

State of Iowa
1936

Getting People Ready
to Teach

By
R. C. WILLIAMS
Director of Research
Department of Public Instruction

BOARD OF EDUCATIONAL EXAMINERS
AGNES SAMUELSON, President

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INTRODUCTION

Experiences of recent years have renewed the interest of the people of Iowa in the work of their public schools. This is a promising by-product of our struggles with the unusual economic and social problems that have confronted us.

To place in every classroom a competent teacher is the most important task confronting the board of education in every community. However, those whom school officials employ as teachers are not trained and certified through local auspices, but under laws which are established by the state legislature and administered by the board of educational examiners. It will be readily admitted that the conditions under which persons enter the vocation of teaching have a fundamental bearing upon the efficiency of instruction in our schools.

There is a need for a more intelligent understanding of this problem. The increasing number of requests we are receiving for information upon which individuals and study groups may become better informed reflects a widespread and growing interest. To supply such a need, this bulletin has been prepared for the board of educational examiners by Mr. R. C. Williams, director of research for the department of public instruction. We commend it to the careful study and discussion of all those who are interested in better schools for Iowa boys and girls.

AGNES SAMUELSON, *President,*
Board of Educational Examiners.

GETTING PEOPLE READY TO TEACH

A Good School or a Poor School

A beautiful school building, in attractive surroundings, offers every evidence that considerable attention is given to its appearance and upkeep. Passing through its corridors and moving through the classrooms, laboratories, auditorium, library, gymnasium, shops, and offices, emphasizes the fact that the physical needs of children have been carefully considered. An adequate supply of well-chosen library books, modern teaching equipment, and supplies appear available. In the sense in which it is frequently used, it is a good school. But is it?

An attractive building in pleasant surroundings, conveniently arranged and supplied with a sufficient amount of up-to-date, usable equipment, is essential to a good school. Iowa, as well as other states, needs more school plants of this kind. But it is not a good school unless there is in the classroom a good teacher with a wholesome, inspiring personality, sympathetic in her understanding and management of children, and well-trained to teach the boys and girls who come to her. The difference between a good school and a poor school is unquestionably the difference between a good teacher and a poor teacher. Inefficient teachers do not make efficient schools.

A good school and a poor school may look alike from the outside, but what is happening to boys and girls on the inside when the school is in motion determines its value.

Every community and every board of education should ask itself the question, "*Does our school have the best teachers it is possible for us to secure?*"

Your Money's Worth of Education

Three-fourths of the money the state of Iowa spends each year for the operating cost of its schools (omitting the cost of new buildings) is used to purchase the services of teachers. When the importance of the teacher in the work of the school is considered, this proportion is not too large. Teachers are the power plants of a school. But, unless this money is used

for good teachers, the state is not getting its money's worth of education.

How Does One Qualify as a Teacher?

To be eligible to teach in the public schools of Iowa, one must be at least 18 years of age, physically competent, morally fit, and possess a certificate issued by the board of educational examiners or the department of public instruction.

The Iowa laws provide two ways in which a person may secure a teacher's certificate in Iowa—by passing written examinations and by completing certain college courses. At the present time most of the teachers' certificates in Iowa are issued upon the basis of examination.

A person who has taken the normal training course in an Iowa high school is not required to attend college before writing the examinations and receiving a certificate. If the normal training course in high school has not been taken, an approved course of at least twelve weeks in length in an approved Iowa college after graduation from high school is required before an applicant is allowed to write the certificate examinations. Thus it will be seen that one can receive a certificate entitling him to teach in the public schools of Iowa without spending one day in college.

A teacher's certificate may also be secured upon the completion of certain approved courses in college. The minimum length of these teacher-training courses in college is one year; a course which prepares for teaching in rural schools. Other teacher-training courses require two, three, or four years of college.

What Are the Essentials in the Training of a Teacher?

To transform an individual into a properly trained teacher is an interesting but extensive task. In addition to desirable personal qualities there are certain things which must be a part of the background of any teacher. The time spent in training should be sufficient to cover these phases, and the courses which are a part of the prospective teacher's preparation should qualify him for the various aspects of his work.

