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NINTH BIENNIAL REPORT

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1895/96

OF THE

Superintendent of Public Instruction

STATE OF MINNESOTA

FOR THE

SCHOOL YEARS ENDING JULY 31, 1895 AND 1896.

TWENTY-EIGHTH REPORT IN THE SERIES.

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SCHOOL FOR THE FEEBLE-MINDED.

REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT.

Hon. W. W. Pendergast, Superintendent Public Instruction,

Dear Sir: During the fiscal year ending July 31, 1895, the total attendance (in all departments) at the School for Feeble-Minded was 491, and during 1895-6, 505.

During the days of largest attendance the population was as follows:

	Male.	Female.	Total.
In training department.....	88	93	181
In boys' custodia.....	141	...	141
In girls' custodia ("Sunnyside").....	...	134	134
In farm colony.....	17	...	17
Total	246	227	473

By the training department is meant the one, the whole function of which is to educate. The custodia is the home of such children as experience proves are incapable of marked improvement. When a child is admitted, its previous history and its condition and ability, as evidenced by examination at the time, are the basis for classification. The training department is equipped with a full corps of teachers for both literary and industrial training. The outline presented in my last report indicates the character of the training, viz.:

FIRST STAGE.

Practical Lessons.

- (a) Care of the person. Keeping hands, face and teeth clean, clothing in order, hair combed, etc., etc.
- (b) Simple home duties. Sweeping floors, dusting furniture, etc. (This kind of training devolves upon attendants and nurses as well as teachers.)

SECOND STAGE.

Kindergarten, behavior, marching, games and songs, form and color, simple finger occupation, weaving, sewing, folding, gifts.

THIRD STAGE.

Manual Training—

Boys and Girls—Learning use of needle and thread by means of forms and leather strings.

Over and over stitching and basting.

Girls—Straw braiding and hemming, darning and knitting.

Boys—Outlining on wood and brass from traced patterns with repousse tools, metal polishing, hammock weaving, etc.

Literary Exercises—

Words from objects and cards.

Use of pencil for tracing and copying.

Distinguishing one from more than one.

Directions and distances in school building and surrounding grounds.

Exercises in articulation.

FOURTH STAGE.

Industrial Training—

Boys—Brush making, scroll sawing, repousse.

Farming—Dairying and care of stock, gardening.

Girls—Making articles, requiring only over and over stitching and hemming.

Making plain garments, hemstitching, dress making, lace making, knitting, fancy work.

Literary Exercises—

Boys and Girls—More advanced reading, writing, orthography, through the ordinary primary exercises to reading in United States History and independent exercises in composition and letter writing.

Numbers—Through fundamental operations and tables of weights and measures.

Geography—Through the course of primary work, etc.

Knowledge of Things—From object lessons, charts and excursions to woods and fields.

The fact of possible susceptibility to improvement is never lost sight of in any department, and a special teacher in each one not only supplements the work of the attendants and nurses in providing entertainment and cheerful occupation for the children, but is engaged systematically in training by rotation groups and individuals, and the proximity of the different departments facilitates transfers between them to suit the requirements of each case.

DEFECTIVE CHILDREN IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

There has been of late years considerable attention given to the study of defective children in the public schools. In my last report I referred to some work of this kind done by Prof. W. S. Monroe of Stanford University, California, who by correspondence collected data concerning over ten thousand pupils. Dr. Warner, an English physician, examined during the years 1892 to 1894 50,000 school children, of whom 8,941 were observed to show defects that were classified as follows (the numbers represented are overlapping, as many children exhibit more than one series of defects):

	Male.	Female.	Total.
1. Defects of development.....	2,308	1,618	3,926
2. Abnormal nerve signs	2,853	2,015	4,868
3. Low nutrition	1,536
4. Mental dullness	2,077	1,697	3,774
5. Defects of eyes	1,489
6. Rickets	49
7. Characteristics of what were termed "Exceptional Children"	157	148	305

Group 4 could be taught in the ordinary schools by receiving special instruction, while Group 7 requires the training of special schools, and includes not only "imbeciles" and children feebly gifted mentally, but those dumb, and epileptics.

Some additional work has been done in this country along these lines, especially by Dr. Arthur McDonald of the Department of Education, Washington, D. C., but I believe the complete results have not yet been published.

RELATION OF TEACHERS TO THE FEEBLE-MINDED IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

I would never urge the dropping of a mentally backward child from the public schools so long as he makes progress, but when this ceases, either from lack of mental power or from his being the object of ridicule from his more fortunate associates, there should be no hesitancy in educating the parents to the idea that the training of the School for Feeble-Minded is the only kind for such a child.

The laws of Minnesota are very liberal and provide for the education of every defective child.

Parents who come to us with their grown or half-grown children, so often remark, "If I had only brought John or Mary when a little child." In some cases their failure to have done so arose from the lack of any exact knowledge of the school and in others from entirely wrong impressions of the school, and a dread of sending their children to a "public institution."

The superintendent will gladly render any assistance to teachers in this matter, and when parents are able to send their children to private schools, and prefer to do so, information concerning them will also be furnished.

Respectfully submitted,

A. C. ROGERS, M. D.,
Superintendent.