

BELLEFONTE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Principal's Excellent Annual Report for the Year 1898-'99.

To THE BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS OF BELLEFONTE, PA.

GENTLEMEN:—So many phases of school work present themselves in a year's experience that when the time comes to submit an annual report it is difficult to select that which will best meet the requirements of such report.

It is now fifteen years since the principal first entered the employ of this school district, and it is seven years since he was transferred, and accepted, his present position. Perhaps it might not be out of place here to direct attention briefly to a few of the changes which have been effected during the latter period by action of the board upon the recommendation of the principal.

Prior to September, 1892, the course of study for the High School was as follows: Fourth year: Required—Algebra, Zoology, English History, Rhetoric, Electives—Geometry or German; Latin, (Cesar), or Government and Natural Resources of the United States, or Greek.

Third year: Algebra, Botany, Natural Philosophy, English Composition, Latin, Civil Government, Mythology, Greek.

N. B.—Pupils in the two higher classes have five daily recitations.

Second year: Algebra, Arithmetic, English Grammar, General History, Physiology, Spelling, Book-keeping—double entry.

First year: Arithmetic, English Grammar, History of the United States, Physical Geography or Physiology, Spelling, Book-keeping—single entry.

N. B.—Pupils in the two lower classes have four daily recitations.

An examination will show that the course provided for only two years in Latin; only one hour a week was given to the study of English classics, while no provision whatever was made for biography nor for the history of England or American literature. Mental arithmetic, as such, had no place in any of the schools; the work in geometry covered four books only, and included few applications; and in algebra, it did not extend beyond quadratics. In general history, Perley was the text; and in natural philosophy a mere primer was used. There was no drawing at all in this grade, except for part of one year, (1889-'90).

Below is given the course as constituted at present:

First year—Language: English Grammar; read and give resume of Cooper's Last of the Mohicans, and Scott's Ivanhoe; Latin lessons elective with physiology; spelling, Sweet's Graded Lessons; rhetorical, declamations and recitations; mathematics, mental arithmetic; written arithmetic, from practical measurements to involution; drawing, free-hand.

Second year—Language: Elements of rhetoric; read and give resume of The Rime of the Ancient Mariner, and the Flight of a Tartar Tribe; Latin, Caesar and grammar, elective with physical geography; spelling, Sweet's synonyms; rhetorical, essay writing under the direction of the teacher; mathematics, arithmetic completed and algebra begun at holidays; book-keeping, single and double entry; history, general begun; drawing, free-hand and original design.

Third year—Language, English composition; read and give resume of Vicar of Wakefield, and Tennyson's Princess; Latin, Vergil, elective with botany and natural resources of the U. S.; rhetorical, essays and declamations; mathematics, algebra, to evolution; drawing, geometrical and industrial; history, general history completed and American history reviewed.

Fourth year—Language: A critical study of the English classics as required by the Association of Colleges of the Middle States. Under this requirement, the last class studied Shakespeare's Macbeth; Burke's Speech on Conciliation with America; Milton's Paradise Lost, books 1st and 2d; and Carlyle's Essay on Burns. The history of English and American literature elective with geometry; three biographical sketches of eminent Americans, and three orations required during the year. Latin, Cicero, elective with civil government, Constitution of Pennsylvania; mathematics, plane geometry completed; elements of algebra finished, and practical arithmetic reviewed; sciences, natural philosophy; drawing, constructive.

It will be observed that the course in language has been extended by more than one full year in English, and by two full years in Latin, while in mathematics the course now comprises more of geometry, more of algebra, and provides for a final review of arithmetic in the latter part of the senior year, and mental arithmetic, one of the very best of disciplinary studies for the young mind, has been made a part of the work of the first year. In general history and in natural philosophy, texts much fuller and up-to-date have displaced the mere primers formerly used in these subjects. United States history is now completed in the grammar grade and then reviewed in the last year but one of the High School course.

While the course is not by any means what it should be in standard, yet with the present lack of proper facilities and the present teaching force, it will certainly do no further loading.

