

For Loudoun Times-Mirror
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The report and recommendations of the Denny School Commission reveal very clearly that a ^{careful} study has been made of Virginia's public schools by a group of men and women who appreciate fully the value of education to the children of the State. The members of this commission deserve the thanks of the people of this Commonwealth for their gratuitous services so excellently performed.

The commission made many specific recommendations. Nearly all of them will add to the cost of the school system. These are mostly as follows:

1. Establishment of a minimum salary schedule for teachers much higher than the present State minimum but not higher than the Loudoun schedule.
2. Enforcement of Compulsory Attendance law through employment of visiting teachers.
3. Improvement in teacher training institutions.
4. More emphasis on tool subjects or so-called 3 R's and expansion from an eleven to twelve grade system in order to further this aim.
5. Development of a guidance program.
6. Expansion of vocational training.
7. Improvement and expansion of physical education program.
8. Free textbooks, two-thirds cost to be borne by the State.
9. Better provision for adequate school plants and maintenance thereof. To aid in this an assistant to the superintendent is suggested.

10. Supervision for white and colored schools in all localities.
11. Better school library facilities with a greater proportion of the cost borne by the State.
12. Abandonment of more small and poorly equipped elementary schools but adherence to the plan of having elementary schools serve relatively small areas. Further consolidation of high schools so that the offering may be improved.
13. Improvements of facilities for negro education.

These proposals constitute a constructive program for advancement and improvement in education. In some cases Loudoun County has entirely or nearly reached the goal suggested. In our educational circles and conferences we have given serious discussion to all of these suggested improvements that apply locally. In most instances progress has slowed through lack of funds.

The commission has proposed certain changes in the organization of the State Board of Education. They seem sound but would probably have little effect on our schools.

Appointment of county school board members from the county at large by the board of supervisors is recommended. As a concession to those who advocate a change it would seem wise to follow this suggestion. The plan is comparable to that in operation by general law in cities in Virginia. This change alone would effect our school system very little.

A recommendation of the commission that will receive careful scrutiny is the proposal to fix a minimum tax rate or appropriation

for schools in each county equal to 55 cents on each \$100 of the true or full value of all property taxable for local purposes. Under the plan the State Department of Taxation would fix the true or full value of all property in each county. The question will arise whether the Department of Taxation would make the exhaustive study necessary to determine the true value accurately and we might become involved in many controversies over the matter. The State might also be in the position in many counties of fixing the local school levy. For example, if our present assessments ^{ment} of \$19,000,000 represents 40 per cent of the true value, 55 cents on a true value of \$47,500,000 would yield \$261,250 compared to our current appropriation and district school taxes amounting to approximately \$171,000, an increase by state directive of \$90,000. Our schools could very well use this additional sum of money and it is doubtful if the tax burden would then be nearly so great here as that now levied in many of the poorer counties of Virginia. However, this does not seem to preserve the proper proportion of local governmental authority.