A study of the development of the visiting teacher program in the Atlanta Public Schools, 1945-47

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A STUDY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE VISITING TEACHER PROGRAM
IN THE ATLANTA PUBLIC SCHOOLS, 1945-47

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF ATLANTA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF
SOCIAL WORK IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK

BY
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ATLANTA, GEORGIA
JUNE 1948
PREFACE

The writer wishes to express his indebtedness to members of the Board of Education of the City of Atlanta and the State Department of Education for their interest and permission to use materials essential for purposes of this study. Special appreciation is accorded to Miss Ira Jarrel, Superintendent of Atlanta Public Schools; to Mr. Jarvis Barnes, Director of Statistics and Pupil Accounting and coordinator of the Atlanta visiting teacher program; and to Mr. Claude Purcell, Assistant Administrator, Georgia Department of Education. Sincere gratitude is also due Miss Jesse Mae Jones, Principal of E. A. Ware Elementary School for her helpful suggestions.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A study of the development of social services provided through the visiting teacher program in the Atlanta Public Schools evolved out of a great social movement in the education and social work fields, predicated upon a new philosophy which ... "signalized a departure from the traditional role of the school with the intellectual life of the child to a concern for some of the emotional factors that related to learning."¹ This modern view of education, therefore, conceives of a person's usefulness to society not by how much knowledge he acquires, but rather by how well he is able to live with satisfaction to himself and to others in that society. It innovated a broader concern for the development of the whole child, his opportunities to learn more about himself, his capacities and abilities, and participation in school programs as well as community living.

It has a responsibility for helping direct social changes towards improvement for the common welfare. It is the purpose of the school in a democratic society to help the individual meet his personal problems or needs of living in an intelligent way, and become an effective participant in building a better group life. To accomplish this, the school must help the individual develop to the fullest his capacities and potentialities.²

In response to needs of the child, education and social work have recognized jointly that common roots of a similar goal lie in both professions. In order to trace the history of ameliorative and preventive efforts in the

²State Department of Education "Guide to Improvement of Teacher Education," Division of Instruction (Montgomery, Alabama, 1939), p. 21. (Mimeographed.)
interlocking fields of social work and education, child guidance must be considered a significant phase of the movement embodying this "new philosophy."

Educators have recognized the need to become more concerned with the individual's response to learning and relied upon the social case worker in the school to help the teacher understand the child. According to Dr. Arthur E. Fink, the visiting teacher movement evolved from a "social invention" fundamental to conditions as well as changes in our culture that indicated certain needs, such as the gradual development of the civil service, invention of the automobile, the establishment of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Juvenile Court, and the Children's Bureau. With the reorganization of education, ... "to this list must be added visiting teacher work."1 In whatever form and to whatever extent social services are provided in school programs, the services of trained visiting teachers are recognized as an invaluable phase of the program. This growth has been due to the almost universal adoption of compulsory education laws and to the fact that education is becoming popular with the masses.

The full impact of victory emerging from a second global war, the maintenance of national security and the peace have already demonstrated the need to emphasize good care and fuller opportunities for American children. These events have also pointed out the strength and weaknesses in the provision of programs to meet their needs.

The extreme illiteracy, physical unfitness, and emotional disturbances prevalent among young people only a few years out of school, as disclosed by experiences with Selective

1 Arthur E. Fink, op. cit., p. 173.
Service, have aroused the country as no other recent facts have.1

Society is gradually realizing the fact that the child, the community and nation of tomorrow are largely determined through the opportunities provided for physical, mental and moral development of the individual to help him become a useful member of society.

As a social investment, society is becoming interested in itself through the development of the child. As an outgrowth of this social proposition, a varied as well as highly specialized program of services is slowly extending beyond the home to broader areas of responsibilities drawing from a reservoir of knowledge and techniques in the realms of psychology, sociology, social work, education and medicine. Many of these services are known by various names such as pupil personnel services, attendance services, child study, child welfare clinics, child guidance clinics and mental hygiene clinics.

In 1906-1907 visiting teacher work was development independently in three different cities—New York, Boston, and Hartford, Connecticut, introducing this type of service to their public school systems. In Miss Katherine M. Cook's account2 of the origin of school social work she states that Rochester, New York in 1913 became the first city in which the board of education employed its own visiting teacher and equipped her with education in social work. Other cities followed Rochester's example, and by 1939, a survey conducted by the American Association of Visiting

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Teachers showed an estimate of well over 150 communities where this type of work was being done. 

Among the city boards of education adopting a form of visiting teacher work during the first quarter of the twentieth century were Des Monies, Iowa; Detroit, Michigan; Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; St. Paul, Minnesota; Manhattan, Kansas; White Plains, New York; Yonkers, New York; Trenton, New Jersey; and Atlanta, Georgia. ¹ Perhaps the greatest impetus to the child guidance movement in the public schools came from the financial program inaugurated by the Commonwealth Fund of New York in 1921. By 1944, of the 748 cities canvassed in 45 states, 258 had “organized” social work services in their schools, employing a total of approximately 1,000 full or part-time visiting teachers.²

Statement of the Problem

The Board of Education of the Atlanta Public School System and the Georgia State Board of Education recognized the need for a more effective type of program which would improve school social services and set up a more meaningful liaison or relationship between the home, school and community. To culminate this need into legal measures, the General Assembly of Georgia passed a bill, March 8, 1945,³ which provided a modern attendance law and a visiting teacher service on a state-wide basis. Georgia therefore, became the fourth state in the nation to set up such a program.

¹Julius J. Oppenheimer, The Visiting Teacher Movement (New York, 1924), p. 11.


Through the services of the visiting teacher, the public schools of Atlanta began to put "more emphasis" on the all-round development of children as individuals, accepting their responsibility and concern for their emotional and personality adjustment. They promoted this newer concept of education in an attempt to understand and meet the needs of children.

