

sympathy with our educational interests. They cheerfully levy the full limit of school taxes, and assist in every other legitimate way in promoting the welfare of the schools.

Supervisors and Trustees.--Our Supervisors and Trustees have proven themselves to be men of enterprise and public spirit in promoting the best interests of their local schools. With scarcely an exception they have contributed liberally of their time, labor and money to make them more successful and efficient, and have cordially co-operated with teachers and Superintendent in their efforts to elevate the educational standard and improve the methods of instruction. The local school officer is a potential factor in the success of the school.

Teachers.--The scholarship and proficiency of the teachers of this county have been improved to a marked degree during the past two years. Our teachers have attended Teachers' Summer Schools, lectures, Institutes and teachers' associations, and have read pedagogical books and educational periodicals until they are keenly alive to and conversant with the best methods of modern teaching. We require this, and in return we give them the preference in assignment to schools. Among the whites there is not a third grade teacher, and only five of the second grade in the county. I refer to those who are distinctly Hernando county teachers. We have only two of the second grade from abroad. All of our second grade intend to obtain a first at the next examination or resign. The atmosphere here is not healthy for third grade teachers--they climb higher or retire. I am more impressed than ever with the usefulness and importance of the home teacher. Hernando county has given to the public schools an excellent class of teachers reared in her own institutions. Gratifying reports reach us of their success and popularity in other portions of the State where they have been called to teach.

Financial.--The delay in the collection of taxes is the most annoying circumstance connected with our finances. The freeze of 1894 and the drought of last year have reduced our income considerably, compelling a mortifying reduction in salaries, but we hope for better things in this respect in the near future. From present indications, the operations of the schools this year will leave the Board out of debt. Money is borrowed to meet expenses because the taxes are uncollected at the time the schools must be taught. Will or can the Legislature remedy this evil?

New Courses of Study, Rules and Regulations.--The rapid advancement of our public schools has compelled a revision of our course of study. The Board issued September 3, 1898, rules and regulations for the county and a course of study for each of the three classes of schools taught, elementary, grammar and high school, so arranged as to secure uniformity of grade in all the schools. Strict adherence to the courses of study is compulsory upon teachers and pupils. Our rules and regulations were given our closest thought and deepest study in their preparation. They have been pronounced admirable by the highest school authority in the State.

School Houses and Furniture.--Three comfortable frame schools houses have been built--one a large two-story building--one has been enlarged, another nicely ceiled and three furnished with patent desks, since my last bi-ennial report. Every school house in the county is a comfortable frame building, and is furnished with good seats (two exceptions), maps, charts, text-book library, ample black-boards, water facilities, stoves and desks, and in some, globes. Six schools have patent desks. We have not an old-fashioned log cabin school house in the county.