

## V. ESSENTIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF A GOOD SCHOOL FOR TRAINING COUNTRY TEACHERS

There are in this state three kinds of schools engaged in the training of country teachers,—county training schools, high schools, and state normal schools.\* Country teachers may be successfully trained in any of these schools, provided the men at the head keep certain things in mind.

### 1. All the Forces Concerned Must Work Together

County superintendents and supervising teachers must frequently visit the school or schools which train their teachers, and the teachers who are doing the training must frequently get into the country schools. These visits should include both day time visits to the schools when they are in session, and attendance at evening meetings. The expenses connected with these trips should be provided for by the school, as they are a legitimate part of its work. There is no possibility that training teachers will know the condition of affairs as it should be known unless they get into the country to visit.

Conferences of county superintendents, supervising teachers and training teachers should be held occasionally. With a few exceptions this field work needs to be pushed far more than it has been in the past.

### 2. Knowledge of Country Life Emphasized

The teacher hired for the training department in the high school, the supervisor of practice in a county training school, the man at the head of the rural department in the normal school, and all the teachers who teach young people taking training for country teaching must know country schools and country conditions. Conferences of all these teachers should be held from time to time.

### 3. Both Men and Women Help

No class of schools is immune from the temptation to neglect the field work, but the question is perhaps most difficult in high school training departments. The work of the woman who is the high school department teacher should be supplemented by the field work of the agriculture teacher, the supervising principal, or the city superintendent. There is no disputing the fact that if in any school there is only

\* In this pamphlet the term training school is used very frequently as a general term to include county training school, high school training department, and rural training department of a state normal.

one person engaged for training work, that person should be a woman, because the students enrolled in these courses are almost wholly girls who need in many emergencies the counsel and direction which only an older woman can give them. Again, it is women who have most often had the necessary practical experience in elementary teaching which prepares for training work. But the contribution made by men in a number of county training schools and state normal schools has been so invaluable, and so distinctive, that it is certain that any high school maintaining a training department without the active cooperation of some man connected with the city school system is very much crippled indeed.

#### 4. A Student Group Consciousness Created

Young people receiving this training may form a part of a larger student body. If so they should feel that they are an integral part of this larger body, but it is imperative that they should assemble frequently by themselves and feel the inspiration that comes through working with others preparing for a common work. One form that these meetings may take is that of a literary society—"a country life-club," if that phrase is preferred.

#### 5. Equipment and Standards Need Attention

When the students are a part of a larger student body, the other members of the school must feel that the students in the country training course are held to as high standards of work as any other students are. There should be as much attention paid to their needs when inviting quarters in the building are assigned to classes as to the needs of any other body of students. Many county training schools point with pride to buildings and equipment which show the estimation in which the training of country school teachers is held in those counties. A number of high schools training department rooms bespeak the generosity and the interest of city boards in the same problem. Probably it will not be long before our state normal schools are as proud of the quarters assigned the students taking training for country teaching as they are today of their quarters for domestic science, physical training, agriculture, etc.

#### 6. Individual Attention Given Students

Students preparing for country teaching are, as a rule, very young and so should get far more individual attention than they would need were they more mature. No class made up of students of fifteen and sixteen should enroll more than twenty-five members.

Training teachers should become so well acquainted with each student that they may give at any time a fairly accurate opinion as to that student's ability and promise as an instructor and manager

of a school. The student should know this opinion in time so that he may become interested in improving himself and in becoming as good a teacher as his capacity makes possible. (See page 46 of this publication.)

### 7. Adequate Reference Libraries Provided

Carefully selected reference libraries especially designed for the use of these students should be accessible and there should be enough copies of each reference book so that students can consult references assigned. One copy for every group of ten students is about the right proportion if the reference book is one frequently consulted.

### 8. The Daily Program Posted

All schools should have the daily program of the training department posted for the use of students and there should be mimeographed copies of this program for the convenience of visiting teachers, so that they may quickly decide what classes they desire to visit and where these classes are to assemble; otherwise time is lost by the visitor in finding her bearings. These programs should give, in addition to the regular training school classes, the names of practice teachers, the class assigned each practice teacher, and the room in which each class meets.

### 9. Failure Forestalled

Time enough should be taken to make certain that students have fairly mastered the work before they are allowed to graduate. Some graduates of training courses observed at work in their own schools during the past two years were doing very weak work when visited. In response to inquiries they acknowledged that they had been allowed to carry so many branches during their training that they never mastered certain topics; or they had been excused from certain branches because they had had previous country experience. They were so driven that they left without having acquired even a feeling of confidence in themselves.

A school may have had some excuse in the past for yielding to the temptation to let students carry extra studies in order to graduate in a stipulated time, because county superintendents have occasionally been hard put to it to secure teachers with even meagre preparation. But it should be remembered that when a school lowers its standards to do this and sends out poorly prepared students equipped with diplomas, no people regret it more later on than these students to whom the concession was made. The schools which have won the most favorable reputation in this state are those which have steadfastly refused to set their seal of approval upon poorly prepared students. It is worth while to be known as a school which refuses either to overtax its students in order to shorten their course or to lower its standards in order to graduate a larger class.

10-15. A Few Other Essentials

Besides these characteristics which have been discussed in this section, mention may be made of six additional characteristics which are treated in full in section VI of this pamphlet:

Secondary education is provided.

Common school subjects are skillfully taught.

Review work in common school subjects is carefully planned.

Opportunities are offered to all to acquire the rudiments of the industrial education most needed by country teachers.

Professional training proper receives due attention.

The reading of country life books and a study of rural economics supplement the students' first hand knowledge of country conditions.

VI. THE ACADEMIC AND VOCATIONAL STUDIES OFFERED IN TRAINING SCHOOLS.

1. Secondary Education\*

a. Adaptation of secondary education to the special needs of training students. The kind and amount of secondary education most valuable for country teachers to secure is a puzzling question. A complete secondary education includes sixteen units of work. If we cannot at present demand all of these units, just which ones shall be chosen?

The secondary education given prospective teachers should as far as possible be adapted to their special needs. If the training students are taught in the same school where other students are preparing for other lines of work, these training students should preferably form a group by themselves and recite in separate sections. The object of the separate sections is to enable the teachers to make the secondary branches contribute far more effectively than they frequently do to the direct aim of teacher training.

b. Capitalizing country experience. If training teachers are themselves intimately acquainted with country conditions, they may, by illustration, comparison, comment, quotation, etc., use the material most familiar to the country child, and so stimulate their town-bred students to inform themselves in regard to country con-

\* If secondary education, thorough training in common school subjects, and industrial training have been included in the preparation of those applying for entrance to a training school, as may happen in the case of high school graduates who have received good training in these three lines of work in the high school, the training school may, during its course of one year, confine its work to carefully planning the review work in the common school subjects, giving due attention to professional training proper and directing the reading of country life books and a first hand study of rural economics and country life conditions.