

Progressive Era Rural Reform: Creating Standard Schools in the Midwest

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Though many educational spokespersons today maintain that standards-based school reform is unprecedented or historically unique, the claim is not warranted. This essay documents an educational reform effort begun nearly a century ago that set standards for improving rural schools. Emerging in the midst of the tumultuous Progressive Era, the standard school reform initiative was an outgrowth of a larger concern for the quality of rural life in America that culminated in the Country Life movement. Despite this, the components of the standard schools reform effort are strikingly contemporary.

The years between 1900 and 1920, often referred to as the Progressive Era, marked a tumultuous transition in the United States. It was during these years that modern America was born. It was during these years, for example, that most of our societal institutions took the shape and form that they hold today. Economic, political, and educational policy adopted during the Progressive Era was largely a response to pressing and unprecedented circumstances: huge waves of immigrants, exploding central cities across the country, mass production manufacturing, growing trade unionism, and even the first glimpses of rural depopulation. Layered over the top of these complex conditions were incredible scientific breakthroughs that significantly altered the course of day to day living. Vaccines for childhood diseases, electric lights, refrigerators, radio, telephone, the internal combustion engine, and the list could go on. It was a time of change like few others throughout history.

In the midst of the Progressive Era, a little studied reform effort emerged known as the Country Life movement. It was a reaction to the quickly changing circumstances that disturbed many Americans. For instance, as early as 1895 sociologists noticed that America's rural youth were leaving the countryside in unprecedented numbers to make new lives in the city. Popular novels and short stories during the 1890s, like those written by Hamlin Garland, depicted talented rural youth with wide-ranging interests who became disillusioned by farm life and turned to life and jobs in the city. This trend proved troublesome for many American intellectuals who believed that the strength of the nation lay in its strong farmer class. Liberty Hyde Bailey of Cornell University argued that farmers were the "balance wheel" between contentious capital and labor classes. And what was to become of the American mind if rural

youth consorted with the "lower types of humanity" flooding into the nation's urban centers? Could these new immigrants adapt to life in a democracy? Were they capable of making decisions for themselves? One rural sociologist worried that the rural areas of states like Michigan and Illinois were becoming "fished out ponds populated chiefly by bullheads and suckers."¹

The Country Life movement began when President Theodore Roosevelt convened what he called the Country Life Commission in 1908. The task Roosevelt set before the commission and its chairperson, Liberty Hyde Bailey, was to seek solutions to the "rural problem." The commissioners proceeded to survey rural residents from across the country, and they conducted a series of "town meetings" as well, presumably to determine what the "rural problem" was.² Of course, they generated a list of many problems including road improvement, rural electrification, better mail delivery options, etc., but most of the emphasis was reserved for improving rural churches and schools. In fact, in fairly short order it became clear that most of the commissioners and the many others who became known as Country Lifers believed that the rural problem could be solved by keeping rural youth in the countryside. They believed further, that schools could serve as a catalyst to generate affection for the countryside through various curricular and instructional adjustments. As a consequence, most of the reforming to be done under the auspices of the Country Life movement was focused on the rural school.

Mabel Carney, a rural teacher and teacher educator from Illinois and a leading national figure in the Country Life movement, believed that the ultimate goal of the movement was to keep a "standard people" on the land. Bailey believed the movement's central purpose was to determine how to maintain "on our farms a civilization in full harmony with the best American ideals."³ Regardless of how it was phrased, Country Lifers wanted to see strong, white, Anglo-Saxon populations throughout the countryside. It is

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difficult to overestimate the degree to which leading American intellectuals felt that this vibrant rural population was indispensable to the nation's future. To maintain such a population, Country Lifers believed that rural schools needed to be improved. Part of this process, according to many Country Lifers, included curriculum reform, particularly the establishment of nature studies as a cornerstone of the rural school. Their reasoning went something like this: If rural students understood the countryside better, they would appreciate it more. More appreciation for their surroundings might keep youth at home.

