

Some.

CHARACTERISTICS

of

GOOD SCHOOLS

Based upon BULLETIN NO. 100
"How Good Is Your Local School System"
A Guide for Examining the
Quality of Your Local School System

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This booklet prepared by
NOBLE J. GIVIDEN, Regional Consultant

INTRODUCTION

YOU and other citizens in your community are frequently asked, "How good is your school system?" Your answer depends primarily upon your knowledge of your schools and your acquaintance with the characteristics of a good school.

This booklet sets forth *some* of the characteristics of a good school. The items are selected from the recent Department of Public Instruction Bulletin No. 100. The bulletin was produced by a committee which worked more than a year reviewing educational literature and counseling with lay people, teachers, principals, superintendents and college professors.

Good schools will have many characteristics not included in this booklet. A given school system may be quite good and not satisfy every item on the following pages. The judgments you make of your schools may be different from those made by others in your community, but this booklet may help reduce those differences.

Someone has said that, "The quality of a school depends upon what is in the hearts and souls of teachers." While we applaud this statement we feel that, "What is in the minds, hearts and souls of lay people, board members, pupils and administrators," should be included. The quality of a school system also depends upon its pupil and financial resources—the potential the people have for achieving their educational desires.

The strength of Iowa's local school systems determines the state's over-all educational progress. We believe the large majority of Iowa's lay people and members of the teaching profession are interested in the best school systems their cooperative efforts can provide.

J. C. WRIGHT

State Superintendent of Public Instruction

For a more detailed treatment of the sections of this booklet, ask your superintendent or the Department of Public Instruction for a copy of Bulletin No. 100.

GOALS OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

There seems to be growing understanding that education is the most important public service in our country. Renewed emphasis is being given to the need for better scholarship and better educational opportunity. Schools must play their rightful part in keeping America strong.

Perhaps there is no better measure of the success of an educational program than the degree to which our young people grow into effective participating citizens. This development should be fostered by the following related educational goals:

- To Develop and Maintain Sound Physical and Mental Health
- To Achieve a Growing Command of the Fundamental Learnings
- To Establish an Understanding of and Belief in One-self
- To Work Easily and Effectively with Others
- To Understand and Respect Our Democratic Heritage
- To Develop Ability to Use Personal Resources Wisely
- To Build a Personal System of Moral Standards and Spiritual Values
- To Grow in Awareness and Enjoyment of Things of Beauty
- To Develop Wholesome Leisure-time Interests
- To Grow Increasingly in Good Judgment and Intelligent Action
- To Develop an Inner Compulsion for Lifelong Learning
- To Thoughtfully Consider and Plan for a Career

Administrative Policies and Procedures

Good Schools

HAVE A SCHOOL BOARD WHICH

- Recognizes that education is a function of the state
- Recognizes that, as an agent of the state, it has broad powers delegated by the legislature, which places it in a key position to exercise responsibility and demonstrate initiative and leadership

HAVE SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS WHO

- Are genuinely interested in the advancement of education in their community and state
- Make decisions on the basis of evidence rather than prejudice or personal interest
- Believe that the chief tasks of the board are to adopt policies and establish a good climate for the operation of the schools

HAVE SCHOOL BOARD POLICIES AND

PROCEDURES WHICH

- Are written products of board study, formulation and adoption
- Provide for the operation and administration of the schools
- Clearly establish the superintendent as “the executive officer of the board” and provide for his attendance at all meetings except when he is personally under consideration
- Provide that all board meetings are open to the public except when matters such as personnel and purchase of sites are under consideration

HAVE A SUPERINTENDENT WHO

- Is an educational statesman—a person of good character, sound education and experience, and a practical philosophy of education

Good Schools

HAVE A SUPERINTENDENT WHO (continued)

- Recognizes that providing leadership for the instructional program is the administrator's most important responsibility
- Frees teachers to teach by relieving them from as many clerical and administrative details as possible
- Practices democratic development of school policies and objectives
- Delegates responsibility to staff members and holds them accountable for results
- Utilizes, coordinates and supports the services of professional assistants made available through the county superintendent's office, college extension services and the Department of Public Instruction

Organizational Structure

Good Schools

DEVELOP FROM PLANNING WHICH

- Works toward the best characteristics for school district organization
- Provides that all pupils be residents of the school district attended
- Recognizes that a sound district fits into a logical pattern of local districts in a given county and joint-county area

HAVE AN INTERNAL ORGANIZATION WHICH

- Provides one grade per teacher in each elementary attendance center
- Provides an average pupil-teacher ratio for each elementary school no greater than 25 to 1

