



MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Minnesota State Archives

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
Superintendent of Public Instruction
An Inventory of Its Correspondence

OVERVIEW OF THE RECORDS

Agency: Minnesota. Dept. of Public Instruction.
Series Title: Correspondence.
Dates: 1899-1909.
Quantity: 6 cu. ft. (6 boxes).
Location: See Detailed Description section for box locations.

SCOPE AND CONTENTS OF THE RECORDS

Letterpress copies of the outgoing correspondence of Superintendents of Public Instruction J. H. Lewis (September 12, 1899 – January 24, 1901), J. W. Olsen (January 25, 1901 – December 31, 1908), and C. G. Schulz (January 1–December 31, 1909). Correspondence was also often handled by the assistant superintendents, particularly Andrew Nelson, C. G. Schulz, and C. R. Frazier. The bulk of the letters relate to questions and issues about teacher certification, examination, and appointment; certificate renewals; teacher and superintendent recommendations; and inquiries about salaries, reimbursements, state aid, and the distribution of the budget as it applies to individual school districts. Other topics covered in the letters include pupil age, vaccination, tuition, disobedience, attendance, truancy, and distance from school; book publishers, catalogues, textbooks, and library books; building construction and additions, heating, ventilation, and furnishings; and consolidation and formation of new school districts. Occasionally there are lengthy responses to other educational superintendents or officers around the country detailing the specifics of Minnesota's educational system. The majority are typewritten, some are handwritten, and most of the volumes have an alphabetical index of correspondents in the back.

INDEX TERMS

These records are indexed under the following headings in the catalog of the Minnesota Historical Society. Researchers desiring materials about related topics, persons or places should search the catalog using these headings.

Topics:

Agriculture—Study and teaching (secondary)—Minnesota.
Church schools—Minnesota.
Communicable diseases—Minnesota—Prevention.
Corporal punishment—Minnesota.
Education and state—Minnesota.
Education, Compulsory—Minnesota.
Educational law and legislation—Minnesota.
Education—Minnesota—Curricula.
Education—Minnesota—Finance.
Government aid to education—Minnesota.
High school—Minnesota.
Immunization of children—Minnesota.
Indians of North America—Education.
Interstate relations—Minnesota.
Interstate relations—Wisconsin.
Kindergarten—Minnesota.
Language and languages—Study and teaching—Minnesota.
Penmanship, American.
Public schools—Minnesota.
Religion in the public schools—Minnesota.
Rural schools—Minnesota.
School attendance—Minnesota.
School buildings—Minnesota—Design and construction.
School children—Minnesota—Transportation.
School facilities—Minnesota.
School libraries—Minnesota.
School management and organization—Minnesota.
School music—Minnesota.
Schools—Centralization—Minnesota.
Students—Minnesota.
Summer school—Minnesota.
Teachers—Certification—Minnesota.
Teachers—Examinations—Minnesota.
Teachers—Selection and appointment—Minnesota.
Teachers—Training of—Minnesota.
Textbooks—Minnesota.

Location

105.E.9.8F

April 19–June 12, 1900.

Titled General; includes detail of the closing of summer school due to small-pox and diphtheria outbreaks.

September 24, 1900 – February 9, 1901.

Titled General; one describes the state's school system including the number of high schools, their relation to the state university, the taxation system, and the public school funds in place.

February 9–May [15], 1901.

School consolidation laws and organization of a township graded school are discussed.

105.E.9.9B

May 15–August 13, 1901

Many letters cover school consolidation and transportation for rural students; a number touch on the teaching of foreign languages and special religious instruction. One letter instructed the superintendent to appoint teachers to work in the Philippine Islands.

August 13–December 13, 1901.

Includes a copy of the Program of Examinations listing days, times and subjects of the examinations, and a detailed explanation of the state's common, independent, and special schools.

December 13, 1901 – March 21, 1902.

Topics covered include contagious diseases, distribution of the state's educational funds, the taxation system, the curriculum, election of county superintendents, school attendance, illiteracy, length of school year, consolidation, and transportation.

March 21–July 17, 1902

Includes letters detailing the annual expenses and salaries of the Superintendent of Public Instruction office and the number of male and female teachers employed for select summer and winter terms between 1875 and 1901. Also a letter to Governor S. R. Van Sant describing the state of the schools, including statistics, for the school year ending July 31, 1901.

July 18–November 26, 1902.

Documents voting procedures for moving a school site, the issuance of bonds, publisher's sample books and list prices, and school libraries and the State Library Commission.

Location

105.E.9.9B

November 26, 1902 – April 8, 1903.

Topics include the State Teachers' Reading Circle Board, income for the support of the State University, duties and responsibilities of county superintendents, and historical background about the Minnesota Educational Association.

April 8–August 8, 1903.

Includes details of Minnesota's educational system's representation in an exhibit at the St. Louis World's Fair.

