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Articulation and adjustment problems of Negro students entering the junior high school of Coffeyville, Kansas

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ARTICULATION AND ADJUSTMENT PROBLEMS OF NEGRO STUDENTS ENTERING THE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL OF COFFEYVILLE KANSAS

A Problem Submitted to the Graduate Division in
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Science

Ву

T. Homer Denny

KANSAS STATE TEACHER'S COLLEGE
Pittsburg, Kansas
July, 1948

Acknowledgment

The writer wishes to express his thanks and appreciation to Dr. Claude W. Street for his kind advice and constructive criticism in connection with the preparation of this manuscript.

Interests T. H. D.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study is to make a survey of the problems of articulation and adjustment of pupils of the all-Negro Cleveland Elementary School upon entering the ninth grade of the mixed Junior High School of Coffeyville, Kansas. It is concerned mainly with the discovery of points and causes of inarticulation but gives considerable attention to ways and means of effecting better articulation for the Negro pupils.

The investigator who has been a teacher in the Cleveland School for twenty years, has felt for some time the urgent need for a study of this kind.

Meaning and Significance of Articulation and Adjustment.

The Seventh Yearbook of the Department of Superintendence defined articulation as follows:

Articulation means that, adequate relation of part to part which makes for continuous forward movement. In terms of education, it implies such adjustments and relationships between and within school units as permit every pupil to make maximum progress at all points in his school life. 1

The commission on articulation of the Department of Superintendence summarized the scope of school articulation in

lNational Education Association, Department of Superintendence, "The Articulation of the Units of American Education." Seventh Yearbook: Washington, D. C., The Association 1929, Foreword.

1931, as follows:

Outcomes for the learner are materially affected by the number, kind, and degree of inarticulations which modify his experience.

An inarticulation is any point within our public school system and the society which it serves at which the continuous and gradual growth, development, progress, or transition of an individual is hindered by reason of the organization, methods, materials or practices of our schools.²

Adjustment has long been considered a fundamental aim of education. At the opening of this century when the meaning of education was being philosophically reviewed, adjustment was frequently referred to in definitions of educational process. But in those earlier discussions, adjustment was as much concerned with shaping the physical environment to fit man's needs as it was with preparing the individual to cope more effectively with the environment as it is found. The former point of view was well expressed by O'Shea in 1903 who said:

Adjustment seeks ever to give the individual mastery over those phases of the environment that he must understand in order to realize most fully the possibility of his being. And it aims to lead society as a whole to a mastery of the world in its totality so that in reality each member thus becomes adjusted to all features of his environment. One who is guided by this aim will plan his educational system in view of the environments that are to be adjusted to.3

Adjustment becomes a matter of mental health, and a child who unsuccessfully reacts to the intricate and baffling

²Five Unifying Factors in American Education. Ninth Yearbook of the Department of Superintendence of the National Education Association. Washington, D. C., 1931, p. 388.

³M. J. O'Shea, Education As Adjustment, pp. 140, 141.

problems of his own childhood and adolescent environment is lacking that vigor of adequate functioning which characterizes a desirable state of health. Whereas the older conceptions of adjustment emphasized mastery of the environment, the newer point of view stresses the education of conduct. "Since to be mentally healthy a man must be socially adequate, the newer education is coming more and more to believe that its big job is to provide children the opportunity to become socially adequate in order that they may be mentally healthy".4

The need of articulation and adjustment in our schools is constantly increasing as Elsie Smithies points out,

In the last half century, the difficulty of individual adjustment has increased in direct proportion to the growth of the complexity of our social and economic organization, to the development of monotonous routine and standardization in industry to the tendency to mass production, and to laxity resulting from social and moral freedom. More and more bewildering and perplexing to the child has been the "growing up" process. The greater the standardization in the social and economic life, the greater has become the need for concern in respect to the development of the individual pupil.

The promotion to Junior High School life is a matter of great importance because of the adjustment which must be made by each student. Each Junior High School enrollment day brings students of every degree of maladjustment; therefore, the Junior High School should be so articulated with the elementary school that major maladjustments due to lack of articulation are minimized.

⁴E. R. Groves, <u>Personality</u> and <u>Social Adjustment</u>, Chapter VII.