Others, like Carney, called for the recitation of creeds and belief statements also designed to raise the status of the countryside in the minds of young rural dwellers. One such creed began this way: "I believe the country which God made is more beautiful than the city man made." Another maintained that "opportunity comes to the boy on the farm as often as to the boy in the city, that life is larger and freer and happier on the farm than in town."⁴

Between 1898 and 1918 the modern, graded, K-12 school system was born and came to dominate as America's "one best system." Redesigning the nation's educational efforts was deemed to be an important piece of the "societal engineering" called for to take America out of the depression of the 1890s and make it a prosperous world power. Since the vast majority of America's schools were rural, country schools were high on the list for targeted reforms.

Creating Standard Schools

In the early 1900s, Illinois State Superintendent of Public Instruction Alfred Bayliss decided he would try to stimulate interest in improving one-room country schools. His plan was simple. He would visit the schools, evaluate the conditions of the buildings, and assess the quality of the academic programs being offered. Those schools that met the specifications he set up would then receive a special diploma.⁵

Bayliss' simple plan for improving rural schools, essentially a review by an outside evaluator, put in motion a movement that would impact thousands of country school students in six Midwest states during the next 4 decades. The Bayliss school improvement effort paved the way for what came to be known as the "standardization of country schools," or, more commonly, the "standard school program." It is interesting to note that today, about a century after the creation of "standards" for schooling program, a "standards movement" is once again gaining momentum and affecting curricular and instructional practices in schools across the Midwest and the country at large.

When Bayliss retired in 1907, his successor—Francis G. Blair—decided he would continue the Bayliss approach to school improvement. He hired two assistants to help with this effort: U. J. Hoffman and W. S. Booth. He asked

Hoffman and Booth to develop written guidelines and requirements for the standard school program and an offshoot that came to be called the superior school program. Those guidelines were published in the form of circulars issued by the department of public instruction (DPI). Once that was done Hoffman and Booth began conducting school evaluations and spreading the word about rural school improvement.

Between 1909 and 1913 the two assistants had visited country schools in 92 of the 102 counties in Illinois. They had evaluated thousands of schools and awarded diplomas and door plates to the top schools. Some 1,681 schools had qualified for standard school designation and the very best schools—seven—were recognized as superior schools. These schools received no monetary rewards for their achievements—only door plates and diplomas. Despite the lack of funding the popularity of the program expanded to include ungraded country as well as graded town schools.⁶

The standardization review process included an evaluation in the following five categories: yard and outbuildings, the physical condition of the schoolhouse, furnishings and supplies, program organization (curriculum), and the quality of the teaching. Most of the criteria listed under these headings were very general. The exception was the salary for teachers. To qualify as a standard school in Illinois in 1913, the teacher had to be paid at least \$360 per year. Superior schools had to pay their teachers \$480 per year.⁷

Illinois gained national recognition for the standard school program when the U.S. Commissioner of Education issued a bulletin highlighting the program in 1912. In 1914 George Herbert Betts and Otis Earle Hall included a chapter about the Illinois standard school program in their book *Better Rural Schools*. This exposure, plus the informal communication network among state superintendents, helped spread the school standard program to at least five other Midwestern states. These included Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Missouri and Nebraska.⁸

Many Country Lifers believed that improving rural schools meant curricular change and the improvement of teaching—goals specifically addressed in the standard schools program. There were those within the movement, however, who came to believe that school improvement was essentially synonymous with school consolidation. Though this group was a minority among Country Lifers and tended to be those close to the political arena, the cultural appeal of improving things by making them larger meant that the consolidation agenda would always find an audience.

Iowa adopted the standard school program when specific legislation was approved in 1919—more than a decade after Illinois. The delay may have been due to the fact that Iowa experimented for a time with township school district organization. This system was probably responsible

for the fact that proponents of school consolidation in Iowa experienced early successes that were not seen in neighboring states. Falling farm commodity prices, however, combined with the cost of building new schools and operational expenses, plus the desire by farmers to have more control over the education provided to their children were factors that combined to eventually stall the consolidation movement in Iowa.

