

(b) *Scope of services*.—As a first approximation it might be claimed that the longer the school term, the more can be learned. Table 13 indicates that, since the turn of the century, major changes have taken place in the length of the school term. In 1900, the school term lasted an average of 144 days; by 1958, it had been lengthened to 179 days, i.e., by about 24 percent. At the moment further lengthening is contemplated by many school boards.

The change in the average number of days attended by pupils enrolled in public schools during the school term has been even more striking during this period. The average increased from 99 days in 1900 to 158 days in 1956, i.e., about 60 percent.

(c) *Quality of services*.—Perhaps the most feasible approach would involve identifying and then measuring ingredients that make for good education. On that basis an index of quality of education could then be developed. Here are some of the factors that might be included in such an index of the quality of public education:

(1) Class size: While the average pupil-teacher ratio in average daily attendance is a reasonably good indication of class size, like any other average it conceals much detail. For instance, since high school classes are smaller than primary school classes, the age distribution is important. Another telling item would be whether the school offers a course in advanced mathematics or a foreign language if only 10 or 15 students are enrolled. Also the number of teachers' aids is to be considered.

(2) Grouping: Many educators maintain that good education requires that, within limits, students of common ability and interest are grouped together.¹⁹ Even after this philosophy is generally adopted, schools will differ as to whether they are able to deal with very small groups of very able students.

(3) Quality of the teaching staff: A good teaching staff has a number of important characteristics, some more tangible than others. The percent of experienced teachers is revealing. Do they tend to stay on for a career in the school system or do they move often? Also, the background of the teaching staff plays a dominating role. What is the percent of teachers who are graduates of strong liberal arts colleges with majors in the field or fields in which they are teaching? The methods used for selecting new teachers and of appraising the quality of the existing staff are also of interest. A good school interviews many persons for a position; it looks outside the borders of its district and even outside its State for personnel. Thus, an important indicator would be the average number of outside-the-area candidates interviewed for each teacher hired, or the percent of outsiders on the staff. In addition, the better school systems have an organized program of teacher appraisal on which merit increases are based.

Teaching load is another indicator. In many schools 20 hours of teaching a week and dealing with about 175 students is considered normal. It might be helpful to relate the average teaching load of a given school to the national average.

Finally, the quality of the teaching staff depends to no small extent on the number and the variety of specialists among it. Is there a full-time librarian, or more than one, and what is the number of

¹⁹ See James B. Conant, "The American High School Today" (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1959), 140 pages.