An Analysis of the Functions of the Visiting Teacher in Virginia

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AN ANALYSIS OF THE FUNCTIONS OF
THE VISITING TEACHER IN VIRGINIA

by

ALVA SAWYER
For helpful suggestions and guidance during the writing of this project, the writer wishes to express her appreciation to the members of her committee: Mr. George J. Oliver, Chairman, Mr. Kenneth H. Cleeton, and Dr. M. Weldon Thompson.

Data used in this study were secured through the courtesy of the Division of Elementary Education of the State Department of Education.

The writer is also indebted to the visiting teachers of Virginia whose reports and other materials provided the basic data for the project.
"All Americans want this country to be a place where children can live in safety and grow in understanding of the part they must play in the nation's future. If anywhere in the country any child lacks opportunity for home life, for health protection, for education, for moral or spiritual development, the strength of the nation and its ability to cherish and advance the principles of democracy are thereby weakened."

Franklin Delano Roosevelt.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Visiting teacher work, also called school social work, is an outgrowth in the United States of: (1) A greater recognition and acceptance in our schools of the individual differences of children; this implies that some children will need special help in order to obtain the maximum benefits of what the school has to offer; (2) more general and more strictly enforced compulsory education laws in the United States; and (3) an increase in the problems of juvenile delinquency.

Modern education is attempting to educate all children for the democratic way of life. To accomplish this purpose, our schools today are making every effort to understand the child as a whole person and trying to meet his individual needs and interests. Because of the large number of pupils in classes and the teacher's need for time for classroom preparation and for extra-curricular activities, the school has come to realize the need for help in carrying out the program of modern education. In recent years, the school has turned to the visiting teacher and other trained specialists for help along these lines. This thought was aptly expressed by Culbert when she stated:

Someone was needed within the school system whose chief duty it should be to know the conditions under which
pupils live and play, and their consequent educational needs, to become acquainted with the individual child in his home and school relations, to discover handicapping factors and to bring about adjustment of his special difficulties through the cooperation of the home, school, and social agencies. To assist the child to prevent later social wreckage, and make sure that each child's individual problem is seen and his educational needs are met, the visiting teacher has been added to the school staff.  

In an article, "Helping Children Use What the School Offers", Florence Poole states the following definition of school social work and its place in the school program:

School social work, better known as visiting teachers work, is a specialized form of social case work. It is identified with and is a part of the program of the public school. It is a method of helping individual children use what the school offers them. In this way it seeks to maximize (not duplicate) the contribution of the classroom teacher.  

It was not until recent years that the enforcement of compulsory education laws and the raising of the compulsory school age became general in the United States. A yearbook of the Russell Sage Foundation makes the following statement about compulsory education laws and juvenile delinquency and their relation to the visiting teacher movement:

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1Culbert, Jane F., The Visiting Teacher, (New York: Joint Committee on Methods of Preventing Juvenile Delinquency), p. 3.

One important factor in the growth of the visiting teacher movement has been the action on the part of southern states, particularly in regard to enforcement of compulsory attendance laws and increasing the compulsory school age. Another factor has been the increase in the problems of juvenile delinquency. Schools have considered it important to work with other community leaders in an attempt to decrease the difficulties now presented by youth. The school social worker, working with children, parents, community, and school is considered one agency of service which may help to prevent youth problems.

**Purpose of the study:** The purpose of this study is to analyze the function and work of the visiting teacher in Virginia and to evaluate, by use of appropriate criteria, this program in Virginia.

**Problems of the study:** The two problems which present themselves in this study are: (1) To determine what the visiting teacher is now doing in Virginia, and (2) to determine what she should be doing in terms of stated functions of the Virginia program, other state programs, and in the opinion of authorities.

**Plan of the study:** In order to determine acceptable functions of visiting teachers, a study was made of the literature in the field. This review of literature is included in Chapter II, along with appropriate criteria which were derived from generally accepted principles as revealed in the literature. Chapter III gives the history of the development of the visiting teacher program in

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Virginia. To determine the function and work of visiting teachers in the state, an analysis was made of monthly report forms used by the workers. These reports are submitted each month to the State Department of Education by the eighty-six workers in the program; the investigator secured the reports for the months of December, January, and February, 1947-1948, for the analysis. The interpretation of the results from the use of the documentary frequency procedure was basic to the analysis. Chapter III also includes descriptions of cases secured from the State Department of Education; these descriptions of cases were submitted by fifty percent of the workers in the program at the request of the Division of Elementary Education of the State Department of Education. The investigator examined these cases and by a process of elimination, eight were selected for inclusion in the study as illustrations of each of the several types of referrals received and the activities of visiting teachers in each type of situation. In Chapter IV, an evaluation of the state program is made by use of criteria set up as a frame of reference in Chapter II. From this evaluation and from an analysis of the work of visiting teachers in the state, the investigator offers recommendations for the program in Virginia.

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4See Appendix.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE IN THE FIELD

Odd as it may seem, visiting teacher work did not have its beginning from within the educational system, but was used by outside agencies such as private and civic organizations and settlements. In 1906 in New York City the work started in settlement houses. The movement was initiated in Boston, Massachusetts, by a subcommittee of the Women's Education Association and in 1907 at Hartford, Connecticut, by a psychological clinic. It was in Rochester, New York, that the first visiting teacher was employed and supported by a local school board. This pioneer movement by Rochester brought other cities to the realization that visiting teacher activity was a part and function of the school and should play an important part in the accomplishment of the school's objectives.

One of the greatest steps forward in the visiting teacher work began when financial support was secured from the Commonwealth Fund.¹ This Foundation was interested in preventing juvenile delinquency and established Child Guidance Clinics as demonstration centers for curing delinquency. They also established thirty visiting teacher areas as demonstration centers of visiting teacher work. These centers were located in both rural and urban and large and

small centers throughout the country. To each community selected a visiting teacher was assigned with the provisions that the community would share in the expenses and would take over the program at the end of the demonstration period if the service seemed valuable. The Commonwealth Fund withdrew its support in 1930. Twenty-one of the original centers continued visiting teacher work, and in 1939 there were one hundred and fifty visiting teacher centers in the United States.

The visiting teacher movement has become an integral part of many school systems throughout the country and has been adopted on a state-wide basis by Michigan, Virginia, Louisiana, and Georgia. A survey made by the United States Office of Education in 1945 revealed that of 748 cities, there were 266 with full-time organized visiting teacher services. These cities were employing approximately 1,000 visiting teachers. Out of the 748 cities represented in the survey, 102 of them indicated visiting teacher service was being performed by other school personnel not classified as visiting teachers.

As has been stated, the early impetus for visiting teacher work came from social agencies, but in more recent years, according to Oppenheimer, "the emphasis on methods has shifted from a social

service phase in many places to that of an educational function.\textsuperscript{3}

Oppenheimer goes on to say that the following factors have contributed to visiting teacher work:

1. Social and economic conditions which include changes within the school;

2. Modern social philosophy which is determining the purposes and objectives in education and child welfare;

3. The development of methods of dealing with various types of maladjustments through the advance made in psychology (including mental hygiene), sociology, and social case work.\textsuperscript{4}

In discussing the trends in visiting teacher work, Arthur E. Fink\textsuperscript{5} notes that, in its earliest days, visiting teacher work was restricted to lower grades but has since been extended to the high school. He also sees the program today as a preventive service for those youngsters with problems. Another trend, continues Fink, is the location of visiting teachers in schools in good residential districts as compared with its beginnings in the poorer areas of cities. And, finally, the visiting teacher is no longer used as formerly after all other agencies had failed in their efforts with the child.

