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A Study of teacher turnover in Montana Schools

Fred Eugene Sheets

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A STUDY OF TEACHER TURNOVER IN MONTANA SCHOOLS

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A Thesis

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of the
University of North Dakota

By

Fred Eugene Sheets

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of
Master of Science in Education

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This Thesis, presented by Fred Eugene Sheets
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Science in Education,
is hereby approved by the Committee of Instruc-
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Fred Eugene Sheets

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A STUDY OF TEACHER TURNOVER IN MONTANA SCHOOLS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

There has been a feeling among educators for several years that the rate of teacher turnover has been extremely high in our public schools. Due to this high rate of turnover there has been a great loss to our educational system.

Industrial leaders, many years ago, recognized the financial loss that came from high labor turnover and therefore studied the problem scientifically with the idea in mind to stop this loss if possible. "The manufacturer is able to estimate the financial loss to his business due to labor turnover because his output is a tangible product. The schools' product is lives of boys and girls -- a more intangible product which it is difficult to measure. There is no question, however, but that there is an inestimable loss in school efficiency each year due to teacher turnover. The first requisite in teaching is that the teacher shall really know the pupil. He cannot do this and change schools every year or two. In rapid turnover it is the child who suffers. When teaching is a procession rather than a profession the

developing ideas, ideals, and aptitudes of children are
 trampled under foot".¹ "Educational profit or loss is not
 yet measurable in dollars and cents. Inefficient teaching
 is not as apparent as spoiled work in industry. Hence the
 community is scarcely aware of the loss it is sustaining
 at each withdrawal of a competent teacher. Could it but
 realize the seriousness of the problem and all its impli-
 cations, it would exhibit an anxiety as to the amount and
 nature of its teacher turnover and an aggressive inter-
 est in means for its control rivaling that of our largest
 concerns".²

The school board members and the superintendent are
 well aware of the fact that a great effort must be put
 forth by them to select the right teacher to fill a vacancy,
 and, many times, regardless of the care exercised, the
 teacher finally selected may prove to be a failure even
 though her work may have been considered very success-
 ful in her previous position. Then, too, there is a loss
 to the pupils as it is necessary for them to become accus-
 tomed to the methods and ways of the new teachers. The
 teacher also suffers a loss due to the fact that it re-

¹
 Report of the Committee of One Hundred on the Problem of
 Tenure. Addresses and proceedings, National Education
 Association 1928 Vol. 64 pp. 206-212.

²
 Willard S. Elsbree, Teacher Turnover in the Cities and
 Village of New York State, Bureau of Publication, Teachers
 College, Columbia University, 1928 Contributions to Educa-
 tion, no. 300. p. 1.

quires time for her to become acquainted with the individual pupils with whom she must work. She must also incur an expense in seeking a new position for it maybe necessary for her to make personal application several times before she secures a position. Frequently she must pay an agency fee which amounts to four or five per cent of her annual salary. The expense in moving from one community to another while not much of an item for an unmarried teacher may be burdensome for a teacher with a family.

From the above statements it can be seen that the matter of teacher turnover is of great importance, not only to the teacher, but the school and community as well.

Purpose of This Study

This study was undertaken to determine the extent of teacher turnover in the schools of Montana; to find the causes of the teacher turnover; and to suggest means by which this turnover may be reduced if not prevented.

Meaning of Terms

There are some terms that need some explanation in order to make the study clear.

There are three meanings of turnover that have been used at different times. The first refers to the number of persons added to a staff and is known as the add-

itions. The second deals with the number leaving the staff who are replaced. This is known as replacements. The third, deals with the number whose employment has been discontinued and is called the separations. The latter meaning is the one used throughout this study as no effort was made to determine whether the positions vacated were filled or not.

The term teacher as here used includes all supervisors, principals, and superintendents as well as the classroom teachers.

The term rate of teacher turnover means the ratio of the number of teachers leaving a school to the number of teachers in the system. This is found by dividing the number of teachers leaving the school system by the total number of teachers in the school system.

Avoidable turnover consists of the loss of teachers for the following causes: resigned to accept a better position, dismissed, to teach nearer home, to enter another line of work, dissatisfied with present position,¹ and no specified reason.

Limitations

This study will take into consideration only the teachers in the public schools listed in the Montana

¹ Willard S. Elsbree, op. cit. p. 12.

Educational Directory. No attempt was made to study the problem in the rural or private schools of the state.

The questionnaire method was used as it was considered the only feasible means by which the desired information could be obtained. The questionnaire was first made use of in writing a trial thesis. After trying it out on members of a class, several defects were found and after reviewing some studies of a similar nature several revisions were made before the questionnaire was finally mailed.

Source of Data

As indicated above the information in regard to the Montana situation was obtained by means of a questionnaire mailed to the 234 superintendents and principals of the schools of the First Class, Second Class, and Third Class Districts, and the County High Schools as listed in the Montana Educational Directory for the school year 1934-1935. The questionnaires were mailed on May 8, 1935 and the year considered was between May 1, 1934 and May 1, 1935. In this way all resignations occurring during the summer of 1934 were determined.

Of the 234 questionnaires sent to the various schools 115 were filled in and returned. This represents 49.14

1

A copy of the questionnaire will be found in appendix A.

per cent of the number sent. Table I shows a comparison of the number of questionnaires sent and returned for the different classes of schools.

In the state of Montana there are four classes of districts: "A first Class District is one which has a population of eight thousand or more: it employs a superintendent who has had at least five years' experience in public school work: it is controlled by a board of seven trustees." "A Second Class District is one which has a population of one thousand or more and less than eight thousand: it employs a superintendent who has had at least three years' experience in public school work: it is controlled by a board of five members." "A Third Class District is one which has a population of less than one thousand: it employs a superintendent and principal or either. It is controlled by a board of three members." A County High School is under the control of a principal: it is administered in most cases independently of any school district: funds for its upbuilding and maintenance are derived from a uniform county levy: the board of trustees consist of seven members of whom the county superintendent is one and the remaining six are appointed by the county commissioners.¹

1

Montana Educational Directory, 1934-1935, published by State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Helena, Montana

TABLE I
COMPARISON OF NUMBER OF QUESTIONNAIRES SENT AND RETURNED

Class of District	Number Sent	Number Returned	Per Cent Returned
First Class	6	4	66.6
Second Class	70	37	52.85
Third Class	139	62	44.60
County H. S.	19	12	63.15
Total Number	234	115	49.14

Table I shows that returns were received from 66.6 per cent of the schools of the First Class Districts; 52.85 per cent of the schools of the Second Class Districts; 44.60 per cent of the Third Class Districts; and 63.15 per cent of the County High Schools.

Table II shows that the percentage of returns from the different counties in the state.

TABLE II
A COMPARISON OF NUMBER OF QUESTIONNAIRES SENT AND RECEIVED
FROM SCHOOLS IN THE DIFFERENT COUNTIES OF THE STATE

Name of County	Number of Schools	Number of Returns	Per Cent Returned
Beaverhead	3	2	66.6
Big Horn	3	1	33.3
Blaine	4	2	50

TABLE II (Continued)
 COMPARISON OF NUMBER OF QUESTIONNAIRES SENT AND RECEIVED
 FROM SCHOOLS IN THE DIFFERENT COUNTIES OF THE STATE

Name of County	Number of Schools	Number of Returns	Per Cent Returned
Broadwater	3	3	100
Carbon	10	6	60
Carter	2	2	100
Cascade	7	3	42.8
Chouteau	4	3	75
Custer	2	2	100
Daniels	4	1	25
Dawson	3	3	100
Deer Lodge	1	0	0
Fallon	3	2	66.6
Fergus	8	7	87.5
Flathead	6	5	83.3
Gallatin	6	1	16.6
Garfield	3	0	0
Glacier	3	1	33.3
Golden Valley	3	2	66.6
Granite	3	2	66.6
Hill	7	1	14.2

TABLE II (Continued)

