

## THE JONES REPORT AND THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, 1921--1927

On the basis of the 1919 legislation, the Special Legislative Committee on Education held a series of meetings on California education. Every effort was made to have representatives of taxpayers' associations, labor union personnel, and laymen, as well as people directly interested in public education, attend these meetings. The final report was drafted by Ellwood P. Cubberley and published by the Legislature in 1920 under the title Report of the Special Legislative Committee on Education; it was referred to as the "Jones Report" because of the chairmanship of Senator Herbert C. Jones. Particularly pertinent here are the views of the committee on "State Educational Organization, which constituted Chapter I of the report.

### A Double-Headed System

A principal concern of the report had to do with the still existing "double-headed" system that had not been corrected in 1913 when the lay Board of Education at the state level succeeded the ex officio professional Board:

To the older office of Superintendent of Public Instruction certain earlier functions of a supervisory and clerical and statistical nature are given by law, while to the newer State Board of Education a number of new functions relating to policy and educational control have been given, and the Superintendent of Public Instruction has been directed to act as its executive officer and secretary. So long as the present Superintendent of Public Instruction remains in office, and so long as the State Board of Education continues to pursue its present policy, harmonious relations between the two divisions of our state department are likely to continue, but the situation nevertheless is fraught with danger and sooner or later is destined to cause trouble. . . . That part of the state educational organization represented by the State Board of Education is clearly responsible to the Governor and the Legislature for its acts, while that part represented by the Superintendent of Public Instruction remains independent of both State Board of Education and Governor, and largely independent of the Legislature as well, and may work with the State Board of Education or against it, according to the character of the official elected to the office of Superintendent.

Only a policy of friendly cooperation between the State Board of Education and the Superintendent, or, where this is not possible, a policy of inactivity or resignation on the part of either the State Board or the Superintendent can prevent friction, to the disadvantage of the school system, with the state school office organized as it now is in this state. The temptation of a weak State Superintendent to play politics against the State Board of Education, and seek for cheap public notoriety to secure reelection, would

be both possible and natural. Over such a Superintendent the State Board could exercise no control whatever.

Still more, an antagonized or antagonistic Superintendent might at some time raise the constitutional question as to the right of the State Board of Education to do anything whatever in the nature of supervision, claiming that it has no power other than regulatory power. . . .

That the Superintendency is a key position, and that an obdurate Superintendent could almost completely check the work of the State Board of Education except in regulation and investigation, should not be lost sight of. Undoubtedly, then, the present California educational organization must be regarded as temporary and transitional, and dangerous for the future, and it should be superseded at the earliest opportunity by a more rational form of state educational organization.<sup>5</sup>

### Scattered Supervision and Control

As evidence of a lack of logical, efficiently planned organization in the state agency, the report enumerated a number of "more or less unrelated boards, commissions, and other agencies having charge of some part of the educational work of the state." Those having little connection with the State Board of Education or the Superintendent of Public Instruction included the University of California; the normal schools; California Polytechnic School; schools for juvenile delinquents at Whittier, Ione, and Ventura; schools for prisoners at San Quentin and Folsom; schools for atypical children at Sonoma and Pomona; the State School for the Deaf and Blind; the Home for the Education of the Adult Blind; a State Nautical School authorized in 1917 but not yet opened; and the State Library. Orphanages, too, though subject to inspection by the Superintendent of Public Instruction, were under private auspices. In matters of supervision and control, the educational work of the state was actually scattered among 23 boards and commissions, with a total membership of about 160 persons, and these agencies acted with little or no relation to one another.

The report also pointed out that the federal Congress had appropriated a considerable sum of money for the reeducation of persons crippled in industry and was at the time considering the Smith-Towner bill, which would grant funds to the states for educational purposes. To secure the funds apportioned to California by Congress, the State Board of Education would have to manage the expenditure and maintain staff to do so.

The reasons for such a lack of sensible organization were found in the long-standing principle of decentralization and in the old pre-1913 State

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<sup>5</sup>Report of the Special Legislative Committee on Education Sacramento California Legislature, 1920, pp. 17-20.

Board of Education, composed of "busy men, hardly able to organize an educational department."