\textsuperscript{3}Oppenheimer, Julius John, \textit{The Visiting Teacher Movement}, (New York) Joint Committee on Methods of Preventing Juvenile Delinquency, 1925), p. 18.
\textsuperscript{4}Ibid., p. 20.
Review of literature in the field: In order to clarify the function and work of visiting teachers, an examination was made of three programs organized on a state-wide basis. Opinions of authorities in the field were also reviewed to discover acceptable functions of visiting teachers.

The Louisiana State Program: The Louisiana visiting program was adopted in 1944 when the Louisiana Legislature enacted compulsory attendance laws. Among other things, these laws require each parish to provide a full-time or part-time visiting teacher. A handbook, which serves as a guide to visiting teachers in Louisiana, contains this statement about the program: "Getting each child to attend school regularly, though of prime importance in Louisiana at present, is only the first phase of visiting teacher work."

The visiting teacher in Louisiana functions as a census director, an attendance officer, and a school social worker. Duties of the visiting teachers, as stated by the State Department of Education, are listed below:

1. To enforce the Compulsory School-Attendance Law by placing every physically and mentally capable child in a school situation and to aid in bringing educational and child welfare services to the exceptional child
2. To discover the causes of nonattendance and work to alleviate and, if possible, remove the causes

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3. To work as consultant to parents, teachers, and pupils to help children obtain the maximum from the school program.

4. To interpret the visiting teacher program to the community, parents, agencies, schools and children.

5. To assume the responsibility for referrals to agencies.

6. To work with all persons and agencies in modifying undesirable environmental conditions.

7. To stimulate the development of needed services for children in the community.

8. To devise and maintain records.

Certification requirements for visiting teachers in Louisiana are as follows:

From August 1, 1944 to July 1, 1947 - Visiting Teachers who have not heretofore served as truant or attendance officers shall meet the following temporary certification requirements:

1. Class 1-B certificate which requires:
   A. Baccalaureate degree or better
   and
   B. Five years of successful teaching

2. Holders of Class 1-B certificate who obtain temporary authorization to serve as visiting teachers must earn prior to July 1, 1947, a minimum of nine semester hour credits related to the responsibilities of the visiting teacher in order to obtain permanent authorization as visiting teacher. The nine semester hours so earned shall be subject to approval by the State Supervisor of Teacher Education and Certification.

7 Ibid., p. 14.
3. Persons who served as truant or attendance officers during 1943-44 shall, upon recommendation of the parish school board, be granted temporary certificates valid for one year only. Such persons who do not possess the qualifications as regular visiting teachers must by July 26, 1949 obtain the full qualifications required by the State Board of Education.8

The motive and emphasis of visiting teacher work in Louisiana is plainly attendance. This is not unusual, particularly in the Southern States, where school attendance has been poor and the illiteracy rate has been high. From a review of functions of visiting teachers throughout the country, it was found that the visiting teacher in the role of census director was unusual. This function, too, is probably an outgrowth of the poor school attendance in Louisiana. The program in this state is located in and is supervised by the Department of Attendance in the State Department of Education.

The Georgia program: The State of Georgia launched its visiting teacher program as an offensive against illiteracy after a Compulsory State Attendance Law was passed by the Georgia General Assembly in 1945. This law obligated all parents and guardians to send children between the ages of seven and sixteen to school or be subject to a fine or imprisonment.9

The State Board of Education in Georgia has listed the following ten specific duties for the visiting teachers in the state:

1. Cooperate with principals and teachers of public, private, and denominational and parochial schools in visiting homes of pupils who are not enrolled in school or are irregular in attendance.

2. Carefully study the causes of absence on the part of individual pupils and counsel with parents and teachers in helping to eliminate causes of non-attendance.

3. Participate in school and community studies relating to underlying causes of non-attendance and cooperate in making the adjustments found necessary and desirable.

4. Cooperate with the system superintendents in issuing work certificates.

5. Assist teachers and principals in the maintenance of a continuous census of children of compulsory school age.

6. Acquaint themselves systematically with records of repeated or habitual absence or failure to enroll children between the ages of 7 and 16.

7. Report to the juvenile, superior, city or other court having jurisdiction, any child as a delinquent who absents himself from school in violation of this act.

8. When necessary in order to enforce provisions of this act, file proceedings in court and furnish evidence for conviction of parents for non-compliance with the law.

9. Cooperate fully with the State Department of Welfare, Labor, Health, and other state agencies in eliminating causes of irregular attendance, non-attendance, and school failures.

10. Make monthly and annual reports on attendance and other problems of child school adjustment in their territory to the county or independent school system superintendent respectively, and comply with rules and regulations of local and state boards of education.\(^\text{10}\)

\(^\text{10}\)Ibid., p. 8.
A six-week workshop was sponsored by the Georgia Education School and forty-one men and women registered to learn about effective techniques in visiting teacher work. In order to give these people the desired training, the Education School of the University College of Education secured the services of the following educators: Miss Alma Laabs, supervisor of the Visiting Teacher Department of the Minneapolis Public Schools, Claud Purcell, administrative assistant, Georgia State Department of Education, and Miss Rose Thompson, visiting teacher and faculty member of the Georgia State College for Women at Milledgeville, Georgia.

"This new program of modern school attendance service is another milestone in educational progress", Georgia's state superintendent of schools said.\[1\]

In Georgia certification requirements for visiting teachers are as follows:

1. Professional teachers certificate (requires four years' college work, including special preparation for work of the visiting teacher as specified by the State Department of Education)

2. A graduate professional certificate for services as a visiting teacher shall be developed to correspond with similar certificates for other special services and teaching fields.

\[1\]Ibid., p. 10.
3. State Department of Education is authorized to prescribe professional courses which shall serve as a basis for certifying qualified teachers for this service.12

The visiting teacher program in Georgia is among the newest of the programs established on a state-wide basis. It's emphasis is on illiteracy caused by poor school attendance. In this program, as in Louisiana, the workers are required to have special training in visiting teacher work; yet their stated duties require them to perform both as attendance officers and as visiting teachers.

The Michigan Program: The Michigan state program was an outcome of the concern of the people of the state for the increase in juvenile delinquency problems. The visiting teacher bill was passed in this connection to provide a special service for children who exhibited antisocial behavior.

The state appropriated money to be used by the counties and cities to employ visiting teachers. Local boards were encouraged to do this and reimbursement from the state was permitted to the extent of $1,500 per visiting teacher.13

The list of duties of visiting teachers in Michigan includes the following:

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1. Emphasize the prevention of delinquency and treatment of milder cases.

2. Assist other teachers to recognize symptoms which are significant as indicating possible or probable juvenile delinquency.

3. Emphasize total faculty planning and understanding of problems.

4. Study the child and seek to discover causes of the symptoms.

5. Recommend steps to be taken for proper treatment.

6. Know thoroughly all services, local and state, available from other than school agencies.14

The state of Michigan requires the following certification for visiting teachers in the state:

Certificate
Michigan life or provisional permanent or other certificate recommended and approved by the State Board of Education.

Experience
Three years appropriate experience, some of which should be as a teacher preferably on an elementary level. (Teaching requirement may be waived by the Department of Public Instruction in an exceptional case if the applicant has had an unusually rich background of appropriate experience).

Education
1. A.B. degree or equivalent and fifteen hours of graduate credit in graduate approved courses.

2. Thirty semester hours in Education, Social Work, Psychology and Sociology.15

14 Ibid.

The well organized visiting teacher program in Michigan is under the Special Education Department in the state. Since the work is a special service in the schools, this location seems logical. The momentum for the program came from an interest of the state in the prevention of juvenile delinquency. This beginning was in line with the philosophy underlying visiting teacher work and gives the program a different status from those which evolved from an interest primarily in attendance.

