was reported to be the most frequently used. Sixteen schools use this step alone. Five others use a letter to the parents together with a visit to the home. Eight combine a letter to the parents, a visit to the home, and referral to health or welfare authorities if the case warrants. Nine use a letter to the parents, a visit to the home, and a report to the district attorney. A visit to the home and referral to the health or welfare authorities are the steps taken in four schools. In three schools a report to the district attorney is the only step taken to secure regular attendance. One response gave as steps taken: a letter to the parents, a visit to the home, and a report to the district attorney as a last resort. Only one response reported that all four steps--a letter to the parents, a visit to the home, referral to health or welfare authorities, and a report to the district attorney--are taken to secure regular attendance. Those superintendents indicating that cases of non-attendance are reported to the district attorney noted that this is done only when other steps fail.

In reporting upon each absence investigated, twenty-six responses indicated that an oral report to the superintendent is the only report made. Eight attendance workers

In reply to the question, "What steps are taken to secure regular attendance of students and fail to attend regularly?" a visit to the home was reported as the most frequently used. Sixteen schools use this step alone. Five others use a letter to the parents to bring them to the home. Eight combine a letter to the parents, a visit to the home, and referral to health or welfare authorities. The case warrants. Nine use a letter to the parents, a visit to the home, and a report to the district attorney. Visit to the home and referral to the health or welfare authorities are the steps taken in four schools. In three schools a report to the district attorney is the only step taken to secure regular attendance. One response was as follows: a letter to the parents, a visit to the home, and a report to the district attorney as a last resort. Only one response reported that all four steps--a letter to the parents, a visit to the home, referral to health or welfare authorities, and a report to the district attorney--are taken to secure regular attendance. Those authorities indicating that cases of non-attendance are reported to the district attorney noted that this is done only when other steps fail. In reporting upon each instance investigated, twenty-six responses indicated that an oral report to the superintendent is the only report made. Where attendance was

make a written report on a form used by the school. Three attendance workers make a written case history of each absence investigated, one makes a written report on a form used by the school and reports orally to the superintendent, and another writes a case history and reports orally to the superintendent. In one school an oral report is made to the school board. Two responses indicated that no report is made of the absences investigated.

In fourteen of the schools in which absences are investigated, the attendance workers make periodic summaries of their activities. Seven make weekly reports, and seven make monthly reports. In twenty-nine schools no summary is made of attendance work.

In thirty-three schools, six-tenths of the total reporting, the enrollment is checked against the school census. In eight schools this is not done. The remaining thirteen responses did not indicate whether it is done or not.

Although not in agreement with the above figures, forty-three responses stated that non-enrollees are investigated.

The effort most commonly made to enroll those children who have not voluntarily done so is a visit to the parents. Twenty-nine schools use this means alone. Eleven others use this means along with some other to enroll the

make a written report on a form furnished by the school. Attendance workers make a written case history of each absence investigated, one makes a written report on a form used by the school and reports orally to the superintendent, and another writes a case history and reports orally to the superintendent. In one school an oral report is made to the school board. Two responses indicated that no report is made of the absences investigated.

In fourteen of the schools in which attendance was investigated, the attendance workers make periodic summaries of their activities. Seven make weekly reports, and seven make monthly reports. In twenty-nine schools no summary is made of attendance work.

In thirty-three schools, six-tenths of the total reporting, the enrollment is checked against the school census. In eight schools this is not done. The remaining thirteen responses did not indicate whether it is done or not.

Although not in agreement with the above findings, forty-three responses stated that non-enrollments are investigated.

The effort most commonly made to bring truancy children who have not voluntarily come to school to the parents. Twenty-nine schools use this means alone. Eleven others use this means along with some other method.

non-enrollees. Five schools use a letter to the parents and a visit to the parents. Four schools use a visit to the parents and a report to the district attorney. In three schools the three means mentioned--a letter to the parents, a visit to the parents, and a report to the district attorney--are employed to enroll the non-enrollees. A letter to the parents and a report to the district attorney are the means used in two schools. The superintendents who report cases of non-enrollment to the district attorney stated that this is done only when other means fail. Three responses indicated that no effort is made to enroll the children who have not voluntarily done so.

Seventeen superintendents reported that there are private or denominational schools located within their districts. The law requires that the heads of these private or denominational schools report cases of non-attendance to the superintendent of the public school in the district in which the private or denominational schools are located. Four of the responses reported that, in their opinion, the regulation is complied with; the remaining thirteen, eight-tenths of the cases, reported that it is not.

In thirty schools no work permits were issued during the past year. In the twenty-four schools which did issue work permits, the number issued ranged from one to 115. The average number issued was slightly over twelve.

non-enrolled. Five schools are listed as having made a visit to the parents. Four schools are listed as having made a report to the district attorney. In these schools the three means mentioned--a letter to the parents, a visit to the parents, and a report to the district attorney--are employed to enroll the non-enrolled. A letter to the parents and a report to the district attorney are the means used in two schools. The superintendent who report cases of non-enrollment to the district attorney stated that this is done only when other means fail. These responses indicated that no effort is made to enroll the children who have not voluntarily come in.