COMPARISON OF NUMBER OF QUESTIONNAIRES SENT AND RECEIVED
FROM SCHOOLS IN THE DIFFERENT COUNTIES OF THE STATE

Name of County	Number of Schools	Number of Returns	Per Cent Returned
Jefferson	6	1	16.6
Judith Basin	5	4	80
Lake	2	1	50
Lewis and Clark	4	1	25
Liberty	2	1	50
Lincoln	6	3	50
McCone	2	1	50
Madison	6	4	66.6
Meagher	2	1	50
Mineral	3	0	0
Missoula	5	3	60
Musselshell	4	1	25
Park	4	3	75
Petroleum	1	1	100
Phillip	6	3	50
Pondera	3	1	33.3
Powder River	1	0	0
Powell	3	3	100

TABLE II (Continued)

COMPARISON OF NUMBER OF QUESTIONNAIRES SENT AND RECEIVED
FROM SCHOOLS IN THE DIFFERENT COUNTIES OF THE STATE

Name of County	Number of Schools	Number of Returns	Per Cent Returned
Prairie	2	2	100
Ravalli	6	3	50
Richland	4	4	100
Roosevelt	6	3	50
Rosebud	6	0	0
Sanders	7	3	42.8
Sheridan	8	4	50
Silver Bow	4	1	25
Stillwater	5	3	60
Sweetgrass	2	0	0
Teton	7	3	42.8
Toole	5	3	60
Treasure	1	0	0
Valley	5	1	20
Wheatland	4	3	75
Wibaux	2	0	0
Yellowstone	6	2	33.3

Table II shows that there was a good return from most of the counties and that the replies were well distributed over the state.

Summary of Chapter I

This study is justified because of its importance to teachers and because such a study has never been made for the state of Montana.

The procedure used in collecting the data, was the only kind that could be used for gathering information over such a large geographical area.

CHAPTER II

THE AMOUNT OF TEACHER TURNOVER IN MONTANA

The total number of teachers leaving a school system affects a great number of people who are directly concerned with the affairs of the school. To the superintendent and school trustees it means the task of filling the vacancies that are created. To the principals and supervisors it means additional work to make the necessary adjustments of the new teachers to the regular routine of the school. "To the teachers who remain it means the loss of friends and the necessity of making new contacts. The task of initiating new teachers becomes small or great exactly as the rate of turnover varies from a negligible amount to staggering proportions." ¹ Therefore this problem is not determined by the number of teachers leaving a system but rather by the percentage of those leaving.

In some cases teacher turnover is necessary and in other cases it is desirable. When this is the case the additional tasks that accompanies this problem must be borne. If, as in many cases, this turnover could be prevented, the additional work accompanying it is unnecessary and therefore should be reduced or eliminated.

Table III shows the rate of teacher turnover in the

1

Willard S. Elsbree, Teacher Turnover in the Cities and Villages of New York State, Bureau of Publication, Teachers College, Columbia University, Publication for the Study of Education, 1928. p. 7

different class districts.

TABLE III
RATE OF TEACHER TURNOVER IN THE SCHOOLS OF THE
DIFFERENT CLASS DISTRICTS .

Class of District	Number of Teachers in Schools	Total Number of Withdrawals	Per Cent Withdrawals
First Class	662	38	5.74
Second Class	749	115	15.34
Third Class	410	143	34.87
County H. S.	199.5	23	11.52
Total	2020.5	319	15.78

Information given relative to the different districts shows that the school of the First Class Districts are the largest in the state, while the school of the Second Class and County High Schools are next in size and the schools of the Third Class Districts are the smallest. The size of the County High Schools varies a great deal as one school has but six teachers, while another has twenty-eight.

From Table III it is seen that as the schools become smaller the rate of teacher turnover increases, as was to be expected. In the case of the County High Schools it will be noticed that there are 199.5 teachers. The half teacher is accounted for, because one school employed a teacher for half time work.

TABLE IV
RELATION OF THE PERCENTAGE OF TEACHER TURNOVER
TO THE SIZE OF THE SCHOOL

Percentage of Gross Teacher Turnover	Group of Schools							
	2-6	7-11	12-16	17-21	22-26	27-31	32-36	37-
0- 10	5	2	5	5	2	5	1	4
11- 20	6	10	5		3	2	2	1
21- 30	3	5	3	2				
31- 40	6	5	1	1			1	
41- 50	4	5	1	1				
51- 60	3	2						
61- 70	3	1						
71- 80	1	1						
81- 90	4	1						
91-100	2	1						

Table IV shows the relation of the percentage of teacher turnover to the size of school as measured by the number of teachers in the system. All the schools are placed in eight groups. The first group contains all the schools having two to six teachers inclusive; the second group, seven to eleven; the third group, twelve to sixteen; the fourth group, seventeen to twenty-

one; the fifth group, twenty-two to twenty-six; the sixth group, twenty-seven to thirty-one; the seventh group, thirty-two to thirty-six; and the eighth group, includes the remaining five schools employing thirty-seven or more teachers in the systems.

The table shows that there is a direct relation between the size of a school and the rate of teacher turnover. Two of the schools in which there was 100 per cent turnover were found in the schools having 2-6 teachers and the third one was found in the schools having 7-11 teachers. The table shows that the schools having over 50 per cent teacher turnover have eleven or less teachers. There was, generally, a decrease in teacher turnover as the size of the school increased.

Table V shows the percentage of turnover for each school and its rank as far as rate of gross turnover is concerned. The rate of gross turnover is the ratio of all teachers leaving a system to all the teachers in the school.

TABLE V
RATE OF TEACHER TURNOVER IN THE SCHOOLS OF MONTANA

Name of School	Number of Teachers	Total Turnover	Per Cent Turnover	Rank
Augusta	13	0	0	7
Carbon Co H. S.	12	0	0	7
Cardwell	3	0	0	7
Custer Co. H. S.	26	0	0	7
Geyser	6	0	0	7
Glendive	27	0	0	7
Hot Springs	8	0	0	7
Malta	21	0	0	7
Ollie	4	0	0	7
Park Co. H. S.	15 $\frac{1}{2}$	0	0	7
Red Lodge	17	0	0	7
Rexford	2	0	0	7
Washoe	4	0	0	7
Havre	57	1	1.7	14
Missoula	74	2	2.7	15
Livingston	35	1	2.9	16
Whitefish	30	1	3.3	17
Lewistown	29	1	3.4	18

TABLE V (Continued)

RATE OF TEACHER TURNOVER IN THE SCHOOLS OF MONTANA

Name of School	Number of Teachers	Total Turnover	Per Cent Turnover	Rank
Flathead Co. H. S.	28	1	3.5	19
Great Falls	216	8	3.7	20
Shelby	21	1	4.7	21
Butte	236	13	5.5	23
Dawson Co. H. S.	18	1	5.5	23
Deer Lodge	18	1	5.5	23
Dillon	13	1	7.7	25½
Fergus Co H. S.	26	2	7.7	25½
Cascade	12	1	8.3	27
Sidney	30	3	10	28
Billings	135	15	11.1	30½
Geraldine	9	1	11.1	30½
Richey	9	1	11.1	30½
Townsend	9	1	11.1	30½
Miles City	35	4	11.4	33
Browning	32	4	12.5	36
Outlook	8	1	12.5	36
Phillipsburg	8	1	12.5	36
Scobey	24	3	12.5	36
Sheridan	8	1	12.5	36

TABLE V (Continued)

RATE OF TEACHER TURNOVER IN THE SCHOOLS OF MONTANA

Name of School	Number of Teachers	Total Turnover	Per Cent Turnover	Rank
Kalispell	31	4	12.9	39
Polson	22	5	13.6	40
Big Sandy	14	2	14.2	42
Joliet	7	1	14.2	42
Moccasin	7	1	14.2	42
Libby	27	4	14.8	44
Columbus	12	2	16.6	49
Comertown	6	1	16.6	49
Corvallis	12	2	16.6	49
Granite Co. H. S.	6	1	16.6	49
Grass Range	6	1	16.6	49
Ismay	6	1	16.6	49
Judith Gap	6	1	16.6	49
Powell Co. H. S.	12	2	16.6	49
Roy	6	1	16.6	49
Thompson Falls	17	3	17.6	54
Fairview	11	2	18.1	55½
Worden	33	6	18.1	55½
Beaverhead Co. H. S.	15	3	20	58

TABLE V (Continued)

