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St. Cloud State Teachers College

BULLETIN

ATTITUDES OF MINNESOTA SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS
TOWARD TEACHER PLACEMENT AND
FOLLOW-UP SERVICES

by

Charles W. Emery



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FOREWORD

In this bulletin Dr. Charles W. Emery has given us the results of a study to determine the attitudes of Minnesota school administrators toward institutional placement and follow-up-services. What he reports is the result of interviews with city and county superintendents of schools in Minnesota and a questionnaire sent to fifty-seven institutional placement bureaus. While Dr. Emery has been Director of Placement at the St. Cloud State Teachers College a comparatively short time, his experience in related fields has been considerable. He has been State Field Representative of the Youth Personnel Division of the National Youth Administration for the state of Wisconsin and investigator for the United States Civil Service Commission. He is currently President of the Minnesota Institutional Teacher Placement Association. He knows placement from the administrator's standpoint, the teachers standpoint, and from the standpoint of the teacher training institutions. He has been a high school teacher, principal, a city school superintendent, a college instructor, and a director of placement. He has a B.Ed. degree from the State Teachers College, Eau Claire, Wisconsin; an M.A. from The State University of Iowa; and the Ed. D. degree from Colorado State College of Education, Greeley, Colorado.

Floyd E. Perkins

Director, Bureau of Special Services.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Purposes and Duties of the Institutional Teacher Placement and Follow-Up Services

The institutional teacher placement bureau is a separate service of a college for teacher education maintained for the purposes of finding suitable teaching vacancies for graduating students and alumni of the institution, of giving them vocational counsel, and of helping employing school officials to secure suitable teachers to fill vacancies in their faculties. Closely related to the teacher placement services of a college and usually a responsibility of the same bureau are the "teacher follow-up services" - those activities which a college carries on for the purposes of orientation, in-service education, and evaluation of "teaching graduates" of the institution.

In 1939 Endicott¹ conducted a survey study of the personnel services of colleges of education in sixty large universities. From this study he developed a set of principles to guide practice in student personnel work in colleges of education. The first principle of student personnel administration at which he arrived is that:

It should be a definite responsibility and obligation of institutions for the education of teachers to maintain a professional service for the purpose of assisting employing officials to secure for school children the best qualified teachers.²

Over the years a broadening concept of the duties and responsibilities of institutional teacher placement services has developed. From the simple function of bringing together the teacher candidate and the prospective employer the task of the college teacher placement bureau has become a complex of personnel services designed to assist the student or graduate:

in obtaining a position suitable to his interests and qualifications under conditions offering maximum opportunities for both individual satisfactions and social service, of evaluating his professional experience, and of assisting him in his further professional adjustments.³

¹ Endicott, F. S., *Selection, Advisement, and Teacher Placement in Institutions for the Education of Teachers*.

² *Ibid.*, p. 24.

³ Linton, Clarence, "The Role of Placement in the Total Program of Teacher Education," in *Current Practices in Teacher Placement*, p. 11.

Linton lists the following purposes of placement and follow-up services to teachers and other educational workers.

1. To appraise the interests, needs, capabilities, and potentialities of the student or graduate with respect to qualifications for employment.
2. To discover employment possibilities in relation to the interests, needs, and qualifications of the student or graduate.
3. To bring the prospective employer and prospective employee together for the purpose of establishing mutuality of interests with a view to employment of the latter.
4. To assist the prospective employer in appraising the resources of the institution in relation to his needs in general, and the qualifications of students or graduates for the positions available in particular.
5. To obtain knowledge of employment needs, actual, imminent or potential, which may assist the institution in adapting its total program and its placement and follow-up services to serve more effectively the needs of the children to be served and the prospective teachers to be placed.
6. To develop relationships with prospective employers which will promote mutual understanding and cooperation in the placement and follow-up of well qualified students and graduates.
7. To assist the student or graduate in evaluating his professional experience and making further professional adjustments by which he may have optimum personal satisfaction, and render maximum social service.
8. To evaluate the total program of the teacher education institution, the total student personnel program, and especially the placement and follow-up services, as a basis for formulation of institutional policies and the improvement of the total effectiveness of the institutional program.⁴

Development of Institutional Teacher Placement and Follow-Up Services

Not until very recently has the placement of graduates in suitable teaching positions been considered a function of the teacher education program. Until well into the third decade of the nineteenth century teachers had no organized assistance in finding positions. The usual method of seeking teachers and of seeking teaching openings was through the advertising columns of newspapers.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 11 - 12.

The first teacher placement agencies were commercial. In 1835, the American Association for the Supply of Teachers was founded in Philadelphia.⁵ This was the first teachers' agency in the country. During its early years it was more of a teachers' association or cooperative than a commercial placement agency. The officers were elected from the membership of the association until 1839 when a permanent secretary was employed and a fee of 5 per cent of the first year's salary was charged for placement. Half of this fee was paid by the employer, half by the employee.

Between 1870 and 1890 there were 200 commercial teacher placement agencies operating in the United States. This indicates the need that was felt for such a service.

In spite of the apparent need for teacher placement service, normal schools and colleges took little responsibility for teacher placement until the twentieth century. The president or director of training of the school would discuss candidates with employers and often contracts were made out and signed right in the office of the president.

The University of Nebraska established one of the earliest, if not the earliest, institutional teacher placement bureaus in 1892. For the first six years this was nominally operated by the chancellor. However, the chancellor's secretary, who was also assistant registrar, actually did all of the work. In 1898, a faculty committee of five was placed in charge of the bureau, but it continued under the operation of the chancellor's secretary. The bureau was turned over to the supervision of a faculty committee of the university teachers college in 1907. In 1912, a part-time director was appointed to head the office.⁶ This evolution in administrative practice seems to be typical of the changes that have taken place generally in institutional teacher placement bureaus.

The trend toward institutional teacher placement services grew slowly until the early nineteen thirties, when the serious personnel problems caused by the depression accelerated the use of college placement bureaus.⁷ During the post-war period they have continued to expand, until today practically all institutions for teacher education have made provision for teacher placement bureaus.⁸

The history of teacher follow-up work is similar to that of teacher placement offices. In 1892, President William Rainey Harper inaugurated extension work from the University of Chicago. This was the first such service in this country except for a few strictly agricultural courses. The University of Wisconsin instituted its great "state-wide campus"

⁵ Brogan, Whit, *The Work of Placement Offices in Teacher Training Institutions*, p. 3.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁷ Umtattd, J. G. (ed.), *Institutional Teacher Placement*, p. iii.

⁸ Endicott, F. S., *op. cit.*, p. 18.

plan in 1906. From that time on the extension services of schools of higher education have been developing until today they are common.⁹

The State Normal School at Kalamazoo, Michigan, in 1905, was the first teachers college to offer extension work. Colorado State Teachers College, at Greeley, set up such program in 1908, and Kansas State Teachers College, at Pittsburg, established extension classes in 1909. Most teachers colleges in the country were offering extension work to teachers by 1925.¹⁰

Teacher follow-up services have developed even more slowly than teacher placement and extension classes for teachers. Relatively few colleges for teacher education have well organized follow-up services at present.

