

1920

UA3/1/4 Attendance

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ATTENDANCE

The greatest administrative problem in rural education is that of attendance. It is the cause of our greatest waste in time, money and failure to develop good citizens. More than a million and a half of enrolled rural school children are absent every school day on the average. In many rural counties the attendance is only half as large as the enrollment. Often the attendance laws are either poor or they are poorly enforced. But in no school unit, rural or urban, has the attendance ever been what it should be unless the teachers are active in their efforts to keep the pupils in school regularly.

In some states the rural first grade is more than five times as large as the eighth grade. That condition must be due to one or both of two causes, poor attendance or poor teaching. It is usually due to poor attendance more than to poor teaching.

Teachers can almost always improve attendance by showing to the patrons and pupils a real interest in having all pupils present every day when it is possible. She can study the causes of absence and with the aid the better patrons secure better attendance. There are still many parents who do not know the value of regular attendance. Often the children are indifferent about their record.

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Some Things The Teacher Can Do.

1. Visit the parents and urge them to send children regularly. Keep a list of all visits made each month. Remember the last month is as important as the first.
2. Talk to each pupil who has been absent as soon as he returns, urge him to not miss another day if he can avoid it.
3. Keep an honor roll of all pupils whose attendance for the month is

as high as ninety per cent.

4. Keep a blue ribbon roll of all pupils whose attendance is perfect each month.
5. Divide the room or school into two teams about equal in members, age and grades. Call the two teams Reds and Blues or Owls and Night Hawks, anything to designate them. It may be best to let each team select its name. Have the teams contest against each other for best attendance. Announce the result each month. Inspire the losers to redouble their efforts for the next month.
6. Challenge near by schools to a contest in attendance with your school. Have the result announced each month. Do this of course with the consent and cooperation of pupils and patrons.
7. Have all pupils who miss school make up all lessons missed. They need the work, of course, and it will make them more anxious to be present all the time.
8. Join heartily in a county wide contest if practicable. Induce your pupils and patrons to feel that they are as able to win as any other district. If you can get all to assist you your record will be near the top.
9. Note and commend all pupils who attend regularly under difficulties and express your appreciation to patrons who send regularly at great sacrifice.
10. Send to your local paper or to your Teachers College paper accounts of any outstanding records made by pupils, classes or the whole school. Tell how the record was made, it may help some other school.
11. Get your P. T. A. or your live patrons, if you have no P. T. A. organization to assist the unfortunate. They can see to it that none are absent from lack of food, clothing or books.
12. Attempt to plan some new device each month that will motivate good attendance. Never allow interest to lag.
13. Be sure to keep a record of every worth while thing you do to stimulate attendance.