"Iowans quest for modernity was powerless against the local one room school house, a symbol of traditional community identity which in the age of the automobile, the radio, and the demise of rural churches, was fast disappearing," explained Richard Jensen and Mark Friedberger in their landmark study, *Education and Social Structure: An Historical Study of Iowa, 1870-1930*. Wayne Fuller explained the farmers' opposition to school consolidation this way:

educators rarely seemed to understand that abandoning a one-room schoolhouse that had been standing in the countryside for half a century or more was much different from rearranging urban schools. To close a country school was to destroy an institution that held the little rural community together. It was to wipe out the one building the people of the district had in common and, in fact, to destroy the community, which in those years, so many were trying to save and strengthen. Even more important, as far as the farmers were concerned, the destruction of their school meant that their power to set the length of the school terms, to employ their teachers and to determine how much they would spend for education would be taken from them and given to some board far removed from their community and their control.⁹

David Reynolds, in his book *There Goes the Neighborhood*, argued that "rural school consolidation produced more conflict than any other educational issue placed before Iowa voters in the twentieth century. No issue dealing with public schooling before or since has produced as much litigation as school consolidation did when it was being contested in the hustings from 1906 to 1925. The relative wealth and its distribution, the magnitude of additional taxation associated with consolidated schools, and perceived quality and social importance of the existing country schools were also critical factors in some locales, tipping farmers to either support or oppose consolidation."¹⁰

Reynolds noted that the shift from the traditional one-room school entailed a significant increase in school taxes for the average farm family. "A conservative estimate of the average additional tax levy in a consolidated school district was \$.84 per acre. For an average-size farm, this represented a tax increase of \$140 per year, shrinking av-

erage profits of its owner-operator to only \$105 per year . . . it was an increase many farm families felt they could not afford."¹¹

As sentiment in Iowa turned against school consolidation, the appeal of the standard schools program grew. When it was officially adopted in 1919, however, several changes were made to the approach used in Illinois. The most significant involved passage of legislation with an annual appropriation of \$100,000 to support school standardization. No other state supported standardization with a formal law and specific funding for approved standard schools.

P. E. McClenahan was Iowa's state superintendent of public instruction when the standard school program was adopted. But it was May E. Francis who championed the cause for the state's country schools. Her support for country schools, in fact, helped get her elected state superintendent though her tenure in that office was short lived. Ms. Francis began her career as a country school teacher in Bremer County, a county noted for the quality of its rural schools. Shortly thereafter, she was elected Bremer County school superintendent. Iowa was the first state to open this position to females.

In 1919, apparently in recognition of her work as county superintendent, Francis was hired by McClenahan to be the first inspector of rural schools at the state department of public instruction. Her responsibilities included preparing and administering the first regulations for school standardization. Francis surprised the educational establishment by announcing her decision to run for state superintendent in 1922, opposing the man who hired her. Another candidate, W. H. Bender, decided to run for office as well, thus creating a three-way race for the Republican nomination. The three candidates were invited to submit campaign statements for publication in *Midland Schools*, a magazine of the Iowa State Teachers Association (ISTA).

McClenahan used most of his statement to reprint a resolution of endorsement adopted by the ISTA Educational Council 5 months earlier. Francis used her space to outline her support for country schools and for spending restraint. She noted: "I believe that the taxpayers, especially of the rural districts, should not be called upon to expend millions of dollars for palatial school buildings. Rather we should improve buildings and equipment, and with less of the taxpayers' money, lift the standard rural schools to a place of paramount importance in our educational system. . . if elected state superintendent of public instruction for Iowa, I shall inaugurate a policy of ever advancing in school affairs. However, I shall measure this advancement by the rule of conservation, sanity, and safety. This, in order that fads and fadism shall not run rampant like a hungry lion, devouring the hard-earned dollars of the taxpayer. In short, my motto is, progress and advance for the smallest school unit—the rural school."¹² Francis easily won the primary election and then soundly defeated her Democratic oppo-

ment in the general election, becoming the first woman elected to state-wide public office in Iowa. Reynolds noted: "She became the first state superintendent in more than a generation not to tout school consolidation as the only effective means of improving the quality of rural schools."¹³

Her troubled tenure as state superintendent lasted one term. In 1924, at the urging of the ISTA, a special legislative committee met to investigate alleged illegal and unfair acts by the department. Ms. Francis was charged with raising the grades of teachers to permit them to receive certificates, refusing to accredit some consolidated schools, and arbitrarily refusing certificates to some entitled to them.¹⁴