It seems to be the consensus of educators today that the college for teacher education has not discharged its responsibility to its graduates or to the profession on commencement day, but that its services should be extended to the end that its graduates are satisfactorily absorbed into the profession.

For years colleges have been gradually expanding the services of placement, follow-up, and in-service education in response to expressed needs. Much of the practice that has been followed in carrying out these services has been founded on expedience. Often there has not been time to precede a new policy with adequate study. Investigations of current practice in teacher placement and follow-up have been made from time to time, but there have been few major attempts to poll the opinions of the people most involved in these services.

Need for a Study of the Attitudes of School Administrators Toward Institutional Teacher Placement and Follow-Up Services

The chief responsibility of the teacher placement bureau is, of course, to the school child. But in discharging this responsibility, the placement service deals with three interests to whom it is also responsible. These are: (1) The candidate; (2) the college; and (3) the school district, as represented by the employing official. It is important that current representative opinion as to placement and follow-up practices be secured from each of these interests that there may be continuing improvement in the services.

Because the employing officials, usually the school superintendents, are ordinarily on the college campus for only occasional brief visits, it is more difficult to secure their thoughtful opinion about placement and follow-up services than it is to poll college faculty members and

⁹ Reeves, L. S., *The Activities of Teachers College Extension Departments*, p. 45.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 61.

candidates. Yet, the very fact that these school administrators are from off the campus makes their opinion of great value. Kittle¹¹ says:

The placement office has a direct relationship with the employers in all communities in the region, as well as with former students now living and working as citizens. If wisely and efficiently operated, the placement office will have a closer connection with off-campus interests, through direct correspondence, and visits than most other departments of the college.

Unless the placement bureau knows school administrators and their needs and preferences, it is greatly handicapped in performing its function. Superintendent Kirk¹² points this out clearly.

How can the institutional placement bureau improve its service to the teaching profession and to the schools of the United States? My first answer to this question would be that they should learn to know *me*. When I say *me* I mean of course the individuals who make up that large group of school superintendents who prefer to work with the institutional placement bureau rather than with other sources of supply. The institutional placement bureau should familiarize itself with my routine of selecting teachers. It may be that I am eccentric and that my routine is lop-sided, narrow in outlook and antiquated. Nevertheless, it is my routine, the routine which I wish to follow, and the placement bureau should learn it if it is desirous of assisting me in the selection of teachers.

Without the good will of the employing officials a teacher placement bureau cannot operate. As Strebel¹³ says:

The professional significance in institutional teacher-placement work is measured in a large degree by the nature of the bureau's relationships with employers.

It is important, therefore, that teacher placement bureaus keep informed as to the opinions of school administrators in their service area concerning their practices and policies.

¹¹ Kittle, J. L., "The Placement Office and Public Relations," *School and Society*, Vol. 65 (November 24, 1945), p. 340.

¹² Kirk, H. H., "The Superintendent and the Institutional Teacher Placement Bureau," p. 2, *Bulletin of the National Institutional Teacher Placement Association*, Vol. 2 (May 15, 1936), quoted in Umstattd, J. G. (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 140.

¹³ Strebel, R. F., "Relations with Employers," in Umstattd, J. G. (ed.) *op. cit.*, p. 140.

CHAPTER TWO

A Study of the Attitudes of Minnesota School Administrators Toward Institutional Teacher Placement and Follow-Up Services

In 1954-5 a study¹⁴ was conducted which had two purposes. The major purpose of this study was to ascertain the opinions and attitudes of Minnesota public school administrators regarding certain practices and policies of the teacher placement bureaus, teacher follow-up programs, and field services of the institutions for teacher education which principally serve this area. To acquire this information interviews were held with 100 Minnesota public school officials (Appendix A), comprising 17.14 per cent of the district superintendents and 18.39 per cent of the county superintendents in the state. These interviews were guided by a schedule of twenty-one items so constructed as to elicit discussion by the interviewee. During the interviews the questioner attempted to categorize broadly the responses of the administrators. These were recorded in several groups according to pupil enrollment in the districts represented and the distance of the districts from the nearest institution for teacher education. In addition, especially significant or pertinent remarks which appeared in the interview were recorded. An effort was made to establish an objective, controlled interviewing situation. All of the interviews, which averaged seventy-five minutes in length, were conducted in the privacy of the administrator's own offices. Standardized illustrations were used to clarify the questions and the interviewer refrained from any comment which would reveal his own attitude or opinion. The superintendents showed much interest in the study and were highly cooperative in the interviews.

A minor and auxiliary purpose of the study was to discover what the policies of the institutional teacher placement bureaus which serve this region are in regard to certain placement and follow-up procedures. This information was acquired through a questionnaire of twenty items which was mailed to the directors of teacher placement (Appendix B) in the fifty-eight universities and colleges which educate teachers in the states of Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. Fifty-seven, or 98.28 per cent, of these placement directors responded, indicating that these officials considered the study to be needed and valuable. The responses were tabulated according to the types of institutions represented, that is, (1) state universities, (2) private or church related universities, (3) state colleges, and (4) private or church related colleges.

¹⁴ Emery, C. W. *Attitudes of Minnesota School Administrators Toward Placement, Follow-Up, and Extension Services of Colleges for Teacher Education.*

CHAPTER THREE

Practices and Policies of Institutional Teacher Placement Services

All of the fifty-seven institutions for teacher education included in the study have organized teacher placement services which operate under the direction of a designated official. Thirty, or 56.63 per cent, of these placement bureaus are independent of the general placement services of the institution, and twenty-seven, or 47.37 per cent, are a part of the general institutional placement services. The fifty-one of these institutions which revealed their placement figures were responsible for placing 5,892 graduates in educational positions in the twelve months preceding September 1, 1953, with an average of 115.53. The largest number placed by any institutional bureau was 796 and the lowest figure was eight.

The institutional teacher placement bureaus in the region enjoy a good reputation among the Minnesota school administrators. Of the 100 superintendents interviewed, eighty-nine definitely preferred to secure their teachers through an institutional placement service rather than a commercial teachers agency. Four preferred the commercial agency as a source for teachers, and seven felt no real preference for either type of placement service. The factor of high commercial agency fees was given most frequently as a reason for their preference by the administrators who favored the use of institutional placement bureaus. Other reasons having a high frequency referred to the more intimate knowledge of the candidates possessed by the institutional bureaus and the contrast between the professional and commercial motivations of the respective services. Nine of the superintendents felt that institutional bureaus enroll a better type of candidate than do commercial agencies. The four administrators who favored commercial teachers agencies believe that these offices are more efficient and rapid in their service and that they have a better selection of experienced teachers than institutional bureaus.

Thirty-six, or 63.16 per cent, of the fifty-seven institutions polled in the study require their education students to register with the teacher placement bureau before they are graduated. Twenty-one, or 36.84 per cent, do not make it a requirement for graduation. Seventy-six of the 100 school administrators who were interviewed believed that registration of education students with the college teacher placement service should be a requirement of graduation. There was strong agreement between superintendents of large, average, and small systems on this point although a somewhat higher percentage of superintendents of systems near colleges for teacher education than of those more distant in location favor this practice.