### Committee Recommendations on Organization

The committee recommended, first, the proposal of a constitutional amendment that would abolish the practice of electing a Superintendent of Public Instruction and would provide, rather, for the appointment by the State Board of Education of a Commissioner of Education to act as the chief executive officer of the Board:

Once such a constitutional change has been effected it will then be possible for the legislature to create, under the headship of the State Board of Education, a State Department of Education capable of properly coordinating the different parts of the state's educational service, insuring harmonious relations in all its parts, and rendering large service to the schools of the state. In the meantime the Legislature can proceed with the creation of a State Department of Education, but there will always be danger of serious friction until such a constitutional change gives authority for a proper relationship of all its parts.<sup>6</sup>

Secondly, the committee recommended that the educational functions being exercised elsewhere should gradually be reassigned to the new State Department of Education:

While preserving the principles of democratic government, it should be frankly recognized that efficiency and economy can only be secured by an organization which recognizes the importance of expert professional service, in which there is proper responsibility for the use of authority, through which related functions are brought together for administrative control, and by means of which the interests of the state in education can be promoted intelligently and effectively.<sup>7</sup>

The committee listed 16 divisions it felt should be included in the new Department of Education. Seven of these were already more or less clearly in existence, while nine would either be considered new divisions or would be the result of transferring responsibilities and defining new functions. Those already in operation were identified as follows (with certain additional duties): (1) a business division -- to keep books and records, make purchases, pay bills, apportion school funds, and act as secretary to the State Board of Education; (2) a publication, information, and statistical division -- to collect statistics, prepare forms and registers, prepare the biennial report and other publications, and answer public inquiries; (3) an examining,

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 24.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

certificating, and pensioning division -- to have charge of all examinations for the certification of teachers (such certification to be made a state function and to be made uniform throughout the state); (4) a vocational education division -- to add to its duties the supervision of the work of the California Polytechnic School and the State Nautical School, and to include, possibly, a new rehabilitation division; (5) a secondary education division -- to take over from the University of California the inspection and accrediting of all high schools and to supervise junior colleges as they might be established; (6) an elementary education division -- to supervise elementary schools, including kindergartens; and (7) a health and physical welfare division -- to take on the duties of supervising health instruction and making studies of the health, physical welfare, nutrition, and abnormalities of school children.

The additional nine divisions and their duties were suggested as follows

1. A legal division, headed by an attorney well versed in school law, would edit and publish a school code, advise the Legislature as to needed legislation, and interpret the meaning and intent of school law.
2. A research division would act as a center for the dissemination of educational information and supply or sell educational tests and scales.
3. A teacher-training division would supervise and control the work done in teacher training in all state institutions and in inservice "reading circle work." This division could for a time be combined with the examining, certificating, and pensioning division.
4. A buildings and sanitation division would study the needs and suggest plans for improving schoolhouse construction and sanitation, prepare sets of plans to be loaned to school corporations, approve plans for new school buildings, and assist counties in making sanitary surveys of school buildings. "This division could be made into quite a money-saver for the state."
5. A special education division would exercise supervision of, and conduct studies with a view to improving, the education provided for the blind, deaf and dumb, feebleminded and mentally defective, truant and incorrigible, and dependent and delinquent children. It would have supervision of educational work in the charitable, penal, and reformatory institutions and orphan asylums supported in whole or in part by the state. It would also maintain the experimental laboratory already in existence at the Whittier State School for the measurement and proper classification of all children sent to institutions for juvenile delinquents.
6. A rehabilitation division would take over from the Industrial Accident Commission work provided for by the Legislature of 1919 in the reeducation of persons crippled in industry and would become the agent of the federal government for such work. The education of crippled children would also come under the jurisdiction of this division. The work of the rehabilitation division might be considered part of the vocational education division described earlier.

7. An adult education division would have charge of immigrant education, Americanization, and other adult education. This had already begun under the State Commission on Immigration and Housing. Combined with this division would be certain responsibilities in visual education, such as supplying the schools and libraries with charts, maps, lantern slides, and films.
8. An art and music division would study the needs of the state in pure and applied art and in music, with a view to improving the instruction in these fields, "elevating the artistic and musical tastes of our people, and better preparing the workers for the applied-art needs of the industries."
9. A library division could be formed mainly to improve county library work. "The work of the State Library . . . is so good that there is no present need for such a reclassification," but county library work could be better provided for.