The writer became interested in this program of the Atlanta Public Schools while serving in the capacity of student visiting teacher in collaboration with his field work training under the auspices of Atlanta University School of Social Work. It is hoped that this study will stimulate interest in the problems involved in providing social services in a public school system and be of some assistance in interpreting these services and arousing community concern to the point of becoming more conscious of them.

Purpose of The Study

The purpose of this study is to present the history and development of social services provided through the visiting teacher program in the Atlanta Public School System from its reorganization in 1945 to 1947. This study will attempt to give the legal provisions of the program; to present various problems handled by the visiting teacher; to show the coordination of the program with other services; and to indicate the limitations or inadequacies of the program.

Limitations and Scope

This study will be limited to the public schools of Atlanta,

Georgia, Negro and white having a visiting teacher program from 1945 to 1947. This study of necessity is limited due to the fact that school records prepared by visiting teachers did not give a full and detailed account of the problems presented.

Method of Procedure

Data for this study were collected from many sources, utilizing the following methods: first, surveying the literature of eminent leaders in the fields of social work and education, reviewing official documents from the State Department of Education and the Atlanta Public School System and reading reports prepared by visiting teachers; second, conducting personal interviews with classroom teachers, visiting teachers, principals, administrative officers of the State Department of Education and Atlanta Public School System; and third, studying case record material of various Negro schools.
CHAPTER II

LEGAL PROVISIONS FOR THE PROGRAM

The function of a modern public school is no longer confined to the "four walls" of the classroom. Through a system of individual guidance, the school as one of the cardinal institutions of society is not only concerned with the development of the whole child in the home, the school and community but very often is the best place for early and social group contacts with other children. Hence, public education involves teaching children in large and small groups whose individual differences propose a wide diversity in age, intellectual, emotional and physical traits as well as in individual experiences.\(^1\)

Ideally, every school should impress the child favorably to the extent that he would wish to attend it regularly. Otherwise, those who fail to take full advantage of "learning in the social situation offered by the school miss the chance for healthy growth, and the purpose of the school is only partially fulfilled."\(^2\) A large share of the responsibilities for attendance services is the direct duty of the state through adequate attendance laws and their enforcement. Especially is this true in states or local departments of education where professionally prepared staffs are employed to stimulate regular school attendance. For the most part, however, southern states have lagged behind other sections of the country in accepting responsibility for enforcing compulsory

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\(^2\)Ibid., p. 5.
education laws.

Georgia, one of the fourteen southern states adopting compulsory attendance legislation after 1900, passed its first act in 1916.\(^1\) Under the Georgia Compulsory School Attendance Law of 1916, the responsibility of enforcing the law was vested in county and municipal boards of education, and attendance officers were employed without benefits of teacher retirement pension and on a fixed fee basis. According to the 1916 law:

Each county and municipal board of education shall employ an attendance officer whose duty it shall be to report to the board of education failure of attendance on the part of pupils between the ages of eight and fourteen years. For this service these officials shall be paid not less than one dollar nor more than three dollars per day during the time employed ...\(^2\)

In spite of the passage of the bill in the General Assembly, little effort was made to enforce this law up to 1921. The Board of Education of the City of Atlanta did appoint two attendance officers in 1922 to serve 22,083 white pupils. The following year one Negro attendance officer was appointed to serve 12,859 Negro pupils.\(^3\) Qualifications of attendance officers were very inadequate and the number too small to be effective in meeting the needs or ameliorate the multiplicity of deep-seated problems present in school situations.

Not until 1945 did the Citizens' Council, a civic organization, the Georgia Education Association and the State Department of Education

\(^1\) *Georgia Laws* (1916), Part I, Title V, 101.


\(^3\) *Georgia Department of Education, Annual Attendance Report, City of Atlanta, 1922-23* (Atlanta, October, 1947), (Unpublished.)
cooperate in sponsoring and interpreting to "school people" a new bill which gained unanimous support in the General Assembly of Georgia. This concerted move crystallized ... "a long step toward making effective Georgia's educational system" ... by providing visiting teacher services in its public schools throughout the State. The purpose of the new law, however, suggested a new approach to the school child by incorporating a basic social case work idea. The law states that:

Whereas the terms of this act recognized that the purpose of the public schools are not fulfilled, and the efforts of the teachers are impaired and the public school funds are uneconomically utilized if children fail to use the opportunity for learning which is provided in school; that laws of compulsion alone are not sufficient to keep children in school and that a more specialized and professional service is needed than has been possible for 'attendance' or 'truant officers' of the past; and that an effective compulsory school attendance service must be concerned with removal of the causes of non-attendance and with promotion of conditions favorable to the child's normal development and regular attendance.1

Proponents of this new law and the State Board of Education realized that a compulsory education law alone did not solve the problem of non-attendance, nor was the compulsory school age effective throughout the whole school term.

Appointment and Qualifications

The 1945 law authorized city and county boards of education to enforce the act and to facilitate the program through the employment of visiting teachers. It states that:

It shall be the duty of each County and Independent School System Board of Education within the State to administer this Act and to secure its enforcement in cooperation with the

1State Department of Education, op. cit., p. 3.
other state and county agencies mentioned herein. To facilitate the enforcement of this Act, each County and Independent School System Board of Education shall have authority to employ at least one competent and qualified full-time visiting teacher, whose duty it shall be to act as attendance officer to enforce the compulsory school attendance laws of the State ......