RATE OF TEACHER TURNOVER IN THE SCHOOLS OF MONTANA

Name of School	Number of Teachers	Total Turnover	Per Cent Turnover	Rank
Gallatin Co. H. S.	25	5	20	58
Hobson	10	2	20	58
Denton	9	2	22.2	60½
Big Fork	9	2	22.2	60½
Fromberg	13	3	23	62
Bowdoin	4	1	25	65½
Harlem	20	5	25	65½
Klein	12	3	25	65½
Ringling	4	1	25	65½
Shawmut	4	1	25	65½
Wyola	8	2	25	65½
Plentywood	15	4	26.6	69
Harlowtown	18	5	27.7	70
Power	7	2	28.5	71½
Winifred	7	2	28.5	71½
Belmont	3	1	33.3	76
Chester	9	3	33.3	76
Florence	6	2	33.3	76
Galata	3	1	33.3	76
Lavina	6	2	33.3	76

TABLE V (Continued)

RATE OF TEACHER TURNOVER IN THE SCHOOLS OF MONTANA

Name of School	Number of Teachers	Total Turnover	Per Cent Turnover	Rank
Rapelje	6	2	33.3	76
Teton Co. H. S.	9	3	33.3	76
Terry	17	6	35.3	80
Absorakee	8	3	37.5	82
Bainville	8	3	37.5	82
Bearcreek	8	3	37.5	82
Winnett	13	5	38.4	84
Fairfield	5	2	40	85½
Lambert	5	2	40	85½
Sand Coulee	17	7	41.1	87
Ennis	7	3	42.8	89
Plevena	7	3	42.8	89
Savage	7	3	42.8	89
Somers	11	5	45.4	91
Elliston	6	3	50	94
Lonepine	6	3	50	94
Nashua	16	8	50	94
Redstone	6	3	50	94
Troy	10	5	50	94

TABLE V (Continued)

RATE OF TEACHER TURNOVER IN THE SCHOOLS OF MONTANA

Name of School	Number of Teachers	Total Turnover	Per Cent Turnover	Rank
Culbertson	11	6	54.4	97
Saco	9	5	55.5	98
Broadwater Co. H. S.	7	4	57	99
Hogeland	5	3	60	101½
Pony	5	3	60	101½
Victor	10	6	60	101½
Windham	5	3	60	101½
Brookway	6	4	66.6	105
Clyde Park	6	4	66.6	105
Highwood	6	4	66.6	105
Mildred	7	5	71.4	107
Broadview	6	5	83.3	109½
Buffalo	6	5	83.3	109½
Frenchtown	6	5	83.3	109½
Sweetgrass	6	5	83.3	109½
Brady	7	6	85.7	112
Clinton	3	3	100	114
Toston	2	2	100	114
Twin Bridges	7	7	100	114

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From the above table it is seen that the rate of teacher turnover varies greatly. The percentage ranged from zero per cent in fourteen schools to a hundred per cent in three schools. Thus it will be seen that in some schools the turnover problem was of no great importance between May 1, 1934 and May 1, 1935 while in other schools it was a serious problem. The rate of gross turnover is not as important to school authorities as that which can be prevented in many cases. The next table shows the amount of avoidable turnover. As explained above, avoidable turnover consists of the loss of teachers for the following causes: resigned to accept a better position, dismissed, to teach nearer home, to enter another line of work, dissatisfied with present position, and no specified reason.¹

TABLE VI
RATE OF AVOIDABLE TEACHER TURNOVER IN MONTANA

Name of School	Per Cent Total Turnover	Per Cent Avoidable Turnover	Rank
Augusta	0	0	13½
Belmont	0	0	13½
Billings	11.1	0	13½

¹

Ibid., p. 12.

TABLE VI (Continued)
 RATE OF AVOIDABLE TEACHER TURNOVER IN MONTANA

Name of School	Per Cent Total Turnover	Per Cent Avoidable Turnover	Rank
Butte	5.5	0	13½
Carbon Co. H. S.	0	0	13½
Cardwell	0	0	13½
Columbus	16.6	0	13½
Custer Co. H. S.	0	0	13½
Fairview	18.1	0	13½
Fromberg	23	0	13½
Geyser	0	0	13½
Glendive	0	0	13½
Hot Springs	0	0	13½
Joliet	14.2	0	13½
Livingston	2.9	0	13½
Malta	0	0	13½
Missoula	2.7	0	13½
Ollie	0	0	13½
Outlook	12.5	0	13½
Park Co. H. S.	0	0	13½
Phillipsburg	12.5	0	13½

TABLE VI (Continued)
 RATE OF AVOIDABLE TEACHER TURNOVER IN MONTANA

Name of School	Per Cent Total Turnover	Per Cent Avoidable Turnover	Rank
Red Lodge	0	0	13½
Rexford	0	0	13½
Sheridan	12.5	0	13½
Townsend	11.1	0	13½
Washoe	0	0	13½
Great Falls	3.7	.008	27
Havre	1.7	1.7	28
Miles City	11.4	2.8	29
Kalispell	12.9	3.2	30
Whitefish	3.3	3.3	31
Lewistown	3.4	3.4	32
Flathead Co. H. S.	3.5	3.5	33
Libby	14.8	3.7	34
Fergus Co. H. S.	7.7	3.8	35
Shelby	4.7	4.7	36
Harlem	25	5	37
Dawson Co. H. S.	5.5	5.5	39
Deer Lodge	5.5	5.5	39
Harlowtown	27.7	5.5	39

TABLE VI (Continued)
 RATE OF AVOIDABLE TEACHER TURNOVER IN MONTANA

Name of School	Per Cent Total Turnover	Per Cent Avoidable Turnover	Rank
Sidney	10	6.6	42
Gallatin Co. H. S.	20	6.6	42
Plentywood	26.6	6.6	42
Big Sandy	14.2	7.1	44
Dillon	7.6	7.6	45
Cascade	8.3	8.3	47
Corvallis	16.6	8.3	47
Klein	25	8.3	47
Somers	45.5	9.1	49
Scobey	12.5	9.4	50
Hobson	20	10	51
Big Fork	22.2	11.1	53½
Geraldine	11.1	11.1	53½
Richey	11.1	11.1	53½
Teton Co. H. S.	33.3	11.1	53½
Thompson Falls	17.6	11.1	53½
Worden	18.1	12.1	57
Bearcreek	37.5	12.5	59
Browning	12.5	12.5	59

TABLE VI (Continued)
 RATE OF AVOIDABLE TEACHER TURNOVER IN MONTANA

Name of School	Per Cent Total Turnover	Per Cent Avoidable Turnover	Rank
Wyola	25	12.5	59
Beaverhead Co. H. S.	20	13.3	61
Terry	35.3	14.1	62
Moccasin	14.2	14.2	64
Plevana	14.2	14.2	64
Power	28.5	14.2	64
Comertown	16.6	16.6	69½
Granite Co. H. S.	16.6	16.6	69½
Grass Range	16.6	16.6	69½
Ismay	16.6	16.6	69½
Judith Gap	16.6	16.6	69½
Powell Co. H. S.	16.6	16.6	69½
Roy	16.6	16.6	69½
Lavina	33.3	16.6	69½
Polson	22.7	18.1	74
Fairfield	40	20	75½
Lambert	40	20	75½
Chester	33.3	22.2	77½
Denton	22.2	22.2	77½

TABLE VI (Continued)
 RATE OF AVOIDABLE TEACHER TURNOVER IN MONTANA

Name of School	Per Cent Total Turnover	Per Cent Avoidable Turnover	Rank
Sand Coulee	41.1	23.5	79
Absorakee	37.5	25	82½
Bainville	37.5	25	82½
Bowdoin	25	25	82½
Ringling	25	25	82½
Shawmut	25	25	82½
Troy	50	25	82½
Ennis	42.8	28.4	86
Winifred	28.5	28.5	87
Winnett	38.4	30.7	88
Lonepine	50	33.2	89
Florence	33.3	33.3	92
Galata	33.3	33.3	92
Highwood	33.3	33.3	92
Rapelje	33.3	33.3	92
Saco	55.5	33.3	92
Hogeland	60	40	95
Broadwater Co. H. S.	57	42.7	96
Savage	42.8	42.8	97

TABLE VI (Continued)
RATE OF AVOIDABLE TEACHER TURNOVER IN MONTANA

Name of School	Per Cent Total Turnover	Per Cent Avoidable Turnover	Rank
Culbertson	54.5	45.5	98
Brockway	66.6	49.8	99½
Clyde Park	66.6	49.8	99½
Elliston	50	50	102½
Nashua	50	50	102½
Redstone	50	50	102½
Victor	60	50	102½
Pony	60	60	105½
Windham	60	60	105½
Sweetgrass	83.3	66.6	107
Mildred	71.4	71.4	108½
Brady	85.7	71.4	108½
Broadview	83.3	83.3	111
Buffalo	83.3	83.3	111
Frenchtown	83.3	83.3	111
Twinbridges	100	85.7	113
Clinton	100	100	114½
Toston	100	100	114½

Summary of Chapter II

In the year between May 1, 1934 and May 1, 1935 it was found that there were fourteen schools that had zero per cent turnover while in the same year there were three that had 100 per cent turnover.