- Limits enrollment to approximately 30 pupils in any given room, kindergarten through third grade, and approximately 35 in any given room above the third grade
- Exceeds the minimum recommendation of ten teachers in each high school attendance center
- Provides special teachers from the local or county staff to serve gifted pupils and pupils with handicaps in speech, sight, hearing, emotional adjustment and physical or bodily conditions
- Provides teachers 45 minutes daily, exclusive of classroom teaching, for planning instruction, parent conferences and attention to individual or group problems
- Shows separations of elementary school, junior high school and high school, if enrollment permits
- Recognizes the need for an adequate number of principals at the elementary, junior high and high school levels
- Fosters the development of adult education programs
- Provides a pupil-teacher ratio in high school not greater than 25 to 1
- Provides a minimum pupil-teacher ratio in high school of 12 to 1, except for small groups organized for special needs such as instruction for the mentally handicapped or gifted, speech therapy, corrective physical education, vocal or instrumental music, or for students with unusual interests
- Provides for a maximum enrollment of approximately 30 in a high school academic class, and approximately 45 in areas such as physical education, typewriting, instrumental and vocal music
- Provides that no high school teacher instruct more than 150 students per day in academic endeavor

The Educational Program

The term “educational program” refers to areas in which the schools offer formal instruction. We believe the program presented in this booklet is representative of the *minimum* offerings a school should provide. Good schools exceed the minimum insofar as reasonably possible.

We acknowledge that time and research will dictate almost continuous change in some areas. Continued emphasis will be given the basic learnings even though changes in teaching methods and content occur.

Good Schools

HAVE CONTINUOUS PROGRAM STUDY AND

PLANNING WHICH

- Involves lay groups, including school boards, and all levels of the professional staff
- Strives to meet the needs of *all* children and youth in the school district

PROVIDE COURSE OFFERINGS WHICH

- Are outlined as to objectives, content, teaching materials, instructional activities, and appraisal methods and standards
- Give attention to study and research activities in the library and materials-of-instruction centers
- Use teacher competence and skill to give attention to abilities, needs and interests of each pupil
- Are kept up-to-date in content and teaching methods

HAVE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PROGRAMS WHICH

- Include half-day sessions in kindergarten, full-day sessions for all others
- Teach the three R's and emphasize the acquisition of knowledge and good study habits
- Evidence good relationships between pupils, teachers and parents
- Have an abundance of reading and other up-to-date instructional materials
- Describe pupil progress so that unnecessary repetitions or gaps in learning experiences are avoided as children move along through the grades

HAVE JUNIOR HIGH PROGRAMS WHICH

- Serve the maturity level of early adolescents
- Require each student each semester to take English, mathematics, physical education (exclusive of athletics) and social studies
- Require each student to take the equivalent of one semester of science each year
- Require each student to take music or art education in grades 7 and 8
- Offer homemaking, industrial arts, music and art in each grade
- Offer foreign language if the ninth grade is in the junior high
- Have adequate facilities and materials
- Have appropriate guidance and counseling services

HAVE HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAMS WHICH

- Meet the common needs of all high school students and the special needs of those planning for college, those expecting to enter a specialized vocation, and those who may seek jobs in non-specialized occupations
- Have appropriate time allotments for recitation, laboratory work and supervised study

Good Schools

HAVE HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAMS WHICH (continued)

- Annually exceed the minimum offerings set out below for grades nine through twelve

	Years
Art	1
Business Education (including typing).....	3
Driver Education.....	1/2
English	4
Foreign Languages (at least 2 years in each offered).....	2
Homemaking	2
Industrial Arts.....	2
Mathematics	4
Music	2
Physical Education.....	4
Science (including a year of either physics or chemistry).....	3
Social Studies.....	4

Offer two years in agriculture, or distributive education, or trade and industrial education. In absence of two years in one of those three areas, the three industrial arts offerings listed above should be changed to three years.

- Have adequate facilities and materials

A school is regarded as "offering" a course if there is: a) a qualified teacher employed, b) appropriate instructional facilities and materials available, and c) adequate guidance to inform pupils, in terms of their individual abilities and interests, as to the possible value for them of the course offered.

- Have appropriate guidance and counseling
- Have graduation requirements consistent with the needs of a sound general education

Pupil Activity Programs

Good Schools

HAVE A BALANCED ACTIVITY PROGRAM WHICH

- Is measured in terms of its contribution to the over-all educational program
- Provides for the voluntary participation of *all* students
- Is properly supervised
- Discourages interscholastic activities below grade nine
- Provides in the elementary school, opportunities for participation in a variety of physical activities, art, music, dramatics, class projects and hobby pursuits
- Provides, in the junior high school, opportunities in clubs, intramural athletics, art, music, social activities, student government, hobbies, etc.
- Provides, in the high school, opportunities in physical activities and interscholastic athletics (individual and group), intramural athletics (individual and group), vocal and instrumental music, speech and dramatics, student council, journalism, clubs, social activities, class activities, hobbies, assemblies, etc.