The board of education controlling the local public school system selects its visiting teachers and initiates policies concerning training, certification and appointment in accordance with the law and the policies prescribed by the State Board of Education. The appointment of visiting teachers shall be made by:

The County or Independent School System Board of Education upon the recommendation of the County or Independent School System Superintendent; but no visiting teacher shall be so appointed unless qualified in accordance with professional requirements prescribed by the State Board of Education. Persons presently serving as truant or attendance officers in any County or Independent School System of the State on the effective date of this Act, .... shall, upon the request of the school board, be granted temporary permits to serve as acting visiting teachers; but such person or persons who do not possess the qualifications prescribed by the State Board of Education for certification as visiting teachers must continue to render satisfactory service, or within five years from the effective date of this Act, satisfy such qualifications as will justify certification by the State Board of Education, or they shall no longer be eligible to serve as visiting teachers, and the County or Independent School System Boards of Education shall remove them from their positions as acting visiting teachers.

Considerable difficulty has been encountered in appointments due to the fact that there is a gross shortage of professionally trained personnel, both white and Negro. The Atlanta Board of Education which

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2 Ibid., Sect. IV, 344.
is typical of other boards of education throughout Georgia, did not wait until there was trained personnel available for carrying out the job created by the new act of 1945. Appointment of visiting teachers was largely made from the already existing teacher staffs. Pre-requisites for their new work consisted of past teaching experience, personal qualifications and interest in working with individual children and families.

Teachers in the Atlanta Public School System who were already employed as attendance officers, part-time visiting teachers at the time of enactment of the Compulsory School Attendance Law of 1945 were granted an extension of five years to fulfill requirements promulgated by the State Department of Education. These included the completion of four years of college work, field work if possible under the supervision of a person or agency meeting the requirements of the National Association of Schools of Social Workers, the acquisition of certain basic knowledge and skills in education, social work, medical information, child growth and development and related information regarding local, state and national legislation on child welfare, administration of schools, community organization and relationships.¹

In addition to such knowledge, visiting teachers must possess certain personal qualities, namely, understanding and sympathy, good health and a wholesome, well-balanced personality and the ability to establish relationships with children, adults and others in the community. While there is still some variance of opinion as to what is

¹State Department of Education, op. cit., pp. 57-60.
required in the training of visiting teachers, public school administrators believe that training in a school of social work with experience in supervised case work provides the essentials necessary for carrying out the specific functions of the job.

**Function of the Visiting Teacher**

The common consensus of the duties of the visiting teacher as "interpreting the home to the school" or "helping an individual child" may be all too inclusive to furnish a basis for standardization of the work and to make clear the school organization and aims. The opinion of school officials are necessary to give proper emphasis to the school's view of what the work should be in relation to the type of community to be served and services available. The functions of the visiting teacher as defined in the Georgia Law and adopted by the State Board of Education is stated as follows:

To cooperate fully with the State Department of Public Welfare, Labor, and Health, and other State Agencies; to make monthly and annual reports on attendance and other problems of child school adjustment in their territory to the County or Independent School Superintendent respectively, and to comply with the rules and regulations of the County and Independent School System Boards of Education.³

The law makes it mandatory that:

- Visiting teachers and attendance officers, after written notice to parent or guardian of a child, shall report to the juvenile, superior, city, or other court having jurisdiction, any child as delinquent who absents himself from school in violation of this Act.²

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Duties recommended and adopted by the State Board of Education for the visiting teachers involve their:

Becoming systematically acquainted with records of children between the ages of seven and sixteen who are repeatedly absent or fail to enroll in school; cooperating with principals and teachers of public, private, denominational, and parochial schools in visiting homes or pupils who are not enrolled in school or irregular in attendance; carefully studying the causes or absences on the part of individual pupils and counseling with parents and teachers to help eliminate causes of non-attendance; participating in school and community studies relating to underlying causes of non-attendance and cooperating in making the adjustments found necessary and desirable; cooperating with school superintendents in issuing work certificates; and assisting teachers and principals in the maintenance of a continuous census of children of school age.¹

Administrative Organization

The visiting teacher program of Atlanta is organized under the division of statistics and pupil accounting of the Board of Education. Mr. Jarvis Barnes, who was appointed director in 1946, is coordinator of the visiting teacher program for the city. At the present, some visiting teachers are assigned directly to the central city office and others are assigned to individual schools. Their positions vary from special teacher, classroom teacher to special representatives of the principal. The general trend, however, in regard to their status in the school seems to be one in which the visiting teacher is a co-equal of the classroom teacher in the same school system. In view of the fact that a great deal of the work is in connection with the administration of the program of the school system, he becomes an official representative of both the principal and the central office.

¹State Department of Education, op. cit., pp. 7-8.
According to the policies of the Atlanta Public School System, the visiting teacher reports to work at the same time as does the regular classroom teacher. During the first part of the morning, a conference with the principal is held in regard to cases to be considered. The visiting teacher assists the principal in interviewing parents who come to school with children; and he discusses a child with his classroom teacher in order to understand the problem fully before a home visit is made. Visiting teachers have the privilege of visiting a classroom whenever desirable to observe children with whom they are working, to review new cases, to discuss disposition of old ones and to formulate plans for treatment.

The Atlanta schools serving white pupils have no visiting teachers assigned directly to the forty-eight public schools, but have access to the services of five white visiting teachers who operate from the central office. The Negro schools have eleven visiting teachers, employed either full-time or part-time for fifteen public schools, all of whom have some professional training.

TABLE 1

<table>
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<th>Year</th>
<th>Full-Time</th>
<th>Part Time</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Negro</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Negro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945-46</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946-47</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1947-48</td>
<td>2</td>
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According to report from Board of Education of the City of Atlanta, Atlanta, Georgia, November, 1947.

One full-time Negro visiting teacher is assigned to the two Negro high
schools—Booker T. Washington and David T. Howard respectively. These two full-time visiting teachers, plus nine part-time visiting teachers, who spend one-half the day in the classroom and the other half in the field, show some consideration toward further integration of visiting teachers into the Negro public schools. Inspite of a decrease in the employment of part-time Negro visiting teachers since the 1946-47 school term (see Table 1, p. 14), there are approximately 6.5 Negro visiting teachers compared to 5.0 white computed on a full-time basis in the public school system.