⁵Elsie M. Smithies, <u>Case</u> <u>Studies</u> <u>of Normal Adolescent</u> Girls, p. 8.

"For every child, understanding..." are the beginning words of one of the first principles in the Children's Charter. And why? Because every child is different from all others. He is an individual personality with a background of experiences, with abilities, interests, attitudes, strength, weaknesses, and needs that are peculiarly his own. He acts from different motives, learns in different ways and at different rates, accomplishes different ends, and uses his learnings in different ways than his associates. Every year finds him a little different, for he is a growing personality, surprising his parents and teacher from time to time with new abilities, new patterns of behavior, new motives, and new ambitions.6

The major problem of the school is to understand each child, to define his needs, and to organize learning problems in such a way that he will gain the greatest possible good from his experiences. Understanding implies knowledge of his physical condition, his social development, his emotional behavior, and his general ability. It involves knowledge, also, of each child's special interests and talents, and of his defects and learning difficulties, and of the nature of his growth process. The problem is restricted to no single grade level. Elementary and secondary school teachers alike must be able to detect differences among children of the same age or in the same grade, and to observe the changes that take

⁶Dabney M. Davis, "Know your School Child." United States Department of the Interior, Leaflet No. 51, p. 19.

place within the same child from year to year. In judging the effectiveness of the school, one needs to discover how intimately the school understands each pupil, and to what extent it modifies its aims and procedures to meet individual needs.

These factors, as stated above, are surely paramount in school systems throughout our country. It seems that teachers, counselors, and administrators need to accept the challenge more fully, give more counseling to students in elementary and secondary schools. Early diagnosis of maladjustment, finding interest areas of the child, searching for reasons of emotional unbalance and eradication or minimizing these, may result in better adjustment.

The tragedy of the unadjusted school child has so frequently resulted in the even greater tragedy of the psychopathic adult and the social delinquent that school authorities are finding it one of their major responsibilities to give serious consideration to the undesirable behavior symptoms of childhood. The early detection of maladjustment, and analysis of its causes, and an application of remedial treatment demand the best facilities which the school authorities and community can afford. Even then success cannot be guaranteed, for the environmental influences of home and neighborhood often work in direct opposition to measures of adjustment which might otherwise be effectual; however, the prevention of crime and psychosis in even a few cases is a challenge which the school cannot afford to pass by. "If we can find the means whereby

the maladjusted child may be made a happier, more contented individual and a better adjusted, contributing member of society, then all the time, the study, and money spent upon the program will not be in vain.

Background Data

Coffeyville is an industrial town of approximately twenty thousand people. The chief industries of the city are brick plants, railroad round house, oil refineries, one zinc smelter, the Acme Foundry, The Parkersburg Rig and Reel, Packing House, and The Page Milk Company. The population is composed largely of people working in these industries.

The school facilities are as follows: Seven grade schools, five for white children and two for negroes, one Junior High School, one Senior High School, the McFarland Trade School, and one Junior College. There are approximately four thousand children enrolled in the school system.

The Cleveland School at one time, years ago, enrolled both white and Negro students, as was true of the other elementary schools of Coffeyville. Negro students attending the Cleveland School were taught by a Negro teacher in a room by themselves. As the Negro population grew, access to more of the building was necessary, resulting in the Cleveland School being devoted entirely to elementary Negro education under the principalship of Will Easter. Other Negro students

⁷Elsie H. Martens, "Adjustment of Behavior Problems of School Children," U. S. Department of Interior: Bulletin, 1932, No. 18, p. 1.

attending school throughout the city were transferred to the Cleveland elementary school. At that time the school system used the 8-4 plan.

Several years later, a Junior High School was erected. The elementary schools of Coffeyville, with the exception of the Cleveland School then changed to the six-grade plan. It was decided at that time to keep all Negro students in the Cleveland School until they had completed the ninth grade, but there was considerable opposition to the plan, which caused the matter to be taken into court. The opponents won after much misunderstanding and the loss of one year of education by the Negro students who were then ready to enter the Junior High School. The following year, Negro students were enrolled in the Junior High School at the beginning of the ninth grade, thus initiating the 8-1-3 plan for the Negro students, which still exists.