Pupil Personnel Services

Good Schools

HAVE ACCURATE PERSONNEL RECORDS WHICH

- Show census, enrollment and attendance
- Provide individual pupil cumulative records encompassing attendance, scholastic achievement, biographical data including health records, records of standard tests and inventories, records of professional observations and interviews
- Are safely stored in locked fireproof files or vaults

HAVE AN ORGANIZED GUIDANCE AND

COUNSELING PROGRAM WHICH

- Is coordinated by a professionally-prepared counselor
- Provides both group guidance and individual counseling services
- Avoids the use of a principal or superintendent as a counselor or teacher-counselor
- Recognizes the significant guidance role of the classroom teacher and provides in-service guidance education for teachers

HAVE BASIC "PUPIL BEHAVIOR" POLICIES WHICH

- Are in writing
- Make provision for the development of pupils who are increasingly independent, self-disciplined and responsible citizens of their schools and communities

Professional Staff

Good Schools

HAVE GOOD ADMINISTRATORS EMPLOYED

- As Superintendent
- As Elementary Principals
- As Junior High School Principals
- As High School Principals
- To be responsible for actual classroom visitations
- To spend at least one-half of the regular school day for administration and supervision

HAVE AVAILABLE PROFESSIONAL SUPERVISORS

AND CONSULTANTS WHO

- Are employed by the local district if there is sufficient enrollment
- Are employed by the county and used on a regularly scheduled and referral basis
- Are employed by the Department of Public Instruction and colleges and are used on a referral basis

HAVE GOOD ELEMENTARY-SCHOOL TEACHERS WHO

- Hold the bachelor's degree or have two years' training and are working on the completion of the degree
- Are employed on a single salary schedule

HAVE GOOD SECONDARY-SCHOOL TEACHERS WHO

- Hold at least the bachelor's degree

Good Schools

HAVE GOOD SECONDARY-SCHOOL

TEACHERS WHO (continued)

- Are assigned to a maximum of two teaching fields (such as English and social studies or mathematics and science), with a maximum of four daily preparations for separate classes
- Are assigned to a maximum of five classes instructed or supervised daily (exclusively of activity assignments)

HAVE SPECIAL TEACHERS WHO

- Serve areas such as special education, music, art, guidance and physical education
- Adequately coordinate their efforts with those of other professional personnel

HAVE PROFESSIONAL STAFF WORKERS WHO

- Are fully certificated for the services performed
- Are sensitive to training opportunities and conscious of efforts for self-improvement
- Understand children and youth and are responsive to their needs
- Individually have 30 or more semester hours of preparation in any teaching assignment of more than half-time
- Participate in cooperatively planned and executed in-service education programs
- Hold local, state and national membership in a professional organization for teachers

Buildings, Facilities and Auxiliary Services *

Good Schools

HAVE SCHOOL BUILDINGS WHICH

- Are located, planned and constructed to fit the educational program
- Are clean, safe and attractive
- Have proper lighting, heating and ventilating conditions
- Are well-equipped with modern furniture, libraries, laboratories, audio-visual and other instructional aids

HAVE A SCHOOL HEALTH PROGRAM WHICH

- Is under professional supervision
- Provides instruction in healthful living
- Cooperates with state and local health agencies
- Provides for daily observation of school health conditions

HAVE APPETIZING, NUTRITIONAL AND EFFICIENTLY PROVIDED SCHOOL LUNCHES

HAVE SAFE, ADEQUATE AND EFFICIENTLY OPERATED TRANSPORTATION PROVIDED FOR EACH CHILD LEGALLY ELIGIBLE FOR TRANSPORTATION AT PUBLIC EXPENSE

*For detailed treatment of these items contact the Department of Public Instruction or the Department of Public Health. Buildings and equipment are more adequately covered under Bulletin No. 100.

We believe that every child, regardless of where he lives, should have the benefits of a comprehensive program of educational services . . . The path to school is one that each child can take but once—for a few short years. For many—far too many—the educational opportunities provided are limited and inadequate . . . Improvements and how to achieve them, the inadequacies and how to resolve them, these are the responsibilities of everyone.*

**Effective Intermediate Units—a Guide for Development,*
Department of Rural Education, NEA, Washington,
D. C., 1955.

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