High School Student + ? ? ? ? ? = Teacher

These aspects include:

1. Mastery of the fundamental skills necessary for acquiring an education and for communication with others—such as English, mathematics, and reading. Individuals who have not learned to use the English language properly or who have not acquired the fundamental skills of learning are not ready for teaching.

2. Thorough knowledge of the subjects to be taught. An individual must be well-versed in the field of science, for example, if he is competent to teach the subject.

3. Methods of teaching. The ability to pass on knowledge to others and help children in the most effective and economical ways to learn is an important part of the training of a teacher.

4. Understanding of children. The physical, mental, emotional, and social make-up of children must be appreciated and kept in mind. To teach children, one must have a sympathetic and intelligent understanding of them.

5. Management of the classroom and the school. The teacher is immediately confronted with the direction of the group life of her pupils, and has certain obligations to the board of education and other school officials. Ability to direct the work of a classroom in profitable activities is one of the most important qualifications of a good teacher.

The above statements point out that the preparation for teaching embraces a number of related fields and that it is impossible to cover these fields in a short time. Prospective teachers should spend a sufficient amount of time in training to receive satisfactory instruction in each of the above lines.

Are the Standards for Iowa Teachers High or Low?

In seeking an answer to this question, many different points of view might be considered. We shall present two groups of facts, a comparison of Iowa standards with those of other states, and a comparison of the minimum standards for teachers in Iowa with those of other vocations for which the state issues licenses.

For many years it has been recognized that two years of college training after graduation from high school should constitute the minimum amount of preparation for teaching

in the elementary grades. Compared with this standard the issuance of certificates to Iowa teachers who are just graduating from high school, or have gone to college for twelve weeks, indicates that our minimum training requirement is far below the accepted standard. True it is that many Iowa teachers have more than the minimum amount, but we are giving certificates each year to more than three thousand potential teachers who have not more than twelve weeks of training after graduation from high school.

According to the latest information available, 31 states require at least one year of college training before allowing one to teach in the elementary grades and 20 states require at least two years of college work. It is obvious that our standards in Iowa are considerably below the average and steps should be taken as soon as possible to raise the minimum amount of training required.

The following tabulation shows the number of states which require the indicated amounts of training before applicants are eligible for teachers' certificates:

Minimum Amount of Training Required for Certificate	Number of States
1. No prescribed amount.....	7
2. Less than high school graduation.....	1
3. Graduation from high school.....	6*
4. Graduation from high school, plus	
a. Six weeks of college credit.....	3
b. One year of college credit.....	11
c. Two years of college credit.....	10
d. Three years of college credit.....	6
e. Four years of college credit.....	4
Total	<u>48</u>

The above facts clearly show the Iowa situation in relation to that of other states. Thirty-four states have higher minimum qualifications and but eight states accept less preparation than Iowa requires. This information has been prepared from summaries by Dr. B. W. Frazier, Senior Specialist in Teacher Training, United States Office of Education, and the Research Division of the National Education Association.

In comparing the amount of training necessary to secure a teacher's certificate with that demanded by the state for licensing the members of other professions, note the following summary made from an analysis of our Iowa standards.

*Iowa is one of these six states.

To Be Certified as a	Minimum Training Required After High School Graduation
Nurse	3 years
Pharmacist	2 years
Optometrist	3 years
Chiropractor	3 years
Osteopath	4 years
Doctor	8 years
Dentist	7 years
TEACHER	NONE

It is accepted by everyone that these other professions need well-trained people and that the above minimums ought not to be lowered. But what about the teacher? Is her work important? Should she have as much special training as any of those mentioned above?

During the school year ending June 30, 1934, the state of Iowa issued new certificates to 6,353 teachers. This did not include the renewal of certificates previously issued, the number of which was 3,880, or 11,796 new type certificates issued in exchange for those formerly held. Of the new certificates 1,841 (29 per cent of the total) were issued to those who had taken no college work (graduates from normal training courses in high schools), and 2,335 (37.1 per cent of the total) were issued to those who had 12 weeks of college training after high school graduation. Only one-third of this total attended college for two years or more and but one out of five (21 per cent) were college graduates.