Seventeen superintendents reported that there are private or denominational schools located within their districts. The law requires that the names of these private or denominational schools report cases of non-enrollment to the superintendent of the public school in the district in which the private or denominational schools are located. Four of the responses reported that, in their opinion, the regulation is complied with; the remaining thirteen, however, reported that it is not.

In thirty schools no work permits were issued during the past year. In the twenty-four schools which did issue work permits, the number issued ranged from one to 11. The average number issued was slightly over twelve.

Attendance is checked in approximately one-third of the schools at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session. In another one-third of the schools attendance is checked in each class period. In the remainder of the schools attendance is checked by half-days in the elementary school and at each class period in high school and in all grades in which instruction is departmentalized.

In twenty-nine schools the principal keeps the official record of attendance. In eleven schools the classroom teacher keeps this record. Home room teachers keep the official record of attendance in three schools. Five responses indicated that this is a joint task of home room and classroom teachers. In one school each the superintendent and the school secretary keep the record of attendance.

The great majority, forty-four, of the schools require a student to have an admission slip from the principal's office before being admitted to class following an absence. In thirty-five schools the student is required to present a written excuse signed by the parent in order to obtain this admission slip. The other nine schools issue this slip upon the student's own explanation of his absence.

To stimulate attendance, twelve schools present certificates of perfect attendance and publish the names of those pupils having perfect attendance. Seven schools use

Attendance is checked in a systematic manner at the schools at the beginning of each term and at the session. In another one-third of the schools attendance is checked in each class period. In the remainder of the schools attendance is checked by half-days in the elementary school and at each class period in high school and in all grades in which instruction is being conducted.

In twenty-nine schools the principal keeps the official record of attendance. In eleven schools the principal keeps this record. In three schools the teacher keeps this record. In one school each the undersigned and the school secretary keep the record of attendance.

The great majority, forty-four, of the schools require a student to have an admission slip from the principal's office before being admitted to class following an absence. In thirty-five schools the student is required to present a written excuse signed by the parent in order to obtain this admission slip. The other nine schools issue this slip upon the student's own explanation of his absence.

To stimulate attendance, twelve schools present certificates of perfect attendance and grant the honor of those pupils having perfect attendance. Twelve schools use

the certificate alone. Ten schools give an award to each student having perfect attendance.

Each superintendent was requested to estimate the costs of the attendance program for the past year. Twenty-nine estimates were received. Total costs ranged from forty dollars to \$3,650. The total cost was broken down into: salaries, supplies, transportation, and other. The median total cost of attendance services was \$1,000. The salary expense ranged from fifty dollars to \$3,400, the median being \$1,100. Transportation expenses ranged from fifty-five dollars to \$500 in the eight schools reporting expenses for this item, the average being \$244. Costs of supplies ranged from ten dollars to \$100 in the five schools reporting expenses for supplies. Average expenditure for supplies was sixty-two dollars.

Per-pupil cost of attendance services based on enrollment, ranged from \$.09 to \$2.40. The highest per-pupil cost was in a school having a part-time attendance worker. The per-pupil cost in schools having full-time attendance workers ranged from \$.61 to \$1.46. School size and the cost of attendance services are related. The larger the enrollment the less was the per-pupil cost.

The coefficient of correlation, computed by the rank-difference formula, between per-pupil expenditure and the per cent average daily attendance was of school census was

the certificate signed by the principal and the school board, and the student having no other record.

Each superintendent was requested to submit a report of the attendance program for the past year. From nine estimates were received. Total costs ranged from \$1,000 to \$3,500. The total cost was \$1,500. The cost of salaries, supplies, transportation, and other. The total cost of attendance services was \$1,000. The average expense ranged from \$1,000 to \$3,500. The average being \$1,100. Transportation expenses ranged from \$1,000 to \$500 in the eight schools reporting. For this item, the average being \$1,100. Costs of supplies ranged from ten dollars to \$100 in the five schools reporting. Average expenses for supplies. Average expenses for transportation was sixty-two dollars.

Per-pupil cost of attendance services based on enrollment, ranged from \$1.00 to \$3.50. The average per-pupil cost was in a school having a part-time attendance worker. The per-pupil cost in schools having full-time attendance workers ranged from \$1.00 to \$3.50. School boards and the cost of attendance services are related. The larger the enrollment the less was the per-pupil cost.

The coefficient of correlation, computed by the difference formula, between per-pupil expenditures and the per cent average daily attendance was 0.84, indicating a

found to be plus .48. This figure shows some positive relation between the two items.