### Organization of the State Department of Education

The Legislature took up the work of forming a State Department of Education in its 1921 session. An act of May 31, 1921, created a State Department of Education "to be conducted under the control of an executive officer to be known as the Director of Education," and the Superintendent of Public Instruction was to be ex officio Director. The powers and duties of the boards of trustees of the several normal schools, henceforth to be called "state teachers colleges" (under legislation enacted in the same session), were transferred to the new Department. Similarly, the Department took over the powers and duties of the Board of Trustees of the California Polytechnic School and of the Board of Directors of the California School for the Deaf and Blind.

The formation of the Department was in line with recommendations of the Jones Report. However, other sections of the law of May 31, 1921, continued the anomalous organizational features to which the report had objected. The State Board of Education was continued, along with its previous responsibilities. One new division of the Department, the Division of Textbooks, Certification, and Trust Funds, would be under the Board of Education. The new Division of Normal and Special Schools would be under the Director of Education, although the appointment of principals and faculty members of the schools was subject to approval by the Board, which also had the power to enact rules and regulations for these state schools. The three commissioners of education were unaffected by the new legislation and were to continue with the status of assistant superintendents, appointed by and responsible to the State Board of Education.

Several positions were added: a deputy director of education to represent the Director of Education in the Division of Normal and Special Schools. The statistician became an assistant superintendent, with general research duties added to his former responsibilities. The provisions of the Federal Vocational Rehabilitation Act were accepted by the Legislature in 1921, and a supervisor

of vocational rehabilitation and an assistant in rehabilitation were added to the office of Commissioner of Industrial and Vocational Education.

Although the various offices constituting the new Department were based on the functions of the Superintendent's office or on appointment by the Board of Education, Superintendent Wood organized the Department into a functioning body that was remarkably unified considering the double-headed nature of the agency. In his 1922 biennial report, Wood described the new organization as follows:

The fifty-one officers and employees included, were organized into an Executive Office and eleven divisions. The Executive Office included the superintendent and his secretary, assistant secretaries to handle work of the State Board of Education and the Retirement Fund, two bookkeepers, a mailing clerk, a stenographer and a messenger.

The Elementary Schools Division and the Secondary Schools Division were each staffed with their respective commissioners and secretarial stenographers. The Division of Vocational Education, headed by the commissioner, also included supervisors of agricultural education, home economics training, trades and industry, and rehabilitation. There were also an assistant in rehabilitation, a secretarial stenographer, and three stenographers in this division.

The Division of Physical Education included the supervisor, two assistant supervisors, and a secretarial stenographer.

The deputy director of education headed the Division of Normal and Special Schools, and was assisted by one secretary and one stenographer.

The Division of Immigrant Education included the assistant superintendent and half-time stenographer.

The deputy superintendent headed a Legal Division, and had one stenographer.

The assistant superintendent advanced from statistician headed a Division of Statistics, aided by a statistical clerk.

In the Textbook Division were the head of the division (a bookkeeper), an assistant, and a part-time clerk.

The Credentials Division had an assistant secretary in charge. This employee was of the same service classification as the assistant secretary for the State Board of Education, and the assistant secretary for the Retirement Salary Fund; they were, like her, employees of the State Board of Education, but the latter two were considered in the Executive Office under this plan. There were also four credentials clerks and six employees classified as stenographers or clerks in this division.

The sole person in the Attendance Division was the supervisor of attendance.

The two departmental councils -- the Cabinet, consisting of the Superintendent and the commissioners, and the Credentials Commission of like composition, were continued as of the reorganization of 1919.<sup>8</sup>

With a real State Department of Education in Sacramento rather than a galaxy of offices associated with the Superintendent of Public Instruction and the Board of Education, educational activities of the state became more and more centralized. School people, furthermore, were encountering increasingly complex problems, and they brought to the State Department of Education their questions about school law, federal vocational education, compulsory attendance, compulsory physical education, and the laws relating to the education of immigrants. Closer supervision of the schools was brought about by the work of the three commissioners of education. The courses of study in both elementary and secondary schools were subject to the approval of the State Department of Education, and the Department published the state series of elementary school textbooks and the official list of approved high school textbooks. Through control of the administration of the teachers colleges, the Department exerted a direct influence on the conduct of these schools.