AMOUNT OF COLLEGE TRAINING POSSESSED BY THOSE
RECEIVING NEW CERTIFICATES—YEAR ENDING
JUNE 30, 1934

Amount of College Training	No. of Certificates Issued	Per Cent of Total
No college work.....	1,841	29.0
Twelve weeks	2,355	37.1
One year	56	.9
Two years	727	11.4
Three years	40	.6
Four years	1,082	17.0
Five or more years.....	252	4.0
Total	6,353	100.0

The facts given above show that the standards in Iowa for those who are entering the work of teaching are unusually low, and that each year permission to teach is given to a large number of individuals with very little preparation for their work.

How Much Training Do Iowa Teachers Have?

The minimum amount of special training asked of those who are receiving teachers' certificates does not represent the amount they actually have. Neither do the standards set up by the department of public instruction show the situation, for they are also minimum standards and it is to be expected that schools will not be satisfied with teachers who stop at the minimum.

In 1931 a nation-wide study of the education of teachers was made. This survey gathered information from teachers over the country as to the amount of training received. These facts, while not as recent as desired, are the latest obtainable and are interesting for purposes of comparison. What did this survey show about the training of Iowa teachers as compared with those throughout the United States?

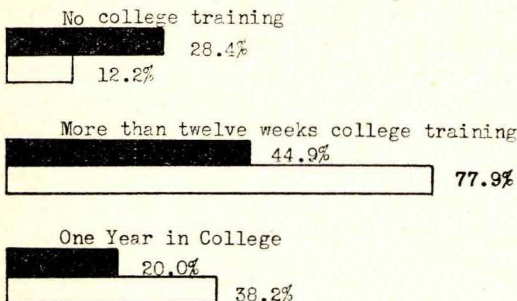
Teachers in Iowa schools did not have as much training as those throughout the United States. The difference was greatest for those who were teaching in the open country and small towns. A few facts will show what this difference is.

More than one-fourth (28.4 per cent) of those teaching in the one-teacher rural schools of Iowa had only a high school education (in most cases normal training high schools), less than one-half (44.9 per cent) had attended college for more than 12 weeks after graduation from high school, and one-fifth had attended college for more than one year. Throughout the United States one-eighth (12.2 per cent) of the teachers did not attend college, four-fifths (77.9 per cent) attended college for more than 12 weeks, and two-fifths (38.2 per cent) attended college for more than one year.

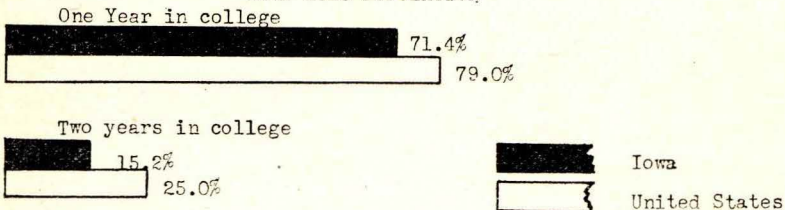
In towns of less than 2,500 population in Iowa, five out of every seven (71.4 per cent) of those teaching in the elementary grades spent more than one year in college, while one-sixth (15.1 per cent) attended college for more than two years. However, four-fifths (79 per cent) of the same group of teachers in the United States had more than one year of college training and one-fourth of them attended college for more than two years.

RELATIVE TRAINING OF ELEMENTARY TEACHERS IN IOWA
AND IN THE UNITED STATES

RURAL TEACHERS



ELEMENTARY TEACHERS IN TOWNS OF LESS
THAN 2500 POPULATION



For elementary teachers in larger schools and all high school teachers the differences were not so great, although in no case did Iowa teachers show as much training as the average for the country. But one-sixth of the teachers in Iowa high schools had taken any post-graduate work as compared with three-tenths of similar teachers in the United States.

Teachers of the elementary grades in the rural and small town schools of Iowa have had much less training than those throughout the country.

What About the New Certificate Law?

In 1933, the forty-fifth general assembly made some changes in the laws governing the issuance of teachers' certificates. The only certificates affected were those issued upon the completion of approved college courses.

According to the old law the so-called "state" certificate specified that the holder was qualified to teach in the public

schools but said nothing about what place he was prepared to occupy. It merely authorized him to teach for a specified number of years. As far as the law was concerned the same certificate would allow him to be a superintendent, high school principal, high school teacher, special supervisor, elementary principal, or elementary teacher. The new law recognized the obvious fact that there should be different qualifications for each of these types of positions. Consequently, there is now a certificate for the superintendent, another for the high school principal, another for the high school teacher, etc. The state board of educational examiners, which issues certificates to teachers, was authorized to set up the regulations upon which each type of certificate would be granted.

