

Refer in reply to the following:

Education

Department of the Interior,

OFFICE OF INDIAN AFFAIRS,

WASHINGTON, January 15, 1892.

To Indian Agents, Superintendents of Indian Schools
and School Supervisors.

Under the system of Indian education now in operation, provision is made for the training of a large number of Indian youth in schools off reservations, both in Government and in contract schools. More than one fourth of the whole number of Indian pupils enrolled last year were in such schools. This method of education has been in operation during a sufficient length of time perhaps, to furnish a partial basis for estimating its efficiency.

Conflicting opinions have been expressed as to its ultimate net value. Some claim that the "returned student" retains the habits and principles acquired during his school life away from home and becomes an uplifting force among his people. Others insist that upon his return home he is dragged down by his surroundings and sometimes "relapses" into even a worse condition of uncivilization, than is found among those who remain at home. It is also affirmed that at schools distant from home the health of the students becomes undermined, and that a considerable proportion of them return home only to die. On the other hand, it is claimed that in general the health of students improves while they are away

at school. Other opinions on the subject fill all the space between these extremes..

The Office should be in possession of information from which a trustworthy opinion can be formed as to the worth and permanency of the training given in such schools.

As you have had experience in the matter or have abundant opportunity to inform yourself, please return this with replies to the questions herein.

Facts and specific instances are better than opinions and generalizations, and all replies given must be based on reliable information. The questions are intended to relate only to students who have been at least one year on a non-reservation school. It is not fair to include those who have spent any shorter term in such schools.

Questions to be answered by Agents:

How many pupils have gone from your agency to schools off reservations?

What is the average length of time which they have spent in such schools?

How many returned in a worse state of health than when they left their homes?

How many have died from diseases contracted or developed while away at school?

What proportion of the returned students have made a record which can be classed as excellent?

What proportion good?

What proportion fair?

What proportion poor?

What proportion bad?

How many individual instances in each class do you know of, personally or from reliable information - Excellent.....

Good.....Fair.....Poor.....Bad.....

REMARKS.....

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School Supervisors will give such information relating to the points above outlined as their observation will warrant, especially as to individual instances of success or failure; and hereafter in their tours among Indian schools will give these matters special attention, and make specific reports to this Office giving detailed information as far as practicable in regard to each returned student, - such as name, age, sex, tribe, agency, school attended, length of time spent there, record of student, since return, present occupation, &c., &c.

Superintendents of schools will furnish the information

asked for from the school records which they are expected to keep with care, and in detail.

In the classification the following system will be followed:-

EXCELLENT - Those who have had exceptional advantages, and are using them faithfully, or those who by earnestness and pluck, have also won a wide and telling influence for good.

GOOD - Those who do well and are exerting good influence even though it may not be very wide, e. g. a young man who settles down quietly upon his farm or at his trade, wears citizens' clothes, goes regularly to church, marries legally, is industrious and temperate, or a woman with a correspondingly good record. In short, any whose lives can be pointed to as an example for others to follow and improve upon.

FAIR - The sick and unfortunate, who have had few advantages, or those who by some slip have perhaps temporarily blemished their record.

POOR - Those who have not done as well as they should; have married after the Indian custom while knowing better, have fallen from weakness rather than vice; this may include some who are recovering themselves after more serious falls.

BAD - Those who do wrong while knowing better.

Respectfully,

Commissioner.

Circular

Jan'y 15/92

All Indians who
return from the
Training Schools
better in work
after a few years.