Responsibility of Parent or Guardian

In view of the fact that the most important factor in the life of the child is the home, the school must be interpreted to his parents to enlist their cooperation in planning more satisfactory activities in the home, community and school life. In order to protect the child and to ensure an opportunity and right to acquire a minimum degree of education, the legal responsibility of parents and parent substitutes have been set forth in the Compulsory School Attendance Law of 1945 as follows:

Every parent, guardian, or other person residing within the State of Georgia, having control or charge of any child or children between their seventh and sixteenth birthdays, shall enroll and send such child or children to a public or private school under such penalty for non-compliance herewith as is hereinafter provided.¹

The law further states that:

Any parent, guardian, or other person residing in this State who has control or charge of a child or children and who shall violate the provisions of this Act shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and shall be subject to a fine not to exceed one hundred ($100) dollars or imprisonment not to exceed

¹Georgia Law, op. cit., p. 343.
thirty (30) days, or both, at the discretion of the superior, city or other court having jurisdiction. Each day's absence from school in violation of this Act shall constitute a separate offense. Visiting teachers and attendance officers shall have authority and it shall be their duty to file proceedings in court to enforce the provisions of this Act.¹

Unfortunately, many parents are apathetic toward school. Some are actually antagonistic and fail for various reasons to assume their responsibility to enroll children and keep them in school. Sometimes, it becomes necessary to modify attitudes of the parents which are effecting the child adversely; and frequently the school has to resort to legal measures to secure parental cooperation.

For the most part, in Atlanta, school enrollment and attendance increased in the public schools which reflected one of the salient results of the newly passed law. Previous to the adoption of the new law, the school enrollment for the year 1944-45 had been 30,840 white and 17,504 Negro children—a total of 48,344 pupils. The following school term after the enactment of the law, there were enrolled 33,855 white and 18,341 Negro pupils, an overall increase of approximately 3,852 children or 92.5 per cent. Operation under the compulsory school attendance law shows continuous increase in school attendance. For an example, the fall term of 1947 marks the second year of existence of the new law, and the total enrollment shows 35,118 white pupils and 18,951 Negroes.² Increases for the two years, including the 1947 fall term, indicate approximately 4,278 white pupils and 1,447 Negroes, a total of 5,725 children in the public schools of Atlanta.

¹Ibid., p. 347.
CHAPTER III

PROBLEMS HANDLED BY THE VISITING TEACHER

The effectiveness of the visiting teacher service is reflected in each visiting teacher's interest, qualifications and efforts. One of the most important factors in making the services meaningful is to fit the school to the child which invariably involves working with the child in the school, parents and undesirable factors in the home and community.

Types of Problems

The most frequent problems referred to the visiting teacher by principals, teachers, parents, interested parties and social agencies include the following kinds of symptomatic behavior, namely; stealing, running away from home, disobedience, defiance and truancy. Similarly, personality difficulties, such as, indifference, retardation, self-consciousness, nervousness and adverse home and social conditions covering poverty, broken-homes, early marriages, illegitimate pregnancies of pupils and non-legal employment of children constitute reasons for referrals. Ways of meeting these problems differ; and some attempt is made to secure the services of other agencies in the community. Although granting direct financial aid by the school is discouraged by the Board of Education, in cases of dire need, visiting teachers take it upon themselves to secure as much aid as possible until a social agency can meet the need.

The following case illustrates a more frequent problem intensified by adverse home conditions which contributed to frequent absents from school of one pupil.

17
Case 1

Henry, age twelve, was regarded by his homeroom teacher as a 'chronic' truant and was referred to the visiting teacher. When in school he was a model student, inspire of his shabby attire. The visiting teacher found that Henry lived with his parents and four other children ages from twelve to two months, in a three-room house which appeared not to have been repaired in a number of years. The neighborhood is known for its run-down conditions and is located down by the 'tracks.' The mother was ill and unable to work. The father had a job with a construction company but was not able to work during inclement weather. The family was known to social agencies, but every effort to help them had been unsuccessful. His mother explained that Henry had to miss days out of school because he had only one pair of pants which she washed at night. During the days when her illness was aggravated, she could not wash and had to keep Henry home.

In this situation clothing was obtained from various sources for the child.

In the case of Sally, special services were made available in relieving a physical condition which interfered with school progress.

Case 2

Sally, a fifteen year old six-grade pupil, was reported to the visiting teacher because she showed little interest in her class work. She was absent from school three or four days each week. Her teachers stated that she was timid; sat on the back row, recited very little and kept her hands over her face or rested her head on the desk most of the time. Observation of Sally's reactions in class revealed that she rubbed her eyes constantly. During an interview with Sally, she complained of headaches and could not see words on the black board. Consequently, she was not able to keep up with the rest of the class and felt that she should stay home. Sally was immediately referred to the visiting nurse who recommended eye treatments and glasses which were obtained at the city hospital.

As anti-social behavior such as persistent truancy or running away from home is studied, it appears that the roots are found in parental suspicions, over-severity, nagging, lack of love and affection and misunderstanding. Feelings of insecurity, aggressiveness and regressive behavior
or manifestations of some other method of escape were frequently the re-
sults.

James, a twelve year old boy who ran away very often illustrates inter-
related motifs which were difficult to isolate. It seems possible, how-
ever, that many of the boys's problems would have been solved had it been
possible to gain the cooperation of his parents.