It would seem that here is a point of very poor articulation. Earlier introduction of the Negro student to the Junior High School, as proposed later in this study should result in better articulation.

The Cleveland School has 8.5 regular classroom teachers, and a teaching principal. The training of the faculty averages one hundred-twenty semester hours per teacher. Two teachers have a master's degree; five have between sixty and one hundred twenty hours of college credit; two have Bachelor's degrees.

There are three hundred forty-six pupils enrolled in the

Cleveland School which comprises eight grades. The Douglass School is a two-teacher Negro school of six elementary grades which sends its pupils on to the Cleveland School for the seventh and eighth grades. These pupils are obliged to make three major changes within three years if they enter Senior High School after spending two years in the Cleveland School and one year in the Junior High School.

The Junior High School has twenty-four teachers and a principal, and an enrollment of approximately seven hundred fifty students in grades seven, eight, and nine. All of the teachers have a Bachelor's degree or its equivalent.

Sources of Data

This study is based upon data from many sources including:

- l. Educational periodicals, Yearbooks and other literature.
- 2. Records and reports of the Cleveland
 School and the Junior High School of
 Coffeyville, Kansas.
- 3. Interviews with Negro pupils and their parents and with the principals of the Cleveland School and the Junior High School.

CHAPTER II

INARTICULATION AND ADJUSTMENT PROBLEMS OF NEGRO PUPILS ENTERING THE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Inarticulations Resulting from Faulty
Organization and Administration

Authorities in education agree that the 8-1-3 plan of organization is one of the poorest possible from the stand-point of articulation. They advocate having no unit of less than three years and many favor a four-year unit. In spending but one year in the Junior High School the Negro pupil is at a distinct disadvantage compared to the white pupils as the following data show. The situation would be greatly improved by the adoption of the 6-3-3 or a 6-4-4 plan for all pupils.

The average class period in the seventh, eighth, and ninth grades at the Junior High School is approximately fifty-one minutes. The average class period in the seventh and eighth grades of the Cleveland school is forty minutes.

The Junior High School offers the seventh and eighth grade pupils five elective subjects. The Cleveland school seventh and eighth grades have no elective subjects.

Departmentalization is used throughout the seventh, eighth, and ninth grades of the Junior High School. At the Cleveland school the seventh and eighth grades remain in one room under one teacher throughout the morning periods, then

rotate to special subject teachers in the afternoon.

Some of the problems of articulation for the Negro pupils might be eliminated if the faculty of the entire school system, with the approval of the administration, adopted a common philosophy of democratic education with a section as follows:

Democratic education serves each individual with justice, seeking to provide equal educational opportunity for all, regardless of intelligence, race, religion, social status, economic conditions or vocational plans.

Each person, by virtue of his membership in the democratic community, is entitled to learn the things best suited to his particular needs, to share in determining the purpose of education, to exercise the leadership of which he is capable, and to take part freely in the social life of the schools.

The administration of the Coffeyville schools, being far sighted, and broad-minded, would no doubt favor, not only the adoption of, but the adherence to, a thoroughly democratic philosophy of education.

The administration at present makes little effort at orientation of Negro students going into the Junior High School. There are no provisions made for teachers to study the lower and higher educational levels in order to be better prepared to help students adjust to new educational and social levels. Failure to provide adequately for individual differences and needs of these Negro students is evidently

Ininth year of the Department of Superintendence of the National Education Association, Washington, D. C. 1931, p. 387, The Hallmarks of Democratic Education.

due to the lack of:

- a. Any type of cumulative records accompanying the pupil and showing his growth from kinder-garten into the Junior High School.
- b. Any type of adequate guidance planning for Negro students in the elementary and the Junior High School.
 - c. Understanding and sympathy on part of the teachers in the Junior High School.

A study of the grades of the thirty-three Negro students in the ninth grade of the Junior High School of Coffeyville, for the school year 1947-1948 revealed that: No Negro student made an "A" in any subject; five students, or 15 per cent of the class, made "B's"; eight students, or 24 per cent, made "C's"; sixteen, or 49 per cent, made "D's"; and four students, or 12 per cent, made "F's".