Some of the reasons given by these superintendents in support of compulsory registration of college students with the teacher placement service were:

1. Placement credentials are a valuable part of the college's cumulative record on the student.

2. A student doesn't know at the time of graduation whether or not he will ever wish to teach. If he ever does, his file of credentials is in good order.
3. Students in state institutions owe such registration to the state.
4. Complete registration is to the advantage of the entire profession in this time of teacher shortage.
5. Some agency is necessary for the candidate - his college bureau is the best for him.
6. Complete registration of teachers is of great help to employing officials.
7. It is the most opportune time for placement registration.

Twenty-one of the 100 administrators opposed compulsory registration largely on the basis that it is arbitrary and, as some of them said, "undemocratic."

One superintendent suggested that there should be a central repository for teachers' credentials in each state with which every certified teacher must be registered.

The administrators interviewed in this study were nearly unanimous in their opinion that institutional teacher placement bureaus should maintain an active alumni placement service. Ninety-eight of the 100 interviewees favored such a service, and only two believed that it is a poor policy. Fifty-six, or 98.25 per cent, of the fifty-seven institutional bureaus represented in the study reported that they register alumni for placement. There is no evidence in this study, however, of the degree of emphasis placed upon this service by the various placement bureaus. It is probable that many college placement bureaus do not feature this service, for there seemed to be a general impression held by the school superintendents that most college placement bureaus do not encourage alumni registration. The school administrators who favored the practice believed that emphasis on alumni placement would strengthen the loyalty of alumni to the *alma mater*, would improve public relations for the college, and would furnish more efficient service to the employing superintendent. Those opposed felt that the chief responsibility of the institutional placement office is to the inexperienced graduates, and that emphasis on alumni placement would over-tax the facilities of the bureaus to such an extent that the new graduates would be neglected.

A slightly smaller number of the Minnesota school superintendents who were interviewed believed that it is wise for a college placement bureau to help worthy alumni build careers by notifying them of better positions for which they are qualified. Ninety of the 100 interviewees favored this practice, but twenty-eight of these qualified their affirmative replies. These qualifications were that ethical considerations should be observed in notifying superintendents, that the placement bureaus be adequately staffed to handle the work, and that competition between colleges be reduced. The ten administrators who opposed the policy believed that it might lead to favoritism and abuse, that it would require more placement personnel and facilities, and that it is too directive.

Thirty-one, or 54.39 per cent, of the fifty-seven institutional teacher placement bureaus reported that they charge a registration fee, and twenty-six, or 45.6 per cent, said they have no fee for registration. Twelve of the bureaus, 21.05 per cent, charge a fee of alumni only, while six, or 16.53 per cent, charge only new graduates for registration. Of the reporting institutions only three charge a fee for securing a position for a registrant, and these charges are nominal. The highest registration fee charged by any of the thirty-one institutions which make such a charge is \$5.50. The mode was \$2.00 to \$2.99. There was no uniformity whatsoever in the amount of fees charged or in the custom of charging fees for original registration or reregistration. Almost every conceivable practice was reported by the placement bureaus represented in the study.

The interviewer asked the 100 school administrators what information they considered desirable to possess about a candidate when selecting a new teacher. Their replies included 109 different items of information. These were classified into the ten major groups which appear below in the rank order of frequency:

1. Personal qualities and data
2. Academic preparation
3. Social and cultural background
4. Teaching effectiveness
5. Character traits
6. Activities and interests other than classroom
7. Professional philosophy and attitude
8. Evaluation of the teacher by others
9. Social adaptability and acceptability
10. Miscellaneous

"Moral habits" and "emotional stability" were mentioned by only twelve superintendents and ranked 16.5. Only four superintendents named "success in discipline", and only three mentioned "industry." The fact that "race" was listed by only one is probably because this does not constitute a serious problem in Minnesota. "Religious preference" was mentioned by thirty-five superintendents indicating that this is a real problem in some communities. Many of the administrators who mentioned "religious preference" explained that this was not because of intolerance but because they felt it is wise to keep a balance of teachers of various religious leanings on their faculties. Others said that as their community had no establishments of some major religious categories, they felt that teachers embracing those faiths would be unhappy in the community.

The screening of candidates for teaching positions by the institutional placement bureau is favored by the great majority of Minnesota school superintendents. Eighty-four of the 100 administrators who were interviewed ordinarily wished to have the placement director pre-select their candidates and submit two to six names. They appeared to have faith

in the judgment of the placement director to select candidates who would be happy and successful in their school systems. The fact that this practice saves the superintendent valuable time was mentioned by several, as was the belief that widespread notification of vacancies increases competition for positions and drives down teachers' salaries.

Thirteen of the 100 superintendents would prefer to have all candidates notified of their vacancies. Some of these believed the placement bureaus cannot do effective screening and others felt that a large number of candidates allow them to do a better job of building a balanced faculty.

Three superintendents would like to have the placement director carefully select one nominee for the position because they felt that if each bureau nominated only one candidate, he would probably be outstanding.

Little agreement was shown in the practices followed by the fifty-seven responding institutional teacher placement bureaus in the number of candidates notified of a given vacancy. Thirty-two, or 56.14 per cent, of them screen their candidates, while twenty-three, or 40.35 per cent, as a general practice notify all candidates who are qualified to fill the vacancy. Two of the placement directors in state colleges usually nominate one highly selected candidate for a position.

Most of the superintendents who were interviewed believed that the counseling function of the placement director is very important and expressed a desire for a free and highly informative advisement program. They also seemed to have a sympathetic understanding of the problems inherent in representing so many groups in the placement procedure. Eighty-eight of the 100 administrators said that the placement director should frankly discuss the candidate with the superintendent, but twenty-three of these qualified their response. Most of these qualifications referred to the objectivity of the counseling and the possession of accurate knowledge by the director. These superintendents felt that such advisement is an obligation of the bureau and is best for all persons concerned.

Nine of the superintendents were strongly opposed to the director's discussing candidates with the hiring official. These administrators felt that it is difficult to keep such counseling objective, that the director's judgment is not always good, and that some superintendents cannot be trusted with confidential information.

Three superintendents did not comment on this practice.

Twenty-one, or 36.84 per cent, of the fifty-seven placement directors polled in this study regularly discuss candidates with the employing official. Thirty more, or 52.63 per cent, give such counsel when it is requested. Five, or 8.77 per cent, do not discuss the candidate with the potential employer. One director did not reply to this question.

Frequently a candidate for a teaching position will ask the director of the institutional placement bureau questions regarding the superintendent

of the district where the vacancy exists. Answering such questions has its dangers, and in any case requires great diplomacy and objectivity. Eighty-seven of the 100 administrators who were interviewed believed that answering such questions is a responsibility of the placement director although twenty-seven of these qualified their answers. These qualifications referred to accuracy of information and objectivity. Their attitude was summed up by one of them thus: "The placement director should be as frank as he can and still be professional."

Eleven of the administrators were opposed to this practice. They believed the directors are not well enough informed to give this counsel and that it is dangerous to give such confidential information to inexperienced candidates whose ethical concepts are not yet developed.

Of the fifty-seven placement directors who replied to the questionnaire, only twenty-six, or 45.61 per cent, reported that they ever discuss the employing superintendent with the candidate.