Case 3

James, a clean neatly dressed youngster, was a boy who
had long been a serious problem in the school. For months
the school had realized that his home was more or less re-
sponsible for his difficulties. His record showed numerous
unsuccessful attempts of running away from home. The visiting
teacher contacted James for the first time when it was re-
ported by a neighborhood city police that he had run away from
home. James stated that he had been trying to find some re-
latives, but it was later learned that not any of his people
lived in that particular city.

In the first interview with James, he was impressive,
very active mentally and physically, and it was evident that
disciplinary action would only aggravate his feelings. He
was sent back to his classes. A review of his situation in-
dicated that his father beat him 'for nothing' and appeared
to take little interest in his welfare. His parents worked
every day and spent very little time at home with him. James
showed a subtle bitterness against his home and wanted more
wholesome, outside activity.

When James showed interest in joining the Boy's Club,
the director of the club was contacted and arrangements were
made for James to join. His mother was persuaded by mail to
permit him to join since it was difficult to contact her at
home. He was very fond of adventure stories and arrangements
were made with the school's librarian to permit him to borrow
books. The visiting teacher helped with his arithmetic lessons.
At the end of two months, James showed considerable change in
attitude in class, appeared to be content and made it a point
to be seen by the visiting teacher every morning.

In this particular case there was need to work closely with the boy's parents
and to help them understand his needs. But it was not possible to have an
interview with them. There was also a need to interpret to them the child's
desire to make better use of his leisure time and help him make a school adjustment.

A common situation frequently referred to visiting teachers and others engaged in working with adolescent girls was unmarried mothers and illegitimate pregnancies. It emphasized the indifferent attitude of parents and relatives and how it effects a child's life, especially when she is starved emotionally and expresses her deprivation during adolescence through perverted sexual activities.

Case 4

Mary, a girl of fifteen, who was still in the sixth grade after being left behind by her class for two consecutive years, was frequently absent from school. Two psychological tests revealed that she was between borderline and dull intelligence levels. She had already established a well entrenched reputation for herself, and it was alleged that she had had 'affairs' with a man much older than she. Her teachers had very little that was favorable to say concerning her classroom work or conduct. Mary was not an unattractive girl, in spite of her size which made her appear much older than she really was. She lived with an older married sister and father who could not control her.

After several weeks of absences from school, a home visit was made to see Mary concerning her attendance and school work. She stated that her mother had died when she was very young, and soon afterwards her father had given up farming in a small town nearby to make his home in Atlanta. Mary felt that her father hardly knew she existed. There was no close tie between them. She felt rather close, however, to her married sister, but there was very little she could do for Mary because she had a young daughter of her own, and her husband was not too good to her. Mary had learned to go through life in her own way and keep quiet about her affairs. She told the visiting teacher that she was expecting a baby. Her sister and father knew of her condition but exhibited little concern. Mary stated that her father said that she was 'grown' now and that he was too busy 'holding' his job to worry about her. Moreover, the putative father had made no preparations to marry her. She consented to have arrangements made to have clinical treatments.
Cases Referred to Court

The visiting teacher must be realistic about his services. Many times it is necessary for him to act as witness in the interest of a child and to make wise disposition of cases based upon case histories which may involve the physical, mental, emotional and environmental factors of a pupil's life. The visiting teacher's contact with children who are dependent, neglected, incorrigible, truant and in need of proper guardianship brings him into close touch with the juvenile court.

Children were not taken to juvenile court unless it was absolutely necessary. In handling the children who had difficulty in school, emphasis is placed on removal of the causes rather than resorting to punitive measures. Frequently, the visiting teacher's status as a friend of the child and family is undermined when he files complaints; and he loses the confidence of the family and the neighbors which is so essential to his work.

**TABLE 2**

**NUMBER OF CASES REFERRED IN JUVENILE COURT 1944-47**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Negro</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1944-45</td>
<td>n&lt;sup&gt;1&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>/ n</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945-46</td>
<td>x&lt;sup&gt;2&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946-47</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>1</sup>Not available

<sup>2</sup>Not broken down according to race

While there are no actual statistical records covering the two-year period of operation, 1945-47 under the new compulsory school attendance
law, the information in Table 2 (see p. 21) was furnished by the aforementioned Mr. Barnes, director of Statistics and Pupil Accounting, regarding the number of court cases handled by visiting teachers.

The number of cases reviewed by the juvenile court judge is shown in Table 3. Disposition of these cases varied from probationary periods to actual commitments to state institutions.

### TABLE 3

#### CASES ACTED UPON IN JUVENILE COURT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Negro</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1944-45</td>
<td>n¹</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945-46</td>
<td>x²</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>43</td>
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<tr>
<td>1946-47</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>44</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

¹Not available

²Not broken down according to race

### Services To Meet The Problems

As previously stated, the Board of Education of Atlanta does not grant material relief. Consequently, visiting teachers are not concerned with the task of providing material aid except in cases of extreme emergency. Financial assistance, however, is available through public and private social agencies. The year 1947, will mark the first attempt at keeping statistical records on the number of referrals made by visiting teachers of Atlanta to social agencies.

All of the community services must be utilized to meet the varied
needs of children when factors impede their progress or the economic power of families weakens to the extent that they are no longer able to provide adequately for their children.

One of the most important jobs of the visiting teacher is to maintain contact with the social agencies outside the school and manipulating social resources of the community to the advantage of the child who is obstructed in his normal growth. One of the visiting teacher's chief function is to make available the assets of the community to meet the school child's needs and to individualize them on the basis of careful diagnosis of the factors involved.

Of the various welfare services, the Department of Public Health is one of the most valuable agency in the community cooperating with the school and is widely used by the visiting teachers. They work very close with the Health Department in analyzing and removing undesirable health conditions. Basic causes of many problems of the Atlanta school child stem from insalubrious health and sanitation situations in the home. The following case reveals a visiting teacher's effort in this area.