Since most authorities agree that intelligence is not the sole determining factor affecting scholastic achievement, it would seem that the low grades of the Negro students, as shown, might involve factors of articulation, orientation, and adjustment. They indicate the need of more pupil guidance and more consideration of the individual needs of these students in planning their programs of studies.

The intelligence quotients of the thirty-three Negro students in question as established by the "Otis Quick Scoring Mental Ability Test", were below average. This test showed that only fifteen students had intelligence quotients above 90, while the remaining eighteen students had I. Q.'s between 60 and 90.

The Stanford Achievement test scores of these thirtythree Negro students indicated that thirty-two of them were
below the ninth grade norm. The special subject fields of
the test revealed that:

- a. Thirty-two, or 97 per cent of the students, were below the norm in literature and general science.
 - b. Thirty, or 91 per cent of students, were below norm in arithmetic reasoning and social studies.
- c. Twenty-nine, or 88 per cent of the students, were below norm in word meaning, language usage, spelling, arithmetic computation, and social studies.

The poor marks obtained by the Negro pupils in ninth grade subjects, the low I. Q.'s and the very poor showing made by these pupils in the Stanford Achievement tests point to the need for more adequate guidance and for better adaptation of methods and curricula to the needs of the pupils. There is unquestionably too great a break between the eighth grade and the ninth grade for these Negro pupils.

Problems of Interracial and Social Adjustment

Our own land can make no greater contribution to this troubled world than to establish brotherhood as the rule of life among all our citizens of every religion, race, or national origin. We cannot hope to commend brotherhood abroad unless we practice it at home.²

This statement made by President Harry Truman later followed by his appointing a Commission on Civil Rights, which recommended the early elimination of segregation and racial

²School Life, XXX (March, 1948), p. 15.

discrimination. Believing that America cannot stand in defense of democracy and christianity and continue to condone the antithesis of these fundamentals to our national structure, our public schools must one day become truly democratic for all. In anticipation of that day, which may be sooner than we think, education should prepare the way.

It is probably true that the advent of Negro students, from the eighth grade of the Cleveland school into the ninth grade of the Junior High School, causes some degree of maladjustment to the white students, because the white student is not accustomed to the Negro in classes. Negro student entering into a class of white students who have been together as a class for two years is necessarily curious as to how he will be accepted by the white teacher and the white students.

The lack of knowledge of these students of each other is due to little or no early intercultural education.

The practice of racial segregation and discrimination in the local school organization make for frustration and maladjustment of the Negro students.

The fact that the white and the Negro students have read and been told for generations that the Negro is inferior, causes concepts that are not the whole truth on the part of both groups.

The feeling of not belonging to the school community because of barriers imposed by the administration and community is another factor. A Negro student upon entering the Junior

High School of Coffeyville, Kansas feels bewildered and frustrated. He knows that he will not be accepted into full student membership as a participant in the school organizations. He knows that the history of the local school situation is one of segregation and discrimination. Whatever his capabilities or potentialities, he will never become class president, captain or member of the Junior High football teams. He is not allowed to participate in such extra-class activities as swimming, orchestra, choral groups, band, debate, and dramatics. He is not included in the extra-class program except in activities attended solely by Negroes.

It is evident that the Negro pupils are not afforded equal educational opportunities under the present set-up.

Data Obtained by Interviewing Negro Pupils

The investigator interviewed twenty-five of the thirtythree Negro pupils who were enrolled in the Coffeyville Junior
High School in 1947-48. A copy of the check list which was
used is included in the appendix.

The findings of the interviews are presented under the following headings: Pupil-Teacher Relationships, Participation in School Activities, and School Progress and Vocational Interests.

Pupil-Teacher Relationships.

Eighteen students reported that they had had no contact with the home-room teacher or school counselor relative to school work, behavior problems, or personal problems. Only

seven of the students had contacted either the counselor or home-room teacher for any reason. A condition of this sort seems to bear out the fact that one of three factors are responsible:

- a. The children are shy about approaching their teacher, or the counselor, relative to personal problems.
- b. The teacher or counselor is unapproachable and does not invite confidences.
 - c. The students have not received proper orientation in the matter of counseling.

Whatever the cause, the responsibility of adjustment or re-adjustment of these students lies with the school. The problem must be recognized and faced if these children are to receive their just educational heritage.