Thirty-four superintendents reported no court action during the past five years against parents for failure to send children to school. Eight reported one instance during the past five years. Two reported two, and two reported three. Three reported ten cases during the past five years. One reported twelve, one reported twenty to thirty, two reported thirty to forty, and one reported an even forty cases of court action against parents during the past five years.

Approximately one-third of the superintendents consider that the officers of the law aid considerably or greatly in enforcing attendance. The remaining two-thirds consider that these officers aid little or none in enforcing attendance.

Twenty-nine responses gave definite estimate of the per cent of increase in attendance produced by the attendance services. The other responses either stated that it was impossible to estimate the increase, or else left the question unanswered. Two estimated it as 1 per cent, ten at 2 per cent, two at 4 per cent, eleven at 5 per cent, three at 10 per cent, and one at 15 per cent. Estimates of the per cent of increase in attendance in schools having full-time attendance workers and in those having part-time

found to be plus .46. This figure shows some relation

relation between the two items.

Thirty-four superintendents reported no change in

during the past five years against persons for failure to

send children to school. Eight reported one instance during

the past five years. Two reported two, and two reported

three. Three reported ten each during the past five years.

One reported twelve, one reported twenty, and two

reported thirty to forty, and one reported an even forty

cases of court action against persons during the past five

years.

Approximately one-third of the superintendents con-

sider that the officers of the law are somewhat of

greatly in enforcing attendance. The remaining two-thirds

consider that these officers did little or none in enforcing

attendance.

Twenty-nine responses gave definite estimates of the

per cent of increase in attendance produced by the atten-

dance services. The other responses either stated that it

was impossible to estimate the increase, or else left the

question unanswered. Two estimated it as 1 per cent, ten as

2 per cent, two as 4 per cent, eleven as 5 per cent, three

as 10 per cent, and one as 15 per cent. Estimates of the

per cent of increase in attendance in schools having full-

time attendance workers was in those having half-time

workers were about the same. The average estimate in each group was slightly more than 5 per cent.

Twenty-four respondents indicated that they were satisfied with their present attendance program; thirty expressed dissatisfaction. Six gave reasons for their dissatisfaction. Two responses stated that the program is not sufficiently well planned. One stated that more time is needed for the program. Use of the superintendent's time was another reason for dissatisfaction. "The parents excuse too many" was still another cause of dissatisfaction. One superintendent expressed a desire for a full-time attendance worker.

The most frequently recommended change in the present attendance law was to increase budgetary allowance to give necessary funds for adequate attendance services. Twenty-three respondents recommended this change alone, and five others recommended it together with some other change. Four respondents favored changing from local to state enforcement of attendance. Two recommended state certification of attendance workers. Three responses recommended raising the compulsory age to eighteen. One superintendent, in contrast, suggested that in his own local situation it would be better to lower the compulsory age limit instead of raising it. Another stated, "Definitely not raise the compulsory

worksite were about the same. The group was slightly more...
Twenty-one...
assisted with...
expressed dissatisfaction...
assistance...
entirely self...
needed for the program...
was another reason...
too many" was still another...
superintendent...
worker.

The most frequently...
attendance for...
necessary...
three respondents...
others recommended...
respondents favored...
of attendance...
attendance workers...
compulsory...
trust, suggested...
better to lower...
it. Another stated...

age limit." The remaining five responses had no recommendations for change.

The questionnaire contained the request for "any comment you care to make upon the general problem of school attendance in New Mexico." Seventeen superintendents did comment upon the problem. Thirty-seven did not. The comments made are given below:

1. (a) Providing for remedial or "opportunity room" service will tend to hold many of those who become discouraged and disinterested.

(b) Providing for dual curriculum, one division offering a course for the less able students. This is a strong assumption; for it will require a special line of texts, and therewith should be complete equipment for such things as arts and crafts, etc.
2. A county attendance officer to work through local law-enforcing officers, thus relieving the superintendent of duty as an officer of the law.
3. When we had State Police here he would go and bring them to school. This seemed to get the best results of any.
4. It is difficult to enforce attendance laws when almost all surrounding schools are lax in enforcing them.
5. More strictly enforced work permit.
6. Employer should have to be responsible for reporting of labor of school age and not permitted to hire one without a work permit from school officials. Subject to fine for violation. This should apply to farm labor or any other type not covered by child labor act.
7. Education of the parents to the importance of school for their children. Convince the children

eye limit." The committee is now in the process of...

actions for change.

The secretariat is now in the process of...

comment you can find in the report of the...

attendance in New York, the committee is now in the process of...

comment upon the report. The committee is now in the process of...

ments made are given below:

1. (a) Providing the committee with the necessary...

service all have to do with the committee...

become disinterested and the committee...

(b) The committee is now in the process of...

offer a solution for the committee...

This is a serious matter and the committee...

a special committee has been set up...

complete agreement on the committee...

exists, etc.