Ninety-one of the 100 Minnesota school administrators believed that the placement director should frankly discuss school systems and communities with the candidates. Apparently they considered it more dangerous than the other types of counseling, however, for forty-three of them qualified their replies with warnings to the director to be factual and objective. A much greater percentage of superintendents in small systems than in large systems favored this type of advisement, and superintendents in districts remote from a placement bureau favored it more strongly than those in systems adjacent to or near a college.

Complete disagreement with the practice was voiced by eight of the interviewees. The reason most frequently given for their attitude was that young people should learn to evaluate and make decisions for themselves. One superintendent did not reply to the question.

Forty-six, or 80.70 per cent, of the directors of placement who responded to the questionnaire discuss prospective school systems and positions with the candidate, and forty, or 70.18 per cent, inform him about prospective communities.

The great majority of the administrators who were interviewed, seventy-seven of the 100, believed that counseling on salaries should consist of informing the candidates regarding prevailing salaries in the area and discussing the range in salaries and the factors which create the range. They felt that this counseling should be strictly factual and that advice should not be given the candidate by the placement director.

Two of the superintendents, both from small districts, would like to have the placement director set a minimum figure below which he would not let his candidates accept a position. They felt that this would strengthen the administrator's hand with his board of education in the matter of salary increases and would eventually result in adequate teachers' salaries.

Ten of the superintendents believed it is the responsibility of the director of placement to tell the candidate what salary he can expect and give him advice on the matter.

The practice of counseling candidates on salaries was absolutely opposed by eleven of the 100 administrators. It was said by some that because salary schedules are arbitrary such information would be valueless to a candidate. Others felt that it would be giving an unfair advantage to a candidate in a bargaining situation.

Forty-seven, or 82.46 per cent, of the fifty-seven placement directors in the four state area who responded to the questionnaire tell their candidates what salary they have a right to expect, but only seventeen, or 29.82 per cent, are so directive as to set a minimum salary for candidates.

Advice on how to proceed with the application for a position and the job interview is given by fifty-one, or 89.47 per cent, of the placement directors cooperating in the study. In the interview conducted with the school administrators the question was asked: "What advice should a placement director give a candidate about making job application interviews?" The 100 superintendents responded with sixty-four items of advice that they believed should be given in such counseling. Many original items were named and much contradictory thinking on the subject by school administrators was revealed. "Appearance" was the most frequently mentioned factor. Others frequently mentioned had to do with being informed before the interview, "genuine interest in the school and community," and "conversational approach."

Fifty, or 87.72 per cent, of the responding placement directors reported that they give advice to candidates on how to write letters of application. When asked what advice a placement director should give a candidate about writing application letters, the 100 Minnesota school administrators listed fifty-eight suggestions which they believed should be made to candidates regarding the writing of letters of application. The item most frequently mentioned regarded brevity. Fifty-two interviewees recommended that application letters be not over one page in length. Typewritten letters for both elementary and secondary teachers were favored by seventeen superintendents. In contrast to this recommendation, eleven superintendents prefer all application letters in long-hand. Fifteen expressed themselves as believing that either form is satisfactory. Many such differences of opinion appear in the lists. It is obvious that it would be impossible for a candidate to follow all of the suggestions made by these administrators regarding the writing of application letters. However, the list indicates what practices are favored by the largest number of administrators.

The interviewer inquired of the Minnesota school administrators regarding the value of four media of publicity which are used by various teacher placement bureaus and requested the administrators to name other effective means of publicity. The fifty-seven directors of teacher placement who are represented in the study were asked questions regarding their use of the same means of publicity. The four media about which these officials were questioned were:

1. Direct solicitation of school boards by letter
2. Direct solicitation of superintendents by letter

3. Advertisements in professional journals
4. Joint advertisements in professional journals with other members of the state institutional teacher placement association

Because the value of a state directory of placement officers to be printed on a card and sent to all employing officials was mentioned so frequently by superintendents, it was added to the above list in the revised interviewing schedule.

The interviewer received the impression that most of the superintendents and many of the placement directors felt that because of the teacher shortage publicity is not an important problem to institutional teacher placement bureaus at this time.

For several years the Minnesota Institutional Teacher Placement Association has placed an advertisement in one issue of the Minnesota Education Association Journal setting forth the aims of the association and listing the member institutions. Seventy-one of the 100 Minnesota school administrators believed this publicity medium is valuable. Only fifteen felt, however, that an advertisement carried by one school is effective. Sixty-three of these officials said that direct solicitation of superintendents is an effective medium, particularly if a list of available candidates is frequently circularized. The direct solicitation of school boards was vigorously opposed by ninety-two of the 100 school administrators who felt that this would weaken the superintendent's position and help place hiring in the hands of non-professional people. Fifty-nine administrators were questioned about the value of a state directory of institutional teacher placement bureaus. Forty-six, or 71 per cent, of these believed such a directory would be effective.

Sixteen, or 28.08 per cent, of the fifty-seven directors of placement who were polled reported that their schools do nothing to publicize the services of the placement bureaus. The medium of publicity most commonly used by the forty-one institutional bureaus that do advertise is the direct solicitation of superintendents by letters, circulars, personal visits, or other means. Only eight, or 14.04 per cent, of the institutions solicit school boards directly. One of the fifty-seven institutions - a state college - reported using advertisements in professional journals. Nine colleges and universities, comprising 15.79 per cent of the responding schools, reported that they use joint advertisements with other members of the state institutional teacher placement association. These institutions are all members of the Minnesota Institutional Teacher Placement Association.

In the discussion of ethical concepts in teacher placement services the interviewer described two situations which confront all placement directors and asked the 100 school administrators what action they thought should be taken by the placement directors in the cases described. The first of these was a situation in which derogatory information which is apparently unfair or malicious appears in a candidate's references. Twenty-eight of the interviewees said that recommendations should not be edited or deleted from the file under any circumstances. On the other hand,

forty-three of the 100 superintendents believed that under certain circumstances complete deletion of the recommendation would be justified. Only two administrators favored editing the material. Twenty-five interviewees suggested that an investigation of the circumstances be made by the placement director. Thirty superintendents recommended that the derogatory material be retained in the file, but that the director evaluate it in some way for the prospective employers. In the opinion of seven respondents the placement director must rely on the judgment and fair play of the employing superintendents.

The fifty-seven directors of teacher placement were very evenly divided in their opinion as to the course which should be taken in this delicate ethical situation. None of them believed, however, that all letters should be shown to prospective employers without explanation. Twenty-seven, or 47.37 per cent, of the placement officials said they believed that in a case where apparently unfair or malicious information has been included in the references the file should be edited and the offensive material deleted from the credentials. Three of these respondents emphasized that this did not mean that they alter the letters, they delete them entirely. Twenty-eight, or 49.2 per cent, of the placement directors present all the letters to prospective employers and have all unusual factors investigated and explained to employing officials. Two placement directors of private or church related colleges did not respond to the question.

The other ethical problem which was presented to the 100 Minnesota school administrators for discussion was regarding the action to be taken by a placement director in the case of rumors of vacancies which are brought to the placement bureau. Fifty-seven of the interviewees believed that rumors of vacancies should be verified before credentials are sent out. It was the opinion of twenty of the superintendents that the placement bureau should take no action whatever on rumors of vacancies but should wait for the employing official to notify the bureau of the vacancy before sending out credentials of candidates. Ten administrators believed that candidates should be allowed to apply for positions on the basis of rumor.

