



MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
STATE ARCHIVES DEPARTMENT

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## Government Records Information Leaflet No. 3 Records of the County Superintendent of Schools

Many historically important records concerning Minnesota schools were generated and maintained by the County Superintendent of Schools. This office was established in 1851 while Minnesota was still a territory and was abolished in 1970 after all rural common school districts had merged with independent school districts. The county superintendent's functions were to oversee the operations of the various school districts in the county, including examination and licensure of teachers, school inspection, curriculum planning, and planning of school facilities. Records listed on this sheet were kept to administer these functions effectively. When the office was abolished, each county board of commissioners was to find storage space for the county superintendent's records. Records of the county superintendent have been found in the custody of various county officials, notably the auditor, court administrator, treasurer, and county administrator, and with the local independent school district superintendents. Records listed below that no longer have administrative value to their custodians may be eligible for transfer to the State Archives in the Minnesota Historical Society. Transfer of such records to any other historical agency, public library, or museum is allowed with permission of the State Archives.

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**SCHOOL CENSUS:** Annual list from each common school district giving names and ages of all children under twenty-one years of age.

**TEACHER'S REPORTS:** Various reports submitted annually or periodically throughout the year by teachers, principals, or superintendents. Give general information on the operation of each common school district and include student scholastic records, textbook and equipment inventories, curriculum reports, enrollment statistics, and census information. Sometimes called "Term reports" or "Teacher's annual report to county superintendent."

**TEACHER'S READING CIRCLE RECORD:** Record of books concerning teaching and education loaned to and read by county teachers for course planning and teaching credits. Gives names of teachers and book titles.

**TEACHER RETIREMENT FUND LEDGERS:** Especially before 1932, these volumes record payments made to the teacher's retirement fund.

**SUPERINTENDENT'S RECORDS:** An older record, kept ca. 1880-1920, containing records of teacher examinations, officer lists, and miscellaneous financial information. Usually in volumes.

**MAPS AND PLATS** indicating boundaries for existing districts, or boundaries for proposed consolidations.

**CONSOLIDATION RECORDS** containing county superintendent's correspondence with common school districts and the state education department, consolidation election records, petitions, and plats of proposed consolidations.

**PERMANENT PUPIL RECORDS:** Record on each student containing brief biographical information, district(s) where student has attended school, and scholastic record. Usually in card file format. Sometimes titled "Record of pupil credits toward county graduation."

**TEACHER CERTIFICATION AND EXAMINATION RECORD:** Record of information on all teachers who have taught in the county. Includes biographical information, teaching history, annual salaries received, and results of state examinations. Early records in volumes, later ones usually on cards.

**COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD ASSOCIATION RECORDS:** Minutes and records of the county organization of elected school officials, frequently maintained by the county superintendent.

**VISITATION RECORD:** Record of the inspection of each school district by the county superintendent. Includes information on enrollment, finances, and condition of school facilities.

**CLASS LISTS:** Titled "County class lists for elementary schools." Record of state board examination scores of seventh and eighth graders.

**OFFICER LISTS** include names of school board officers for each district and the extent of their terms. In volumes, card files, or loose papers.

**CLOSED SCHOOL CLASS LISTS** contain names of students attending schools slated for closing.

**MISCELLANEOUS RECORDS** for various activities often are found with the county superintendent's records. May include bulletins and newsletters; commencement materials and programs; PTA records; records of special programs and activities such as day care and music festivals; and records of the superintendent's professional affiliations.

**COUNTY SURVEY COMMITTEE RECORDS** concern common school district reorganization. Beginning ca. 1947, these records may include minutes, reports, and miscellaneous correspondence of committee members and the county superintendent. May also include minutes and correspondence of the High School Area Committees, formed in the 1930s.

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Among the records of the county superintendent may be found important records of **CLOSED RURAL SCHOOLS**, such as clerk's books, treasurer's books, library records, student record cards, attendance registers, censuses, and consolidation data. These records may be eligible for transfer to the State Archives.

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The preservation and orderly disposal of school records are governed by Minnesota Statutes 138.17, Subdivision 1. No county superintendent's records of any kind may be destroyed or removed from agency custody without signed authorization by the Records Disposition Panel as constituted by this statute. Further information and forms on which to request permission to destroy records on a onetime basis or to transfer noncurrent records to the State Archives are available from the State Archives, Minnesota Historical Society, at the address and phone number shown above.