2. A country as a whole is now in the process of...

law and order is now in the process of...

instrument of the committee...

3. The committee is now in the process of...

bring the committee...

possibilities of...

4. It is the committee's...

elaborate and...

for the committee...

5. The committee is now in the process of...

6. The committee is now in the process of...

covered by the committee...

should only be...

of the committee...

to the committee...

7. Education of the committee...

school for the committee...

that education is not only a must but a necessity for successful living.

8. Place the responsibility of enforcement squarely on the shoulders of the district attorney and let him work with the school.
9. We have no attendance problem here. Most children like school well enough that they attend regularly.
10. Ours (attendance program) works, but I do not like compulsory attendance.
11. Our attendance problem is largely an economic one.
12. Courts in our section now try children for non-attendance. The responsibility rests with the parent and parent is the one whom charges should be brought against. However, this procedure is not followed.
13. I feel that the attendance program and the guidance program should go hand in hand, and that a trained employee should be provided in the faculty for same.
14. Most of us must prepare or try to prepare students for high school or college from an academic standpoint. This is not the need for many New Mexico students. . . . We just don't interest enough pupils.
15. I believe attendance could be enforced more efficiently and more effectively if it were handled by a county officer and not by local district.
16. Teachers and school authorities usually are to blame for bad attendance.
17. Under the budgetary regulations in New Mexico an attendance officer as such is practically outlawed. This probably came about because in former years the attendance officers were little more than petty political "ward heelers." Legislation directly empowering school boards to

that he was not a member of the
for the purpose of 1913.

8. Plans the meeting of the
on the subject of the
himself with the

9. We have no other
then the subject of
regularly.

10. Our intention is to
this subject of

11. Our attention is
one.

12. Course in the
efficiency of the
general and general
be through the
not follow.

13. I feel that the
and progress of
trained and over
ready for

14. Most of the
element of the
New York as
interest in the

15. I believe the
effectively and
handled by a
disposal.

16. Teachers and school
plans for the

17. Under the
attendance of
lacked. The
former was
more than
legislation

employ visiting teachers but strictly forbidding their engaging in political activities of any sort might prove a real help.

1000

and by the way, I have a few more
of these things, and I will send you
a few more of these things, and I will

137

1000

1000

1000

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Only 60 per cent of the fifty-four schools included in this study have attendance workers. Attendance work in these schools is being done by persons usually low in educational attainment. These persons are usually not members of the educational staff of the school.

Procedures affecting attendance are fairly uniform in the schools for which information is available. Usually a visit is made to the home to determine the cause of absence and to secure regular attendance. This is also the usual step taken to enroll those children who fail to do so voluntarily.

Expenditures for attendance services are low. The average total expense for the past year was \$1,408. Average cost per pupil was \$.92. Average salary paid to ten full-time workers was \$2,446. The average paid to part-time workers was \$625. In most cases expenditures are inadequate.

Certain provisions of the attendance law are not being complied with. Most of the heads of the private or denominational schools do not report cases of non-attendance to the heads of the public schools. More than one-half of

the schools did not issue a single work permit during the past year. Thirty-four schools have not taken court action during the past five years against parents for failure to send children to school. Although the foregoing two facts do not necessarily imply a violation of the law, they do indicate that the law is probably not being complied with in those two respects. It is difficult to believe that there are no cases of children between fourteen and sixteen who are working, or that there have been no violations of the attendance law in that many different schools during the past five years.

II. RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the findings of this study and in harmony with the practices and policies recommended by the authorities cited, the following recommendations are made:

1. Enact legislation specifically authorizing school boards to employ attendance workers and allowing the use of school funds for expenses necessary to maintain an adequate attendance program. As previously mentioned, a majority of the superintendents reporting not having attendance workers stated that lack of funds was the reason. As can be seen from the copy of the letter from the State Educational Budget Auditor (see Appendix, p. 57) there is no law to guide

the budgeting of money for attendance services, nor is there uniformity of procedure in permitting budgeting for this item.

2. Require state certification of all persons engaged in attendance work. According to Deffenbaugh and Keesecker:

A law which requires that all attendance officers shall be certified by the state and qualified to deal sociologically with individual non-attendance problems may be expected to promote better relationships between the home and the school than a law which permits local school boards the freedom to select unsuitable and unqualified attendance officers.¹

Such certification should be based upon at least four years of college work.²

3. The attendance worker should be a member of the educational staff. In so doing the school can be brought much closer to the home and much more accurately represented than by having these functions performed by a bus driver, policeman or other person not a member of the educational staff.³

¹ Walter S. Deffenbaugh and Ward W. Keesecker, Compulsory Attendance Laws and Their Administration (Washington, D. C.: U. S. Office of Education, Bulletin, 1935, No. 4, U. S. Government Printing Office, 1935), 96 pp.

² D. L. Wilson, "Improving Attendance," Nation's Schools, 25:60, May, 1940.