There are several features which might be added to our work with interest and profit if there seemed to be any room at all for them at this time. Amongst these are stenography and typewriting. Then, too, there is music. What a grand feature it would be! We have long wished that music might be regularly and systematically taught in all grades of our schools. It is not mere idle fancy which prompts the statement that a more potent factor than music, in the refinement of manners and in the development of character, does not exist. To borrow a thought, we ask, what else is so completely the product and power of civilization? Does it not appeal to the emotions, stimulate the affections? Yes, does it not fill the very soul with nobler purpose and better resolve? There is no better, there can be no better refining influence than music over children; and there is no other class of individuals who so demands this influence. It has been said that the music of a nation is the measure of its intelligence. That a school that sings well is apt to think well. And how the little poem set to music, which was sung in innocent doses of harm has long since been touched by the frost of death; and though we no longer listen to their sweet strain in fact, yet in fancy, we wander up and hear them, as in a still happier throng they swell the heavenly anthem whose charm turns our thoughts to God and a better life.

Again, music is called the right hand of patriotism, and surely in no other land in the great, wide world is it so important that national music should fill the hearts and lives of the people as in this country of ours. We need music, we must have music

to aid in Americanizing the stranger from across the seas who comes to live amongst us, who has sought to better himself in a better land. In order to properly instill into this foreign-born citizen the true essence of our free institutions, we must lead him to catch the airs of Yankee Doodle, the Star Spangled Banner, and America.

An examination of the minutes of your board will disclose that the principal's first annual report, submitted June 30, 1893, contained the following urgent appeal: "Inasmuch as it is during the last years of their school life only that pupils become most interested in their studies, and because of the great press of work which these later years bring, it is urged that the board make the length of term of the high school the same as that for the other grades." The board took immediate action on motion of Mr. Harris, seconded by Mr. Cole and extended the term to nine months.

It never did appear clear why the little child of six, who was least able to endure it, should be closed up in the school-room during the swiftest days of early September and late May, while the strapping young fellow of sixteen, whose school life was near an end, and to whose school advantages always should mean so much, spent this time in picnicking, hunting, fishing, or in loafing in the alley around the corner.

If there is any one thing, more than another, of which a teacher should be ever watchful, it is to guard closely the health of those placed under his charge. Having accepted such a trust, the principal has always kept in mind the seriousness of this responsibility.

When the stone school building was erected, thirty years ago, the matter of proper light and ventilation received much less attention than they do in modern school architecture. So that it was not strange that the principal, on assuming his duties, should find amongst the pupils in this building much complaint of impaired vision. The cause being sought, it was readily discovered to be due to cross lights occasioned by the use of clear glass partitions and to opposing windows. The attention of the board having been directed to the matter, prompt action was taken in 1893 to give proper shading to the windows and to frost the glass of the partitions, so that no longer does there arise any complaint traceable to this same cause. But the fact that the building was erected without any provision for proper ventilation furnished a fruitful source of sickness, especially of sick headache, and more particularly of affecting the pupils in the crowded primary rooms. So prevalent was this complaint that the principal, in his report of June 18, 1895, again called attention to the urgent necessity of providing some means of relief from this condition. At this same meeting the board, on motion of Mr. Smith, seconded by Dr. Ward, took active measures to put in a ventilating system which has done much to improve the health conditions of the building. Other changes have been made from time to time until a few years ago, when in pursuance of a resolution offered by Mr. Haines, seconded by Mr. Harris, the board practically changed the building into a modern structure.

