

teachers to interest themselves in removing one of the most unpleasant features of their work. I appeal to the parents who are indifferent because they are thus depriving their children of a large part of the teacher's attention which they might otherwise enjoy.

The next point that I wish to refer to in our district school system is *the frequent change of teachers that prevails*. This is also an unnecessary evil that must sadly interfere with the success of any school system. In view of the small inducements that are held out to teachers we must expect few young people to adopt this as their life work; young men will use this profession as a stepping stone to something more lucrative, but by spending their fresh energies in this direction they confer as well as receive a benefit. Young women spend a few years in training the children of others, then leave this for the highest type of life, that of training one's own children. A certain amount of change, under the present custom of changing the teacher every term, is simply outrageous. I think you will agree with me that there is no more effective means of retarding the progress of the scholars than that of placing them in strange hands every three or four months. This custom arose I presume in the days of the "Hosier schoolmaster" when it required the muscular power of a man to control the brute force that manifested itself in the winter schools. A woman might teach the little ones in the summer school, but a man must be had for the boys in the winter; this state of things has now practically passed away; we have become more civilized. Throwing boys through the window is not now a necessary part of school work, and therefore young women are engaged for the winter term, or shall I say that young women have proved themselves better teachers than men and therefore they are engaged for both terms of the school year. But I think I am giving a true impression of the present state of things when I say that it is the general rule that the schools have a different teacher every term. For a teacher to continue two or three or four terms in a school is the exception and at once becomes the subject of remark; this is sufficient to ruin the efficiency of any school. But there are certain peculiarities in our district schools that make these frequent changes doubly injurious. The evil from these frequent changes arises from the fact that the new teacher cannot grasp at once the exact mental state of the different pupils. She cannot discover for some time just what the child knows, what work he has really mastered and what he can undertake next with the most profit. The new teacher has to take the child on trial at first and as she teaches him in the different subjects points come up continually which show his ignorance or knowledge until the child's real attainments are clearly before the teacher. While the teacher is getting fully acquainted with the child and the child is becoming fully accustomed to the peculiarities of the teacher, two, three or four weeks pass away during which both pupil and teacher have been working to great disadvantage. This difficulty would not be so great nor the delay so serious if the teacher had but one class in a single subject to examine. But when there are three or four different classes in each of the several subjects the difficulty becomes much greater and the delay that is caused by these frequent changes of teachers becomes a very serious matter in view of the short school year of eight months. Another reason why it is difficult for a teacher to discover the exact standing of the pupils is *that each of the two terms into which the school year is divided is preceded by at least two months holidays*. The new teacher therefore does not receive the pupils with their minds

fresh from the instruction of their former teacher, but after they have rusticated for two months. If it be difficult to discover what a child knows at any time, it is ten times more difficult to discover the attainments of a child that has grown rusty during two months absence from school. This of course increases the evil of these frequent changes. *Again there are no records in connection with these schools* which the incoming teacher may consult to assist her in ascertaining the standing of the pupils in organizing her school. In most well ordered schools, written examinations are held once or twice a year in all the subjects, and the pupils are classified according to their standing; in this examination form not only a test of the success of the teacher's efforts and of the pupils progress, but the registered results form a valuable book of reference particularly to a new teacher taking charge of a school. Now written examinations are entirely unknown in our district schools. The idea of closing up a term by a written examination in each subject to test the work of progress of each pupil during the term has yet to be introduced in Township elementary schools. The new teacher finds no record from which she can learn anything concerning the state of the school of which she is to be the mistress. From these various reasons it is evident that this frequent change of teachers tends in an especial manner to interfere with the success of the schools; but the remedy for this evil is not a difficult one. Let the Boards of Commissioners resolve that they will not engage a teacher for less than a year. Let them first recognize the importance of the question and then use their influence to keep the same teachers for as long a time as possible in the same schools. Let them indicate that they look with suspicion upon those teachers that move about from school to school. In their appointments let them show a preference for those teachers that have taught several terms in the same school. Let them make a slight difference in salary in favor of those who continue in the same school from term to term. If the regular salary be ten dollars per month, let the Board offer nine dollars for the first term, ten for the second and third and eleven for subsequent terms provided the teacher continues in the same school. If these simple means were faithfully adopted I feel confident that these changes would in a very short time be reduced to their minimum number. But parents and Boards of Commissioners must first be brought to a due appreciation of the loss which they and their children sustain in these frequent changes. Another remedy for the evil is regular written examinations, if these examinations were held at the close of each term and a permanent record made of the questions and the percentage of marks in each subject it would prove of very great value to the teacher in organizing the school. By comparing the percentage of marks taken by a pupil in any subject the teacher would have at once a correct index in that particular branch. The weak point and the strong points of each pupil would then be clearly brought before her mind at the outset of her work. *The present division of the school year into two terms separated by long intervals of vacation tends to perpetuate these frequent changes*. Those who divided the terms in this way seem to have thought that extremes of temperature were most favorable to mental activity. For the coldest days of winter and the warmest days of summer form the greater part of the school year, while the temperate weather of spring and autumn is set apart for vacation. If the two terms were brought nearer to one another and made to continue from October until June with slight interruptions it would tend to check these frequent changes of teachers and improve the efficiency