1883

1883 Annual Report of the School Committee of the Town of Bridgewater

The Town of Bridgewater

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ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
SCHOOL COMMITTEE.

The condition of its schools is intimately connected with the industrial pursuits of a community. When these are well fixed, the state of the schools becomes adapted to the wants and the demands of the people. When these are in a state of transition, or when they are failing, the schools feel every change; they ebb and flow, together.

In a community like ours, with its large territory and its very unequal settlement, the schools cannot be all alike; they cannot in all respects be equally good. It is hard to keep some of our schools alive, for lack of scholars: one of them has now been closed for several terms, and its few scholars have been conveyed, at the expense of the town, to a neighboring school; others have become so small that there can be no proper classes, and they are without the benefits of graded and associated work.

The course of population is towards industrial centres. Cities and the larger villages are built up, in a certain sense, at the expense of the outlying country. This is the case more and more, and it is likely to continue so: new inventions lead to new divisions of labor, and to minute subdivisions; and the laborers must gather together, and must be near enough one to another for each to perform the part assigned him with the least loss of time, and to the best advantage. If all the houses in these outer districts were swept away by fire or by tornado, few of
them would be at once rebuilt. Most of them have come down from a somewhat remote past, when our industries were not the same as now; and they are held and occupied because they are apparently of too much value, or have too great wealth of old association, to be readily given up: but their continued occupancy is attended with many inconveniences and discomforts and sacrifices, on the part of those who are forced to seek their daily employment far from their homes. Little by little these old houses are going to their ruin; and when one of them is destroyed by fire, or becomes unfit for further occupancy, its place not infrequently is left desolate.

Many of the trials and perplexities of your Committee are connected with the little schools in the outlying districts. They are too small for the best progress of the scholars. It costs the town nearly as much to maintain a school of ten as a school of thirty or forty; and expenses are therefore very great, when we have, as now, several of these very small schools.

No one of the schools can be closed without serious inconvenience to some families; and those who have always had a schoolhouse within sight of their dwellings, would feel wronged if their children were called upon in their turn to walk a mile or two to school. And the territorial extent of our town is so great, while its population is so sparse, that it would not be easy to bring our scholars together, in larger schools, even by the removal of some of the schoolhouses to new locations: some families would necessarily be subjected to considerable inconvenience.

Your Committee cannot make these schools what they would gladly have them. They are not, however, of the opinion that the time is ripe for any great change. They therefore do the best they can; and they watch, and wait. But they regard it as well to bring this whole subject before their fellow-townsmen, for careful consideration. And they would now express their belief that if the causes
that now exist continue to operate, it will soon become necessary to close two or three of our schoolhouses: and if such should be the case, more scholars must be conveyed to the nearest schools at the expense of the town; and a change of location of some of the schoolhouses may become a manifest necessity. It may be well for those who have the good of our schools at heart to prepare themselves for judicious action; and this notice may help us all, so that in due time we may act unselfishly, and with due regard to the common good.

But while awaiting the time for further action, we may comfort ourselves with the reflection, that these little schools are not without their own advantages; and that it is not desirable, as it certainly is not practicable, for all to be educated alike.

VISITORS.

At the time of writing this Report, Dr. Lowe is the visitor of schools numbered 3, 5, 6 and 14; Mr. Leonard is the visitor of the Grammar department of No. 1, and of schools numbered 2, 4, 10 and 11; Dr. Worcester is the visitor of the Intermediate and the Primary departments of No. 1, and of schools numbered 7, 8, 9, 12 and 13: Dr. Lowe and Dr. Worcester are the visitors of the High School. The Evening Schools have been under Dr. Worcester's special care; but Dr. Lowe has visited both of them.

CHANGES IN THE SCHOOLS.

We cannot count on long retaining the services of any one who is known to be a really good teacher; unless, for personal reasons, Bridgewater is strongly preferred as a home. We cannot compete with the cities and the towns of greatest wealth in the matter of salary; and any one whom we value highly, we are in danger of losing.

The Grammar department of No. 1 has suffered from its frequent change of teachers during the year. The
Visitor reports that it is doing excellent work under its present teacher,—the fifth of the series.

In the Intermediate department of No. 1, there has been a change. Here, with but a brief interval, we had long enjoyed the faithful service of one whose home is with us; but ill-health forced her to surrender her charge at the end of the last school-year. At the beginning of the present year one took her place who also belongs in town, and who is striving hard to be a worthy successor.