The High School is in possession of a very fair library—the origin and growth of which might be of interest. As the young people who attended the High School prior to 1889 well know, there was not a book of any kind in the school, except a Webster dictionary. During the year mentioned, the senior class, composed of Misses Bessie Dorworth, Jennie Fauble, Jennie Lukenbach, (Mrs. Harry E. Jenkins), and Messrs. Andrew Cruse, John Given, Wm. Kelley, Charles Noll, and Harry Tibbens, gave several entertainments, to which was charged a small admission. In this way quite a nice sum was netted. Of this fund the present principal, then principal of the High School, was made treasurer; and he, along with the former principal of the school, was appointed a committee on investment. This committee purchased Macaulay's History of England, Humes' History of England, Alden's Cyclopaedia of Universal Literature, Alden's Manifold Cyclopaedia, Helprin's Historical Reference Book, a Latin dictionary, a German dictionary, as well as several miscellaneous works of reference. The class of 1890, in its turn, contributed quite materially to the fund, but no part of this latter sum was expended until November 1892, when a part of it was used in the purchase of Appleton Cyclopaedia of American Biography, one of the most useful, as well as most used, works now in the library. The balance of this donation was used in part in the purchase of a set of the International Cyclopaedia, a standard work of fifteen volumes. In February, 1891, the board, on motion of Mr. Harris, seconded by Mr. Smith, contributed ten dollars to the library. This money was used in the purchase of the People's Cyclopaedia, which has since been transferred to the stone building for the use of the grammar school. In 1890 a prize for excellence in declamation was established by the late Major Reynolds, which has been continued through the kindness of his nephew Col. Reynolds. The contest for this prize was held in the High School room for the first two years; but in 1893, in order to give proper prominence to this feature of our school work and also to afford better conditions to those contesting, the teachers and principal prevailed upon the young people to hold this entertainment in the opera house. A nominal admission was charged, a crowded house witnessed the contest, and after all expenses were paid the class turned a goodly sum into the library treasury. Since then each succeeding class has been able to give more or less aid to the enterprise until the students, by their own efforts, have put upon the shelves about three hundred carefully selected, choice volumes of history, literature and science, as well as a miscellaneous lot of standard works of reference.

In his report of July 11, 1893, the principal requested the board to consider the propriety of setting aside the tuition received from non-resident pupils admitted to the High School and to use the same in the purchase of apparatus to aid in properly teaching the sciences, and for the benefit of the library. Favorable action upon the recommendation was immediately taken by the board; and many valuable books have been bought under this right. On February 22, 1897, the students of the High School, under the direction of the senior class, held a book reception and in this way secured between sixty and seventy volumes, amongst them several very desirable ones.

Again, on August 10, 1897, the principal submitted a report embodying the following recommendation: "Believing that the surest way to beget our pupils a desire to read good literature and to study good books is to place within the reach of the young a generous supply of wholesome literature, and then require that a certain amount of reading and committing shall be done by each pupil. It is therefore recommended that the board purchase two sets of modern classics, one for use in each of the senior grammar schools. And it is further recommended that there be purchased, during the coming year, out of the tuition fund, full sets of the American Authors—Holmes, Whittier, Longfellow, Lowell, Emerson, and Hawthorne."

The above, as a part of the report offered at the time, was endorsed by the committee on text-books as follows: "The undersigned committee on text-books and library join in the recommendation made by the principal and respectfully submit that the same be adopted."

WM. B. RANKIN, } Com.  
D. F. FORTNEY, }  
G. W. REES, }

The report was adopted by the board, and all of the books mentioned have since been procured, as well as the American Statesmen series and the American History, subsequently recommended to the committee on library. Some of the works which should have an early place in the library are Scott's, Bayard Taylor's, Holland's and Charles Reade's.

Just here it might be added that the cases should be fitted out with doors which can be locked so as to prevent the carrying away of books by persons unknown to the teachers. Already several valuable works have been lost in this way. Although the standard of education throughout the country has been steadily rising, as is evidenced by the more rigid exactions for admission to higher institutions, yet our students have kept well abreast with the upward movement, since they not only continue to enter these higher schools, but at the same time take advanced standing in their college classes. To be sure, there are some who pass out from our schools without becoming as strong as could be desired along certain lines. In this particular our school does not differ from any other secondary school nor, in fact, from any school for that matter, be it the kindergarten or the university.

The measure of capacity is not the same for all persons. This is a condition for which the school is not responsible. During the past year our school work was disturbed very little by epidemic sickness. But we had a serious attack of *hollidays* in 1898. For instance, April 26, April 27 was Grant Day, Apr. 28 Arbor Day, and May 1st, Dewey Day. The last two days mentioned were suitably observed by all of the schools, while Grant Day also was remembered in several grades. The principal takes this occasion to say that these holidays and special occasion days, although well intended, do more to destroy wholesome school conditions than almost any other cause. Irregularity in any other business is always productive of harm, and how can it be otherwise in school work? The success of a special exercise means special preparation, and this must be had at the expense of the regular schedule; and then, too, very often only a comparative few will be directly benefitted.