A close relation exists between the size of school and teacher turnover. As the size of school increases, the rate of teacher turnover decreases.

The rate of avoidable turnover is more significant than the rate of gross turnover as something can be done in many cases to prevent avoidable turnover.

CHAPTER III

CAUSES OF TEACHER TURNOVER IN MONTANA

In order to improve or solve a problem, the causes for the existing conditions, which make such a problem, must be known. Therefore, the causes of teacher turnover are of great importance if the conditions effecting it are to be improved. The easiest, but not necessarily the best, way to deal with a problem of this nature, is to accept such a condition as inevitable and, therefore, make no attempt to remedy the evil. However if the school is to perform its tasks successfully, something must be done to alleviate some of the evils which bring about teacher turnover.

In the small school systems of today we find this problem of teacher turnover much more prevalent and since the small schools outnumber the larger ones to a great extent it is in the small schools that changes must be made.

Usually the reasons for teacher turnover are known by the superintendent and the school board. There are no satisfactory records kept of the teacher turnover in small

schools, which makes it impossible to study them in several systems over a period of years. "There is a definite need for a cumulative record card giving information about the teachers. This card should give information to the superintendent for his state report. It should be the basis for recommendation to his board of education for the re-employment or dismissal of teachers."¹

According to the information obtained from the questionnaire there are three principal causes for teacher turnover in Montana. Named in order of importance they are as follows; "resigned to be married", "dismissed", and "resigned to accept a better position." These three causes account respectively for 27.5 per cent, 24.2 per cent, and 22.8 per cent of the turnover. These make up 74.5 per cent of the entire turnover for the schools reporting. Thus it will be seen that anything done to improve conditions, must take into consideration the above mentioned causes. The following table gives the different reasons for teacher turnover in Montana in order of their importance.

1

L. W. Hanson, School Records and Reports, unpublished Masters' Thesis, North Dakota University, July, 1935, p.100

TABLE VII
CAUSES OF TEACHER TURNOVER IN MONTANA

Reason for Leaving School	Number Leaving	Per Cent Leaving	Rank
Resigned to be married	88	27.58	1
Dismissed	77	24.21	2
To accept better position	73	22.88	3
Resigned, no reason given	28	8.77	4
To enter another line of work	11	3.44	5
Ill health	9	2.82	6½
Dissatisfied with position	9	2.82	6½
Home duties	8	2.50	8
For professional study	7	2.19	9
Retirement because of age	3	.94	10
Illness at home	2	.63	11½
To teach near home	2	.63	11½
Family moved	1	.36	13½
Death	1	.36	13½
Total	318	100	

The following table shows that the percentage of turnover does not vary much in the different states for the important causes of turnover. It is seen that there is a noticeable difference in percentage of turnover to secure better positions for the different years. The

economic conditions account for a great deal of this difference because in the years 1924 and 1927 financial conditions were much better and it was less difficult to secure a better position than during the past few years.

TABLE VIII

CHIEF CAUSES OF SEPARATION IN SMALL SCHOOL SYSTEMS IN
MINNESOTA, NEW YORK, IOWA, AND MONTANA

Causes of Separation	1		3	
	Iowa, 1924	Minn., 1927	New York, 1927	Montana, 1934-1935
Better position	41	35	26	22.8
Marriage*		15	19	27.5
Dismissal	26	33	14	24.2
Home conditions	no data	2	9	2.5
Teach nearer home	" "	2	9	.6
To continue study	12	4	5	2.9
To enter other lines of work	20	4	5	3.4
Other causes	1	5	13	16.1

1

Wendell White, "Teacher Turnover in Iowa," American School Board Journal, December, 1925.

2

R. O. Johnson, Selecting Teachers in Small School Systems in Minnesota, University of Minnesota Library, Minneapolis, 1928.

3

E. S. Elsbree, Teacher Turnover in New York State, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1928.

*In Iowa marriage is included under "To enter other lines of work".

3-2-33. W

The fact that "resigned to be married" is the greatest cause for teachers leaving the school systems is perhaps not surprising. There seems to be no great variation in the proportion resigning for this one reason in the different sized schools. This is a reason that is found generally in all schools. The question in regard to the employment of married women is one that has been discussed frequently and as yet no settlement of the problem has been made. In reports obtained from the 115 schools in Montana it was found that most school boards have a definite ruling against the employment of married women. The reasons given for such rulings are varied. Such reasons as, "old ruling of board", "single teachers need employment", "divided attention of married women", "not necessary for both man and wife to earn", were given. Out of the 115 schools reporting there were 27 that employed married women. In some cases a qualifying statement was made to the effect that they were hired if necessary to aid in the support of the family. There were in all 23.47 per cent of the schools that do employ married women.

In Montana, as in many other states, contract provisions and board rules show that the practice of barring

married women is quite prevalent. "Courts are divided in their opinion as to whether or not married women can be barred if the statutes do not make specific provision for it¹

The arguments for and against married women teachers have been given by E. E. Lewis² but since thirty-one such arguments are given only a few of the important ones on either side will be given here.

Arguments for the Employment of Married Teachers

1. Married women teach for the love of work.
2. Married teachers are better in discipline.
3. Married teachers are more intelligently interested in children.
4. The state gets more from the training of teachers if these trained are allowed to stay after marriage.
5. Married women are more permanently a part of the community and reduce the turnover.
6. Married women are usually home teachers and spend their money in their home town.
7. Married women are better disciplined through experience and receive criticism in a better spirit.
8. Married women are especially good as teachers of

1

I. O. Brendsel, Non-professional Restrictions Placed Upon Public School Teachers, Unpublished Masters' Thesis, University, North Dakota, August 1934. p. 75

2

E. E. Lewis, Personnel Problems of the Teaching Staff, The Century Company, 1925, p. 185-188.

certain subjects, such as hygiene, home economics, etc.

9. Married women are quite generally permitted in other trades and professions.

10. The merits of a teacher alone should count. Society profits most through teachers who understand children.

11. Young teachers are not as settled and do not keep as good hours. They are more interested in social pleasures than in children.

12. They have better economic security and are more settled in the profession.

Arguments Against the Employment of Married Teachers

1. Married women have their thoughts and interests in the home and teach only for the money.

2. Married teachers can not carry both the home and school duties without becoming cross and irritable.

3. The unmarried woman has few interests besides her professional duties and therefore devotes her entire time to them.

4. Inefficient married women are hard to eliminate. They become fixed and do not improve professionally.

5. Married teachers increase the home teacher problem. This induces inbreeding and reduces efficiency.

6. The woman's place is in the home.

7. The husband is paid a salary upon the basis of supporting a wife.

8. It is not good to have teachers absent from school for long periods at a time, and this would be necessary in mother-hood.

9. The teaching profession is the one outstanding asylum for spinsters.

10. Mother-hood is the first duty of women and nothing should be allowed to interfere with it.

11. It is for the best interests of the pupils to have young teachers who are not married.

12. The married woman does not need the money and is taking somebody else's job.

In reading through these arguments we find that in many of them the important reason for employing any teacher is lost sight of, namely, the welfare of the children whom she is hired to instruct. If the married teacher can instruct the children as well after marriage as before there is no educational reason for her dismissal just because she marries. Due to the oversupply of single teachers at the present time there may be good economic reason for dismissal or refusal to re-hire a married teacher.

The second most important reason for teacher turnover

was found to be dismissal. One must come to the conclusion that there is something wrong with some phase of our educational system when we consider that nearly one-fourth of the teachers who withdrew from the schools of Montana, for the year under consideration, did so because of dismissal. Figures given above show that, approximately, this rate obtains in other states in which such studies have been made. Just where the fault lies is rather hard to ascertain.