105.E.9.10F

August 8–December 12, 1903.

Topics include corporal punishment of students, endorsements of book titles, and penmanship.

December 12, 1903 – April 16, 1904.

Comments on penmanship and a new organization called the State Teachers' Reading Circle Union.

April 16–September 3, 1904.

Topics include religious use of school houses and state aid.

September 3, 1904 – January 27, 1905.

Details the amount of aid given to Minnesota's high schools and school inspections, transportation, and a breach of contract between a teacher and school board.

January 27–June 8, 1905.

Covers the teaching of agriculture in the rural schools, the basic guidelines of Minnesota's school system, and the benefits of the free textbook program.

June 8–October 3, 1905.

Details of heating and ventilation of buildings, amendments and new laws related to education passed by the 1903 legislative session, and the June 6, 1905 State Normal School Board Annual Meeting.

October 3, 1905 – February 14, 1906.

Topics covered include school district bonds, smoking on school grounds, selection of books for a country school library, and the organization of teacher training schools and appointment of faculty.

Location

105.E.10.1B

February 15–June 21, 1906.

Discusses authority over pupils going to and from school, the value of a kindergarten as part of a school, the building and arrangement of a schoolhouse, and the issue of prayer in school.

June 21–October 15, 1906.

Includes letters covering the general rules and requirements to qualify as a state graded school, the statutes regarding normal school legislative enactments, a list of schools that received first and second class rural aid and the amount of aid, guidelines on the building of a new schoolhouse, and a fraudulent teaching certificate.

October 15, 1906 – February 20, 1907.

Includes letters discussing issues between public, private, and parochial schools; a listing of the total school funds distributed from March 1901 – October 1906, including rates per pupil; and a list of the members of the State High School Board and description of the board's duties.

February 21–May 22, 1907.

Letters concerning House File 447, a bill asking for an increase in the standing appropriations for special state aid to high, graded, semi-graded, and common schools; college preparatory courses in the state's high schools and how the high schools have influenced young men and women to attend college; and two Senate bills: SF 416, regarding consolidation of school districts, and SF 425, regarding high school examinations.

May 21–August 30, 1907.

Topics include compulsory school attendance, truant schools, truant officers, and laws relating to child labor.

May 27, 1901 – January 4, 1908.

Titled John W. Olsen – Personal; a collection of both personal and business letters. They document Superintendent Olsen's farm business and taxes, as well as his appointment as the University of Minnesota's Dean of the College of Agriculture.

October 8, 1902 – December 14, 1908.

Also mainly Olsen's personal letters, many involving political campaigning.

Location

105.E.10.2F

August 30–December 4, 1907.

Topics include child labor, lotteries, kindergarten admission age, special state aid, and a bill in Congress, HR 24757, to extend federal aid to encourage education in the states, particularly in agriculture and the mechanic arts.

December 4, 1907 – March 23, 1908.

Documents the steps to hiring and paying a teacher; statistics on rural enrollment, attendance, number of schools of one room, teachers employed, and their average salary; women's right to vote on school officers and any other question connected with the administration of public schools and to serve as county superintendents; and a March 1, 1906 law giving county superintendents the power to call a convention of school officers to address the issues and improvements needed for rural schools.

March 24–July 15, 1908.

Topics include attendance, transportation, summer schools, legislation requiring teachers in the public schools to give instruction on the effects of narcotics and stimulants, manual and industrial training in the high schools, and the general requirements to establish a state graded school.

July 15–September 25, 1908.

Includes two comparative reports offering significant number and expense statistics between the years 1904 and 1907 (pages 590 and 769); also discussion of the issues of reciprocity relations in the certificating of Wisconsin and Minnesota normal graduates.

September 26, 1908 – January 15, 1909.

Several letters detail the state's general and high school systems, as well as teacher certification, the need for more high school faculty training facilities, and consideration of a law to establish and promote more agricultural training. There is also a listing of the members of the Department of Public Instruction and their salaries (page 839).

January 15–April 1, 1909.

Includes information on Minnesota schools and colleges and discussion of a county board of trustees bill and a library bill.

Location

105.E.10.3B

April 5–May 27, 1909.

Topics covered include state appropriations for educational purposes, teacher training schools, manual training and domestic science courses, and a May 1, 1909 agreement with Wisconsin to grant special licenses for certain normal school graduates to teach in Wisconsin.

May 28–July 28, 1909.

Includes documentation on the two existing agricultural high schools and appropriations for ten high schools to add work in agriculture.

July 28–September 23, 1909.

Includes details of the law concerning school attendance in relation to rural farmers needing their children's help on the farm.

September 24–December 2, 1909.

Includes responses for arrangements of flowers, programs, and memorial funds in regard to the death of Governor J. A. Johnson, and comments on the subjects of normal schools, agriculture, wage percentage increases, and county superintendents.

December 2–December 31, 1909.

Includes information on music study in the public schools.