The duties of visiting teachers in this state point to a preventive program of work and emphasize a treatment of causes rather than a treatment of symptoms of delinquent behavior. The recognition of other social agencies as necessary in effective visiting teacher work is a pertinent duty mentioned for the workers in the Michigan program.

Since the activities listed for visiting teachers in the foregoing state programs apparently were somewhat influenced by local situations, the writer consulted authorities in the field for other acceptable functions of visiting teachers.

Laabs, Senior Consultant in School Social Work in the Minneapolis Public Schools, defines the visiting teacher and her function in the following way:

The visiting teacher or school social worker is a social worker in the school setting, trained and experienced in the two fields concerned. She works in cooperation with the school and the home on problems identified by and with the school program. She has the opportunity of interpreting the philosophy, services, and limitations of social
services in the community and to the social agencies' personnel corresponding information about school services. She can see that the information and plans for remedial measures are known to both agencies.¹⁶

A picture of the function of the visiting teacher somewhat different from that suggested by the state programs just reviewed is presented by Miss Laabs in that she places the chief emphasis on a program of interpretation. Since it is a generally accepted fact that the school is only one agency for helping children, the visiting teacher as a liaison officer between the school and community is an important function for those in the work. The outcome from such activity on the part of the visiting teacher should promote better understanding between the community agencies and, therefore, lead to greater and more effective use of the resources of each in the solving of children's problems.

Hall, Assistant Professor of Child Welfare, Tulane University School of Social Work, says that three aspects stand out in the function of the visiting teacher. They are: (1) To help individual children make the best possible use of what the school has to offer, (2) To assist administrators in the school system to make changes in certain policies, procedures, and resources in order serve better the needs of the children, and (3) To assume the

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responsibility for setting up a program that will enable other social workers in the community to work effectively with the school system.\textsuperscript{17}

The focal point of visiting teacher work, as seen by Miss Hall, is the child and his problems. Recognition of and assistance to "individuals" within the school is a part of the underlying philosophy of visiting teacher work. Hall and Laabs charge the visiting teacher with the responsibility of coordinating school services with those of other community agencies for better working relationships to the end that the needs of the children may be better met.

A year book of the American Association of School Administrators, "The Expanding Role of Education," states that visiting teacher work has become a part of the total school program, but the duties of visiting teachers vary according to the school systems in which they work.\textsuperscript{18} The facilities which the school offers and the philosophy of principals and teachers within the school appear to determine the types of problems with which they deal. Often, the major portion of the visiting teacher's time is used as a counselor and guide to slow learners and maladjusted children. This reference


places visiting teacher work under a heading of "Special Services for Exceptional Children."

The writer feels that the recognition of the fact that the functions of visiting teachers will vary according to the philosophies of those with whom they work is a basic understanding for those in the work. Effective work by the visiting teacher depends largely upon a good working relationship with other members of the school staff. The preceding reference also points to the visiting teacher as a guide and counselor to those children with problems. From the functions reviewed in this study, that activity is one of the most acceptable ones and is found in practice in the visiting teacher program in the state of Michigan.

Modern education has become aware of the importance of educating the "whole" child which implies that many factors in the life of the child must be considered if such a task is to be accomplished. The schools are no longer concerned solely with promoting mental ability but are recognizing the importance of social and emotional aspects which affect the adjustment of the child to life. Such a concern on the part of the schools today indicates the need for information concerning the life of the child outside of the classroom; it also implies the use of other community agencies if an effective adjustment of the "whole" child is to be secured.

With this enlarged responsibility accepted by the schools of today, there has arisen a need for special workers on the school staff to assist in meeting the needs of children. Visiting teachers
have been employed, and the program in which they work is among others which have been organized for this purpose.

In order to assist in the accomplishment of the school's objectives, visiting teachers must work as an integral part of the school system. Effective work can be done by visiting teachers only as they work with and are accepted by pupils, teachers, principals, supervisors, superintendents, and parents. The program purposes to offer a special service to the school and its pupils; one that is supplementary and complementary to that of the classroom teacher.

As visiting teachers work with children and learn more about the conditions which affect them in and out of school, they find it necessary to work cooperatively with other social agencies in the community. The resources of the departments of health and welfare, court resources, or the resources of all types of civic organizations may offer the means for solving problems of children.

In the interest of the children they seek to serve, visiting teachers work with both schools and other social agencies. To be effective in their work, they perform both as social workers and as representatives of the schools. This dual performance by visiting teachers, calls for interpretation of their program. To the social agencies and homes with which they work, visiting teachers interpret the purposes and policies of the schools; to the schools and to the homes of pupils with whom they work, they are in a position to interpret the services of community agencies.
It is evident, then, that visiting teachers must be specially trained in the field of social work and education. In order to interpret the purposes and policies of the schools to parents and to other social agencies, the workers need training and experience in the field of education. The workers are "students of child behavior and social conditions which affect the child".\(^{19}\)

They need also a knowledge of social agencies and ability to use their services. Visiting teachers are trained in these fields in order that they may be better able to carry out their professional responsibilities to children.

**Criteria:** The following criteria of an adequate visiting teacher program were suggested by the preceding review of literature in the field of visiting teacher work. They will serve, in Chapter IV, as a frame of reference by which to evaluate the visiting teacher program in Virginia.

1. Visiting teacher programs should be concerned with prevention as well as correction. The emphasis of visiting teacher work, as far as possible, should be on the positive rather than the negative approach.

2. There should be at least one visiting teacher for every 1,500 to 3,000 of the school population, depending upon the density of population, the distances to be traveled, and the social resources

of the community.

3. The program should include provision for the coordination and utilization of other social agencies in the community.

4. The program should recognize the basic importance of a good relationship between the home and the school.

5. The visiting teacher program should be organized as a part of the educational program.

6. Visiting teacher programs must be adequately financed.

7. The duties and responsibilities of visiting teachers should be clearly stated and understood by visiting teachers, administrative officers, and other school personnel.

8. Visiting teacher programs should provide supervision and inservice training opportunities for visiting teachers and jointly for visiting teachers and school personnel.

9. Visiting teachers should be trained specifically for the service with a background in social work and education, and with practical experience in dealing with problems of individuals and of society.

10. Visiting teachers should receive compensation on the same scale as other school personnel of equal qualifications.
CHAPTER III

THE WORK AND FUNCTION OF THE VISITING TEACHER IN VIRGINIA

History of the development of the program in Virginia:

A number of school divisions in Virginia had employed attendance officers prior to January, 1944. The chief duty of these officers was to investigate cases of unlawful absence. These attendance officers were sometimes called visiting teachers. The first official recognition of visiting teacher work by the state of Virginia was in 1944 when the State Board of Education passed a resolution encouraging local school divisions to employ visiting teachers.

On February 3, 1944, the General Assembly of Virginia during its regular session, adopted a joint resolution appointing a commission "to make a thorough and complete study of the public school system of Virginia". This commission was composed of nine members with Dr. George H. Denny as chairman. The report of the "Denny Commission" (as it is commonly called in honor of its chairman) was submitted to the 1945 Special Session of the General Assembly and included the following recommendations:

The Commission recommends that the term "attendance officer" or "truant officer" be abandoned in favor of the designation "visiting teacher", and that the services of at least one such visiting teacher, and

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more if found to be necessary, be provided in every school division of the state. It is further recommended that the Department of Education develop a list of eligible persons from which visiting teachers shall be chosen. It also recommends that the State Board of Education prescribe the qualifications and minimum salary for such individuals on the same basis as those for supervision, so as to assure uniformly high quality of personnel and performance in this important position.2

The General Assembly appropriated $175,000 to be used for the employment of additional supervisors, and Governor Darden approved the use of a part of this money for the employment of visiting teachers.

