

A STATISTICAL STUDY OF THE TENURE OF OKLAHOMA PUBLIC SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS*

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THE DATA for this study were secured directly from the issues of the Oklahoma Educational Directory, published annually by the Oklahoma State Department of Education. Each year this Directory gives the names of the superintendents and high school principals of the schools where as many as four teachers are employed.

By bringing into comparison the information given in two successive directories, it was possible to discover which administrators were working during any given year in the same communities in which they worked the previous year. A series of such comparisons reveals the information given in the following table:

TABLE I. PERCENT OF ADMINISTRATORS RETURNING TO SAME COMMUNITY
WHICH THEY SERVED THE PRECEDING YEAR

In Sept.,	1917, 237	out of 580	returned to same community, i.e.,	40%
"	1919, 103	" 203	"	50%
"	1918, 104	" 205	"	50%
"	1920, 328	" 736	"	44%
"	1921, 412	" 895	"	46%
"	1922, 468	" 1020	"	45%
"	1923, 438	" 956	"	45%
"	1924, 568	" 971	"	58%
"	1925, 523	" 983	"	53%
"	1926, 563	" 983	"	57%
"	1927, 634	" 1052	"	60%
"	1928, 661	" 1098	"	60%

In 1918 and in 1919 the number of cases is relatively small, due to the fact that the directory for those years included the names of superintendents only. For all the other years, the names of many high school principals as well as superintendents were included.

Whenever a principal was promoted to the superintendency, he was tabulated as returning to the same community, even though his work as a superintendent would not be identical with his previous work as a high school principal.

Two significant facts are evident from a study of Table I. The first is the great amount of mobility among public school administrators in Oklahoma. If totals be taken for the entire series of tabulations, it is found that during the twelve years from 1917 to 1928 inclusive, 5039 out of 9682 returned to the same communities for a second year. This means that each fall found 51 percent of the superintendents and principals in the same communities they were serving the previous year. In other words 49 percent of them were in new communities doing new work.

The second significant fact is that there appears to be a gradual increase in the tenure of Oklahoma public school administrators. While in 1917 only forty percent of the superintendents and principals returned to the same communities in which they served the preceding year, in 1929 sixty percent returned.

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From the figures covering the past decade it is evident that in many communities in Oklahoma the changing of the superintendent is almost, if not quite, an annual event. It is indeed difficult to predict for such communities any very steady improvement in the public schools. Often the platform of the incoming administration is the reversal of the policies of the outgoing administration. This constant change of policies over a series of years is one of the most disturbing features of public school education in Oklahoma. It is encouraging to note that conditions are improving.