On a narrow vote of the committee, she was exonerated of all charges. But the investigation weakened her leadership influence. Ms. Francis completed the remaining 2 years of her term. She devoted much of her time to campaigning for improving the quality of the country school and trying to help the large number of small consolidated schools cope with financial problems. She was defeated in a primary election by another woman who was also supportive of rural schools. That woman—Agnes Samuelson—had the backing of the educational establishment. Samuelson narrowly defeated Francis and then won the general election, becoming the second woman to be elected to statewide office in Iowa. Francis left Iowa and enrolled at the University of Texas where she became an instructor in the College of Education and earned her Ph.D. in 1934. She wrote two historical novels, two children's books, and a spelling textbook. Her best known work, *Jim Bowie's Lost Mine*, went through five printings.

Iowa's Standard School Law

The Iowa Standard School Law was approved in 1919 and became effective for the 1919-1920 school year. The law provided state aid according to the number of students who attended a school qualifying for standardization recognition for at least 6 months. Half of the funding was given to the teacher as a salary supplement; the other half was to be used to purchase equipment and supplies. The state superintendent was directed to "prescribe for standard schools the minimum requirements of teaching, general equipment, heating, ventilation, lighting, seating, water supply, library, care of grounds, fire protection, and other such requirements as he may deem necessary." Another directive called for the state superintendent to "furnish standard schools with a door plate for the promotion of standard schools." Other requirements specified in the law included a minimum enrollment of 10 students and employment of a teacher with a first grade certificate for a full year. A first grade certificate required completion of three 12-week terms of normal training and passage of a comprehensive examination.¹⁵

The 1925 Regulations for Standardizing Common Schools published by the DPI contained a list of 53 standards grouped under six categories. The categories included: grounds and out buildings, the schoolhouse, equipment and care of the schoolroom, library and supplementary readers, teacher and academic requirements, and community activities. The point value varied by regulation. For example, if the teacher was judged by the county superintendent to be excellent or superior, the school received six points. If the school had a vestibule and separate cloak closets for boys and girls, they could earn three points. Unlike Illinois, no minimum salary requirements were included in the Iowa regulations. A perfect score would produce a 100 point total. To qualify as a standard school, a score of 80 points was required. To maintain that ranking a school had to obtain a score of 85 the 2nd year and at least 90 the 3rd year.¹⁶

If a school qualified as a standard school and had a minimum enrollment of 10 full-time students, they would receive a state aid payment of \$60. The average salary for teachers in Iowa standard schools in 1924 was \$90.07 per month. For nonstandard country schools, the salary average per month was \$85.67 per month. By 1924, 1,134 of the 10,000 country schools had qualified as standard schools. These schools had an enrollment of 19,727. There were standard schools in 94 Iowa counties.¹⁷

In her 1924 Biennial Report, State Commissioner Francis had praised the legislature for creating the standard school law, for it was the first time that the general assembly had recognized the necessity and the desirability of extending direct financial aid and encouragement to the one-room schools. "Of the hundreds of millions that the farmer has paid into the state treasury for the support of education in general in the state of Iowa, this is the first attempt to give his school some direct benefit from it." Francis noted for the 1923-1924 school year that the funds provided for standardization were not enough "to care for all the schools meeting the standards established by law. I am, therefore, recommending that the Forty-first General Assembly increase this amount to \$150,000 annually for the furtherance of this work."¹⁸

Unfortunately for the country schools, Francis and the DPI did not have the political clout to make the legislature seriously consider the plea for full funding for standard schools. And improving programs in country schools was not a priority for ISTA and other school leaders. Instead of increasing funding for standard schools, the legislature in 1927 added this sentence to the School Standardization Law: "The money shall be expended in making improvements and in purchasing necessary apparatus, but no part thereof shall be paid to any teacher for compensation."¹⁹

Despite this financial rebuke, country school advocates continued to promote participation in the standardization program. One tool they used very effectively was the pub-

lication of several editions of booklets that defined the criteria and point totals used in the evaluation process. The booklets also featured pictures and testimonials from teachers and county superintendents representing schools that achieved standard school recognition. The Department also published a Standard School Rating Card which summarized the criteria and point scoring used in the evaluations. (See the 1928 version which used a 1,000 point rating scale in the Appendix.) These rating cards were distributed to county superintendents who gave them to teachers to help them prepare for the evaluation. Teachers sometimes passed the rating card to parents to get them involved in working for school improvements needed to obtain the standard school designation.