Very rarely a part of the exercise may be such that only a part of the school can have a place on the program, and they are not generally the ones who most need the opportunity but are selected because it is known that they will do their parts well and so insure success in the undertaking. There were, in all, 783 pupils in our public schools during the past year, distributed as follows: First primary, 193, two schools; second primary, 159, three schools; intermediate, 140, three schools; junior grammar, 67, two schools; senior grammar, 110, two schools; High School, 106, four classes.

Not all of these pupils were in school throughout the year. More than a hundred dropped out from cause, some through sickness, others moved out of the district, while yet others were compelled to go to work in their own support. The primary grades suffered more than the others from sickness, but few from these grades moved away, so that when school opens in September they will probably be in their places. Besides, the revival of industry hereabouts is likely to cause an increase in our school population.

As is shown by the above statistics, some of the schools were more crowded. In a primary grade the teacher should never have charge of more than fifty pupils, since a mastery of the work by beginners must be accomplished almost wholly through observation and memory; and consequently the teacher must call them up frequently to recite individually. This is impossible where the school contains anywhere from sixty-five to ninety children. Relief from undue crowding might be secured in either one of two ways. Another primary school might be organized which should be so stated as to relieve both of the present ones. A better plan would be to organize a new school, to be known as the Senior Grammar School, by putting together the "A" classes from the present grammar schools. Then move all remaining classes along one step, thus relieving the lower grades. This latter plan would be better because proper grading can be done from the top only. Again the new school would have to be situated apart from the present schools and if a primary, it would require that the little children, in some instances, go alone to school, while if the primary schools are kept in the main building these little people will always have some one to accompany them, if not brothers or sisters then neighboring children. Still again, by making a new grammar instead of a new primary school, this new school would consist of about forty pupils all of the same grade, one year from the High School, so that the teacher in charge, not having a wide range of work, could concentrate his efforts and thereby vouchsafe to his pupils a much better preparation for the High School.

The erection of a new school building at no very distant date is a condition and not a theory which must soon claim the attention of the Board.

A change in text books is sometimes desirable and should be made, when the best interests of the schools demand such a change. This will be true if the text in use is out-dated or when it is weak in arrangement or in character of subject matter. But newness alone does not always furnish a sufficient guarantee of merit.

The Board might make a few changes in texts at this time which would be for the betterment of the schools, namely: 1st. From Brooks' Normal Union Arithmetic to Brooks' Normal Standard.

This change would secure the advantages of a work superior in arrangement of topics, and more practical in the character of its problems. The former book, though an excellent text in its time, has been in use at least fifteen years without revision. The Normal Standard supplies such revision, and has added the late features necessary to make the work complete to date.

2d. From the Spencerian mixed system of writing to the Natural system of vertical writing.

By this arrangement the schools would have a definite system which they do not now have. Our text book would then be based on our writing charts, which in itself would promise better results.

A change in writing books does not carry with it any added expense whatever, since an entire new supply must be procured each year. 3d. To displace Barnes' U. S. History by Montgomery's New American History.

By this change schools would receive the advantages given by an up-to-date book, including the Spanish-American war; the Omaha Exposition; the annexation of Hawaii; and the Treaty of Paris, &c. 4th. McMaster's School History to displace Montgomery's U. S. History now used for review in the Junior year of the High School.

Such a change would furnish a different text from that used in the grades, for a review of the subject. This in itself has some advantages. McMaster is well suited as a text for students and older pupils. The above changes should be made gradually, so as to cause the least possible expense to the district, at the same time taking care not to prejudice the best interests of the pupils.

It is recommended, also, that three dozen of Baldwin's First Readers be procured for use in the primary schools. This would furnish variety of material in a grade where variety can serve a good purpose. Enough geographies to supply one class will have to be displaced this year by the new book adopted a year ago.

The books of the district have been well cared for as shown by the fact that of those used in the grades above the primary none have had to be replaced as yet, although they have been in use ever since the text book law went into effect; and with the same degree of care most of them are good for several years more of service. The work of the teachers' meetings during the past year was based on a review of the main facts of English history; Brown's Educational Theories; Allen's Mind Study for Young Teachers; and a discussion of daily experiences and methods in the school room.