The Primary department of No. 1 continues to be the School of Observation, under the arrangement made with the Principal of the State Normal School, and authorized by the town. As our Central School is the only fully graded school that we have, this School of Observation is our only unmixed Primary school. Its success has been very satisfactory; the general interest in it has been fully manifested in the frequent visits of parents and teachers and friends. At the beginning of the present school-year the number in attendance was so great that, in the fulfilment of the law of the State, it was found necessary to employ an assistant; and a second room was thrown open to the school. The accommodations for it have thus been made ample and excellent, with the single exception of its desks; these are old-fashioned and ill arranged, designed each for two scholars; it is very desirable to replace them with good single desks, better fitted for the comfort, the health, and the good conduct of the children. But in this school, too, we lost our principal teacher. For personal reasons she was compelled to resign the position that she was filling so satisfactorily; and after the Christmas holidays she was succeeded by one from whose good service, if we may judge from her success in another field, we have reason to expect excellent results. This school has given great delight to its Visitor; and its good work of the last few years, faithfully supplemented in the Intermediate department, now shows good fruit in the Grammar school.
Schools numbered 2, 3 and 4 have had no change of teachers. Their Visitors report them as doing well.

The teacher of No. 5 was transferred to No. 11, at the beginning of the Winter Term; and one was elected to fill the vacancy who had formerly taught in town, and who is doing good work. The school is very small, and is likely to be smaller.

No. 6 remains without change. The Visitor's report is favorable.

The teacher of No. 7 was forced to resign her position, on account of the death of her mother. After a single term's absence she returned to her labors, at the beginning of the Winter Term. This is one of our very small schools. Its continuance is threatened.

No. 8 is now one of our very small schools. Formerly it was one of the largest; but the population of that part of the town has greatly changed. This school, at the beginning of the present school-year was restored to the charge of one who formerly did good service in it, but who had been teaching for a year in another town.

In the Grammar department of No. 9 there has been no change. The work in this school is very satisfactory to its Visitor. The services of the teacher of the Primary department were interrupted by long and serious sickness; but the school went on successfully under the care of one who taught it long ago. This department of No. 9 is one of our largest schools. It is not an unmixed Primary school, for it has not only the scholars of the primary grade, but the lower classes of an Intermediate school: this and the great size of the school make the labors of the teacher very arduous. It has already become very desirable to give this school an assistant teacher; and it is probable that during the coming year the Committee will be compelled to make an appointment of an assistant, in compliance with the law of the State. The faithful teacher of this school greatly needs help.
With the exception of a few weeks, No. 10 has remained under the instruction of the teacher who has long been there. The Visitor's report is favorable.

No. 11, after several trials during the present school-year, has been placed under the care of the experienced teacher transferred from No. 5 at the beginning of the Winter Term. The Visitor's report is now favorable. There was much that was favorable before.

No. 12 remains closed. Its very few scholars are still conveyed, at the expense of the town, to the good school at North Middleboro'.

There has been no interruption of the good work of No. 18.

There has been no change of teachers in No. 14. The teachers do faithful work, under somewhat trying circumstances. The Primary department of this school is at times very large; but the attendance is irregular, and it is kept within the limits of a single teacher by frequent removals to the upper school.

THE HIGH SCHOOL.

Last May, Mr. J. B. Gifford, who had long been the Principal of the High School, presented his resignation, that he might engage in other business; but at the request of the Committee he kindly consented to serve till the end of the year. It soon become known that a vacancy in the principalship existed; and applications, both by letter and in person, poured in. From a list of more than sixty applicants, Mr. H. H. Gay, a graduate of Amherst, then teaching in the Lawrence Academy at Groton, was selected by the Committee.

During the summer holidays, the 1st Assistant, wearied with her ten years of constant service, resigned her position. The vacancy was filled by the election of one who was well known as a successful teacher, from her long service in the High School of East Bridgewater.
A little later the 2d Assistant resigned the office which she had held for several years; and soon after, she removed with her family to the West, where she is now teaching with success. The vacancy was held open until the beginning of the new school-year, to give the Committee the opportunity to become acquainted with the teachers already elected, and to learn what service would be needed from a second assistant. One was then appointed who had had a single year's experience in teaching, and whose home was in town.

The Committee desire here to place on record their appreciation of the long and faithful service of the three teachers who thus left us.

In accordance with the plan presented in the last Annual Report, the Course of Study was thoroughly revised, in the endeavor to adapt it to the wants of all our scholars. It was made to include a strictly English course, as well as the Academic and the Classical courses. It is hoped that hereafter none will leave school without a fair knowledge of those branches that are most necessary for all.