Just after the "Benny Commission" made its report, the State Board of Education outlined the function of the visiting teacher as follows:

In general, under the direction and supervision of the school board and the division superintendent of schools, the visiting teacher will work with the child, the parent, and the teacher in helping to solve the child's problems which relate to his school experience. More specifically, the visiting teacher will be concerned with

a. Problems and conditions which promote or interfere with a child's success in school, such as maintenance of health, emotional disturbances, social relationships, economic conditions, home and family situations resulting in irregular or non-attendance at school, and other difficulties;

b. Advising and working with teachers and other school personnel in bringing the resources of the school to bear upon the problems or conditions adversely affecting the proper growth of the child;

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2Ibid., p. 19,20.
c. Utilizing in addition to those provided by the school, the resources afforded by other community agencies, such as Public Health or Welfare, to solve problems and to remedy conditions which impede the child's development.  

The qualifications for visiting teachers in Virginia are stated by the State Board of Education as follows:

General Qualifications of the Visiting Teacher

1. The candidate must be in good health and must possess personal qualities needed in order to command respect and exercise leadership.

2. The candidate must present evidence of appropriate study in the fields of both education and social work.

3. The qualifications of any individual recommended by local school authorities for the position of visiting teacher shall be approved by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction and the Division of Instruction of the State Department of Education.

Special Qualifications

Fully approved qualifications:

1. The candidate shall hold the highest form of Virginia teaching certificate (now Collegiate Professional).

2. The candidate shall have had at least twelve semester hours of appropriate training in social work at a recognized institution or one year of successful experience in social work.

3. The candidate shall have had at least three years of successful teaching experience or two years of successful teaching experience and one year of successful experience in social work.

Mimeographed material prepared by the State Department of Education, "Virginia's Visiting Teacher Program", November 29, 1946.
Temporarily approved qualifications:

1. The candidate must meet the requirements of 1 and 2 above.

2. The candidate shall secure at least twelve semester hours of appropriate training in social work from a recognized institution within four years after first employed as visiting teacher.4

The visiting teacher program was inaugurated in the state of Virginia in the school session of 1945-1946. In instituting the program, the State Department of Education held a three day conference at Richmond for those beginning the work in the coming school session. At this conference the function of the visiting teacher in the school program was discussed as were procedures for working with pupils, teachers, and parents. In September of 1946 a one day orientation conference was held for those who were to begin their work as visiting teachers in the 1946-1947 school session. This orientation program was continued in August, 1947, for those who were to begin their work in the schools in September, 1947.5

**Orientation and In-Service Training Procedures:** The State Department of Education also organized the visiting teachers in Virginia into eight regional groups. This was done in December, 1946, and the groups thus constituted hold regular monthly meetings in which

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4Mimeoographed material from the State Department of Education, April, 1946.
5Mimeoographed material, loc. cit.
the members discuss common problems and work as a professional group for in-service growth of visiting teachers.

A state-wide conference for white visiting teachers was held at Natural Bridge, Virginia, in April, 1947. This conference was planned cooperatively by the staff of the Division of Elementary Education and the chairmen of the eight regional groups of visiting teachers over the state. There were sixty-nine visiting teachers, four division superintendents, nine members of the State Department of Education, and two out-of-state consultants in attendance at the conference.

During the summer of 1947, a workshop was held at The Richmond Professional Institute, Richmond, Virginia, for the purpose of preparing a handbook for Virginia Visiting Teachers. The task of writing and organizing the material was done by five visiting teachers in the state working under the direction of the Division of Elementary Education of the State Department of Education. A preliminary edition of the handbook was completed and copies were sent to superintendents, principals, and visiting teachers throughout the state. It was hoped that these school people would make suggestions for modification and revision of the handbook and that another workshop could be planned in the summer of 1948 for the purpose of preparing the handbook for printing.6

At the Virginia Education Association meeting in Richmond, Virginia in October, 1947, the status of the visiting teachers in the state changed from that of a section in the Virginia Education Association to the Department of Visiting Teachers of the Virginia Education Association.

By September, 1947, seventy-one school divisions in the state were employing a total of eighty-six visiting teachers; of which seventy-five were white and eleven were Negro.

Work and function of the Virginia Visiting Teacher: "A Handbook for Visiting Teachers" issued by the State Department of Education defines the work and function of the Virginia visiting teacher as follows:

Visiting teacher work has developed out of a belief that provisions should be made whereby every child shall have a school experience that is appropriate for him. The visiting teacher is that member of the school staff who works with the home, the school, and the community in making adjustments for and with the child who is having unusual difficulty in profiting from school experience or who is showing early symptoms of maladjustment.7

One way of analyzing the function and work of the visiting teacher is to determine, as nearly as possible, the types of work she is doing. The reports of Virginia visiting teachers were analyzed for the months of December, January, and February (1947-1948). These

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reports were secured from the State Department of Education and represent the work of the eighty-six visiting teachers in the state for the three months period.

The reasons for referral of children to visiting teachers according to the monthly reports are: (1) Attendance, which includes (a) Irregular, (b) Non-enrollment, (c) Drop-outs, (d) Truants; (2) Aggressive anti-social behavior, (3) Excessive shyness or withdrawn behavior, (4) Health conditions, (5) Indigency, (6) Unsatisfactory achievement in school, and (7) miscellaneous other reasons for referral.

Table I gives the number of each type of problem which was referred to the visiting teachers by principals and teachers and the percent each represents of the total number of referrals.

Under the heading of "Other reasons for referral" were such problems as: Tardiness, problems incidental to transportation, run-aways, physical handicap, working unlawfully, unwed mothers, housing, transfer inquiries from other states, and reading and speech difficulties.

Among the reasons for referral to visiting teachers the percentage of attendance cases referred was highest, fifty-seven percent. This fact indicates that the visiting teacher in Virginia is working to a considerable extent with attendance cases; however, it should be pointed out that attendance problems are often the avenues which lead the visiting teacher to more basic problems of maladjustment in children.
### Table I


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons for Referral</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Attendance</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irregular</td>
<td>4,274</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-enrollment</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drop-outs</td>
<td>601</td>
<td>06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truants</td>
<td>678</td>
<td>07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Aggressive anti-social behavior</strong></td>
<td>634</td>
<td>06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. Excessive shyness or withdrawn behavior</strong></td>
<td>176</td>
<td>02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4. Health conditions</strong></td>
<td>1,564</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5. Indigency</strong></td>
<td>902</td>
<td>09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6. Unsatisfactory achievement in school</strong></td>
<td>642</td>
<td>06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>7. Other reasons for referral</strong></td>
<td>602</td>
<td>05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>10,338</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Fifteen percent of the total number of referrals were for health conditions. The data do not show whether the cases were in the area of mental or physical health. Regardless of the area of health the referrals were in, such problems fall within the scope of visiting teacher work, since health conditions often prevent children from making the most of their school experience.

According to acceptable functions of visiting teachers, the area of maladjusted behavior is one in which they should work. Statistics for this study show that Virginia workers receive only eight percent of their referrals from principals and teachers for maladjusted behavior (aggressive anti-social behavior and excessive shyness or withdrawn behavior). This might imply that school personnel are not sensitive to this type of problem and to the benefits which such children might receive from specially trained workers. Nine percent of the referrals to visiting teachers in the state were for problems involving indigency. These include conditions in the home which do affect the child at school.