³ Public Education in New Mexico. A Report of the New Mexico Educational Survey Board, Division of Surveys and Field Services, (Nashville, Tennessee: George Peabody College for Teachers, 1949), p. 80.

the budgeting of money for the various items of the
university of Wisconsin in the various items of the
item.

2. The Board of Regents shall have the right to
engage in attendance at the various items of the
university.

A law which shall be passed by the Board of Regents
shall be subject to the approval of the Board of Regents
unanimously. The Board of Regents shall have the right to
engage in attendance at the various items of the
university.

3. The Board of Regents shall have the right to
engage in attendance at the various items of the
university. The Board of Regents shall have the right to
engage in attendance at the various items of the
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engage in attendance at the various items of the
university. The Board of Regents shall have the right to
engage in attendance at the various items of the
university.

4. Establish a minimum grade attainment for granting work permits. The present law makes no educational requirement whatsoever for granting work permits. The very lowest grade considered as a minimum should be Grade 8.

5. The provision in the law permitting schools to be excused from establishing part-time classes or schools for the holders of work permits should be abolished and the schools required to hold part-time classes for holders of work permits.

6. Require schools to keep a continuous census of all children of ages one to eighteen residing in the district. In the days of easy and rapid population shifts, an annual census is not sufficient to keep up with the children as they move from place to place. Only through keeping the continuing census up-to-date can the school be sure that all children of school age are enrolled in school.

7. Require the district attorney to take court action against parents who fail to send children to school, such action to be taken upon being given proof by the superintendent that the law is being violated. Under present legal provisions many superintendents are hesitant to start legal action against parents in the district in which these superintendents must work.

8. The approach to the problem of attendance should be changed from enforcement of attendance to the more modern, more progressive social-work approach. This does not imply abolishing the compulsory attendance law. There must remain legal compulsion which can be invoked against the few parents who refuse to send children to school unless compelled to do so. However, better results can be expected from efforts to enlist the co-operation of parents and children than from purely enforcement measures.⁴

9. There should be further study and research into the causes and possible remedies of poor attendance in both rural and municipal schools of New Mexico. Few such studies have been made. Experimentation with possible remedies has not been reported in writing if it has been carried on. Mere recognition of the existence of poor attendance is not enough to solve the problem. Efforts must be made to increase school attendance in New Mexico.

⁴ Paul R. Mort and Francis G. Cornell, A Guide for Self-Appraisal of School Systems (New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1937), p. 24.

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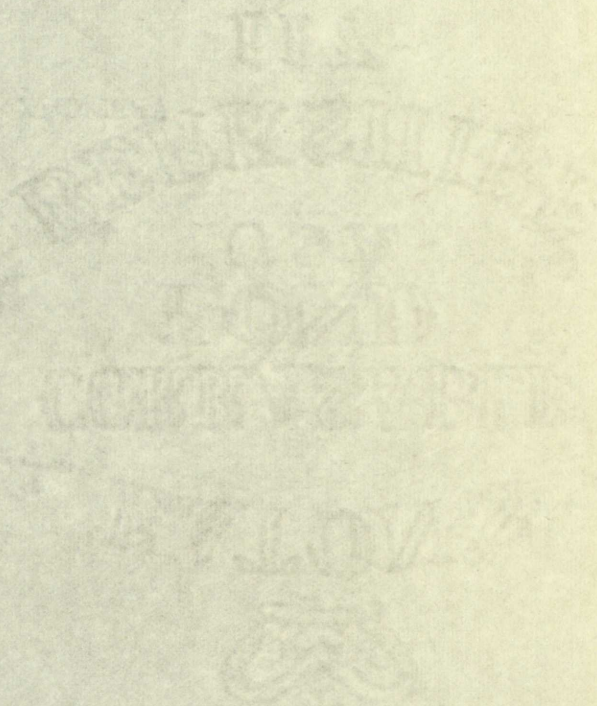
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APPENDIX



C O P Y

205 South Harvard
Albuquerque, N. Mex.
July 18, 1949

Mr. R. H. Grissom
State Educational Budget Auditor
Santa Fe, New Mexico

Dear Mr. Grissom:

In response to a questionnaire which I am sending to the municipal school superintendents in connection with a thesis which I am writing on the subject of Attendance Practices in the Municipal Schools of New Mexico, a few of the superintendents have stated that budgetary procedure practically precludes provision for the salary of an attendance worker as such. I should like to ask if you consider this to be an accurate interpretation on the part of those superintendents, and just what limitations there are in budgetary procedure or regulations which tend to prevent the hiring of attendance workers who would give full time to the problem of non-attendance.

The above question does have an important bearing upon the problem under investigation. Your help in clarifying this point will be sincerely appreciated.