There does not appear to be any predominating practice among the fifty-seven institutional placement bureaus in the handling of rumored vacancies, except that none of these offices notifies enrollees of them or nominates candidates for them without verification of some kind. Fifteen, or 27.27 per cent, reported that they ignore such rumors completely. Thirty, or 54.54 per cent, said that they instruct candidates to write letters of inquiry to verify the vacancy and ask for the opportunity to apply for the position. Twenty-two, or 40 per cent, of the placement officials verify the vacancy personally, by letter or phone, and ask for permission to nominate candidates. A number of institutions reported that they use both methods of verification.

The practice of rating letters of recommendation does not seem to be in general use. So many of the superintendents who were interviewed in this study were unfamiliar with the practice that the question re-

garding it was dropped from the interviewing opinionnaire. Eight, or 14.04 per cent, of the fifty-seven placement directors attempt to rate letters of recommendation, while forty-eight, or 84.21 per cent, do not follow this practice. The director of placement of one private or church related college did not respond to this question.

The interviewer asked the 100 school administrators: "In evaluating an inexperienced candidate, letters of recommendation from which of these references usually would influence you most? From a: (1) College administrator, (2) college professor, (3) family clergyman, (4) student teaching supervisor, or (5) family physician." Student teaching supervisors were ranked much the highest by the superintendents. Seventy-two superintendents rated them first; twenty-three, second; only three, third; and none in the fourth or fifth categories. The recommendations of college teachers also ranked high with twenty-three firsts, and sixty-eight seconds. The vote for the remaining three was very small and there was little difference in rank between the three least chosen types of references. The interviewees place greatest confidence in the recommendations of inexperienced teacher candidates by student teaching supervisors, and also highly regard the recommendations of college teachers, but give very little weight to recommendations of the same candidate by his pastor, college administrator, or personal physician.

A wide variety of practice and policy in their relationships with commercial teachers' agencies was reported by the fifty-seven institutional placement bureaus represented in the study. Twenty, or 35.09 per cent, of the bureaus polled cooperate fully with commercial teachers' agencies by furnishing them with the confidential papers of candidates at the request of either the agency or the candidate. Nine, or 15.79 per cent, of them reported that they furnish candidates' credentials to commercial agencies to be copied only at the request of the agency itself. Confidential credentials are lent to commercial agencies for copying only upon the request of the candidate by fifteen, or 26.31 per cent, of the fifty-seven institutional teacher placement bureaus. Thirteen, or 22.81 per cent, do not furnish candidates' credentials to commercial agencies for copying under any circumstances.

Of the 100 Minnesota school administrators who were interviewed, twenty-four believed an institutional teacher placement bureau should lend candidates' credentials to commercial agencies at the request of either the candidate or the agency because they felt that it is a service both to the candidate and to the candidate's references. Eight respondents believed the institutional bureau should make a charge for this service. Thirty-three said that the institutional bureau should lend candidates' credentials to commercial teachers' agencies, but only at the request of the candidate. They also gave as their reason that it is a service to both the candidate and his references.

In the opinion of forty-one superintendents the institutional teacher placement bureau should not lend its confidential papers to commercial agencies for copying. They reasoned that the college bureau had done

the work of assembling the papers and that it would be unfair for the commercial agency to reap the profit. Some also considered it a violation of a confidence.

CHAPTER FOUR

Teacher Follow-Up Practices

Closely allied to the teacher placement services of colleges for teacher education are the teacher follow-up services of these institutions. In the geographical area covered by this study, the teacher follow-up work is sponsored or co-sponsored by the teacher placement bureau in forty-one, or 89.13 per cent, of the forty-six institutions for teacher education which have follow-up programs. The attitude of the school administrators who were interviewed toward teacher follow-up programs was highly favorable. Ninety-seven of the 100 interviewees felt that teacher follow-up service has real value, and only three believed that colleges of education should not engage in follow-up activities. Sixty-eight of the 100 superintendents said that this service is a responsibility of the institutions for teacher education. Twenty-nine did not consider it a responsibility of the colleges but thought it is valuable to superintendents and teachers. County superintendents showed more enthusiasm for this activity than did the other administrators. In most Minnesota counties the county superintendent of schools is without supervisory assistance and these officials feel a great need for follow-up service. Likewise administrators in small systems showed more enthusiasm for follow-up programs than superintendents of large systems which have highly organized supervisory activities. Some of the favorable outcomes of teacher follow-up work mentioned by these administrators were:

1. It is a means whereby a college can improve its curriculum through a study of its products.
2. It gives the teacher a sense of security.
3. It informs the placement bureau of the success of its candidates.
4. It helps the new teacher make a transition from theory to practice.
5. It fosters cooperation between the colleges and local school authorities.
6. It supplements the inadequate supervision that can be offered by many small school systems.

The three superintendents who opposed the practice of teacher follow-up felt that the orientation of new teachers is primarily the responsibility and prerogative of the local school system and community.

They said that the colleges might attempt to impose their own philosophy of education upon the local schools.

Eighty-four of the 100 Minnesota school superintendents expressed themselves as believing that the colleges for teacher education serving this region are not doing a satisfactory job of teacher follow-up work. Thirteen of them felt that the colleges are performing satisfactory follow-up service. Three of the administrators did not venture an opinion. Forty-one of these school administrators held the belief that little or no follow-up is being done by the colleges of education in Minnesota.

According to responses on the questionnaire, only thirty-four, or 59.65 per cent, of the fifty-seven institutions which educate teachers in the four state area operate what they consider real follow-up programs; while twelve, or 21.05 per cent, maintain very limited follow-up services; and eleven, or 19.3 per cent, do no teacher follow-up work at all.

Only three, or 5.26 per cent, of the fifty-seven placement officials represented in the study believed that their institutions have adequate follow-up programs. Fifty-four, or 94.74 per cent, reported that they are unable to do as much follow-up work as is desirable. They said that the three important limiting factors to adequate teacher follow-up are (1) inadequate staff, (2) insufficient funds, and (3) too great a geographical area to be covered. Only three of the fifty-seven placement directors considered lack of cooperation by local school officials to be an inhibiting factor to teacher follow-up work.

The interviewer asked the 100 Minnesota school administrators to evaluate the effectiveness of seven follow-up techniques in the program of teacher orientation. The fact that a large majority of the superintendents considered every one of these activities to be effective indicates the enthusiasm they feel for teacher follow-up programs generally.

Responses from the fifty-seven placement directors who were polled show that letters of inquiry to superintendents regarding the success of recent graduates are used with much greater frequency by their offices than other follow-up devices. Thirty-seven, or 80.43 per cent, of the forty-six institutions having teacher follow-up programs reported using this method. Ninety-one of the 100 Minnesota school administrators considered these letters to be effective, and twenty-one of them said they are very effective. Only seven believed them to be ineffective. There seemed to be some feeling that these letters are not studied after they are received by the colleges. Many of the superintendents said their greatest value is to the teacher education institution as an evaluation of its product. The superintendents who considered inquiries to superintendents to be ineffective felt that they are not always answered thoughtfully and honestly and that many superintendents are not well enough informed about their faculties to intelligently answer the questions.