Unsatisfactory achievement in school is the reason for six percent of the referrals to workers in the state program. This problem may be the symptom of such things as low mental ability, poor physical health, home conditions, lack of interest in school, or a school curriculum that is not meeting the needs of the children it purposes to serve. The percent of referrals for this problem is among the lowest in the reasons for referrals to visiting teachers.
and may indicate that the visiting teacher is not being used enough in this area.

To clarify further the activities of the visiting teachers in Virginia, the same monthly report forms were examined to see procedures used by workers in the cases referred to them.

Table II shows the procedures used by visiting teachers; the number of times each procedure was used; and the percent of frequency with which a certain procedure was used. The findings in the table are based on the 10,338 cases referred to the Virginia workers for the months of December, January, and February (1947-1948).

Listed under "other conferences", visiting teachers reveal on their monthly reports that they also work with school nurses, attendance officers, probation officers, school counselors, guidance workers, judges, psychiatric social workers, doctors, employers of children, bus drivers, and other visiting teachers. Other resources being used by the workers are: Parent Teacher Associations, Red Cross, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Mental Hygiene Clinics, Consultation Services, Civic Clubs, Churches, State Vocational Schools, and the Department of Labor.

The data reveal that Virginia visiting teachers are using the procedure of conferring more frequently that any other procedure. Conferences with principals or head teachers, classroom teachers, children, and parents include the largest percent of the total number of conferences, seventy-eight percent. The frequency with
### TABLE II

PROCEDURES CLASSIFIED ON THE MONTHLY REPORT FORMS OF THE EIGHTY-SIX VISITING TEACHERS IN VIRGINIA, AS USED WITH 10,338 CASES FOR THE MONTHS OF DECEMBER, JANUARY, AND FEBRUARY (1947-1948)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Procedures Used</th>
<th>Frequency Use of Each Procedure</th>
<th>Percent of Frequency of Use of Each Procedure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conference with principal or head teacher</td>
<td>6,519</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conference with classroom teacher</td>
<td>7,501</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conference with child</td>
<td>7,890</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conference with parent</td>
<td>7,124</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conference with supervisor</td>
<td>1,389</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conference with superintendent</td>
<td>963</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other conferences</td>
<td>1,093</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources of health agencies</td>
<td>950</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources of welfare agencies</td>
<td>1,076</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Court</td>
<td>428</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinical services</td>
<td>517</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services of rehabilitation supervisor</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other resources</td>
<td>1,203</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>36,746</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
which the workers are conferring with supervisors, superintendents, and holding miscellaneous conferences is ten percent. Visiting teachers are also using the resources of other social agencies as a procedure in their work. Ten percent represents the frequency of use of this procedure. Such a small percent in the frequency of use of other social agencies by visiting teachers may indicate a scarcity of certain social agencies in the state or it may indicate that Virginia workers are not making use of other agencies in their work with cases referred by principals and teachers as often as the situation would warrant.

Examination of descriptions of cases: Data in this study show that Virginia visiting teachers are working with many different types of problems. Fifty percent of the workers in the state, upon the request of the State Department of Education, submitted descriptions of cases with which they had worked. The investigator examined these case descriptions and selected one case from each area of referral as an illustrative one in that area. Eight cases are included in this study in order to present a clearer picture of the types of problems with which the visiting teachers are working and to give an insight into their activities. These descriptions were written by Virginia visiting teachers as reports of cases and not as complete case studies.
Case 1 was referred to the visiting teacher as an attendance problem. This case is illustrative of the fifty-seven percent of attendance referrals to Virginia visiting teachers.

Case 1

William is fourteen years old and in the fifth grade. This pupil has been an attendance and a discipline problem for approximately four years, and his record includes hearings in juvenile court for offenses, mostly petty larceny. Several municipal agencies have attempted to assist the child and his family. The visiting teacher requested the aid of the elementary supervisor in October, when the pupil was finally enrolled after many home visits and persuasions of various types. William was given achievement tests, etc., during which time a reading difficulty and an accompanying dislike of reading were discovered. However, an interest in animals was disclosed, and reading materials in accord with this interest were suggested to the teacher. The supervisor and visiting teacher also supplied the teacher with all the facts known about William.

The pupil has now taken an interest in library facilities and goes there of his own volition after school when the schedule is so arranged. His attendance has been faultless since October and he has been a constant visitor to the visiting teacher's office. There has been one display of temper which was adjusted by the teacher.
Case 2 was referred to the visiting teacher for truancy. This area of attendance problems gives the workers seven percent of the total referrals.

Case 2

My introduction to Bill, an eleven year old boy, came when he was truant from school. In no other way particularly had he been a problem to the school itself. One look at Bill made me feel, however, that he had many hidden problems. He was underweight, secretive, and seemed unhappy. He was never heard to laugh aloud. He never ran very fast or played very hard. He was retarded in his work, being only a placement in the third grade.

Several visits were made to the home by the visiting teacher to learn the causes of Bill's truancy. It was found that both mother and father worked, the mother often from four in the afternoon until late at night; and for this reason could not be up when the children were being helped off to school by a sister much too young to have this responsibility. Bill told me that he would like for his mother to be awake in the morning so she could remind him of school and help him to get ready.

The status of truant and an indifferent student fitted Bill for the next months, during which time the visiting teacher, through conferences, home visits, and gifts of used games and roller skates, tried to win his confidence. Some progress was made. The child became a shade happier because of the increased interest in him. The principal of the school cooperated by finding him small
jobs to do around his office in order that he might have additional contacts with the child.

Suddenly in Bill's classroom a wave or epidemic of obscene language and suggestive acts was discovered. The teacher, young and inexperienced, immediately shied off from the problem, saying that she was sure Bill was the leader, and that he was becoming a moral degenerate. Investigation and friendly conferences with the children by the visiting teacher brought out the fact that he was the leader and that his thoughts were certainly not those of a healthy eleven-year-old boy.

The principal took Bill to the doctor for a thorough physical examination. Previous to this, it had been discovered that his sight was very poor. The doctor's examination revealed that Bill had had an irritation and trouble with the genital organs for several years, and he recommended circumcision as soon as possible. It seemed to the visiting teacher that it would be best to defer this another six weeks until school would be out for the summer, in order not to arouse the curiosity of the child's playmates.

A home visit to the mother revealed that she had known of the child's organs and twice had called on a local doctor to prescribe medicine for treatment. The visiting teacher explained to her carefully that Bill was sick, just as much so as if he had pneumonia, and that he needed treatment for this sickness. The mother agreed to the operation as soon after school as it could be arranged and said she would have a talk with the father and would
see that the child was not beaten as had been the case so often.

For the last six weeks the principal agreed to the visiting teacher's recommendation to transfer Bill to the other third grade where there was an older and more understanding teacher. The new teacher, while being fully advised of the facts, did not let Bill know that she even suspected that he was bad, and soon he was showing more interest in the school work. Before the end of the session, we were all gratified by hearing him laugh out loud. He seemed almost normally happy. The teacher succeeded in erasing from his mind a feeling that he was permeated with uncleanness.

A last home visit by the visiting teacher in June arranged with Bill's mother a plan for his summer months whereby he would not be left alone too much, but would be pleasantly occupied as much out of doors as possible. The mother again agreed to the circumcision, and this operation was performed at the local hospital the first week in July.

Those in the school feel that this is the turning point in the child's life and look forward to his normal development during the remainder of his childhood. Periodically, we send for him to come to the office and get magazines for himself and his younger brothers and sisters. By this friendly contact, we hope to make him feel that we are really interested in him and his family. The mother has become a most cooperative patron and frequently comes to the visiting teacher for conferences about the training of the other children.