DATES OF SOME LAWS RELATING TO CERTIFICATION OF TEACHERS IN IOWA¹

- 1840—Teachers to be examined by local school boards.
- 1861—State board of educational examiners created certificates issued to graduates of normal department of state university.
- 1862—All teachers required to pass a county examination.
- 1877—Minimum age for teachers fixed at 19 years for men and 17 years for women.
- 1890—Certificates issued to graduates of normal school at Cedar Falls.
- 1906—All county certificates to be issued by the state board of educational examiners.
- 1907—Board of educational examiners authorized to accredit colleges for teacher-training.
- 1911—High school normal training certificate created.
- 1913—Twelve weeks of normal training required of applicants for teachers' certificates.
- 1929—High school graduation required of all applicants for certificates.

It will be readily seen that the new law was a distinct step forward. For example, it insists that a school superintendent should have more and different training than a high school teacher; that the training of a high school teacher should be different from that of a teacher in the elementary grades, etc. Under this law boards of education will be better able to know whether or not an applicant is prepared for the position he seeks.

But there are at least two situations or conditions which have not been improved as they should. The first, and possi-

¹From an unpublished study by I. H. Hart, Director of Extension, Iowa State Teachers College.

bly the more serious condition which arises, not from the law itself but its application, is that it strengthens the certificate standards for those who have the most training but does nothing to bring the minimum amount of training required in Iowa up to the standards which have been generally accepted for many years. Qualifications of those who have graduated from college are defined in more detail, but as formerly, those who have taken an approved twelve weeks' course after graduation from high school (no college course required if a normal training course in high school is taken) are eligible to write the teachers' examinations.

A second and more important condition that still exists is the issuance of certain teachers' certificates solely upon the basis of examinations, usually to those with the least amount of training. In previous years, when there were not so many opportunities to prepare for teaching, the examination was the most convenient device. But with the expansion and improvement of the facilities for training teachers, together with the opportunities for practice teaching and the observation of good teaching, the best teachers will not be secured by having them attend college for 12 weeks and then answer a few questions satisfactorily. The work of the teacher in any school is so important that she should be well-trained.

One-half of the states issue certificates to elementary teachers on the basis of college training only. Because the minimum standards in Iowa are lower than some of our neighboring states, many who cannot qualify in these states find it convenient to seek positions in Iowa and compete against our own teachers, especially in the border counties. Particularly in such cases, our low standards operate to the detriment of Iowa teachers.

In actual practice, most of these teachers with little training are found in our rural schools. Teaching a rural school is just as difficult and important a task as teaching in a city school. Every boy and girl should have the advantages of a well-trained teacher. The first step in this direction is to raise the minimum amount of training required of those who are to teach in our schools.

Something should be done to secure better trained teachers, especially for our rural boys and girls.

Has the Situation Changed Any in Recent Years?

Those who have been in touch with our schools know that there have been some desirable improvements in many elements of the work of the schools. Have there been any changes in the method of issuing certificates that have contributed to our progress? Have there been any noticeable trends in any particular direction?

For the sake of brevity, all certificates may be classified into three groups: normal training, issued to those who pass the examinations after completion of the high school normal training course; uniform county, issued to those who have passed the county examinations without the completion of more than the required 12 weeks of training; and the state certificates, issued to those who have completed certain approved courses in college—one, two, three, or four years in length.

The significant change which has taken place in the relative number of each of these three groups of new certificates issued at specified intervals is shown by the following table:

NUMBER OF NEW CERTIFICATES ISSUED
(Renewal Certificates Not Included)
Based Upon Examinations

Year	Normal Training	Uniform County	Total	Based Upon Training
1920	1,616	13,170	14,786	2,607
1930	1,425	3,728	5,153	3,006
1934	1,841	2,355	4,196	2,157

It will be seen that there has been a pronounced decrease in the number of certificates issued by examination. In view of the recent change in the certificate law it is difficult to show the exact situation with regard to those issued on training. The above table shows a smaller number issued in this way in 1934 than in 1930.