Some people maintain that more care should be exercised in the selection of students who plan to take up teaching as a profession. About all that has been done in this matter so far has been to select those of high scholarship. This system of selection has proved unsatisfactory as not all good scholars make good teachers. "There is great need of more scientific investigation as to the relation of certain character traits to success. Though the 'personality estimates' of students given at present are subjective in character, yet when they are systematically recorded at regular intervals over a four-year high school period and include the participation record of extra-curricular activities, they furnish the normal school administration valuable aid in selection of those who would engage in the 'social act' of teaching."¹

¹
Elizabeth Breckinridge, "A Study of the Relation of Preparatory School Records and Intelligence Test Scores to Teaching Success", Educational Administration and Supervision, December, 1931, p. 649.

Supervision of teachers is often inadequate, inefficient, or insufficient which causes difficulties to arise, especially with the beginning teachers, so that dismissal follows. Dismissal often is a direct reflection on the supervisors of a school. "In a great many cases there is no professional reason for failure to re-employ a teacher. Some small town boards feel that they are conferring a favor when they elect a teacher to a position, and if the teachers do not court their good will, the boards retaliate¹ at the end of the year."

Thirty-four of the cases of dismissal or 45.3 per cent were found in schools having two to six teachers inclusive. These schools usually have the poorest prepared superintendents and the ones that have the heaviest teaching load. Therefore, they have no time for supervision even if they were capable of giving such aid. Eighteen cases of dismissal or 24. per cent of such cases are found in the schools having between seven and eleven teachers. In the three largest schools of the state there was but one dismissal in the 588 teachers employed. This means that seventeen-hundredths of one per cent of the teachers in these schools were dismissed. This shows that the dismissal problem is greatest in the small schools. The larger schools have a negligible amount

¹

I. O. Brendsel, op. cit., p. 91.

of turnover for this reason.

The causes for dismissal are varied and seem to be well distributed. Often there are several reasons for dismissal given to one teacher. Therefore, in the following table there are more causes for dismissal than there are cases of dismissal.

TABLE IX
CAUSES FOR DISMISSAL OF TEACHERS

Reasons for Dismissal	Number	Rank
Trouble with pupils	19	1
Not fitted for teaching	14	2
Dismissed but no reason given	10	3
Incompetence	9	4
Personality	7	5
Neglect of duty	6	6
Malicious gossip	5	7
Poor health	4	9½
Trouble with board members	4	9½
Poor scholarship	4	9½
Community politics	4	9½
Lack of self control	3	12
Insubordination	1	14
Trouble with other teachers	1	14
Did not fit into system	1	14
Total	92	

The one cause for dismissal that seems to predominate is "trouble with pupils" or problems connected with matters of discipline. There are nineteen such reasons given. There are fourteen cases of "not fitted for teaching" according to the judgment of the superintendents, which might be questioned in some cases. In one case a person so reported had eighteen years of teaching experience. In ten cases "no reason" is given for dismissal. There are nine cases of "incompetence" and seven because of "personality". Due to the fact that "trouble with pupils" is the most important reason for dismissal, it seems to follow that pupils either have a great influence on board members and the superintendent or it means that the pupils, frequently, cannot be controlled by the teacher.

The third important reason for teacher turnover is "resigned to accept a better position". No effort was made to determine the exact meaning of this term. However, in some few cases a statement was made in regard to an increase of salary. Just how large an increase in salary would be an incentive for changing of positions was not determined. There are many things that might enter in under this heading besides more pay such as

better social condition, better opportunity for promotion, and more opportunity to teach one special field. "It is questionable whether the small administrative subdivisions of a state can ever expect to employ the mature, well-

d superior executive or teacher. Individuals in situations in which the best social, economic, and educational opportunities are offered.¹

One reason why so many teachers leave the small places for larger positions is that many large schools employ more experienced teachers. "It is highly unfortunate that larger cities with fairly adequate supervisory personnel could guide and direct inexperienced teachers, and give young teachers to gain their experience in the larger cities where they usually receive little or no

² This reason is not as important according to research as it might be in many places, because 72.17 per cent of schools reported that they hired inexperienced teachers in many cases a qualifying statement was made to the effect that they employed "a few" or "occasionally"

they employed inexperienced teachers. The one reason given most frequently for not employing inexperienced teachers was, "no difficulty in securing experienced ones". It is apparent that this reason, "to accept a better position"

¹ Fred Englehardt, Public School Organization and Administration, p. 197-198, Ginn and Company, 1931.

² W. S. Deffenbaugh and William H. Zeigel, Jr. Selection and Appointment of Teachers, Bulletin, 1932, No. 17, National Survey of Secondary Education, Monograph No. 12.

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for teacher turnover is a much larger factor in the small schools than in the larger schools. In the schools having two to six teachers the turnover due to this cause is twenty-one out of one hundred eighty-three or 27.63 per cent, in the schools having seven to eleven teachers there are twenty-eight out of ninety-five or 29.47 per cent, in the third group of schools having twelve to sixteen teachers there were seven out of thirty six or 19.44 per cent. In the three largest schools in which there were thirty-eight teachers leaving, there were but two who were leaving because of a better position or just 5.27 per cent of those leaving were doing so for this reason.

An effort was made to determine whether turnover was a greater problem among high school teachers or among grade teachers. It was found that there were 1272 grade teachers in the schools studied and 748.5 in the high schools. The number of teachers leaving the grade schools was 174 or a percentage of 13.68. Of the 748.5 teachers in high school, there were 145 who were leaving their schools or a percentage turnover of 19.37. Since many dismissals are due to "trouble with pupils", it may be that teachers find it more difficult to get along with pupils of high school age than with the grade pupils. A check was made to learn how many high school teachers were dismissed of the 145 who were leaving their positions.

There seems to be but very little difference in the percentage of turnover because of dismissal in the high school group of teachers and in the grade group. There is one noticeable difference about the dismissal group of high school and the grade teachers, and that is the majority of high school teachers remain one year in a school before dismissal or an average of 1.68 years, while the majority of grade teachers remain longer than a year in a school before dismissal takes place, or an an average of 2.25.

TABLE X

COMPARISON OF NUMBER OF HIGH SCHOOL AND GRADE TEACHERS
DISMISSED IN RELATION TO YEARS OF TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Total Years Experience	No. H. S. Teachers Dismissed	Percentage Dismissed	No. Grade Teachers Dismissed	Percentage Dismissed
1	10	29.41	2	4.87
2	5	14.70	5	12.19
3	3	8.82	5	12.19
4	1	2.94	2	4.87
5	0	0	3	7.31
6	3	8.82	3	7.31
7	2	5.88	3	7.31
8	4	11.76	3	7.31
9	1	2.94	2	4.87
10 or more	2	5.88	5	12.19
Not given	3	8.82	7	17.07
Total	34	100	41	100

This table shows that a large percentage of the high school teachers are dismissed after having been but one year in a place. A large percentage also leave after the second year of experience. The largest loss for the grade teachers comes after two or three years of experience and then again after ten or more years. Whatever causes dismissal appears earlier in case of the high school teacher than the grade teacher.

If dismissal is not the cause for greater turnover of the teachers in the high schools than in the grades, we must find the cause elsewhere. Upon checking over another of the important reasons for teacher turnover, "resigned to accept better position" it was found to be one of the most important reasons for the greater percentage of turnover among high school teachers. Out of the seventy-three teachers leaving their positions for such reasons it was found that forty-three were for high school teachers while only thirty were for grade teachers, or a percentage turnover of 29.65 for high school teachers and of 17.24 for grade teachers. This reason accounts for the greater percentage of turnover among high school teachers than among grade teachers.

TABLE XI
 COMPARISON OF GRADE AND HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS LEAVING TO
 SECURE BETTER POSITIONS IN RELATION TO THE
 TOTAL NUMBER OF YEARS EXPERIENCE

Total Number Years Experience	No. H. S. Teachers Leaving	Per Cent Leaving	No. Grade Teachers Leaving	Per Cent Leaving
1	6	14.28	1	3.22
2	6	14.28	3	9.67
3	4	9.52	2	6.45
4	3	7.14	2	6.45
5	4	9.52	3	9.67
6	4	9.52	2	6.45
7	1	2.38	3	9.67
8	5	11.9	1	3.22
9	1	2.38	2	6.45
10 or more	4	9.52	3	9.67
Not given	4	9.52	9	29.03
Total	42	100	31	100

From the above table it is seen that the high school teachers secure better positions after having had but one or two years of experience while the grade teachers have more experience before they secure a better position.