Case 5

John, his four brothers and two sisters lived in a four-room shack with their parents just outside the peripheral line of deserted, dilapidated factories and buildings. His mother became ill after the birth of the seventh child and had to give up her job at a neighborhood factory. The father worked at a large mailing order company but drank heavily. John and two younger brothers were referred to the visiting teacher because of long periods of absences and their dirty appearances. The visiting teacher contacted the family and found conditions in the home so appalling that it seemed essential to call in the health officials. Periodic checks were made by the public health nurse to make certain that the home was cleaned and to prevent possibilities of diseases. The case was also referred to the Family Welfare Society for further assistance in planning for the family group.
Likewise, civic organizations are also making contributions to aid children who require additional help in attending school regularly by supplying funds for glasses, clothing, x-rays and by making provisions for recreational facilities. Among such organizations are included the Kiwanis, the Lions, Rotary Clubs, the Elks, Shrines and Parent-teacher organizations.

Furthermore, churches are profitable sources at the command of the visiting teacher which render invaluable aid to children and families in various spheres of needs. They cooperate with schools in providing funds for clothing, giving assistance on personal and social difficulties, furnishing recreational programs and offering ministerial counsel and moral and spiritual support. Moreover, many ministers serve as very strong focal persons in interpreting to the community the importance of the visiting teacher program.
CHAPTER IV

LIMITATIONS OF THE PROGRAM

The operation of the whole visiting teacher program should be directed toward meeting the welfare of all children in the community to the fullest and quickest possible way. Any inadequacy in the program and services will handicap the child who requires a visiting teacher's assistance.

Trained Personnel

The new Georgia attendance law increased the school population; and invertly, the supply of qualified teachers for the position of visiting teacher remains inadequate to meet the demand. Approximately 6,000 additional children have been enrolled in the public schools of Atlanta since 1945. The effort to deal effectively with the added problems created by the law without trained workers, produced a gigantic problem of adequate personnel; and both desirable extension and efficiency of program was hampered. In order to bridge the gap which this scarcity of personnel made and until qualified persons could be secured, "acting" and part-time visiting teachers have been appointed.

For the school year 1947–48, nine part-time visiting teachers were employed to serve in the Negro elementary schools as shown in Table 1.\(^1\) Nevertheless, the program is seriously limited due to the fact that half the time of the visiting teacher has to be spent in the classroom and the other half in the field. To obtain fruitful results, visiting teachers need to devote all their efforts to school social work assignments on a full-time basis. So many times, it is impossible to contact

\(^1\) See p. 14.
parents because they are working and may not have days off at the same
time that the visiting teacher makes a home visit. In other instances,
parents take time off the job at a financial loss. After the closing
hours of school, visiting teachers must make home visits at night.

Visiting teachers' dual job of classroom teaching and visiting
teacher work have proved too strenuous for many of them. The part-time
visiting teacher is very often too tired physically and mentally to
perform efficiently. As a result, the child's problems go unsolved; and
he continues to be a neglected, maladjusted or anti-social individual.

The value of the program and what it means to each school, varies
according to the responsibilities assigned to the visiting teacher by
the public school system and the structural setup of the program depend-
ing upon whether the visiting teachers operate out of the central office
or whether they are part-time or full-time scattered among the various
schools. The setup is not completely centralized. Consequently, each
visiting teacher is more than apt to think only in terms of his own
unit of work. The structural setup is important in the whole program
from the standpoint of intake of cases, satisfactory supervisory relations
and the amount of clerical and stenographic help required to facilitate
the program.

Difficulty in finding people with the proper training, who are
willing to work for the salaries which visiting teachers are paid, has
become a serious handicap in Atlanta. The salary schedule of the visiting
teachers was abolished at the same time all other schedules for teachers
were abolished in 1942. The new salary schedule is now in the process of
revision and unavailable for distribution. However, visiting teachers
with professional training average about $190.00 per month.

Record Keeping

Records and record keeping are valuable because they provide the visiting teacher and others with the means of understanding the child, of perfecting skills, of furnishing specific case studies as a basis for educational changes, of showing that the service rendered is justified and of progressing professionally.¹

Another inadequate feature of the program is concerned with record keeping which constitutes an essential part of having information available on the child. The incompleteness of the records indicates a need to adopt a standardized recording method. Few records show or recommend plans for treatment or follow-up which should be part of a social study.

Many of the cases are filed away without indicating the outcome; and records are not brought up to date by the end of the school year. A large backlog is carried over into the summer months; and considerable difficulty is encountered by having to shuffle through the large volume of cases after the close of school with only a minimum of summer personnel. Hence, no special effort can be made by the visiting teacher on the job for the summer to give pupils referred during the year additional help because most of the records are inadequately kept.

Training Programs

Due to the fact that the service is new and growing and that there is a great possibility of its further application to education, there is

a need for more in-service training. The school administration should provide such a program in order to raise the standards of work.

The visiting teacher staff, however, does meet once a week in the central office. The program of the staff conferences include discussion of policies, problem cases, local developments which have bearing upon the school and varied topics of educational and social significance by outside speakers. These conferences, of course, are valuable. But, there is a need for special stress on personality development, individualization of the child, a more detailed social study of the problem and diagnosis and handling of the situation.

One means of fostering interest in visiting teacher work would be to offer scholarships to teachers and principals or to have some professional person give courses centered around social work in the public school system. But the Atlanta school system affords no such advantages or opportunities.