The Course of Study, as now arranged, will be appended. Doubtless it will be found, in its practical working, to need some changes. We have been forced to put some branches of study too early in the course for their best pursuit. Physics, for example, is set down for the first year; for some pursue their High School studies but a single year, and we are unwilling that any should leave school without some knowledge of physics: but we well know that there are departments of this study that require for their successful prosecution far more maturity of powers, and more preparatory knowledge, than are usually found with first-year students: further instruction must be given, at a later period, to those who pursue a fuller course of study. So with other branches. To carry out the courses of work that are now arranged, it is found necessary to have the constant service of the three teachers.
Formerly, one of the assistants served but half of each day.

The Committee find pleasure in reporting that the interest displayed by the scholars in their new courses of study, under their new instructors, has been earnest and commendable.

We are now trying the experiment of a single session a day, instead of two. The teachers were unanimous in the opinion that it would be well to try this experiment; and the approval of the parents was expressed by a vote of five-sixths of the scholars. The terms will be somewhat lengthened, as the day's work has been reduced.

To make the instruction in physics and in chemistry more practical and thorough, it was found necessary to repair the apparatus and make some additions in the laboratory. As the Committee could make but a very small allowance for these purposes, from the fund for incidentals, the principal of the school with commendable zeal has been trying to raise money for the purpose by means of a course of lectures and entertainments. We hope that he will not find himself much out of pocket. There must be some money expended, that the branches referred to may be thoroughly taught, and that the pupils may engage in the practical work of the laboratory. The Committee ask that a hundred dollars may be raised and appropriated for this work.

COURSES OF STUDY.

FIRST YEAR.

First Term. — American and English History, Arithmetic, English Composition, Drawing, Penmanship while needed, Spelling, Reading, Latin.

Second Term. — Physics, Geometry, Book-keeping, English Composition, Drawing, Penmanship if needed, Spelling, Reading, Latin.
Third Term.—Physics, Geometry, Book-keeping, English Composition, Drawing, Penmanship, Spelling, Reading, Latin.

Second Year.

First Term.—Algebra, Chemistry, English Composition, Penmanship, Spelling, Reading, Drawing, Latin, French.

Second Term.—Algebra, Chemistry, English Composition, Drawing, Penmanship, Reading, Spelling, Latin, French.

Third Term.—Physiology, Zoology, Algebra, Drawing, English Composition, Penmanship, Spelling, Reading, Latin, French.

Third Year.

First Term.—Ancient History, Civil Government, English Literature, English Composition, Penmanship, Spelling, Latin, French, Greek.

Second Term.—Geology and Mineralogy, Civil Government, History, English Literature, English Composition, Penmanship, Spelling, Latin, French, Greek.

Third Term.—Botany, English Literature, English Composition, Penmanship, Spelling, Latin, French, Greek.

Fourth Year.

First Term.—Grecian and Roman History, English Literature, English Composition and Rhetoric, Penmanship, Spelling, Astronomy, Latin, French, Greek.

Second Term.—Grecian and Roman History, English Literature, English Composition and Rhetoric, Penmanship, Spelling, Latin, Greek, French.

Third Term.—Political Economy, English Literature, English Composition and Rhetoric, Penmanship, Spelling, Reviews, Latin, Greek, French.

Evening Schools.

It will be remembered that at its last Annual Meeting the town placed at the disposal of the Committee the sum
of two hundred dollars to be expended in the maintenance
of one or more evening-schools. Early in the season the
response was not prompt to the Committee’s advertise-
ment for names of those who desired to attend such
schools; but later, a very earnest desire was expressed by
a far larger number. A school is now in operation at No.
14, under the instruction of Mr. L. A. Darling: here we
have thirty-two pupils, their ages ranging from sixteen
years to thirty-two. At No. 1 we have a school consist-
ing of thirteen scholars, under the care of Mr. Austin
Turner. A very commendable and satisfactory interest is
manifested by the members of these schools. Reading,
Spelling, Penmanship, Arithmetic, and the simplest forms
of keeping Accounts are taught; some other practical
instruction is given in general exercises. The Committee
hope that this experiment of evening-schools may be con-
tinued another year. As the evening-schools were begun
so late in the season, their teachers have not been paid.
For this reason our Financial Secretary’s Report shows a
small balance to the credit of the appropriation; really,
the whole appropriation is exhausted.

BOOKS.

The Committee recommend the continuation of the
plan for the supply of school-books at cost. They ask
that the usual sum of one hundred dollars be raised and
appropriated for this purpose.