Very truly yours,

Elbert E. Earnest

10

1911

Mr. W. H. Gilman
State Educational Board
Santa Fe, New Mexico

Dear Mr. Gilman:

In response to a query made by me, I am glad to
the municipal school system, and I am glad to
a school which I am glad to see in the
fraternal in the school system of Santa Fe, N. M.
of the school system of Santa Fe, N. M.
proceedure of the school system of Santa Fe, N. M.
of an affidavit of the school system of Santa Fe, N. M.
if you consider this to be of any value, please
the part of the school system of Santa Fe, N. M.
plans there are in the school system of Santa Fe, N. M.
which tend to improve the school system of Santa Fe, N. M.
who would give this information to the school system of Santa Fe, N. M.
Sincerely,
[Signature]

The above question was asked me by the school system of Santa Fe, N. M.
the school system of Santa Fe, N. M.
lying this school system of Santa Fe, N. M.

C O P Y

57

July 22, 1949

Mr. Elbert E. Earnest
205 South Harvard
Albuquerque, New Mexico

Dear Mr. Earnest:

In reply to your letter will say that as we have already told you, budgets are made by me and two people in each county appointed by the County Commissioners.

There are many problems and many things that enter into making a budget. In some of the poorer counties, just where is the money needed the most? Some of the boards of education never ask for an attendance officer. Some prefer to use their principals and some prefer to use the city officers.

Therefore, we could not give you any definite answer to this as we just meet the problems as they are presented.

Yours very truly,

R. H. Grissom

RHG:RG

Mr. Albert E. Harwood
SOP Social Service
Albuquerque, New Mexico

Dear Mr. Harwood:

In reply to your letter of the 12th inst. regarding the
folded paper, enclosed for you is one of the
copies secured by the County Auditor.

There is a small, rectangular piece of paper, about 1 1/2
inches long, and 1/2 inch wide, which is
marked "A" on one end. It is a piece of paper
which is the same as the one which was
of an envelope, and it is not a piece of paper
which is a piece of paper, and it is not a piece of paper
which is a piece of paper.

Therefore, we would not be able to
find a copy of the paper which was

Yours truly,
RHS:RG

Espanola, New Mexico
September 15, 1949

Dear Co-worker:

One of the most pressing problems of education in New Mexico today is non-attendance. Of the 104,279 children enumerated in the 1947-48 school census of the municipal schools, only 90,844 were enrolled. Of those enrolled, approximately twenty-one of each one hundred were absent from school each day. What are the schools doing to remedy this situation?

As a graduate student in Educational Administration in the College of Education, University of New Mexico, I am making a study of The Enforcement of Attendance in the Municipal Schools of New Mexico. In order that I may have sufficient information on the above subject, I should like to have you help by filling out the following questionnaire. This questionnaire carries the approval of the College of Education of the University of New Mexico. Any and all information you may supply will be held in strict confidence. Results of this study will be supplied to you upon your request.

A stamped, self-addressed envelope is enclosed for your convenience in returning the questionnaire. Your co-operation will be sincerely appreciated.

Very truly yours,

Elbert E. Earnest

ATTENDANCE ENFORCEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Please answer each of the following questions by placing a check in the proper place.

1. Does your school system have an attendance worker?
Yes___; No___.
2. If not, why? (a) insufficient funds for his salary___;
(b) students already attend voluntarily___; (c) the
school is already overcrowded___; (d) no felt need___.
3. Who performs the duties of enforcing attendance in your
system? (a) truant officer___; (b) attendance officer___;

Dear Sir:-

One of the most pressing problems of the day is the shortage of teachers. In the 1957-58 school year, 20,000 teachers were needed, but only 18,000 were available. This shortage is expected to continue in the future.

As a graduate student in Education, I am interested in the problem of teacher shortage. I have been studying the problem of teacher shortage in the United States and in other countries. I have found that the problem is very serious and that it is not likely to be solved in the near future. I am hoping that you will be able to help me in my study.

A stamped, self-addressed envelope is enclosed for your reply. Please return it to the address on the envelope. Your reply will be appreciated.

Sincerely,
[Signature]

[Address]

ATTENDANCE INFORMATION

Please answer each of the following questions by checking in the proper place.

1. Does your school system have an attendance system?
Yes ☐ No ☐
2. If not, why? (a) insufficient funds, (b) students already attend voluntarily, (c) no need, (d) already overworked.
3. Who performs the duties of attendance? (a) principal, (b) teacher, (c) parent, (d) none.

(c) visiting teacher____; (d) home visitor____;
 (e) superintendent____; (f) principals____;
 Other (please specify)_____.