The visiting teacher is planning careful treatment of Bill's eyes to be given at the clinic in August.
Case 3 was referred to the visiting teacher as a withdrawal from school. The problem of drop-outs in the schools present six percent of the total number of problems referred to visiting teachers.

Case 3

Thirteen year old Sam was referred to the visiting teacher because he dropped out of school shortly after the Christmas holidays. In trying to trace the boy, the visiting teacher learned that the family moved three times during the period of one month, and left no forwarding address at any time. It proved impossible to trace the whereabouts of the family through neighbors or school children.

The visiting teacher went to the Director of the Boy's Club and the Chief Probation Officer concerning this elusive household. The Probation Officer located the family through a boy under his supervision who resented the fact that his friend across the street was not attending school.

The worker made a visit to the home, and it was evident that the youngster was much in need of shoes and clothing. The mother stated that she felt she could get the boy some shoes. The visiting teacher suggested that the child come to the school
the next afternoon to see if anything could be found in the store room for him to use. Sam came the next day, but there proved to be only a cap and some socks in his size.

The boy agreed to meet the worker the next afternoon at the same time. In the meantime, the welfare chairman of a church was called upon, and she donated ten dollars for clothing for Sam. When the boy met the visiting teacher the next day, he had secured a pair of second hand shoes. Sam said that he needed trousers and a shirt more than anything else, and he was taken by the worker to purchase them. After purchasing these necessities, the balance of the money was spent on a couple of gaily colored undershirts and a belt.

Sam evidenced no embarrassment during the outing. He reported to school the next day after being out for more than a month. In the past several weeks he has not missed a day from school.

Despite the possible unfavorable psychological effects that might result from this assumption of parental responsibilities, it seemed the quickest and the best procedure due to existing conditions at home.
Case 4 is illustrative of the attendance referrals received by Virginia visiting teachers. Forty-one percent of the total number of cases referred by principals and teachers is for irregular attendance at school.

Case 4

James, age fifteen, was an irregular attendant at school. It was known that he was hauling wood during school hours. The principal sent several letters to the parents of the boy advising them of his irregularity in attendance at school. A visit was also made to James' home by the principal to let them know about the situation. James came to school one day and then lapsed back into the old pattern of attending irregularly.

This case was referred to the visiting teacher. On visitation to the home, the mother stated that the teachers had called her son dumb, and he had lost all interest in school. The visiting teacher held a conference with James who stated that none of his teachers had called him dumb, but he did not like to attend school because he failed last year.

A conference was held with the principal and teachers. It was readily agreed to allow James to enter the class in which he had failed, and to adjust his class work to meet his particular need. At present he is attending school regularly.
Case 5, a referral for anti-social behavior, is illustrative of the six percent of referrals that visiting teachers receive.

Case 5

Jack is a sturdy, well-built fourteen-year-old youngster with, ordinarily, a pleasing personality. His guidance folder gives the following description: "Jack wants to have his way. He is often rude and seems to need the firm hand of a man. With the proper influence, we feel that Jack might improve a great deal."

Jack has been known to the attendance department of the city since he was eight years old and his truancy started. He is now indifferent to school, misbehaves in the classroom, and one teacher reported masturbation. The principal and visiting teacher have had many talks with Jack, and all are quite concerned that a boy with intelligence (I.Q. 106) seemed so indifferent to all overtures of help.

Mrs. Jack, the mother, has worked since the death of her husband seven years ago. She earns enough to supply the needs of herself and Jack. They live in a frame house in a fairly good neighborhood. The mother is a very religious woman of limited education; agreeable and pleasant disposition but shows little force or initiative. For a number of years Mrs. Jack has had almost no control over her son's behavior.

On a routine visit to the home the visiting teacher talked with a man on the porch. She learned from him that he had been living with Jack's mother off and on for some time. The boy had
had been told they were married and later that they were not. Since
that time, the man said the boy had been a "regular devil". (Records
at school showed that his extreme belligerence and masturbation dated
from this time). The visiting teacher asked the man if he thought
Jack's behavior could in any way be attributed to the troubled situa-
tion in the home. That angle was discussed, and the visiting teacher
suggested that things might work out better and more rapidly if he
were living elsewhere. He agreed to talk this over with Mrs. Jack.
A note was left for the mother requesting her to come to the office
of the visiting teacher the following morning. She came, contrite
and ashamed that the visiting teacher had learned her story. While
talking about the effect of the situation on Jack, the mother seemed
to get an insight into his trouble in that he might feel rejected.
As she was a very decent and "Churchy" woman, Jack's innate revolt
against the immorality he had lived around was discussed. Mrs. Jack
left the conference, promising she would either remove or marry the
man. Her plans were to send Jack to camp for the summer.

At the beginning of the next school term, the mother came by
to see the visiting teacher. She wanted to tell her that the man had
moved away, and she felt that Jack had profited from camp.

Since this boy had apparently never known the meaning of
discipline, the principal and visiting teacher felt that firmness
with understanding would meet the particular need of this adolescent
boy at this time. Jack was placed in a Special School for Boys in
the city, and since then his masturbation has stopped, and there has
been no recurrence of his trouble.
Case 6 is also a referral for aggressive anti-social behavior. This case is illustrative of referrals received by visiting teachers in the area of anti-social behavior.

Case 6

Anne is six years old and in the first grade. She has become a serious behavior problem during the last month and was referred to the visiting teacher for this reason. She hits and bullies other children, is very restless in school and is careless and destructive with school material. After observing the child for a considerable period, the visiting teacher made a visit to the home.

The following was learned from the home: The mother was divorced from her first husband who is the child's real father. She has two sons who are in --- with their father (first husband). A hearing for a divorce from the second husband is scheduled for next week. Anne likes her stepfather and has been greatly upset over the disagreements that he and her mother have, and now does not understand why he does not come home. The child is also in great need of a tonsillectomy which is to be performed in February.

The above information was reported to the classroom teacher by the visiting teacher, and she is convinced that the child's behavior and nervousness are due to conditions existing in the home.
Case 7 presents a health problem which was referred to the visiting teacher. Health conditions are responsible for fifteen percent of the referrals to the workers in the Virginia program.

Case 7

Margaret, a ten year old girl, was referred to the visiting teacher by the County Health Nurse as an epileptic out of school.

When the school was visited by the worker to check with the principal, it was found that he had thought nothing could be done about this child and did not report her on the non-enrolled list.

A visit to the home by the visiting teacher revealed that the parents were under the impression that the spells were caused by the moon and that nothing could be done. After this investigation, it was suggested to the family that medical care was available at ----, and that there they would examine and treat the case. The family felt that they could not take care of the expense of such treatment.

The visiting teacher discussed the case with the local Department of Public Welfare and with the Health Department. It was decided that the family was medically indigent and that the case was already known to the ---- because an older sister had been treated for poliomyelitis there.

After several visits to the ----, Margaret's spells were less frequent, and finally the doctor recommended that she would be able to attend school.

Margaret is attending school now and is doing average work. She seems happy to be considered like the others in the home and the school.
Case 8 is the description of a case of unsatisfactory achievement in school. Six percent of the total number of referrals to visiting teachers is for work with such problems.

Case 8

Jean is twelve years of age and in the fifth grade but working much below standard. She was referred to the visiting teacher as not making any progress in school.