From 1924-1928 the number of standardized schools had nearly doubled as had student enrollment in the standardized schools. At the end of 1928 school year, there were 2,020 standardized schools with 37,000 students. The prorated amount received by these schools had dipped to \$2.70, but by eliminating the teacher salary supplement, the funding level for school supplies was reduced by only 10%.

A master degree thesis written at Iowa State University in 1925 by H. C. Wilson provides a good comparison of the support being provided for town schools, consolidated schools, and one-room schools. The ratio of money spent per student in each of these types of schools in 1923-1924 was as follows: one-room schools, \$9; town schools, \$10; and consolidated schools, \$13. The value of the school buildings per student: one-room schools, \$1; town schools, \$4; consolidated schools, \$13. The value of educational "apparatus" per child in the three types of schools was \$5 for the one-room schools, \$13 for the consolidated schools, and \$24 for the town schools.²⁰

Progress for country school improvement was continued in the late 1920s and early 1930s under the capable leadership of Agnes Samuelson, who replaced May Francis as state superintendent. Samuelson was assisted by Jessie M. Parker who headed the division of rural schools. In 1928 a new expanded version of the Standardization of Rural Schools "guidebook" and "scorecard" was published with 71 regulations and a 1,000-point rating scale. Additionally, a "superior" school category was added to encourage standard schools to strive for a higher level of excellence. Parker explained: "Many schools which have been on the standard list for several years wish to progress further in making the best possible rural school. To encourage this, the honorary rating of "Superior School" has been established."²¹

To obtain the "Superior School" designation, a school had to be on the standard school list for 3 years and then score more than 900 points on the 1,000-point rating scale. The "superior school" designation did not provide any additional funding, but the DPI did produce a bronze rectan-

gular plate with the words "superior school." Iowa's top-rated country schools were able to proudly demonstrate their record of educational excellence by displaying two door plates on the outside of their school. In 1930 the first three Iowa Superior Schools and their teachers were:

- Bradford #4 Chickasaw County, Mrs. Lela Martin
- Eden #3 Clinton County, Miss Agnes Schnack
- Newton #4 Jasper County, Miss Grace Lynch

Participation in the standard/superior school programs continued to increase into the early 1930s. The number of Iowa standard schools peaked in 1932 when more than 30% (2,715) of Iowa's ungraded one- and two-room schools had obtained this recognition. These schools had a student enrollment of 41,172. During 1932, state aid was prorated at \$2.10 per student. By 1940 the number of standard schools had declined to 2,465. The number of superior schools increased slightly during the decade of the 1930s and probably peaked in 1940 when 63 schools obtained this recognition.

A number of factors and trends had an adverse impact on the standard school movement. The 1930s depression resulted in rural population declines, a circumstance that reduced revenue to local districts. In 1933 a 10% across the board budget cut by the legislature reduced the funding for standard schools to \$90,000 or \$1.95 per student.²²

Tracking participation in the standard/superior school programs and other public school trends became more difficult in the 1940s when a major change occurred with the type of biennial reports issued by the state superintendent. The reports issued after 1940 contained less narrative and became a compilation of statistical tables.

Fortunately, a set of ledgers for the years of 1920 through 1945 lists the standard schools by county and these are on file in the archives at the State Historical Society of Iowa in Des Moines. Combining the information available in these ledgers with state school aid budget tables in the DPI biennial reports, it is possible to track the progress of the standard school program in Iowa. The final standard school budget amount of \$91,174.80 is listed for the 1948-1949 school year.

Conclusion

The Iowa Standard Schools law established the first statewide school improvement program in Iowa. It helped stimulate discussion among parents, teachers, school board members, county superintendents, and taxpayers on actions that could be taken to improve educational opportunities for rural students. It marked the first attempt at developing a set of statewide educational standards. The strife and conflict associated with school consolidation was avoided because it was a voluntary program administered with a variety

of options for obtaining the standard school designation. The standardization program also set a precedent for future voluntary school accreditation programs like those developed by the North Central Association.