The leadership exerted by the Department was in part attributable to the cooperative spirit of the individuals concerned and in part to the long experience of several persons in key positions. Wood had served the Department for five years as Commissioner of Secondary Schools before his election to the first of two terms as Superintendent of Public Instruction. Snyder, the Commissioner of Vocational Education, served for ten years. Job Wood, Jr., who held the position of statistician for 20 years, served as deputy superintendent from 1919 to 1923. Helen Heffernan, Commissioner of Elementary Schools, served the Department for 40 years.

### Political Action and Educational Change

In 1923 Will C. Wood began his second term of office as Superintendent of Public Instruction, and Friend W. Richardson began his term as Governor. Richardson was a conservative. His attitude toward education can be noted in quotations from his budget message of that year when he declared that "extravagance in educational matters has run riot during the past few years," and "politicians in the guise of educators have squandered the people's money with a lavish hand and have denounced advocates of thrift as enemies of education." His policies met with immediate criticism from educational associations, but they received the endorsement of taxpayers' associations.

Meanwhile important changes were taking place in the Department of Education. In 1924 the title of the assistant superintendent in charge of immigrant education was changed to assistant superintendent in charge of adult education, thus indicating a change in emphasis. In 1925 Superintendent Wood appointed Mrs. Mabel Gifford to be the first assistant superintendent of public instruction in charge of speech correction. The appointment

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<sup>8</sup> Thirtieth Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. Sacramento: State Department of Education, 1922, pp. 17-18.

was made possible through a grant of funds from the California Speech Foundation. Major duties of the office were to make surveys of speech problems in various areas of the state, to confer with teachers and administrators, and to coordinate work in speech correction in schools, training centers, and colleges.

Legislation requiring substantial fees to be paid for teachers' credentials had been approved, and this policy made funds available to enlarge the Los Angeles office, where much of the work in connection with credentials was being done.

On the negative side, severe cutbacks in appropriations had necessitated critical adjustments and eliminations in the Department. By 1925 the 51 positions in Wood's department had been reduced to 39. A disparate salary situation came about in the Department when the salaries of the assistant superintendents employed by the Board of Education were increased to \$5,000, while the salaries of assistant superintendents in the office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction remained at \$3,000. The Superintendent himself was still paid \$5,000.

The situation foreseen by the Jones Report became a reality in 1924 when a majority of the State Board of Education, appointed by Richardson, sided with the Governor in opposition to the Superintendent of Public Instruction and refused to confirm the Superintendent's appointments of the presidents of the San Jose and San Francisco state teachers colleges. The resulting impasse, lasting several years, dramatically pointed out the shortcomings of the existing organizational system. In his last biennial report of 1927, Wood recommended legislation to correct the situation:

I recommend legislation to reorganize the present "double-headed" state department of education. The overlapping of functions among the various agencies in the department, the many anomalies in relationships within the department, the lack of subordination in the supervisory staff, and the lack of efficiency and cooperation in certain directions, due to conflicts in conceptions of duties, responsibilities and powers, makes the continuance of the present organization impossible. Laws should be passed defining clearly the powers of the State Board of Education, which should be purely legislative and regulatory, and the powers of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, which should be executive and supervisory.<sup>9</sup>

During this period the California Teachers Association had at work its Committee on Duties and Functions of Public School Administrative Authorities. This committee made a study of the organization of state boards of education in the various states of the Union; in a second study it traced the trends in organization of such boards and recommended a constitutional

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<sup>9</sup> Thirty-second Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. Sacramento: State Department of Education, 1927, p. 14.



amendment to change the California State Board of Education. The committee recommended a larger board, its members to be elected by the people; it defined the Board's functions and recommended that professional functions of the agency be performed through professionally trained persons.

Superintendent Wood made several legislative recommendations affecting the State Board of Education and the Department of Education. One was the creation of a division of school planning for which he had long felt the need. Another was the establishment of a State Curriculum Commission "to draft and adopt minimum standards for elementary school courses of study," and "succeed to the powers of the State Board of Education in reference to approved courses of study in high schools and junior high schools, and the listing of textbooks for high schools." Another was a commission to codify the school laws. Wood also advocated legislation to provide more adequate education for physically handicapped children.<sup>10</sup>

The 1927 Legislature took note of Wood's suggestions and those made by the California Teachers Association. Legislation affecting the organization of the Department of Education was introduced, and much of it was passed.

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid., pp. 14, 18