Among the high school teachers there were none that had more than ten years experience before obtaining a better place while one grade teacher had twenty-six years experience before securing a position as a County Superintendent of Schools which was considered a better position.

As far as the training is concerned there seems to be no relation between preparation and promotion, as for the most part all the high school teachers have the A. B. degree and the grade teachers are two year normal school graduates. There are some in both groups who have had additional training and a few of the high school teachers have Master's degrees. The salary question is closely connected with this reason for teacher turnover. Since no information is available for comparing the old salary with the new it cannot be shown that salary is the chief reason for moving to a new position, although in some cases a statement was made to the effect that the reason for turnover was due to low salaries. One thing that is true about teachers in small schools is that there is little or no opportunity for promotion within the school itself. If advancement is to come it must come from positions obtained in other schools. In the larger schools

there is some opportunity for teachers to be promoted to positions as supervisors or principals, while this cannot be done in a small place. One hundred ten out of five hundred seventy-three schools reported that promotion was an important method of retaining teachers of high quality.¹

Summary of Chapter III

The three important causes of teacher turnover are: resigned to be married, dismissed, and resigned to accept a better position.

Marriage is an important cause of turnover in all classes of schools. The employment of married women is a much discussed question. Better positions and dismissal are responsible for a higher percentage of turnover in the small schools than in the larger schools.

The rate of turnover is higher for high school teachers than grade teachers. This is due largely to the fact that more high school teachers obtain better positions.

¹

Ibid. p. 108

CHAPTER IV

FACTORS AFFECTING TEACHER TURNOVER

The causes of teacher turnover that were given in the preceding chapter account for the larger part of the turnover in the schools of Montana or for any state. But in addition to these main causes there are certain contributory factors that have a great influence on this problem.

There is a desire on the part of many teachers and other workers to leave their small communities for the larger city. The reason for such a desire may be due to the restlessness of individuals which cause them to desire a change or it may be due to the greater attractions that the city holds for people.

Closely associated with the size of the community is the housing problem. Frequently, teachers find it difficult, if not impossible, to find a suitable place in which to live in a small community. The problem of housing does not exist to any great extent in the larger places. In the study of conditions in Montana it was found that usually the superintendent aided the teachers to find living quarters. If he did not, either the clerk or some school board member did so. No effort was made to learn whether the housing problem affected turnover, although one

report indicated that nearly all the teachers stayed in a dormitory. The questionnaire asked whether local teachers were employed and if not, why not? It was found that thirty-seven of the schools or thirty-two per cent did not employ home teachers. Several reasons for not employing them were given. Some of the common reasons given were: "community too small", "known too well", "not a good policy", "avoids petty favoritism", "too hard to dismiss without community trouble". The reason given most often was to the effect that it was difficult to remove local teachers, if they were not satisfactory, without community strife. The percentage of local teachers in a system would make a great difference in the rate of turnover as local teachers can usually live at home cheaper than other teachers and they also have their old friends which makes it pleasant for them. Even though it reduced turnover, the advisability of electing local teachers might be questioned as the answers above indicate.

The treatment of teachers during times of sickness is another factor that might have a great influence on teacher turnover. From the study made of the Montana schools it was learned that fifty-nine of the schools reporting, or

fifty-one per cent did not give any time off with pay for sickness. Other schools did not have a definite rule in regard to this matter. Some schools gave half pay during such time as a teacher was absent due to sickness while many paid the difference between the regular pay and the amount that was paid the substitute. Most of the remaining schools gave five full days off with pay. Some gave three days off and one gave ten days off, while one allowed as many as twenty days off with pay. The treatment of the teachers during times of sickness would make a great deal of difference in their attitude towards their positions. If they received no time off with pay they might look for a position where greater consideration would be shown them under such circumstances.

Another factor that also enters into this problem is the treatment by the community of the teachers that are new in the community. Effort was made to determine the different methods by which new teachers are aided to become adjusted to their new positions and environment.

It was found that in most cases a reception was given to the new teachers. In eighteen cases this was given by the P. T. A. in the town, in thirteen cases it was given by the church, in thirty-six cases it was sponsored by the old teachers in the system and in thirty-one cases

they were entertained by the patrons of the school. In five cases the Woman's Club did this and in one case the lodge was responsible for this entertainment. In three cases it was done by the superintendent and his wife. There was usually some form of welcome given the teachers and often more than one reception was given. Some recognition was made of the new teachers in most places, but too often the group that gave this reception was the old teachers in the system. This would seem that the patrons are not as much concerned about these things as they should be and also it indicates that the teachers make up their own social group. Not only should something be done to make the teachers feel at home when they first arrive in a community, but rather something should be done to make their stay pleasant throughout the year.

The point next considered pertains to the matter of placing the teacher in work for which she is best suited. It was found that in most schools an effort was made to place the new teacher in charge of work for which she is especially well prepared. This frequently is a difficult thing to do as some teachers in a small school, are necessarily required to teach subjects not in their fields. Frequently the teachers who are new in the system

are the ones that have to take the work that the other teachers do not desire to teach. In a few cases the new teacher is given a lighter load but usually this is not the case. Most reports show that the new teacher is given careful supervision by the supervisor or principal. Some say that there is no time for much supervision, therefore, they must resort to personal interviews which can be given after school hours. One report indicated that the careful supervision is of great importance. Most reports show that teachers' meetings are resorted to while nearly all report that the personal interview is used.

As it has been pointed out before, the superintendent or principal, or both, are too busy in our small schools to do much constructive supervision. Usually the only aid that is given comes after some difficulty arises and then it is too late to do much real good.

Many teachers do not realize that their work is not satisfactory until election time comes around in the spring. It was found that in eight-seven cases a warning was given to the teachers who were considered unsatisfactory. It seems only fair that this should be done. "Not infrequently much injustice is done. Sometimes the first notice a teacher has that her work has not been satisfactory

is when she reads in the morning paper that someone else¹ has been elected to the position she has held."

The person or persons who determine whether a teacher is a failure may have some effect upon the teacher turnover in a school. In the schools reporting, it appears that either the superintendent alone, or he, with the cooperation of the school board, determine this matter in most cases. In some cases the board alone decides this matter and in several cases the patrons influence upon the board or superintendent is the determining factor. It would seem that the superintendent should be the best authority to determine the matter as he is directly concerned with the success of the school and he is in closer touch with the teachers of the school than anybody else. The board members, frequently never do visit school and if they do so they are seldom well enough informed about educational matters to settle satisfactorily such a vital matter. "The boards which employ them (teachers) vary from competent, well-educated, and fair-minded persons to ignorant, narrow-minded failures who rejoice in being able to make others share their own ill fortune. There is no stability of uniformity in boards from one community to the next or even in the same community."²

1

E. P. Cubberley Public School Administration p. 211
Houghton Mifflin Company.

2

I. O. Brendsel Non-professional Restrictions Placed upon Public School Teachers, unpublished Master's Thesis, August 1934, University of North Dakota. p. 93.

Another important factor that tends to have a great effect upon teacher turnover is the matter of salary. In many schools of this state no salary schedules are provided. "Previous to the development of the idea of a salary schedule it was a practice, on the part of teachers to get what they could get or take what they were given, and, on the part of the boards of education, to pay what they had to pay or what they could afford to pay. These practices still prevail in hundreds of American communities where the schedule idea has never been broached. Each teacher gets what he or she can get. Personal, social, political, charitable, and even religious pulls are exercised. Frequently the school gets into politics and local bosses dictate not only the selection of the personnel, but also the remuneration. Obviously, under such a plan or, rather lack of plan, many injustices are done. The following advantages may be offered in favor of the salary schedule: 1. It is impersonal. 2. It deals justly with new teachers. 3. It deals justly with home teachers. 4. It makes a career possible. 5. It secures better preparation. 6. It increases tenure. 7. It stimulates teachers. 8. It improves the social status of teachers. 9. It helps fix the yearly budget."