Letters of encouragement and advice to new teachers in which they are offered the support and help of their *alma mater* are used for follow-up work by nineteen, or 41.30 per cent, of the forty-six institutions

having follow-up programs. Very few of the superintendents were familiar with this practice, however, so it must be used infrequently. Eighty-eight of the 100 administrators who were interviewed thought such a letter would be valuable. Thirty-eight of these believed it would be very effective. Ten said it would not be effective, and two did not venture an opinion. Those who favored such a device thought that it had great "morale" value. Those who opposed it said that the new teachers already knew of their *alma mater's* interest in their welfare, therefore such letters would be too much work for the results achieved.

Eleven, or 23.91 per cent, of the forty-six institutions with teacher follow-up services have planned programs of teacher visitation by a placement official. None of the universities reported having such a program. Eighty of the 100 Minnesota school administrators believed that a planned program of follow-up visits of beginning teachers in the college service area by the placement director would be an effective follow-up practice. Of these, forty-four considered this program to be very effective. Planned follow-up visits by the placement director were believed to be ineffective by eighteen superintendents, and two voiced no opinion on the subject.

The administrators who favored the planned program of teacher visitation by the placement director felt that such visits were good for teacher morale and might stimulate weak teachers. The eighteen superintendents who opposed the practice said it is too ambitious to be carried out by the colleges. In their judgment the results would not justify the expenditure of time and money.

Follow-up visits by a placement official at the request of the employing superintendent were reported in use by nine, or 19.35 per cent, of the forty-six institutions having a follow-up program. None of the directors of placement in the reporting universities make such visits. There was less enthusiasm among the 100 Minnesota school administrators for the follow-up visit by request than they showed for the planned program of visitation. Only twenty-two believed this practice to be very effective, whereas twice that number felt that a planned program of visitation would be very effective. Forty-nine of the interviewees called this device effective, twenty-seven said it is ineffective, and two held no opinion.

The seventy-one superintendents who felt the program had merit seemed to consider it more practical than attempting to visit all new teachers. Two major criticisms were made of follow-up visitation on the invitation of the superintendent. One was that most administrators would not call for such aid, either because they were not aware of a problem teacher or because of pride. The other was that when follow-up visitation is not general, a call on a teacher by the placement director is a signal that something is wrong and might do the teacher more harm than good.

Sixteen, or 34.78 per cent, of the forty-six institutions having follow-up programs use supervisory visits by teaching supervisors or education instructors as a teacher follow-up device. The administrators who were

interviewed showed greater enthusiasm for this service than for any of the other follow-up devices. Eighty of the 100 who were interviewed considered it a very effective follow-up practice. Fourteen others called it "effective," and only four believed it to be ineffective. Two interviewees expressed no opinion. This enthusiasm for such a service was found in all enrollment and distance categories.

Several of the administrators had reservations about the value of follow-up visits by supervisors and instructors because of unhappy experiences with them in the past. They stressed the importance of getting the right personnel for the program. The four administrators who considered this practice to be ineffective believed the cost is too great and the college personnel too limited for such activities. Two of them said that supervision is the sole responsibility of the superintendent.

Round table conferences for new teachers are held by eight, or 17.39 per cent, of the forty-six schools for teacher education having follow-up programs. Although none of the superintendents who were interviewed had had personal experience with round table conferences for new teachers as a follow-up device, over half of them believed they would be very effective. Fifty-nine of the 100 school officials said they would be very effective, twenty-six said they would be effective, and twelve felt they would be ineffective. Three administrators did not give an opinion.

In general, those favorable to the plan believed it would inform the college representative and stimulate the teachers who attended the round table. The superintendents who were unfavorable in their attitude to such meetings said they might become places where teachers could voice their grievances against their own school system and make unfavorable comparisons with other systems. It was felt by some that there are already too many such meetings.

Although extension classes for teachers are ordinarily considered as field services of colleges, the function they serve in Minnesota makes them useful as follow-up and in-service training devices. The University of Minnesota and the Minnesota State Teachers Colleges conduct a large number of extension courses in county seats and other strategic spots as aids in the program of the State Department of Education to raise the standard of teacher certification in the state. It is common for a college instructor to have some of the same students both on and off the campus at various times and so become familiar with the student "on the job." In this way and because of the content of the extension courses they often serve as follow-up programs.

Seventy-nine of the 100 administrators who were interviewed considered extension courses to be valuable as a follow-up technique, and of that number fifty-two believed them to be very effective. Ten of the interviewees felt that they are not effective, and six had no opinion on the subject. All of the county superintendents considered these courses to be very effective because a large number of rural teachers in Minne-

sota are teaching on limited certificates and must carry college course work every year for renewal. A higher percentage of administrators of large than of small districts favor extension courses, and a higher percentage of superintendents of districts near colleges than of those in remote areas feel they are effective.

In general, these superintendents feel that extension courses are effectively raising teaching standards in Minnesota. A number of problems were revealed, however. The difficulty of getting teachers to attend was mentioned by some administrators, and two interviewees pointed out the long distances some teachers had to drive in winter weather to attend them. It was suggested by some that extension courses should be tailored to the needs of the immediate area to be serviced, and that the school administrators should be consulted on course content. The interviewees who questioned the value of extension courses gave three reasons for their attitude: (1) Extension classes load down teachers with too much work, and their teaching suffers as a consequence, (2) many teachers who take these courses are not interested in the course offering, but are merely accumulating convenient credits, and (3) many teachers who should return to college campuses for work from time to time, avoid this experience by taking extension courses which are less valuable to them.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS

A large majority of the school superintendents in Minnesota believe that one of the principal functions of colleges for teacher education should be to act as resource and service institutions for the public school systems in the area. They look to them for leadership and professional support which, they feel, is frequently not forthcoming. These administrators, it is true, are properly jealous of their prerogatives in determining the policy and in establishing the philosophy of their schools, but, with only a few exceptions, they look with favor upon closer professional relations with the colleges which prepare the teachers on their faculties.

The institutional teacher placement bureau is one of the direct services which colleges for teacher education furnish the public schools in their area. Although relatively recent in origin college teacher placement services have expanded rapidly in number, in the number of teachers and school districts serviced, and in the scope of their activities until, at the present time, they are probably the principal contact between the colleges and their service areas.

In general, school administrators are pleased with the services they receive from institutional teacher placement bureaus, and the great majority of them prefer to obtain their teachers through a college placement service rather than through a commercial teachers agency. The superintendents believe that institutional bureaus know their candidates better than do commercial agencies, and are more professional in their recommendations and counseling. There is some feeling, however, that commercial agencies give faster, more efficient service than college placement offices. Some superintendents also believe that commercial teachers' agencies have a wider selection of experienced candidates than the institutional bureaus, and many of them urge the college placement offices to put more emphasis on alumni placement.

There is a great variety of opinion among these school administrators as to the items of information about candidates which the bureaus should furnish the employing official. There is no question, however, but that the superintendent's own observations of the candidate and the supervisor's description of the candidate's student teaching experience are considered to be the most reliable evaluation devices in hiring inexperienced teachers.