This legislation provided the first state funding based on student enrollment for local schools in Iowa, and it marked the first time that funds were earmarked for teacher salary improvement. Unfortunately, it may have also helped to establish a trend that enabled legislators to prescribe changes without supplying the funding necessary to implement them. Some might argue that this program provided supplemental funding to schools that were doing well and did little to help those schools most in need. Looking at numbers of qualifying standard schools does not provide a complete picture of the impact this program had on education in Iowa. Schools that participated in this review process probably benefited from implementing reform efforts even if they did not qualify as a standard school.

The standard school program in Iowa and in other Midwestern states led to improvements in many schools that undoubtedly resulted in better educational opportunities for thousands of rural students. It provides an example of an educational initiative that won the approval of policymakers despite the fact that it came with a price tag. The appeal required to accomplish this was probably twofold. On one hand, the standard schools program was an improvement effort that differed from simplistic calls for school consolidation and it avoided the conflict that inevitably accompanied consolidation debates. On the other hand, the program resonated with the goals of the larger Country Life movement of which it was a part. The logic was simple: improve the life circumstances of rural youth by creating "standard schools" and in so doing you increase the odds that the nation will maintain a "standard people" in the countryside. For those who like to think of the current "standards movement" in American education as unprecedented, they would do well to revisit the standard school program of America's Progressive Era.

Footnotes

¹ Liberty Hyde Bailey, *The Country Life Movement in the United States* (New York: Macmillan, 1911), 16. Edward Allsworth Ross, *The Social Trend* (New York: Macmillan, 1922), 47.

² The Commission received more than 115,000 responses to their survey and they conducted thirty "hearings" in towns across the country. They also combed the results of rural social and educational research discovering, for instance, that in 1908 \$13 was spent each year on rural students while \$28 was spent on city pupils. See Paul Theobald, "Country Lifers Reconsidered: Educational Re-

form for Rural America," *Journal of Research in Rural Education* 7 (Winter 1991): 21-28.

³ Bailey's definition of the "rural problem" is cited in Mabel Carney, *Country Life and the Country School* (Chicago: Row, Peterson, and Co., 1912), 3. Carney's definition is on page 203 of the same volume.

⁴ "The Country Boy's Creed," *Rural Manhood* 3 (April 1912): 106. Martha Crow Foote, *The American Country Girl* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Co., 1915), 31.

⁵ "The One Room and Consolidated Country Schools of Illinois," Circular No. 76 Fourth Edition, Francis Blair, Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1914 (pp. 10-12, 97-99).

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.* Circular No. 65, 1912 (pp. 8-13).

⁸ *Twenty-Ninth Biennial Report of Superintendent of Public Instruction*, (Springfield: 1912), 194-195. George Herbert Betts and Otis E. Hall, *Better Rural Schools* (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1914), 379-400. Wayne E. Fuller, *The Old Country School*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 227. Phone conversation with Joan Latta Konechy, reference services librarian, University of Nebraska, July 13, 2001.

⁹ Fuller, *The Old Country School*, 234-235.

¹⁰ David R. Reynolds, *There Goes the Neighborhood*, (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1999), 85.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 228.

¹² "Iowa's Three Candidates for State Superintendent of Public Instruction," *Midland Schools*, (April, 1922): 281-282.

¹³ Reynolds, *There Goes the Neighborhood*, 90.

¹⁴ Senate File No. 282 by Evans and Smith, adopted by the Iowa Senate, Feb. 22, 1919.

¹⁵ "Regulations for Standardizing Common Schools," (Iowa City: Department of Public Instruction, 1925).

¹⁶ These point designations were listed as advertisements in 1919 issues of *Midlands Schools* magazine.

¹⁷ *Report of Department of Public Instruction for the Biennial Period ending June 30, 1924*, (Iowa City: Department of Public Instruction, 1924).

¹⁸ *Standardization of Rural Schools*, (Iowa City: Department of Public Instruction, 1928).

¹⁹ Report of Department of Public Instruction for the Biennial Period ending June 30, 1928. (Iowa City: Department of Public Instruction, 1928), 11.

²⁰ H. C. Wilson, *A Comparative Study of Consolidated, One-Room Rural and Urban Schools in Iowa*, Master of Science Thesis, Iowa State College, 1925.

