

OFFICE OF
State Superintendent,
MADISON, WIS.

**Proposed Constitutional Amendment Relating to the Office of
State Superintendent.**

The following proposed amendment to the Constitution of Wisconsin was agreed to by the legislatures of 1899 and 1901. Chapter 258, laws of 1901, provides that the amendment shall be submitted to a vote of the people of the state at the next general election, in November, 1902.

"PROVISIONS OF AMENDMENT. Section 1. The supervision of public instruction shall be vested in a state superintendent and such other officers as the legislature shall direct; and their qualifications, powers, duties, and compensation shall be prescribed by law. The state superintendent shall be chosen by the qualified electors of the state at the same time and in the same manner as members of the supreme court, and shall hold his office for four years from the succeeding first Monday in July. The state superintendent chosen at the general election in November, 1902, shall hold and continue in his office until the first Monday in July, 1905, and his successor shall be chosen at the time of the judicial election in April, 1905. The term of office, time and manner of electing or appointing all other officers of supervision of public instruction shall be fixed by law."

Importance of the Office of State Superintendent.

The proper administration of the office affects the interests of nearly a half million pupils in the public schools. The state superintendent comes into official relations with more than 20,000 school officers and with the 13,000 teachers of the common schools. He passes upon the qualifications of the 700 high school teachers, and of the 750 teachers in the state graded schools. The proper discharge of his duties directly affects the character of the work done in the schools of the state, for the maintenance of which \$7,000,000 are expended annually, and in which nearly one-fourth of the entire population of the state are receiving instruction for not less than seven months each year.

Work of the Office Professional and Executive, Not Political.

It is the only state office requiring constructive and organizing work. This work must be carried on continuously and intelligently in order that the school system may keep pace in improvement with changing conditions, and with the necessities of the people. The state superintendent is called upon for information and advice in all matters relating to school legislation, and to the administration of the school laws. His various duties bring him into close official relations with people of all political opinions, and in matters which should be decided without reference to political bias.

Office Should Be Upon the Same Plane as the Judiciary.

Of all the offices in the state government, it is the one which should be entirely free from political influences or bias. For this reason this officer should be chosen because of his professional and administrative ability in educational work and not because of his political belief. This office should be put upon the same plane as the judiciary, where men are elected because of their fitness, and at the spring election, when no political issues divide parties.

The proposed amendment aims to take this office out of politics by putting the election in the spring, at the same time the judges are elected.