Last year the sum of one hundred dollars was expended
in the purchase of books to be used by interchange in the
several schools. The Committee would recommend that
the same sum be raised and appropriated the present year,
for this purpose, and for the purchase of works of refer-
ence.

A great deal of work has been done in all our schools
during the past year, in the endeavor to give the pupils
the ability to express thoughts in writing, with accuracy and ease. Our scholars ought to become able to express their thoughts as readily in writing as with their lips. The Committee wish this to be a marked feature in our course of instruction. As there is some doubt as to the strict propriety of furnishing stationery for these purposes from the fund for incidentals, as has been done during the past year, the Committee ask for a special appropriation of one hundred dollars for such purposes.

**APPROPRIATIONS FOR ANOTHER YEAR.**

The Committee ask for the following appropriations:—

As it has become necessary to employ an assistant in Primary School No. 1, and as it may be necessary to employ one in Primary School No. 9, $300 more than last year's appropriation

For incidental expenses, the same as last year. 550 00

For the conveyance of scholars from one district to another, in or out of town, $50 less than last year 50 00

For the support of High School, the same as last year 2,000 00

For rent of the Academy building, the same as last year 300 00

For the laboratory of the School 100 00

For the purchase of reading-books, and for works of reference, the same as last year 100 00

For stationery for the supply of the schools 100 00

To cover expenses in furnishing books at cost, the same as last year 100 00

For evening-schools, the same as last year 200 00

For new desks and seats for Primary School No. 1 175 00
In case the town wishes to continue the charge of conveying the scholars of the outer districts to and from the High School, the Committee would ask for the same appropriation as that of last year $200.00.

Respectfully submitted by the Committee,

SAMUEL H. WORCESTER.
LEWIS G. LOWE.
P. D. LEONARD.

BRIDGEWATER, MASS., Feb. 6, 1884.
FINANCIAL REPORT.

Appropriations for Schools.

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<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<td>Common Schools</td>
<td>$6,200.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>2,000.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>School incidentals</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rent of Academy Building</td>
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<tr>
<td>Supplementary reading</td>
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<td>Evening Schools</td>
<td>200.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conveyance to High School</td>
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<td>Sale of School Books</td>
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<td>&quot; &quot; Dyer Fund</td>
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<td>&quot; &quot; Dog Dividend</td>
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<td>&quot; &quot; Massachusetts School Fund</td>
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$10,585.82

Expenditures.

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<td>Care of School Houses</td>
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<td>For Fuel</td>
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<td>School incidentals and Supplementary reading</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teachers' wages</td>
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<td>Conveyance to High School</td>
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<td>&quot; &quot; Middleboro'</td>
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<td>Rent of Academy Building</td>
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$10,397.22

Unexpended                         | 188.60   |

$10,585.82

P. D. LEONARD,
Financial Secretary.
LIST OF TEACHERS.

WINTER TERM, 1883 AND 1884.

High School. — Mr. H. H. Gay, principal; Miss Jennie E. Chandler, first assistant; Miss Emma Worcester, second assistant.

No. 1, Grammar. — Mr. Frank L. Keith.
No. 1, Primary. — Miss Clara T. Wing, principal; Miss Annie W. Cobb, assistant.

No. 2. — Miss Flora Swift.
No. 3. — Miss Lizzie Reed.
No. 4. — Miss Lizzie A. Tillson.
No. 5. — Miss Jennie Hammond.
No. 6. — Miss Lillie Lawrence.
No. 7. — Miss Mary L. Copeland.
No. 8. — Miss Martha A. Ames.
No. 9, Grammar. — Mr. W. H. Hobbs.
No. 9, Primary. — Miss Carrie Sampson.
No. 10. — Miss Hattie Wilbar.
No. 11. — Miss Lemira Benson.
No. 12. — Closed.
No. 13. — Mrs. Helen Harlow.
No. 14, Grammar. — Mr. L. A. Darling.
No. 14, Primary. — Miss Mary Cleare.
Evening-School at No. 1. — Mr. Austin Turner.
Evening-School at No. 14. — Mr. L. A. Darling
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<th>SCHOOL TERMS</th>
<th>1st MONTH</th>
<th>2nd MONTH</th>
<th>3rd MONTH</th>
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<td>WINTER TERM, 1883-84</td>
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<td>FALL TERM, 1883</td>
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<td>Attendance</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>Attendance</td>
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**SCHOOLS:**

High School

1. Grammar
2. Intermediate
3. Primary

Mid School

1. Mixed
2. Mixed
3. Mixed

Low School

1. Grammar
2. Primary
3. Grammar