Upon observation of the child in the classroom by the worker, it was revealed that her muscular coordination was very poor and at times she appeared extremely nervous, especially when she tried to complete a task within a certain time limit. A visit to the home by the visiting teacher showed home conditions were very good; parents are Hebrew and an older sister is very smart in her school work and wants to become a doctor. It was also learned from the mother that Jean had at one time been treated at ---- Hospital.

The visiting teacher administered the California test of Mental Maturity to Jean, and the results showed a mental age of 6-10 and grade placement of 1.6.

A report from the hospital in which the child had been treated showed that she had been there in 1942, and, at that time a psychological test had been made which gave a M.A. of 4-6 and an I.Q. of 68. It was discovered that her mental retardation was due to a congenital defect of the brain. Institutional care was indicated, but the mother would not accept the fact that her child was retarded and continued to push her. This same attitude is expressed at present as the mother expects Jean to keep up with normal fifth graders.

Since the teacher is now aware of the child's problem through the efforts of the visiting teacher, it will be met with more understanding on the part of the school.

The real task will be working with the mother.
CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Every program, new or old, needs critical evaluation and constant revision of present activities for the purpose of making the program more effective. During its three years of activity, the Virginia visiting teacher program has undergone change and growth and would seem ready now for an evaluation. In order to evaluate this state program, the writer used the criteria set up in Chapter II as a frame of reference. These criteria are broad statements condensed from principles exemplified in other programs established on a state-wide basis and from the opinions of authorities in visiting teacher work. They will serve as the main basis for the following evaluation:

1. Visiting teacher programs should be concerned with prevention as well as correction. The emphasis of visiting teacher work, as far as possible, should be on the positive rather than the negative approach.

The program in Virginia, at the present time, is concerned more with correction than with prevention in that its service is limited to the treatment of children with problems of maladjustment. Prevention is an aspect of the program to the extent that the referrals receive attention from the workers in order to avoid the development of more serious problems. The types of referrals that
visiting teachers receive, as shown in Table 1 of this study suggest that the problems are of the type which emphasize correction. A study of the program as it is now functioning does reveal, however, the possibility of using the following aspects of prevention in the work: (a) Impress teachers with the importance of referring children before conditions become aggravated and (b) visiting teachers and teachers cooperate to find ways of modifying the educational program in order to prevent problems of maladjustment from developing. Such activities would not only stress prevention but would accentuate a positive rather than a negative approach in the program.

(2) There should be at least one visiting teacher for every 1,500 to 3,000 of the school population, depending upon the density of population, the distances to be traveled, and the social resources of the community.

The report of the "Denny Commission", which was influential in the organization of the visiting teacher program in Virginia, recommended the employment of one visiting teacher in every school division of the state and more if it was found necessary.

Virginia is divided into one hundred and eleven school divisions and has a total school population of 718,191 children, according to the 1945 census. As of September, 1947, seventy-one

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1 Table I, p. 29.
school divisions were employing eighty-six visiting teachers.

In the light of the recommendations of the "Benny Commission" and of this criterion, it may be said that forty more school divisions in the state should employ visiting teachers and that approximately two and one-half times as many workers, as are at present employed, should be employed to serve adequately the school population of the state. The increase in the number of visiting teachers employed would not only reduce the case load of the present workers, but would also allow time for working with groups of teachers interested in child study. The result of such joint study should contribute to the development of a visiting teacher program which stresses prevention as well as correction and which uses a positive rather than a negative approach.

(3) The program should include provision for the coordination and utilization of other social agencies.

Because in Virginia the school is recognized as only one of the agencies which are concerned with the wholesome development of children, the state visiting teacher program emphasizes the idea that the workers should serve as liaison officers between the school and other agencies in the community. Visiting teachers in Virginia are charged with responsibility of developing a cooperative working relationship with other agencies. The program in Virginia recommends that this activity be done through a program of interpretation by its workers; interpretation of the school to the other agencies and the services of other agencies to the school. When there is mutual
understanding of policies and purposes of schools and of other agencies
having similar interests in child welfare, more effective work can be
done by all concerned for the good of the children in the community.

Table II\(^2\) of this study, which lists the procedures used by
Virginia visiting teachers, reveals a ten percent frequency of use
of social agencies. While this percent is not indicative of how the
workers are using the agencies, it does point out the fact that visit-
ing teachers are coordinating and using social agencies in their work
with referred cases. Cases 3 and 7 in Chapter III contain illustra-
tions of visiting teachers using the resources of other agencies in
working with the problems of children referred to them. While ten
percent may seem to some to be a small percentage for frequency of
use of social agencies, it does reveal that the workers in the
Virginia program are coordinating and utilizing the resources of
other social agencies in the community.

(4) The program should recognize the basic importance of
a good relationship between the home and the school.

The visiting teacher program in Virginia recognizes the
importance of a good working relationship between the home and the
school since it frees its workers to visit the homes of the children
referred to them. This implies that the program is aware of the
importance of the home and its influence relative to the behavior of
which serves as a guide to the workers in the state program, points

\(^2\)Table II, p. 32.
to a two-way program of interpretation for securing understanding and a better relationship between the home and the school.

Table II\(^3\) of this study shows the large number of conferences that visiting teachers have with parents of children referred to them. It is reasonable to assume that as the visiting teachers confer with parents about the problems of children, an interpretation of the school program is made and a better understanding of what the school does for the child is created. In these same conferences the visiting teachers acquire information about home conditions which may affect the child in school. Such information should be important to school personnel and should lead to a better understanding of the behavior of the child in school. Table II shows that with forty-five percent of the referrals received, visiting teachers confer with other school personnel. It seems reasonable to assume that some of these conferences are arranged for visiting teachers to share with teachers the information acquired about home conditions of children; such information is of basic importance in the establishment of a good home-school relationship. Case 6 in this study is an example of a visiting teacher sharing information with a teacher about the home conditions of a child.

(5) The visiting teacher program should be organized as an integral part of the educational program.

The program in Virginia was instituted and organized by the State Department of Education and the service was placed under

\(^3\)Loc. cit.
the direction of the Division of Elementary Education of the State Department of Education. The program has become an organized department of the Virginia Education Association; many visiting teachers in the state have also affiliated with the National Education Association.

Evidence that the workers function as an integral part of the school program may be found in Table II of this study. These data reveal that visiting teachers confer with other school personnel about cases and that the frequency of use of this procedure is seventy-eight percent; this percent shows that this particular procedure is used more than any other by visiting teachers.

The fact that the programs are supervised by the local administrative officers in school systems and in individual schools is further evidence that the visiting teacher program in Virginia is organized as an integral part of the school program.

(6) Visiting teacher programs must be adequately financed.

Since the program in Virginia was organized and instituted on a state-wide basis, the larger portion of financial support for it comes from the state. At a special session of the General Assembly in 1945, money was appropriated for the visiting teacher program and reimbursement to localities for the service is provided.

The present practice by the state in regard to financial support of the program is as follows: The state reimburses localities two-thirds of a $2,500 (maximum) for the salaries of

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4Loc. cit.
fully qualified visiting teachers. For the salaries of those workers who are temporarily appointed, the state reimburses the localities two-thirds of $2,100. The writer does not have evidence to substantiate the statement that the Virginia program is adequately or inadequately financed; however, it may be said that the state has provided reimbursement for the program on a similar basis to that provided for supervision of instruction.

(7) The duties and responsibilities of visiting teachers should be clearly stated and understood by visiting teachers, administrative officers, and other school personnel.

The Division of Elementary Education of the State Department of Education, under whose leadership the visiting teacher program has been placed, has clearly stated the duties and responsibilities of the workers. This Department issues mimeographed material relative to the work, plans conferences for the workers, and the staff members often serve as consultants to the members of the regional groups as they meet to discuss problems and to interpret their work; these activities are intended to help those working in the program to understand better their duties and responsibilities. "A Handbook for Visiting Teachers", written under the leadership of the staff of this Department, was sent to visiting teachers, principals, superintendents, and other school personnel as an interpretation of the program in Virginia.