²¹ *Report of Department of Public Instruction for the Biennial Period ending June 30, 1930*. (Iowa City: Department of Public Instruction, 1930), 39.

²² *Ibid.*, June 30, 1950, 93-97.

Appendix

STATE OF IOWA
Department of Public Instruction

RATING CARD FOR STANDARD RURAL SCHOOLS

County..... Township..... District..... Date.....
 Teacher..... Address..... Salary per Mo.....
 Total enrollment..... No. months of school..... Date of Inspection.....
 Number of pupils belonging for six months..... Average Daily Attendance..... First date approved.....
 President of the Board..... Address.....
 Secretary of the Board..... Address.....
 Treasurer of the Board..... Address.....

This school has met the requirements specified for standardization by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction and should be designated as a standard school and receive state aid as provided by law. Should this school fail to maintain the required equipment and efficiency, I will remove its certificate of standardization and will notify the State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

.....
County Superintendent.

Standard School—800 or more points
 B Class School—700 to 800 points
 C Class School—600 to 700 points

D Class School—500 to 600 points
 E Class School—below 500 points
 Points marked * are required for standarization

No district will be satisfied to attain only the minimum score but will try to provide for its boys and girls better educational opportunities each year.

Agnes Samuelson
 Superintendent of Public Instruction.

I. GROUNDS AND OUTBUILDINGS—120 Points	II. THE SCHOOLHOUSE—(continued)
1. Grounds well cared for, in good condition, accessible, and removed from dangerous conditions.....10 2. Trees, shrubbery, and flowers, attractively placed.....10 *3. Flag and flag pole with flag display in good weather (Statutory—Section 4253, School Laws of Iowa).....10 4. Adequate grounds, fenced against traffic hazards.....10 *5. Toilets—Two inside, separate, sanitary toilets, or two separate, sanitary, outside toilets, provided with latticed screen for entrance.....20 6. Supervised play, and suitable equipment.....20 7. Water supply—Good well or cistern supplying pure water.....20 8. Walks—cinder, gravel, or cement—from schoolhouse to road, well, and toilets.....10 9. Fuel room in good condition, well supplied with fuel and kindling.....10	4. Good doors with lock and key..... 5 5. Outside platform with steps in good condition and provided with handrail..... 5 6. Interior walls in good condition, tinted a light shade..10 7. Windows on left, or left and rear of pupils.....20 *8. Windows supplied with good translucent shades and sash curtains.....10 *9. Heated and ventilated by approved system (Underline: Basement furnace, room furnace).....30 10. Separate cloakrooms, vestibule, and storage closet.....20 11. Interior clean and tidy. Floors in good condition, smooth, tight, and properly treated for preservation..10 12. Twenty (20) square feet of floor space, and 220 cubic feet of air space for each pupil.....20 13. Window space 1-6 to 1-4 of floor space.....10 14. Twenty linear feet of slate blackboard the proper height, with chalk trays, good erasers and good grade of crayon.....10 15. Provisions for community meetings: (a) Added space (b) Lighting system (c) Folding chairs.....10
II. THE SCHOOLHOUSE—190 Points *1. Good foundation.....10 *2. Roof and siding good.....10 3. Well painted exterior. Good windows with no broken lights, provided with locks.....10	

III. EQUIPMENT—190 Points

1. Single desks	5
Adjustable	5
Movable	5
Properly placed	5
*No child seated so his feet cannot reach floor	
2. Good desk and chair for teacher.....	10
3. Chairs for visitors.....	5
4. Kindergarten table and chairs.....	10
*5. Approved equipment for primary work.....	20
6. Interior of room tastefully decorated.....	5
7. Display and bulletin board.....	10
*8. Three good pictures framed—not more than one portrait included	10
9. Suitable dictionaries	10
10. Charts—reading, hygiene	10
11. Complete set of eight (8) up-to-date maps, including Iowa; evidence that they are used.....	20
12. Globe—twelve inches in diameter; used daily.....	10
13. Good talking machine and ten approved records.....	10
*14. Drinking and washing facilities:	
(a) Sanitary drinking fountain or covered cooler	
(b) Sink and drain—or wash basin	
(c) Individual or paper towels	
(d) Liquid or powdered soap or individual cakes	
(e) Individual drinking cups if cooler is used.....	20
15. Other equipment:	
(a) Waste basket	
(b) Song books	
* (c) Thermometer	
(d) Atlas	
(e) Pencil sharpener	
(f) First aid kit	
(g) Mats for cleaning shoes	
(h) Latest world almanac	
(i) Desk copies in all subjects	
(j) Material for some good writing system including teacher's manual	20