The interviews further indicated that twenty-one students liked all of their teachers. For the most part they reported their teachers to be:

- a. Friendly and cooperative
- Major schob. Helpfules in which these students would have
- c. Interested in the pupils
 - d. Fair and impartial

This clearly indicated that the students are more than willing to meet their new situation; they do not carry prejudices and fears of the teachers with them to the Junior High School.

Four of the students did not like all of their teachers.

Some of the teachers according to these students were:

- a. Lacking in pupil understanding
- b. Snobbish

- Man c. Uncooperative and participate in certain home-
- d. Hateful
- e. Not interested in Negro students
 - f. Prejudiced was Manual and Annual Manual M
- recompleted g. Mean the research all of them intend to despite
- their high. Grouchy laing. Their vocational interests are as a

Any of the above reasons as to why the students disliked their teachers may be caused by frustration, bewilderment and general maladjustment. Certainly some measures should be taken to give these students a sense of belonging and status quo with their peers.

Participation in School Activities

The interviews showed an average of three Negro students in each home-room of the Junior High School. Of the twenty-five students investigated, twenty had neither membership nor office in any of the home-room clubs. It was found, however, that five Negro students held offices in their home-room organizations. Major school activities in which these students would have liked to participate, are:

- interests a. Football weach a state of frustration.
 - Them b. Basketball weblam of oducating august and an armore
- and dentic. Track telepts do the students have for these
- choral groups will that second status allow
- such traile. Band many Magroes somelly make a living es
- these prof. Orchestra opposition that are offered in that a
- own area g. Pep Club v one-half of these students will wamain
 - h. Drum Corps

Nine of these students did participate in certain homeroom intra-mural activities.

School Progress and Vocational Interests

All of the twenty-five Negro students interviewed were promoted to the tenth grade and all of them intend to complete their high school training. Their vocational interests are as follows:

Vocation	No. Interested
Musicians	3
Stenographers	5
Nurses	5
Doctors	2
Dentists	2
Mechanics	2
Psychologists	2
Artists	1
Baseball player	1
Prize fighter	1
Carpenter	1

Considering the results of the tests given these children there is definitely a need for vocational counseling. The students' capacities and aptitudes do not justify their ambitions to be dentists, doctors, psychologists or artists.

These children should certainly be guided into other vocational interests before they reach a state of frustration.

There, too, is the problem of educating musicians, doctors, and dentists. What talents do the students have for these professions? What training? Will their economic status allow such training? How many Negroes actually make a living at these professions? What opportunities are offered in their own area? Approximately one-half of these students will remain

in Coffeyville to follow life pursuits. It would seem, then, that counseling and guidance in terms of their capacities and community needs would be advisable.

This study has attempted to point out the various points

and problems of inarticulation for Negro pupils on entering

alath grade of the Correyville Junior High School from the

eighth grade of the Cleveland school. It was shown that:

- Less time is devoted to curricular offerings in the seventh and eighth grades of the Cleveland than in the seventh and eighth grades of the Junior High Schools.
- 2. No elective subjects are offered students in the seventh and eighth grades of the Cleveland School. The Junior High School surriculum offers the seventh and eighth grade students five electives.
- 3. Departmentalization is used throughout the seventh and eighth grades of the Junior High School. At the Cleveland school, the seventh and eighth grades remain in one room under one teacher throughout the morning periods, then rotate to special subject teachers in the afternoon.
- 4. There is practically no program of orientation for Negro students going into the Junior High School.
- 5. There are no student cumulative records to accompany the student into the Junior High School.
- 6. The lack of adequate guidance planning for Megro students in the elementary school and the Junior High School is in evidence.
- 7. Lack of understanding and sympathy on the part of some of the teachers in the Junior High School is evidenced by such student remarks as: uncooperative, snobbish, mean grouphy, and prejudiced.