The course as planned for the coming year will include White's Management, Lange's Apperception and Rousseau's Emile. The resolution adopted by the Board at its meeting in June, 1897, fixing a standard by which to be governed in the selection of new teachers was a step well taken, and if rigidly adhered to, must, in time, result in great good to the schools. Surely the candidate who has in his favor two years of successful experience should receive more consideration than the candidate with no experience whatever. And a course in a teachers' training school should bring to an applicant great advantages over the person who has had neither this training nor practical experience as a teacher.

Where the applicant is a person who has passed through our schools the Board should require first that the candidate must have been a through-going, careful student while in the public schools, and next that at least a part of the time required at a higher school shall have been given to a study of the rules and principles of teaching. One thing is certain, that is, that the person who finds it necessary, after passing through the public schools, to spend a year or two in a close review of the work had in the grammar school and in the first years of the High School shows that either he was not a very thorough student in earlier years or is not now very ambitious to advance. In either event the person shows a great lack of proper spirit and energy, and such a one, if it be known, is never a safe candidate for the responsible position of teacher.

Some provision should be made for a teachers' training class. This work, for the most part, could be carried by the principal. Such class would have been organized long ago but for the want of a room in which to meet.

Again, there are many boys who, from necessity, have been compelled to leave school at too early an age. It would be a great good to these young people if some provision could be made for giving them the benefit of a night school. Of course, the Board would be justified in extending such aid only so long as appreciated by those for whose good it was intended. The Principal takes this opportunity of placing the matter with the Board, giving the assurance that if provision is made in this direction, he will do his part in the effort to give these persons the further school advantages which some of them so much need.

It is said that our race and generation is smitten with the blight of extravagance. A hundred men have the power to earn, only one to save. Little children learn economy readily; grown persons seldom, if ever. School savings banks would serve as an excellent means of instructing the young in the art of saving. By teaching them to save their little resources, they are prevented, in very many instances, from falling into useless and health-debilitating habits. Their appetites grow wholesome unawares. Cigarettes, chewing gum and bad candy offer poor temptation to the boy or girl who has become interested in building up a bank account.

This thought of instituting the savings bank is also left with the Board for consideration. In conclusion, the principal desires to express his sincere thanks to the board, the patrons, the teachers, and the pupils for the encouragement and assistance so generously given at all times throughout the year.

Respectfully submitted,  
DAVID O. ETTERS,  
Bellefonte, Pa., June 27, 1899.

Persons troubled with diarrhoea will be interested in the experience of Mr. W.M. Bush, clerk of Hotel Dorrance, Providence, R. I. He says: "For several years I have been almost a constant sufferer from diarrhoea, the frequent attacks completely prostrating me and rendering me unfit for my duties at this hotel. About two years ago a traveling salesman kindly gave me a small bottle of Chamberlain's Colic, Cholera and Diarrhoea Remedy. Much to my surprise and delight its effects were immediate. Whenever I felt symptoms of the disease I would fortify myself against the attack with a few doses of this valuable remedy. The result has been very satisfactory and almost complete relief from the affliction." For sale by F. Potts Green, druggist, Bellefonte, Pa.

Reduced Rates to Indianapolis. On account of the Epworth League International Convention, to be held at Indianapolis, Ind., July 20 to 23, the Pennsylvania Railroad Company will sell excursion tickets from points on its line, to Indianapolis, at rate of single fare for the round trip.

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Mr. Phil T. Jones, of Mixersville, Ind., writes: "I had Eczema thirty years, and after a great deal of treatment my leg was so raw and sore that it gave me constant pain. It finally broke into a running sore, and began to spread and grow worse. For the past five or six years I have suffered untold agony and had given up all hope of ever being free from the disease, as I have been treated by some of the best physicians and have taken many blood medicines, all in vain. With little faith left I began to take S. S. S., and it apparently made the Eczema worse, but I knew that this was the way the remedy got rid of the poison. Continuing S. S. S., the sore healed up entirely, the skin became clear and smooth, and I was cured perfectly."



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