Special Needs

Among the greatest aids to the work of the visiting teacher are psychiatric services, mental hygiene clinics, and psychological and medical services. An enlarged program of mental hygiene in the Atlanta schools is needed very much. The present system is far too inadequate to provide services on an individual basis. Facilities at Grady Hospital, one of the few hospitals in the City of Atlanta to which the public schools have access, are already over taxed. Rapid increase in the school population and the possibility of further increases demand additional psychiatric, medical and psychological services.
Furthermore, there are no adequate institutions or quarters to detain children who require removal from their own homes or time to formulate special plans. This is particularly true in the case of the Negro child. Substitute home care is a long standing problem with all its social and legal implications. The problem is accentuated among Negro children because there are so few suitable homes for placement, and similarly institutional care for them are seriously lacking. Likewise, state institutions to which some public school children have to be committed are so crowded and frequently unable to accommodate them that plans for them are delayed. This situation is most prevalent in making provisions for the deaf, blind and socially handicapped child of both racial groups.

Despite the draw backs, the introduction of the visiting teacher program in the Atlanta public schools is one step forward in Georgia's great attempt to protect and conserve its children as future citizens of the State.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In meeting the welfare of all children in the school community, the work of the visiting teacher in public school systems is rapidly becoming a professional service. The school is no longer concerned with the intellectual life of the child per se. Within recent years, the objectives of education have become more and more concerned with the constructive relationships between the teacher and the pupil, his adjustment to the total school program and some of the emotional factors related to learning. Educators depend upon the social case worker in the school to help the teacher understand the child and to facilitate programs devised for his complete growth and development. While distinctly different to some extent, the objectives of social work and education are basically the embodiment of a similar philosophy in the area of child guidance.

This modern view of education is significant because it is one which promotes growth and development of the whole child, emotionally as well as intellectually; it promotes satisfactory adjustment within himself and with others in society intrinsic to becoming an asset to the home, school, community and the nation. Furthermore, it is timely because the nation has just emerged from a second world's war which fully demonstrated the need to emphasize good care and fuller opportunities for American children.

The child has been gradually recognized by society as a social investment. The community and nation of tomorrow are largely determined through the availability of programs to ensure his physical, mental and
moral development which are very essential to becoming a useful member of society. Another significant present-day outgrowth of this social proposition is the fact that more plans are being made for a varied as well as highly specialized program of services extending beyond the home to broader areas of responsibilities. A certain quantity of knowledge, technique and skills have been drawn from related fields—psychology, psychiatry, medicine, social work and sociology—to aid in the struggle to relieve baffling situations. Many of these services are known by various names which include the following: pupil personnel services, attendance services, child study, child welfare clinics, child guidance centers and mental hygiene clinics.

The visiting teacher movement evolved from a "social invention" which has been a natural and inevitable outgrowth of changes and conditions in the American culture. In 1906-07, a visiting teacher service developed simultaneously but independently in three different cities, Boston, New York City and Hartford, Connecticut. In 1923, there were 137 school social workers in fifty-two communities, Atlanta, Georgia was among the city boards of education adopting a form of visiting teacher work during the first quarter of the twentieth century. By 1944, more than 266 cities had organized some type of social work services in their schools. However, the extent to which school systems are able to provide adequate services varies widely throughout the states.

Visiting teacher work is a relatively new experience in the Atlanta Public School System. As is true in any new endeavor, there is a danger of securing personnel who know little about the purpose and function of the program. In the two years of operation, 1945-47, too little information
has been available to principals, teachers and parents in regard to the program. Similarly, information has been insufficient in regard to standards and qualifications for the work, types of services and especially in qualifications of those employed as visiting teachers. Likewise, there has been too little effort made to implement the program with auxiliary services which aid in understanding the child.

Georgia's adoption of the new Compulsory School Attendance Law, enacted in March, 1945, was motivated by the desire to keep children in school. The law provides for enforcement of regular school attendance by authorizing county or independent boards of education to employ visiting teachers whose duty shall be to act as attendance officers. The law does not say that they shall be social workers, but it suggested a new approach in solving the problems of school children, incorporating a basic social work idea which stresses removing the cause rather than resorting to punitive measures. Visiting teachers are selected by boards of education governing the local systems, and are to be qualified in accordance with professional requirements prescribed by the Georgia Board of Education. In order to comply with provisions of the 1945 Law, selection of visiting teachers was made on the same basis as the classroom teacher, utilizing the personnel from teacher staffs who were interested in working with individual children and families. Up to the present time definite policies as to professional requirements and salary schedules for visiting teachers have not been completed.

One of the most important tasks of the visiting teacher is to maintain contact with social agencies in the community and to manipulate resources to the advantage of the child who is having difficulties in school.
It is one of their chief functions to make available the assets of the community to meet the school children's needs and to individualize them on the basis of careful diagnosis of factors involved. Complete readiness to accept the visiting teacher program in the schools will depend largely upon making it more meaningful to those who continue to regard the visiting teacher as a "checker" or as a "policeman." The visiting teachers must interpret the school's program to parents and enlist their cooperation in planning for the child.

Visiting teacher work not only entails working with children's problems, but it also constitutes working with problems of parents as well. Frequently, the school has to resort to legal measures to secure parental cooperation when situations in the family group become detrimental to the child's welfare. It has been found that many of the child's problems are direct results of adverse home conditions such as overcrowdedness, financial difficulties and parental neglect. Generally, these problems constituted the chief reasons for referrals to the visiting teacher and social agencies.

Employment of part-time visiting teacher service cannot meet the problem in Atlanta in view of the fact that the visiting teacher is performing in two jobs, that of classroom teacher and a social worker. There is need to relieve him of teaching responsibilities. It is necessary to devote all his efforts to school social work assignments on a full-time basis in order to achieve desirable results. The increase in Atlanta school population which the new law produced, created additional problems and more trained workers are needed to meet the demand. There is a need for in-service training, workshops and visiting teacher programs to aid
in meeting the impending expansions within the school system and institutions to which school children are referred. Moreover, facilities for detaining and housing school children, removed from their homes for commitment, are too inadequate to do a creditable job of rehabilitating young children. It would seem that the service would be more effective in rendering immediate disposal of school problems if the visiting teachers operated from a bureau. There are enough visiting teachers in the Atlanta system to establish a supervisory staff under the direction of a person trained in social work.