¹

E E. Lewis, Journal of Educational Research, 1924, p. 199.

Some interesting facts were found about the salaries of the turnover group in Montana. One of these teachers was receiving a salary of less than six hundred dollars. Thirteen were receiving between six hundred and six hundred and ninety-nine dollars. Fifty-one of the two hundred seventy from whom reports were received, were receiving between nine hundred and nine hundred ninety-nine dollars. Fifty-five received between one thousand and one thousand ninety-nine dollars. More than sixty-one per cent of the teachers who left their positions received less than eleven hundred dollars. Two received more than eighteen hundred dollars, one of these was dismissed with no reason given for dismissal, while the other, obtained a better position. Because of the way the questionnaire was constructed, it was impossible to show the relation of the salary to the different causes of turnover. In some cases remarks were made to the effect that the reason for teachers leaving a system, was due to low salaries.

The "single salary schedule" has been advocated by some as a means of improving the teaching situation. Under this plan the schedule would pay the same salary to teachers of equal training and experience whether they teach in the grades or high school, or small or large schools.

Summary of Chapter IV

The size of the community has an effect upon turnover due to the greater attractions in the larger places and better living conditions found there.

The majority of the Montana schools employ some local teachers which cuts down turnover. Teachers treatment during times of sickness has an effect on turnover.

Most communities welcomed the teachers by a reception sponsored by one or more of the local organizations. The social life of a community has a great influence upon the attitude of the teacher toward the community in which she works.

Supervision and administration policies of the school affects turnover. Many failures are a result of poor or insufficient supervision. The salary paid is an important factor in the turnover problem. More than sixty-one per cent of the teachers leaving their positions were receiving less than eleven hundred dollars.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A study of this nature reveals to one that the annual rate of teacher turnover is of such a magnitude, that something can, and should be done to reduce turnover, especially in our smaller schools. This difficulty is due to such a diversity of reasons that no one remedy will remove all the causes for the existing condition.

Matrimony was found to be the cause of the greatest percentage of turnover in Montana and since this is the cause of a great turnover in other states also, it might be well for further study to be made along this line to learn whether a rule forbidding married women to teach is legitimate. One, in making such an investigation, should keep in mind that the schools are conducted to benefit but one group of people, and that group is composed of the pupils of the school. If married women can teach as well or better than unmarried women there is no sound educational reason for barring them. If they cannot they should be removed. Until more objective methods of rating teachers are found the employment of married women will depend upon the opinions of the employing boards. Of course nothing can be done or should be done to prevent women who wish to retire from teaching after marriage. According to the information gathered by Deffenbaugh and Zeigel

"Women in Middle Western schools who marry are somewhat more likely to be dropped at the end of the year than are those in other regions."¹

Dismissal ranked second in importance as a cause of teacher turnover in Montana. Since dismissal is of such great importance much study should be done on this phase of the turnover problem. The blame for such a condition rests on several different places. "There should be as much care exercise by training schools in admitting candidates as by school authorities in making appointments."² It is seen from the above quotation that the reason for the dismissal problem might be due to poor students being admitted to normal schools or again to poor selection of teachers by superintendents and school boards. A great effort has been made during the past few years, to devise methods by which only a selective group of young people may take up training to become teachers. As yet no satisfactory method has been devised to select prospective students. More work should be done along this line, so that only desirable people will take up the important work of teaching.

"The selection of teachers is, and will continue to be, among the most important responsibilities of school

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W. S. Deffenbaugh and William H. Zeigel, Jr. "Selection and Appointment of Teachers," p. 26 Bulletin, 1932, No. 17 National Survey of Secondary Education Monograph No. 12, W. S. Government Printing Office Washington: 1933.

2

Almack and Lang, Problems of the Teaching Profession, p.222, 1925, Houghton Mifflin Company.

executives " ¹ It is better to keep out unprepared and improper people in the beginning than to dismiss them later on. In this way the damage they do in the school is prevented. ² Greater care should be exercised in the matter of selecting teachers.

The most common reason given for dismissal was poor discipline. This reason was also found to be the reason ³ most frequently given in the study by Simon of the turnover problem in Indiana. It is suggested by him that the training of teachers should include the study of child psychology, and personality traits which would overcome this difficulty to a great extent.

Closely related to dismissal is the problem of supervision. It is very evident that but little constructive supervision can be given in the small school in which many teachers obtain their first actual teaching experience. "Dismissal is usually considered as a failure on the part of the teacher, whereas the truth is it frequently implies failure on the part of the supervisor. Acceptance by

¹

W. S. Deffenbaugh and William H. Zeigel, Jr. op. cit. p.1.

²

E. P. Cubberley, Public School Administration, The Riverside Press, p. 201.

³

Donald L. Simon, "Turnover among Teachers in the Smaller Secondary Schools of Indiana." The School Review, February, 1936,

supervisors of such a challenge would lead to few failures among teachers".¹ Principals and superintendents in small schools are at present too busily occupied in teaching to spend much time in matters of supervision. If the value of this phase of education were fully realized more emphasis would be placed on supervision than has been done in the past.

From information obtained in this study it was learned that the board took nearly all the power in regard to the matter of dismissing teachers. This power is granted the boards by law but the ideal situation is to have the superintendent and the board cooperate in this matter. This fact is not to be deplored if the board is composed of the right type of people. From information, it was learned that frequently no reason at all could be given for dismissal aside from petty politics in the Community.

Something could and should be done to overcome this difficulty. Satisfactory tenure laws should help this matter. At present several states do have such laws but many of these are tenure laws in name only. Montana has a law which states that the teacher will be automatically re-employed if no notice of dismissal is given to her by the first of May. This is a step in the right direction. If after a probationary period of one, two, or three years

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Willard S. Elsbree, Teacher Turnover in the Cities and Villages of New York State, Bureau of Publication, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1928 Contributions to Education, no. 300. p. 73.

the teacher could be removed only for statutory causes, such as incompetency, insubordination, neglect of duty, and immorality, the condition of removal without just cause would be overcome.

Another very important reason for teacher turnover in small schools is "to secure a better position". Several factors enter into this cause and for that reason several remedies must be advocated. First of all the salary question arises. The salary question is of great importance but closely associated with it are the problems of living conditions and teaching conditions. The grade teacher of a small school frequently has to teach two or more grades while a high school teacher may teach several unrelated subjects. The teacher in the larger schools has but one grade or work in one high school subject.

To compensate for this the small school should pay relatively higher salaries or at least pay as much as the larger schools. "Uniformity in teachers salaries within the state and by improvement of working and living conditions within a community"¹ is advocated by Simon as a means of improving the turnover problem in Indiana. Such a system should improve the condition in any state. A single salary schedule for all the teachers of a state would require a change in the present method of taxation in many states. Such a change would be beneficial as our present system of inequality is unjust to the teacher as

¹

Donald L. Simon, op. cit.p. 136.

well as the pupil.

Another reason for leaving the small community for a better position is that social conditions are far different than living in a large place. Teachers should be prepared for these conditions by courses in the normal training school. By this means they would be able to understand the social problems of the small town.

The responsibility of improving the condition rests also upon people of the community. They must be made to realize that "with their best teachers recruited yearly by the large schools, they must attempt to maintain high standards with young inexperienced teachers or with experienced ones who have failed to make good elsewhere."¹ By proper means of publicity this matter can be brought to the attention of the public and as nearly all movements for the betterment of education come from the teachers themselves, it behooves them to bring such facts before the people in their respective communities.

The value of proper social conditions for employees was early recognized by industrial leaders. They have found that money spent in improvement of social conditions paid good dividends. It made the employees more loyal to their employer and better satisfied with their environment. Little has been done in this field for the teacher.

1

R. I. Seeder, "Aspects of Tenure and Turnover among Minnesota Teachers", American School Board Journal, October, 1928, p. 5-6.

