

minute recess at the end of each hour, and thirty minutes for lunch at twelve. This gives a relaxation of muscles, and a change of work for the next hour period, both a great benefit to the pupil; but another result that is not less important is the improvement in discipline--there is no time for quarrels on the play ground, where most of the disorder originates.

I am very much in favor of Compulsory Education, and also a Uniform Text Book System.

Z. T. MERRITT,
County Superintendent.

DE SOTO COUNTY

At your request I submit the following brief report of the public schools and school work of DeSoto County, for the two years ending June 30, 1898.

Territory and Settlement.--DeSoto, a comparatively new county, with an area of over 4,000 square miles, is sparsely settled, with only one railroad running through the western portion of the county, and leaving many of our schools far back in the interior. This makes it very difficult to keep up an interest in the work, though we are doing all we can to overcome this difficulty, and to make the entire work a success. I think we are succeeding admirably, for the patrons are fully awake to the educational interest of their children.

Number of Schools and Enrollment.--We had 62 white schools, with an enrollment of 2,010 pupils, for the year ending June 30th, 1897, and 63 schools, with an enrollment of 2,069, for the year ending June 30th, 1898. There are two colored schools with an enrollment of 60 pupils for each of the above years.

Most of our schools are small and well distributed through this vast territory. This gives the County Superintendent no small amount of travel in visiting schools, and, as our schools begin in the early summer, he has to encounter a great deal of high water and disagreeable weather.

Arcadia High School.--The Arcadia High School was established in 1897, with an enrollment of 156 pupils, and was very successfully managed for a term of eight months by Prof. E. F. Wilson, principal, ably assisted by Prof. R. E. Watkins and Miss Emma Alderman. There was an increasing interest to the close of the term, and much good accomplished. Quite a number of our young teachers attended the last three months of this school. Prof. Wilson has been employed again for the present year, assisted by Prof. H. L. Swatts, Miss Josie Wilder and Mrs. E. M. Williamson. Every department is giving perfect satisfaction, and our people are justly proud of this school.

Normal Schools.--Several of our best teachers conduct Normal Schools of three months' term in different parts of the county, in the spring, after the public terms have closed. These schools are well attended by young teachers and advanced pupils preparing to teach. They are doing a vast amount of good in preparing teachers for the examinations, and for doing better work in the school room. They are prime factors in the advancement of education in our county.

School Buildings and Furniture.--For the past two years we have built quite a number of good school buildings, and repaired most of the old ones. We will soon have good buildings for all of the schools in the county, and I think we will soon have them furnished with patent desks, charts, and other necessary furniture.