4. Is this a full-time job? Yes____; No____. If not, what other duty does this person perform? (a) school janitor____; (b) local policeman____; (c) school bus driver____; (d) school nurse____; (e) public welfare worker____; (f) classroom teacher____; (g) counselor____; (h) principal____; (i) superintendent____; other (please specify)_____.
5. What is the educational attainment of the person or persons who perform attendance duties? (a) did not complete eighth grade____; (b) completed eighth grade____; (c) high school graduate____; (d) some college work____; (e) college graduate____; (f) master's degree____.
6. What is the usual nature of the investigations of the cause of absence? (a) telephone call to the parents of the absentee____; (b) a letter to the parents reporting the absence and requesting explanation____; (c) a visit to the home of the parents____; other (please specify)_____.
7. How many consecutive times must a student be absent before the reason for his absence is investigated? (a) one____; (b) two____; (c) three____; (d) over three____; (e) no set number_____.
8. How often does the attendance worker regularly investigate the causes of accumulated absences? (a) daily____; (b) three times a week____; (c) twice a week____; (d) weekly____; (e) occasionally_____.
9. What steps are taken to secure regular attendance of students who fail to attend regularly? (check each item which applies) (a) letter to the parent____; (b) visit to the home____; (c) referral to health or welfare authorities if the case warrants____; (d) report to the district attorney____; Other (please specify)_____.
10. What type of report does the attendance worker make of each absence investigated? (a) written case history____; (b) written report on form used by the school____; (c) oral report to the superintendent or Principal____; other (please specify)_____.
11. Does the attendance worker make periodic summaries of his activities? Yes____; No____. If so, how often?

(c) visiting _____
(e) _____
Other (please specify) _____

4. Is this a full-time job? _____
Other duty hours: _____
(b) _____
(c) _____
(d) _____
(e) _____

5. What is the educational background of the person who is the _____
person who is the _____
person who is the _____
person who is the _____
person who is the _____

6. What is the usual nature of the _____
cases of _____
the _____
the _____
the _____

7. How many _____
before the _____
(a) one _____
(b) two _____
(c) three _____
(d) four _____
(e) five _____

8. How often does the _____
case the _____
(a) three times a week _____
(b) twice a week _____
(c) once a week _____
(d) weekly _____
(e) bi-weekly _____

9. What areas are covered by the _____
students who _____
which _____
the _____
the _____
the _____

10. What type of _____
each _____
(a) _____
(b) _____
(c) _____
(d) _____
(e) _____

11. Does the _____
his _____

- (a) weekly___; (b) monthly___; (c) every six weeks___;
(d) by semesters___; (e) annually___.
12. Is the school enrollment checked against the school census? Yes___; No___.
13. Are non-enrollees investigated? Yes___; No___.
14. Are there private or denominational schools within your school district? Yes___; No___.
15. Do the heads of these private or denominational schools report cases of non-attendance to you? Yes___; No___.
16. What effort is made to enroll those children who have not voluntarily done so? (a) letter to parents___;
(b) visit to the parents___; (c) report to the district attorney___; other (please specify)_____.
17. How many work permits were issued during the past year?__
18. How often is attendance checked by the teachers during the day? (a) at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session___; (b) at each class period___; other (please specify)_____.
19. Who keeps the official record of attendance? (a) the principals___; (b) the classroom teachers___; (c) the home room teachers___; other (please specify)_____.
20. Is a student who has been absent required to have an "admission slip" from the principal's office before being allowed to re-enter classes? Yes___; No___.
21. Upon what basis is the admission slip issued? (a) student's own explanation for absence___; (b) written excuse signed by parent___; other (please specify)_____.
22. What devices are used to stimulate attendance? (a) certificates of perfect attendance___; (b) award for perfect attendance___; (please specify type of award)_____
(c) publish names of students having perfect attendance___; other (please specify)_____.
23. What is your estimate of the cost of attendance services for the past year? salaries___; supplies___; transportation___; other___; total_____.

(a) weekly _____
(b) by telephone _____

12. Is the above information correct? _____
correctly Yes _____

13. Are non-emergency situations _____

14. Are there orders or instructions _____
school district _____

15. Do the names of _____
report cases of _____

16. What effort is made to _____
not voluntarily _____
(b) visit to the _____
attorney _____

17. How many work _____

18. How often is _____
the day _____
noon session _____
(please specify) _____

19. Who keeps the _____
principals _____
home room _____

20. Is a student who has been _____
"admission slip" _____
being allowed to re-enter _____

21. Upon what basis is the _____
student's own _____
extra _____

22. What device is used _____
list of names _____
attendance _____
(c) publish names of _____
_____ other (please specify) _____

23. What is your estimate of the need for _____
for the next year? _____
transportation _____

24. In how many cases in the last five years have you resorted to court action against parents for failure to send children to school?_____.
25. To what extent do officers of the law (local policeman, justice of the peace, district attorney, etc.) aid in enforcing school attendance? (a) none____; (b) little____; (c) considerably____; (d) greatly____.
26. By what per cent do you estimate that your attendance is increased by your attendance program? (a) 1%____; (b) 2%____; (c) 4%____; (d) 5%____; other (please specify)_____.
27. Are you satisfied with your present attendance program? Yes____; No____. If not, why?_____.
28. What changes in the present attendance law do you recommend? (a) from local to state enforcement____; (b) increase budgetary allowance to give necessary funds for adequate attendance services____; (c) state certification of attendance workers____; (d) raise upper compulsory age limit to eighteen____; other_____.
29. Please make any comment you care to upon the general problem of school attendance in New Mexico.