"The primary means by which turnover due to teachers leaving for better positions can be controlled, appears to be by payment of larger salaries. The degree to which turnover due to this cause will be controlled is dependent upon two conditions: In the first place, it depends upon the willingness of communities to pay salaries sufficient to hold their better teachers. In the second place, it depends upon the ability of communities to pay salaries sufficient to hold their better teachers, On the one hand, it may be said that, with the growing appreciation of competent teachers, communities are becoming more and more willing to pay salaries to hold the better teachers, and that, therefore, turnover due to this factor may be expected to decrease. On the other hand it may be said that, with our present system of financing education, there are differences of abilities of communities, and that, therefore, turnover due to this factor may be expected to continue to the degree to which these inequalities exist.¹"

"The fact that the board of education is the dominating factor in any school system may not be altogether deplorable, if this almost unlimited control is exercised by a board that appreciates the responsibility of its

¹
Wendell White, "Rate and Causes of Teacher Turnover of Iowa Teachers," American School Board Journal, 1925, Vol. 71, p. 53.

position and the splendor of its opportunity. And may I briefly and affirmatively define such an ideal board? It will possess a fourfold qualification.

1. The ideal board will realize that the purpose of a school system is to educate the children. -----

2. The ideal board of education will represent the whole community and not any particular part thereof. ----

3. The ideal board of education will realize that the administration of the schools is a matter for experts, and will wisely confine itself to legislative and general supervisory functions. -----

4. And now I come to the fourth qualification which I consider the most essential of all. Every member of the ideal board of education will possess an enthusiasm¹ for education."

"The movement of teachers from the small schools to the larger systems is shown by the excessive turnover in the former as compared with the low rate in the latter. The remedy for this situation lies in awakening school officials to the seriousness of the problem of engaging teachers with greater experience and then retaining them over a longer period of years. The problem can be solved only by paying better salaries and by improving teaching and living conditions to the point where the teacher will

¹
R. E. Blight, "Is the Board of Education an Incubus on Modern Education," Journal of Proceedings and Addresses of the National Education Association of the United States, 1915, p. 1038-1040.

be better satisfied to live and work in a small town."¹

Summary of Chapter V

The problem of teacher turnover is an important educational problem, especially among our smaller schools. Teacher turnover neither can nor should be entirely prevented. As long as women teachers marry and establish homes of their own there will be withdrawals of teachers from their positions. We should not lament about this loss as good homes are necessary to the upbuilding of society. Then again there are ambitious people in every field who leave their positions because they feel that greater good will come from their services elsewhere and in other lines of work. Some teachers are successful in one place even though they have been considered failures in other places. In such cases it is advisable for changes to be made, if changing will mean success.

Many cases of withdrawals are avoidable and detrimental to the teacher as well as the pupils and therefore should be prevented. It is a question whether all women teachers who marry should be dismissed just because of marriage. Many such teachers have the necessary training and experience to make excellent teachers and can render just as good, if not better service, to the school as many of the unmarried teachers. The good of the children should be the determining factor in making a decision in regard to this matter.

¹

R. I. Seeder, op. cit. p. 117

The dismissal of teachers cannot be done away with entirely. Nevertheless, better selection of students for teacher training, elimination of those in training for teaching, who give evidence of lacking desirable qualities, and more careful selection of teachers for the staff should reduce, materially, the number of dismissals. More and better supervision would aid the weak or beginning teachers so that the number of dismissals could be reduced. Community pettiness cause unnecessary dismissals which could be eliminated or reduced by the enactment of satisfactory tenure laws.

Many teachers leave the smaller communities to seek more desirable positions in larger places. Too often by such changes the large schools gain and the small schools lose by such a movement. Better salaries and improved living conditions would reduce the number who leave the small communities. A single salary schedule for teachers of like training and experience would reduce turnover from this cause to a great extent. It might be necessary for the smaller schools to even pay more than is paid in the larger places to compensate for the loss due to social conditions.

Awakening the teachers and people of the smaller communities to the realization that excessive turnover reduces the efficiency of the school will also greatly help the turnover evil.

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APPENDIX A

Winifred, Montana
May 8, 1935

Dear Superintendent:

The information called for in this study deals with the extent and causes of teacher turnover in the schools of Montana. Most of the information called for can be given by a check mark or a very few words.

I trust that you can find time to give me this information within the next few days. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Fred E. Sheets
Supt. of Schools

TURNOVER OF TEACHERS IN MONTANA

I. By whom are teachers selected. Check.

- (1) By School Board recommended by Superintendent
- (2) By School Board and Superintendent
- (3) By Superintendent
- (4) By Superintendent and Principal
- (5) Committee of Board
- (6) _____

II. Do you employ married teachers? Yes ___ No ___. If not, why not? _____

Do you employ home teachers? Yes ___ No ___. If not, why not? _____

Do you employ inexperienced teachers? Yes ___ No ___. If not, why not? _____

III. By what standards are teachers selected? Check those actually important in determining selection.

- (1) What preparation for position
High School _____
Grades _____
- (2) Teaching success _____
- (3) Age limits, if any _____
- (4) Religious preference _____
- (5) Recommendations from whom _____
- (6) Moral Character _____
- (7) Health _____
- (8) Personality _____
- (9) Photograph _____
- (10) _____

IV. Methods by which new teachers are aided to become adjusted to their new positions and environment.

- (1) By reception given to teachers.

If given, by whom sponsored? P. T. A.? _____
Church? _____ By old teachers in system? _____ By
patrons of school? _____

- (2) By aiding to find suitable living quarters _____
Who gives aid? _____

- (3) By placing her in charge of work for which she is especially well prepared. _____

- (4) By careful supervision by principal or supervisor, to aid with new problems. _____

- (5) By giving new teachers a lighter teaching load.
- _____

(6) Teachers' meetings _____.

(7) Personal interviews _____.

(8) _____.

V. How are unsuccessful teachers aided. Check methods used.

(1) Extra supervision _____.

(2) Personal conferences _____.

(3) _____.

VI. Who decides that a teacher is a failure and therefore should be dismissed? (1) Superintendent and board? _____.

(2) Superintendent? _____ (3) Committee of board? _____.

(4) Board? _____ (5) Patrons reporting to board or superintendent? _____.

Is warning given to a teacher who is not considered satisfactory? Yes? _____ No _____ When is warning given? _____.

When is notice of dismissal given? _____ Is reason for dismissal given? Yes _____ No _____.

VII. Extent of turnover in your school from May 1, 1934 to May 1, 1935.

Number of teachers in your school.

Number of men teachers leaving system during the year.

In grades _____ In High School _____.

Number of women teachers leaving system during the year.

In grades _____ In High School _____.

VIII. What are the salary levels of the teachers leaving your school in the past year. Give number of teachers leaving at each level.

500--599 900--999 1300--1399 1700--1799

600--699 1000--1099 1400--1499 1800--1899

700--799 1100--1199 1500--1599 1900--1999
 800--899 1200--1299 1600--1699

IX. Number of teachers leaving system who had previous experience in positions similar to position left. _____.

Number of teachers leaving system who had teaching experience but in different field than position left. _____.

X. Causes of Turnover

Position	Sex M-F	Yrs. of Exp.	Degree or Yrs. Training	Years in System	Reason for Withdrawal
					Resigned to accept better position
					Resigned to be married
					Illness at home
					Home duties
					Death in the family
					Family moving away
					Ill health
					To teach nearer home
					For professional study
					Disliked superior officer
					Dissatisfied with present position
					Retirement for age or incapacity
					To enter another line of work
					No specific reason given
					Death

Causes of Turnover (continued)

Sex M-F	Yrs. of Exp.	Degree or Yrs. Training	Years in System	Reason for Withdrawal
				Maternity
				Disciplinary trouble
				Unsocial attitudes in community
				Facetiousness of employment officers
				Dismissed

If dismissed fill
in blank opposite
reason for dis-
missal.

- (1) Immorality
(proved)
- (2) Naturally not
fitted for teaching
- (3) Poor scholar-
ship
- (4) Poor health
- (5) Improper
training
- (6) Lack of self
control
- (7) Trouble with
board members
- (8) Trouble with
pupils
- (9) Personality
- (10) Insubordination
- (11) Trouble with
other teachers
- (12) Malfeasance
- (13) Neglect of
duty
- (14) Incompetence
- (15) Malicious
gossip (unproved)
- (16) _____

XI. (1) Do you have a salary schedule? Yes? _____ No? _____

Does beginning salary depend upon training and experience?

Yes _____ No _____.

(2) How many days are allowed each teacher for sick leave with full pay?_____. Half pay?_____.

XII. Is summary of this report desired? Yes?_____

No?_____

Name_____Position_____

Address_____

CHIEFTAIN BOND