CHAPTER III

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

This study has attempted to point out the various points and problems of inarticulation for Negro pupils on entering the ninth grade of the Coffeyville Junior High School from the eighth grade of the Cleveland school. It was shown that:

- 1. Less time is devoted to curricular offerings in the seventh and eighth grades of the Cleveland than in the seventh and eighth grades of the Junior High Schools.
- 2. No elective subjects are offered students in the seventh and eighth grades of the Cleveland school. The Junior High School curriculum offers the seventh and eighth grade students five electives.
- 3. Departmentalization is used throughout the seventh and eighth grades of the Junior High School. At the Cleveland school, the seventh and eighth grades remain in one room under one teacher throughout the morning periods, then rotate to special subject teachers in the afternoon.
- 4. There is practically no program of orientation for Negro students going into the Junior High School.
- 5. There are no student cumulative records to accompany the student into the Junior High School.
- 6. The lack of adequate guidance planning for Negro students in the elementary school and the Junior High School is in evidence.
- 7. Lack of understanding and sympathy on the part of some of the teachers in the Junior High School is evidenced by such student remarks as: uncooperative, snobbish, mean, grouchy, and prejudiced.

- 8. The intelligence quotients and school marks of the Negro students were low for the most part, indicating a need of more pupil guidance and more consideration of the individual needs of these students in planning their program of studies.
- 9. There is no adequate program of intercultural education in the school system of Coffeyville.
- 10. The Negro students feel the need of admittance into full school membership and participation.

Conclusions

The following conclusions seem to be warranted by the findings of this study:

- 1. A guidance program is needed that will aid the student in making personal, social, educational and vocational adjustments.
- 2. There should be greater continuity in curricula and methods in the elementary and Junior High School levels.
- 3. Better provision for individual needs and interests is essential on both levels.
- 4. A careful study should be made of ways affording better orientation for students in passing from the elementary school to the Junior High School.
- 5. A democratic philosophy of education should be adopted and practiced with a view to gradual elimination of racial discriminations in the Coffeyville schools.
- 6. The one-year unit for Negro pupils in the Junior High School is very unsatisfactory from the standpoint of articulation and should be replaced by a three-year unit. The best plan would probably be to admit Negro pupils to the Junior High School at the beginning of the seventh grade. This would do away with one change of school for the Douglass pupils. If such a change

were found to be impossible, conditions might be improved considerably by establishing a complete Junior High School of seventh, eighth, and ninth grades at the Cleveland school, with standards and opportunities on a par with those at the present Junior High School.

It is the responsibility of the Coffeyville public schools to make life experiences equally meaningfull and available to all students. Democracy as a national way of life can only be protected and realized as it is made an individual realization. It becomes the obligation of the secondary school to stimulate and strengthen democratic ideals in young people, so that these principles will be cherished and sustained in their adult experiences.

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CHRCK LIST USED IN INTERVIEWING MEGRO PUPILS

e. b.
a. b. c.
Were you interviewed by your home room teacher or the dounselor during the school year about any of the following:
a. School work
o. Things you were interested in
d. Other difficulties yes or no
Which teacher did you like best?
Do you intend to complete high school?

CHECK LIST USED IN INTERVIEWING NEGRO PUPILS

1.	Number of Negro pupils in your home room.
2.	Were you a member or officer in any home room club?
3.	List home room activities in which you participated:
	b. c. d.
4.	List any school activities you feel you might have participated in had you had the opportunity:
	a. b. Equiv. 80 to-0
5.	Were you interviewed by your home room teacher or the counselor during the school year about any of the following:
	a. School work yes or no b. Behavior
	yes or no c. Things you were interested in
	d. Other difficultiesyes or no
6.	Did you like your teachers?
7.	Which teacher did you like best?
8.	Which teacher did you like least?
	why?
7th.	Selb Och Bank by the Och Jane of
9.	Were you promoted to the 10th grade? yes or no
10.	Do you intend to complete high school?
11.	What have you chosen for your life's work?

BOY'S INDIVIDUAL INFORMATION SHEET -- COFFEYVILLE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Name -							Add	lress					
Date of Birth —			School last Date of Attended Entrance										1014
										OTIS TEST			
No. Brot	o. Brothers Older Younger No. in Family Living at Home								Form	Score	Date		
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BOY'S INDIVIDUAL INFORMATION SHEET - COFFEYVILLE HIGH SCHOOL

Name _			Addre	ess								Au sou	
Date of	of School last Date of Entrance												
Parent _			Number in										
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	Creative Work												
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	H. S. or College Teacher												
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	Mechanical; Household												
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