The counseling functions of the teacher placement services are considered by these administrators to be of primary importance both to themselves and to the candidates. Although they are aware of the ethical considerations and the extreme delicacy of such activities, a large majority of them favor a free and open counseling situation. They believe that vocational guidance and occupational information furnished by the placement bureau is a fundamental part of teacher education and reduces the number of "teacher failures." They insist, however, that such counseling must be ethical, objective, and based upon knowledge rather than assumption.

Many superintendents believe that institutional placement directors are generally not well acquainted with the school systems they serve and as a result do not do as effective a job of selecting applicants as they might. It is felt that this also handicaps them in counseling candidates about school systems. A number of these administrators recommended that placement directors spend more time in school and community visitation to better inform themselves regarding their service area.

A great need for teacher follow-up services of many kinds was expressed by the participants in this study. Superintendents of small systems and county superintendents especially emphasized the value of such services by teacher preparation institutions. The school administrators in Minnesota say that they see little evidence of teacher follow-up work being carried on by the colleges of the state. Although they recognize and appreciate the limiting factors of finance, limited personnel, and wide geographical area they believe the service is so valuable that perhaps some other functions of the colleges should be sacrificed to make it possible.

There are many indications that the relationships between colleges for teacher education and public school systems will become closer in the future. School administrators are seeking such cooperation and the colleges must find the means to extend their services through their placement bureaus, follow-up, and other field activities. As one of the superintendents who participated in this study said, "We must remember that the end purpose of both the colleges of education and the public schools is the same - well-educated children. Certainly that purpose can be best served by close cooperation and a concerted effort by all educational agencies."

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APPENDIX A

MINNESOTA SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS WHO COOPERATED IN THIS STUDY

- S. O. Aaker—Superintendent of Schools, Sauk Centre
- Mrs. Inez E. Anderson—County Superintendent of Schools, Wright County, Buffalo
- Earl W. Anderson—Superintendent of Schools, Howard Lake
- Harriette Anderson—County Superintendent of Schools, Meeker County, Litchfield
- P. M. Atwood—Superintendent of Schools, Staples
- H. D. Baab—Superintendent of Schools, Upsala
- Oliver P. Bakken—Superintendent of Schools, Aitkin
- R. M. Belsaas—Superintendent of Schools, Braham
- L. L. Bender—Superintendent of Schools, Barrett
- A. P. Bergee—Superintendent of Schools, Hector
- C. E. Bertram—Superintendent of Schools, Ashby
- A. S. Blenkush—Superintendent of Schools, Browerville
- H. K. Bluhm—County Superintendent of Schools, Wadena County, Wadena
- Esther Boyd—County Superintendent of Schools, Kanabec County, Mora
- Mrs. Gertrude H. Barbie—County Superintendent of Schools, Itasca County, Grand Rapids
- Carl N. Bye—Superintendent of Schools, Brooten
- Morris Bye—Superintendent of Schools, Anoka
- Kenneth Camp—County Superintendent of Schools, Benton County, Foley
- A. D. Cummings—Superintendent of Schools, Buffalo
- Ruby Dahlin—Director of Personnel, Minneapolis Public Schools, Minneapolis 13
- Ruth Douglas—County Superintendent of Schools, Mille Lacs County, Milaca
- Jack Dulude—Superintendent of Schools, Swanville
- E. W. Eininger—Superintendent of Schools, Annandale
- A. R. Ehrnst—Superintendent of Schools, Foley

Henry J. Folkerds—Superintendent of Schools, Cokato
H. B. Gough—Superintendent of Schools, St. Cloud
Arthur O. Hafdal—Superintendent of Schools, Alexandria
Earl V. Hallock—Superintendent of Schools, Alberta
K. L. Halverson—Superintendent of Schools, Sauk Rapids
R. W. Handke—Superintendent of Schools, Elk River
Stewart R. Hansen—Superintendent of Schools, Eden Valley
Paul J. Hanson—Superintendent of Schools, Little Falls
Ole E. Haugejorde—Superintendent of Schools, Kensington
Victor A. Heed—Superintendent of Schools, Becker
S. L. Held—Superintendent of Schools, Grove City
C. B. Holje—Superintendent of Schools, Ogilvie
J. A. Hughes—Superintendent of Schools, Forest Lake
Herman Hulin—Superintendent of Schools, Long Prairie
H. A. Jenson—Superintendent of Schools, Litchfield
Gordon E. Johnston—Superintendent of Schools, Murdock
L. E. Kassube—Superintendent of Schools, Brandon
S. R. Knutson—Superintendent of Schools, Hutchinson
G. G. Kottke—Superintendent of Schools, Cambridge
James B. Krajeck—Superintendent of Schools, Holdingford
Leo S. Kroll—County Superintendent of Schools, Morrison County, Little Falls
Merrol R. Larson—Superintendent of Schools, Mora
Dayton G. Lauthen—Superintendent of Schools, Clarissa
Lawrence T. Lechner—Superintendent of Schools, Gilbert
Edmund C. Lee—Superintendent of Schools, Elbow Lake
Mrs. Lucie Leighton—County Superintendent of Schools, Sherburne County, Elk River
John O. Lindahl—Superintendent of Schools, Crosby-Ironton, Crosby
Carlton W. Lytle—Superintendent of Schools, Orono, Long Lake
Gladys Mathews—County Superintendent of Schools, Todd County, Long Prairie

Mrs. Grace McAlpine—County Superintendent of Schools, Washington
County, Stillwater