Though great progress has been made by Georgia, there are special services required to implement the program. Mental hygiene services are not yet integrated to any degree with health services for children in school nor with welfare services for socially handicapped children. There is a need for community education dealing with all phases of mental and physical health services and visiting teacher services, especially where parents, guardians and school officials are concerned.
## ENROLLMENT CARD

### (Front)

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<th>Last Name</th>
<th>First Name</th>
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<td>Mother's Maiden Name:</td>
<td>Address:</td>
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<td>Guardian's Name (Relation):</td>
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<th>Date Issued</th>
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<th>Date Enrolled</th>
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*If out of city give school, city and state.

### Withdrawal Information

(Back)

1. Date Withdrew .................................. Grade

2. Attendance (Regular) (Irregular)

3. Scholarship (Excellent, Satisfactory, Poor)

4. Books, fees, supplies checked

5. New Address ....................................

6. New School ....................................

7. Reason for Withdrawal ..........................

8. Remarks ......................................

---

1Attendance Department, Statistics and Pupil Accounting, Atlanta Public School System, Atlanta, Georgia, November, 1947.
# TEACHERS WEEKLY REPORT OF PUPIL ATTENDANCE

**Teacher** ___________________________  **Week Ending** ___________________________

**Grade** ___________________________  **No. of days in Week** ___________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yearly Enrollment</th>
<th>Active Enrollment</th>
<th>No. of Days Absent</th>
<th>Withdrawals</th>
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<th>Reason</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Reasons:*
- **E** - Entered school for the first time
- **T** - From a Georgia School
- **TT** - From Atlanta Teacher
- **TS** - From Another State
## Attendance Record

**School**

**ONE HUNDRED PER-CENT ATTENDANCE**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Mon</th>
<th>Tue</th>
<th>Wed</th>
<th>Thu</th>
<th>Fri</th>
<th>Sat</th>
<th>Sun</th>
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</thead>
</table>

### ALL PRESENT
**Attendance Record—Atlanta Public Schools**

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Last</th>
<th>First</th>
<th>Middle</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Date of Birth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

- Phone No. | Business Phone No. | Neighbor's Phone No. |

- Parent's Name | Address | Business |

(Full name)

| Semester | Year | 1st | 2nd | 3rd | 4th | 5th | 6th | 7th | 8th | 9th | 10th | 11th | 12th | 13th | 14th | 15th | 16th | 17th | 18th | 19th | 20th |
|----------|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|

- E—Date of Entrance
- W—Date of Withdrawal
- RE—Reentered
- A—Absent
- T—Tardy (Time of arrival)
- E. D.—Early Dismissal

1—Card mailed
2—Reply received
3—Excuse accepted
4—Excuse not accepted
5—Truancy
6—Illness
7—Religious holiday
8—Suspended
9—Referred to Visiting Teacher
10—Referred to Central Office
11—Tardiness made up
12—Telephoned home
REQUEST FOR ATTENDANCE OR PROBLEM CASE INVESTIGATION

ATLANTA PUBLIC SCHOOLS
DEPARTMENT OF STATISTICS AND PUPIL ACCOUNTING
ATLANTA, GEORGIA

REQUEST FOR ATTENDANCE OR PROBLEM CASE INVESTIGATION

Name: ___________________________ School: ___________________________ Date: __________

Address: ___________________________ Phone No.: ___________________________

Birthday: ___________________________ Teacher: ___________________________ Grade: __________

Parent or Guardian: ___________________________ Mother's Maiden Name: __________

PROBLEM: ____________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

INVESTIGATION

Others In Family: ___________________________ Date: ___________________________

REMARKS: ____________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

Visiting Teacher
MONTHLY REPORT OF VISITING TEACHER ACTIVITIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>FROM</th>
<th>TO</th>
<th>VISITING TEACHER</th>
<th>SCHOOL</th>
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<tr>
<td>Number of Visits to Schools</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of Families Referred to Visiting Teacher for Investigation</td>
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<td>Number of Visits to Above Agencies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of Children Entering School for the First Time, This Year or as Result of Visits</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of Children Re-Entering School as Result of Visits</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of Children Referred to Other Agencies for Assistance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of Visits to Landlords, Owners, and Other Interested Parties</td>
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<td>Number of Community Meetings Tended Where School Attendance Was Discussed</td>
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<td>Number of Warrants Issued: Adults</td>
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<td>Number of Convictions: Children</td>
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<td>Number of Hours Spent in Field</td>
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## Atlanta Public Schools

### PRINCIPAL'S MONTHLY REPORT OF PUPIL ATTENDANCE

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### SCHOOL

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School Month Ending: 194

No. of Days in This School:

Month:

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Section 1: Every parent, guardian, or other person residing within the State of Georgia, having control or charge of any child or children between their seventh and sixteenth birthdays, shall enroll and send such child or children to a public or private school under such penalty for non-compliance herewith as is herein-after provided.

Section 10: Any parent, guardian, or other person residing in this State who has control or charge of a child or children and who shall violate the provisions of this Act shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and shall be subject to a fine not to exceed one hundred ($100) dollars or imprisonment not to exceed thirty (30) days, or both, at the discretion of the superior, city or other court having jurisdiction. Each day's absence from school in violation of this Act shall constitute a separate offense. Visiting teachers and attendance officers shall have authority and it shall be their duty to file proceedings in court to enforce the provisions of this Act.

Jarvis Barnes, Director
Statistics and Pupil Accounting

*Accompany letters to parents or guardians in violation of this law.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

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State Department of Education. "Guide to Improvement of The Teacher." Montgomery, Alabama. Division of Instruction, 1939. (Mimeographed.)