Table I of this study shows that the workers in the state receive referrals from school people and function in all of the areas
as presenting problems with which visiting teachers properly should work. Even though the percentage of referrals is larger in some areas than in others, it might be assumed that the duties and responsibilities of visiting teachers in the state are clearly stated and understood by those using the program. The high percentage of referrals in the area of attendance may suggest to some that this aspect of the visiting teacher work is overstressed. Working with problems in this area, however, is an acceptable function for visiting teachers so long as the workers are not required to take legal action with the cases; such action should be taken by some other administrative agency. Furthermore, attendance may be just a symptom which points to a problem in some other area of maladjustment. The eight cases in Chapter III present evidence that the workers in the state receive referrals from principals and teachers and work with problems which the state has designated as acceptable for visiting teachers.

(8) Visiting teacher programs should provide supervision and in-service training opportunities for visiting teachers, and, jointly, for visiting teachers and school personnel.

It may be said that the State Department of Education does provide supervision and in-service training opportunities for the workers in the state program. Evidences of this fact may be found in the activities of the State Department of Education; eight regional groups of visiting teachers were organized throughout
the state for the purpose of "professional group study of problems relating to the visiting teacher movement"; state conferences are planned cooperatively by the State Department of Education and the chairmen of the eight regional groups in order that the workers in the state might come together and study problems relating to their work; orientation conferences are held yearly for those entering the work in the state for the first time; monthly reports are required of the visiting teachers and are used by the State Department to analyze the strengths and needs of the state program.

The writer does not have data which reveal any provision on a state or local level for visiting teachers to meet jointly with other school personnel. It seems reasonable to assume, however, that on a local level visiting teachers have in-service training opportunities with other school personnel.

(9) Visiting teachers should be trained specifically for the service, with a background in social work and education, and with practical experience in dealing with problems of individuals and of society.

In Chapter III of this study, the certification requirements for visiting teachers in Virginia, as set up by the State Department of Education, are described. An examination of this material reveals that the workers are required to have twelve semester hours of training in social work, a Collegiate Professional

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Certificate, which is the highest type of teaching certificate in the state, and three years of successful teaching experience or two years successful teaching experience and one year's successful experience in social work. This latter requirement indicates that the program recognizes the need for the workers to have practical experience in dealing with problems of individuals and of society.

In comparison with certification requirements for visiting teachers in other state programs and in the light of this criterion, it may be said that the Virginia program requires its workers to be trained specifically in social work and education to offer a special service to the schools.

Statistics as of September, 1947, show that of the eighty-six visiting teachers employed, thirty-eight met the requirements of the State Department of Education for full approval, thirty-nine met the requirements for temporary approval, and nine held special permits.

(10) Visiting teachers should receive compensation on the same scale as other school personnel of equal qualifications.

The "Denny Commission", which was influential in the organization of the program in Virginia, recommended that the workers receive compensation on the same scale as supervisors of instruction. The September (1946) report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction in Virginia says: "Reimbursement from state funds is provided
on a similar basis to that which obtains for supervision". The above statements are evidence of the fact that the state is reimbursing localities for the employment of visiting teachers on the same basis as for supervisors whom they recognize as school personnel of equal qualifications.

Although the writer does not have data on the salaries of visiting teachers and supervisors throughout the state, it may be assumed that localities would follow the same principles in compensating visiting teachers as in compensating supervisors, and on the same scale, since the state subsidy in each case is approximately the same. A wide variation in the salaries of both may be expected in Virginia, however, since there is no state salary scale and salaries vary for all school personnel according to the locality in which they work.

Recommendations: A study and an evaluation of the visiting teacher program in Virginia leads the investigator to make the following recommendations with a view to a more effective visiting teacher program in the state:

1. The services of the program should be extended to all children in the state; approximately two and one-half times as many visiting teachers, as are now working, should be employed.

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2. It is suggested that prevention as well as correction should be emphasized in the state program. Joint meetings of visiting teachers and teachers interested in child study is a procedure which should lead to a visiting teacher program which emphasizes prevention as well as correction.

3. It is recommended that provisions be made by the State Department of Education for a continuous series of meetings of representatives of visiting teachers, principals, supervisors, and superintendents throughout the state for the purpose of interpreting further the duties and responsibilities of visiting teachers in Virginia and developing effective procedures.

4. It is recommended that visiting teachers in Virginia analyze with the classroom teachers concerned the referrals which they (the visiting teachers) receive, in order to assure that all types of problems with which the visiting teacher should deal will receive appropriate attention. The data in Table I reveal that pupil problems in the important areas of "unsatisfactory achievement in school" and "aggressive, anti-social behavior" are referred less frequently than other types which appear to be no more important.

5. It is suggested that the State Department of Education set up a recommended program which conforms to requirements for a Masters degree in order that Virginia visiting teachers might make use of the required twelve hours of social work in earning a graduate degree.
6. It is recommended that a study be made of the monthly report forms used by visiting teachers to determine the value of including additional data which might prove useful in an evaluation of the program.

7. The writer recognizes the value of continuous evaluation of any program and also recognizes the presence of limitations in this study; therefore, it is suggested that further research be done on the visiting teacher program in Virginia.
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VISITING TEACHER'S MONTHLY REPORT

School Division: [ ] Visiting Teacher: [ ] Month: [ ] Year: [ ]

Referals:
1. Children referred previous months of school year: Boys ___ Girls ___ Total ___
2. Children referred current month: ___
3. Children worked with during the month: ___

How many cases have been List as briefly as possible the principal underlying
referred by principals or causes of these conditions that have been revealed by
teachers this month for your analyses of these cases. (Use reverse side of
each of the following reasons?

Number

Attendance
Irregular ___
Non-enrollment ___
Drop-outs ___
Truants ___

Aggressive anti-social behavior ___

Excessive shyness or withdrawn behavior ___

Health conditions ___

Indigency ___

Unsatisfactory achievement in school ___

Add others ___

...th how many of the cases worked with during the month have you used the following procedures?

No. of cases

ference with principal or Used resources of health agencies ___
head teacher ___
ference with classroom teacher ___
ference with child ___
ference with parent ___
ference with supervisor ___
ference with superintendent ___
st other conferences ___

No. of cases

ference with classro...
ference with head teach...
ference with parent ___
ference with supervisor ___
ference with superintendent ___
st other conferences ___
Summary of Activities

Working days for the month ________ Number of visits made to homes ______
Miles traveled during month ________ Number of professional group meetings attended ______
Number of schools in which visiting teacher worked ________ Number of community meetings attended ______
Number of visits made to schools ________
Other activities: (List specifically)

Please report any problems facing you as a visiting teacher, outstanding accomplishments, or special activities in which you have engaged this month. Comments or suggestions that will help the Division of Elementary Education be of greater service to you or that will have a bearing upon the development of the visiting teacher program should be listed here. Any requests you wish to make should also be made in the space below.

______________________________
Visiting Teacher
V I T A

Name: Miss Alva Sawyer

Born: April 24, 1913

Parents: Burville E. and Edith D. Sawyer

Training: Petersburg High School, 1927-1931

Farmville State Teachers College, 1931-1935

Summer School: College of William and Mary, 1946, 1947, 1948

Occupation: Visiting teacher, Petersburg Public Schools

Candidate for the Master of Education Degree from the College of William and Mary, August 20th, 1948.