E. F. McKee—Director of Personnel, St. Paul Public Schools, St. Paul 2

Andrew M. Mevig—Superintendent of Schools, Hoffman

B. J. Michael—Superintendent of Schools, Albany

James K. Michie—Superintendent of Schools, Hibbing

Carl J. Moe—Superintendent of Schools, Dassel

C. H. Mogck—Superintendent of Schools, Benson

Harold T. Molstad—County Superintendent of Schools, Crow Wing County,
Brainerd

Joseph M. Mork—Superintendent of Schools, Milaca

Myer Nelson—Superintendent of Schools, Pillager

E. N. Nordgaard—Superintendent of Schools, Glenwood

H. C. Nordgaard—Superintendent of Schools, Brainerd

Melvin W. Norsted—Superintendent of Schools, Monticello

Carl Ohmann—County Superintendent of Schools, Stearns County, St.
Cloud

Clarence F. Omacht—Superintendent of Schools, Osakis

G. M. Orwell—Superintendent of Schools, North Branch

Kenneth G. Parker—Superintendent of Schools, Kimball

Frederick A. Parson—Superintendent of Schools, Delano

W. A. Peterson—Superintendent of Schools, Starbuck

John T. Provinzino—Superintendent of Schools, Maple Lake

L. C. Purrington—Superintendent of Schools, Royalton

Ralph R. Reeder—Superintendent of Schools, Mounds View District, New
Brighton

O. A. Roberts—Superintendent of Schools, Grey Eagle

G. J. Rubash—Superintendent of Schools, Melrose

George A. Skustad—Superintendent of Schools, Virginia

J. E. Snyder—Superintendent of Schools, Wayzata

E. W. Solyst—Superintendent of Schools, Kerkhoven

J. J. Sorkness—Superintendent of Schools, Evansville

E. R. Steffensrud—Superintendent of Schools, Chisholm

Charles E. Stephenson—Superintendent of Schools, Rockford
W. H. Stetzler—Superintendent of Schools, Verndale
Alvin T. Stolen—Superintendent of Schools, Duluth
Herman J. Talle—County Superintendent of Schools, Pope County, Glen-
wood
Mrs. Dorothy E. Thorson—County Superintendent of Schools, Kandiyohi
County, Willmar
Theodore H. Tofte—Superintendent of Schools, Wadena
Oswald Tufte—Superintendent of Schools, Big Lake
H. W. Van Putten—Superintendent of Schools, Eveleth
E. L. Vitalis—Superintendent of Schools, Stillwater
L. A. Vogland—Superintendent of Schools, Villard
F. J. Wallace—Superintendent of Schools, Hill City
L. E. Wermager—Superintendent of Schools, Fergus Falls
Emmett D. Williams—Superintendent of Schools, Roseville District, St.
Paul 13
E. W. Winter—Superintendent of Schools, Belgrade
A. M. Wisness—Superintendent of Schools, Willmar
Freeman Wold—County Superintendent of Schools, Aitkin County, Aitkin
O. L. Worner—Superintendent of Schools, Paynesville
V. W. Ziebarth—Superintendent of Schools, Pine City

APPENDIX B

DIRECTORS OF INSTITUTIONAL TEACHER PLACEMENT BUREAUS WHO COOPERATED IN THIS STUDY

- J. Frederic Andrews, Director of Placement, Ripon College, Ripon, Wisconsin
- D. S. Brainerd, Vice President and Director of Placement, State Teachers College, St. Cloud, Minnesota
- L. H. Bruhn, Director of Special Services, State Teachers College, Valley City, North Dakota
- William L. Cofell, Director of Teacher Placement, St. John's University, Collegeville, Minnesota
- Mark W. Delzell, Dean, School of Education and Director of Teacher Placement Bureau, University of South Dakota, Vermillion, South Dakota
- Marie A. Dohr, Director of Teacher Placement, Lawrence College, Appleton, Wisconsin
- Richard H. Carlson, Coordinator of Placement, University of Minnesota, Duluth Branch, Duluth, Minnesota
- Glenn E. Fishbaugher, Director of Training and Placement, State Teachers College, Winona, Minnesota
- Philip Fjelsted, Assistant Director of Placement, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota
- Merritt N. Flynn, Assistant Professor of Education, In Charge of Placement, School of Applied Arts and Sciences, North Dakota Agricultural College, Fargo, North Dakota
- Raymond Gotham, Director of Training and Teacher Placement, Wisconsin State College, Stevens Point, Wisconsin
- J. Rollin Grant, Director of Teacher Placement Bureau, Macalaster College, St. Paul, Minnesota
- R. E. Guiles, Director of Teacher Training, Wisconsin State College, Platteville, Wisconsin
- Charles A. Johnson, Director of Placement, State Teachers College, Dickinson, North Dakota
- John A. Johnson, Director of Placement, State Teachers College, Mankato, Minnesota

- Lloyd F. Johnson, Director of Extension and Field Services, Northern State Teachers College, Aberdeen, South Dakota
- Mrs. Iva Kessler, Secretary, Placement Bureau, Wisconsin State College, Eau Claire, Wisconsin
- Lyle Koch, Director of Teacher Placement, Hamline University, St. Paul, Minnesota
- Mrs. T. J. Kuemmerlein, Director of Placement, Milwaukee-Downer College, Milwaukee 11, Wisconsin
- Rev. E. J. La Mal, Acting Head of Education Department and Director of Teacher Placement, St. Norbert College, West De Pere, Wisconsin
- G. C. Leno, Director, Placement Service, State Teachers College, Mayville, North Dakota
- Elvin R. Lewandowski, Director of Placement, St. Mary's College, Winona, Minnesota
- W. W. Ludeman, Dean, Southern State Teachers College, Springfield, South Dakota
- Ruth V. Luebbe, Dean of Women and Associate Placement Director, Carroll College, Waukesha, Wisconsin
- Alger Myhre, Director, Teacher Placement and Teacher Training, State Teachers College, Minot, North Dakota
- L. H. Mathews, Director, Office of Field Services, Wisconsin State College, Milwaukee, Wisconsin
- Carl R. Narveson, Director of Placement, Concordia College, Moorhead, Minnesota
- Gertrude M. O'Brien, Placement Chairman, The Stout Institute, Menomonie, Wisconsin
- Sister Paula Reiten, Registrar and Director of Placement, College of St. Benedict, St. Joseph, Minnesota
- C. L. Robertson, Placement Director, Jamestown College, Jamestown, North Dakota
- Sister Romana, Director of Placement, College of St. Theresa, Winona, Minnesota
- R. W. Schliet, Professor of Education and Director of Placement, Augustana College, Sioux Falls, South Dakota
- Mrs. Frances Schook, Secretary - Registrar, State Normal and Industrial College, Ellendale, North Dakota
- Erich Selke, Director of Teacher Placement, University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, North Dakota

- Richard A. Siggelhow, Associate Director, Teacher Placement Bureau,
University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin
- Leith Schackel, Director of Placement, Carlton College, Northfield, Minne-
sota
- Sister Catherine Ann, Director of Teacher Placement, The College of St.
Catherine, St. Paul, Minnesota
- Sister M. Rose, Head of Education Department, College of St. Scholastica,
Duluth, Minnesota
- Sister Mary Philemon, Director of Teacher Training, Mount Mary College,
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
- David W. Smith, Director of Personnel, Gustavus Adolphus College, St.
Peter, Minnesota
- J. H. Smith, Director of Training and Placement, Wisconsin State College,
Oshkosh, Wisconsin
- Ray R. Sorenson, Director of Placement and In-Service Education, State
Teachers College, Moorhead, Minnesota
- Morris N. Spencer, Dean, Huron College, Huron, South Dakota
- L. Gordon Stone, Director, Division of Education and Placement, Wis-
consin State College, River Falls, Wisconsin
- Teacher Placement Bureau, Dakota Wesleyan University, Mitchell, South
Dakota
- R. G. Thuente, Director of Student Teaching, St. Thomas College, St.
Paul, Minnesota
- Paul Tinsley, Head, Department of Education and Director of Placement
Bureau, Yankton College, Yankton, South Dakota
- John B. Tracy, Director of Teacher Placement, Marquette University,
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
- P. E. Tyrell, Dean, Registrar, General Beadle State Teachers College,
Madison, South Dakota
- C. Van Eschen, Chairman, Department of Education, Beloit College,
Beloit, Wisconsin
- V. E. Van Patter, Director, Teacher Training, Chairman, Department of
Education, Wisconsin State College, Superior, Wisconsin
- Everett M. White, Director, Placement Bureau, State Teachers College,
Bemidji, Minnesota
- A. L. Winther, Director, Teacher Placement, Wisconsin State College,
Whitewater, Wisconsin

- C. R. Wiseman, Director, Bureau of Recommendations, Department of Education, South Dakota State College, Brookings, South Dakota
- Arnold S. Woestehoff, Director, Bureau of Recommendations, College of Education, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota
- E. C. Woodburn, President Emeritus and Director of Placement, Black Hills Teachers College, Spearfish, South Dakota
- Bernard J. Young, Director, Campus School, Wisconsin State College, LaCrosse, Wisconsin