IV. LIBRARY AND SUPPLEMENTARY READERS—90 Points

1. Good bookcase used for books only.....	10
2. List of 100 books chosen from state bulletins.....	20
3. Standard set of encyclopedias of recent date.....	20
4. Supplementary readers for all grades from one to seven as listed.....	20
5. One current events paper—one farm paper.....	10
6. One table for primary grades, with many varieties of primers and lower grade reading material.....	10

V. TEACHER AND SCHOOL ORGANIZATION—290 Points

1. Training:	
High School Normal Training.....	10
College, including special training for rural schools.....	10
2. One year of previous experience (5)	
More than one year (5).....	10
3. Teacher retained a second year.....	10
4. Professional Spirit:	
(a) Membership in state or National Education Association	2
(b) Attendance at educational meetings called by county superintendent	4
(c) Reading of at least one professional magazine every year	2
(d) Reading of at least one professional book every year	2
5. Attendance at summer school within past three years	15
6. Interest in community.....	10
7. Management:	
(a) Well-kept records and prompt reports	
(b) Daily program posted and followed	
(c) Not over 28 classes per day	
(d) Good order—all children profitably employed.....	20
8. State Course of Study and bulletins followed.....	10

V. TEACHER AND SCHOOL ORGANIZATION—(Con'd)

9. An average daily attendance of 85 per cent required. Not over 2% of tardiness. School hours closely observed	10
10. Housekeeping:	
Careful attention to light, heating, ventilation and cleanliness, including cloakroom, toilet, playground, and basement	20
11. Efficiency of teacher (Ranked by County Superintendent)	
(a) Professional attitude (10)	
(b) Teaching and discipline (35)	
(c) Playground management and care of property (10)	
(d) Personal appearance and manner (10)	
(e) Community and social contacts (10).....	75
12. Attitude of Pupils:	
(a) Orderly	
(b) Neat and clean	
(c) Courteous	
(d) Industrious—trying to do required work	
(e) Loyal to school and careful of school property.....	20
13. Homes of pupils visited by teacher.....	10
14. At least two demonstrations of school work prepared and given to public.....	20
15. Organized health program.....	10
*16. Physical Education as prescribed by State Course of Study	10
17. Hot lunch in season.....	10
18. Other improvements not listed: (a) radio (b) window ventilators (c) textbooks on art (d) chart printing outfit (e) hectograph (f) paper cutting machine (g) piano (h) screens for windows and doors (i) manual training equipment (j) additional records, 15, for teaching music (k) provisions for outdoor lunch	
Not over 25.....	

VI. COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL ACTIVITIES—120 Points

1. Teacher Salary	
\$10 above minimum (10).....	10
Each additional \$5 (2).....	
2. Nine month term.....	10
3. Attitude of directors	
* (a) Visit school	
(b) Have building in order and supplies on hand at opening of term	
(c) Hold regular meetings with minutes recorded	
(d) Encourage teachers to attend professional meetings	10
4. Cooperation with County Superintendent:	
(a) Attend meetings called by county superintendent	4
(b) Consult county superintendent before buying supplies	8
(c) Consult county superintendent before hiring teachers	8
5. Represented at state, district, or county fairs.....	10
6. Compete in spelling, arithmetic, dramatic, music, or other contests.....	10
7. Conduct a school literary society, Boys' and Girls' Clubs, Boy Scouts or Campfire Girls, Girl Reserves.....	10
8. Be a community center for two or more meetings.....	10
9. Community activities:	
(a) Board or patrons assist in scoring school	
(b) At least one-half number of parents visit school once during the year	
(c) Donations of labor or equipment by community or individuals	10
10. Community organizations:	
(a) Active Parent-Teachers' Association affiliated with state and national organizations.....	10
(b) Other community clubs.....	10