What Recommendations Were Made by the National Survey of the Education of Teachers?

The National Survey of the Education of Teachers, which was authorized and financed by Congress, made its report in 1933. It is interesting and helpful to note one of their recommendations which is here given.

1. The rate at which the level of educational preparation of teachers has been increased since the World War, the increased desirability of teaching as a profession, and the present oversupply of teachers make it possible for the states to take immediate steps to raise the level of the educational preparation of their teachers.
 - a. All high school training classes, county normal schools, and one-year curricula in institutions preparing teachers should be abandoned.
 - b. Every state, which has not already done so, should require at least two years of college training for all new elementary teachers and should set the goal for four years at some date in the near future.
 - c. Teachers in rural schools should be as well-prepared as teachers in urban schools.
 - d. Teachers in kindergarten and elementary schools should be as well-prepared as teachers in secondary schools.
 - e. Teachers in secondary schools should be up-graded to a minimum of one year of graduate work.
2. Teachers should be more definitely prepared for specific positions and should be prevented from accepting positions for which they have not had the prescribed special training.²

Since the minimum standards for the training of teachers in Iowa are so far below these recommendations, it may not be possible to adopt them as stated. However, they embody the judgment of national authorities and point out the necessity for raising our minimum required training and improving our practices in other directions.

Is This a Good Time to Raise the Minimum Qualifications?

The surest way to improve teaching in the schools is to get better trained teachers. Granting that there are none too many well-trained teachers available, there is a sufficient number with some training to supply the demand. Raising the minimum qualifications would disqualify some who now have certificates and would encourage them to secure more preparation. Now is the easiest and best time to take this step.

²Adapted from "Teacher Personnel in the United States," Volume II, National Survey of the Education of Teachers, United States Office of Education, Bulletin 1933, No. 10, pp. 103-4.

What Is Favorable About the Training of Teachers in Iowa?

There are a number of commendable features in Iowa's machinery for preparing teachers which ought not to be overlooked. They show that some progress has been made, although the need for further improvement is obvious.

1. All teachers' certificates are issued either by the department of public instruction or the state board of educational examiners. Since the superintendent of public instruction is president of the board of educational examiners and both units are housed in the same office, there is a unified administration.
2. Facilities for the training of teachers are ample and good. In addition to the three state-supported institutions of higher learning, many of the private and denominational colleges offer teacher-training curricula. As the purposes of the new certificate law are understood and the resources of the board of educational examiners are adequate to provide the necessary supervision, the work of these institutions will be coordinated and strengthened.
3. While certificates based either upon training or examination are issued, those based upon training have the longer life and represent the types of work for which trained.
4. Recent changes in the certificate law show that Iowa proposes to be more careful in licensing its teachers, and that it endorses the principle of completing specific curricula as the desirable evidence or preparation for teaching.
5. Teachers are seeking more training. Hundreds of them are attending summer schools and pursuing extension courses in order to become better qualified.
6. The department of public instruction, the board of educational examiners, and the teacher-training institutions are cooperating willingly in determining the needs of the schools and the best methods of preparing teachers for them.

CONCLUSIONS

This brief introduction to the teacher-training situation in Iowa has pointed out certain elements which affect the most vital factor in the success of a school. The rather obvious conclusions arising from these facts and statements should provide the basis for study and planning by those who are concerned over the efficiency and improvement of our schools.

1. Every school needs the best teachers it can secure.
2. Standards for those who begin as teachers are low in Iowa, in consideration of—
 - a. The importance of the work of the teacher.
 - b. Standards for certification in other vocations.
 - c. Minimum requirements of other states.
3. Most of those who receive teachers' certificates in Iowa have little special training. Only one-third of those who were issued certificates in 1933-34 had attended college for more than 12 weeks.
4. Teachers in the rural schools and the elementary grades in smaller cities and towns have as important and as difficult a work as those teaching in the elementary and secondary schools in the city.
5. The minimum qualifications of teachers in Iowa should be raised.

FOR FURTHER STUDY

For those who desire to make a more complete and detailed study of this problem than is provided in the limited space of this book, the following references are suggested. No attempt is made to include the many books on school administration and supervision, nor scientific studies which have been made in other states.

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