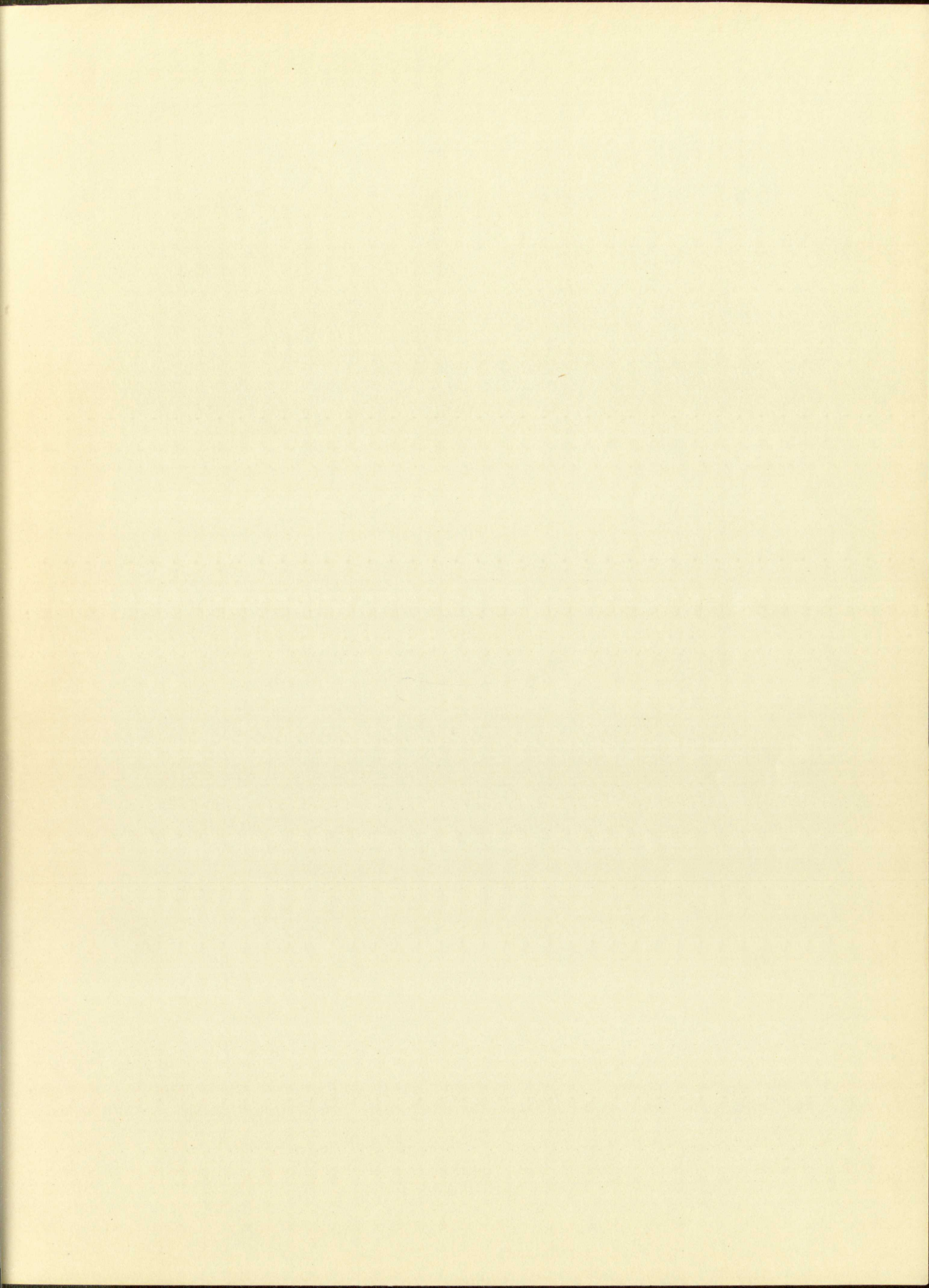
24. In how many cases... reported to... send children to school...
25. To what extent do... justice of the... enforcing school... (c)... By what means... increased by... 26. Are you satisfied with your... Yes... 27. What changes in... recommendations... (b) those... for added... action of... every age... 28. Please make any... proper...

16. 1880
The Kew Gardens

16. 1880
The Kew Gardens

UNIVERSITY OF
TORONTO

D.7.





IMPORTANT!

Special care should be taken to prevent loss or damage of this volume. If lost or damaged, it must be paid for at the current rate of typing.

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