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The School Maintenance Employee

William W. Emerson

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THE SCHOOL MAINTENANCE EMPLOYEE

by

William W. Emerson

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education, in the Graduate School of the Central Washington College of Education

August, 1953
APPROVED FOR THE GRADUATE FACULTY

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Peter E. Zook
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Chapter I
INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this problem is to ascertain the role of the public school maintenance employee in the present educational system.

Through extensive and intensive library research, and by means of a questionnaire, the writer desires to explore the areas that will answer the following questions: How important is the school maintenance employee to the educational program? What qualifications are essential to fulfill the school maintenance job? What are the responsibilities delegated to the school maintenance employee? To whom is he responsible? Who is responsible for employing, supervising, and evaluating the school maintenance employee? The questionnaire used in this study was checked by 239 principals and teachers who were active in schools located in nineteen counties in the State of Washington during the 1951-52 school year. In addition to the questionnaire, personal interviews were conducted on the campus at the Central Washington College of Education, Ellensburg, Washington in the summer of 1952. The writer also visited school plants in Jefferson County, Washington, and contacted
superintendents and principals in connection with school maintenance and school maintenance personnel.

Problems concerning school maintenance and maintenance personnel are important to school authorities. The importance of adequate and well-kept school building facilities for the welfare of boys and girls and to the work of the school merits the attention of school officials and teachers. Authorities responsible for the operation and maintenance of the school must not forget that their chief consideration is the school child.

For many decades much attention has been given to the improvement of educational practices, but only during recent years has much attention been given to the improvement of the school building facilities and to the method of maintaining these facilities. School buildings should be replaced or remodeled when they no longer meet educational standards. A very important factor is the maintenance of the modern school plant. The school building plant and facilities should meet the requirements of the educational program. These maintenance services are vital to the health, safety, and general welfare of the pupils. The new and improved school building facilities that have been provided will not render the services for which they were intended if the men and women employed for building
maintenance service fail in their duties.

In former times custodial services were simple. One broom was all that was required in many cases. Before school began in the fall of the year, the director and his family took a day off to mow the weeds that had accumulated during the summer, scrub floors, and wash the windows. The assumption was, that like a Saturday night bath, one good cleaning a year was all that was necessary. Conditions have changed until today the public school building maintenance employee, or custodian, as he is properly called, is left the immediate responsibility for the care and protection of an investment representing many thousands and even millions of dollars.

Moehlman says that the "little red schoolhouse" was worth only a few hundred dollars. Experts tell us that now the people of the United States have invested more than 12,000,000,000 dollars in school plants and equipment and that the education of children is the largest business in the United States today.¹ Working with and among other employees of the school system, the custodian will have his part to fulfill in the overall task of educating boys and girls. The writer finds that the custodian has a definite

and very important place in the business of educating children, and as Ganders states, "The custodial work must be stressed because of the importance of the work and its influence on health, discipline, good housing ideals, learning conditions, protection of school property, and the community use of the school plant."¹

The maintenance work is important since a building properly maintained will last many years longer than one poorly maintained. The influence of proper maintenance protects and improves the physical health of the boys and girls and personnel occupying the building day after day. The morale of the occupants is greatly improved by proper maintenance. Good housing ideals will make the community use of the school plant more enjoyable, and will also improve the attitude of the community toward the educational program of the school. The Dean of Men of the Teachers' College of the University of Nebraska bears out the importance of proper maintenance when he states: "Certainly the health, morale, and efficiency of both teachers and pupils are greatly improved when the environment is attractive and clean."²


Pleasant, clean, cheerful surroundings improve the spiritual tone of the persons working in and around the school plant. Amidon adds that the school should be a place where one supreme and constant goal should be kept in mind; the harmonious development of personalities 'the nuture of the human spirit'.

The school custodian contributes his share to the development of personalities. He is a teacher in many ways. Pupils are influenced by their environment. In some communities the custodian is the only adult male in the school building and is called on by both teachers and pupils to render some personal service, or even give advice. What the custodian does or says may prove influential in either a positive or negative way, therefore custodians should not be selected at random. Instead, they should be selected as carefully as teachers, and should be selected by the superintendent of schools or his appointed assistant.

Viles says, "The administrator should have authority to recommend men for employment for custodial and maintenance forces."

If the superintendent of schools has appointed the

principal to share in this responsibility, the principal should have an important part in the selection and employment of custodians. The principal will know how to pick those who will work together harmoniously and who will work with him satisfactorily.

It is important to hold to high standards when selecting maintenance men. The question should be asked: Are they capable of rendering the right kind of service for the public schools? Unfortunately a large portion of the maintenance workers required for the nation's public-school buildings are still poorly selected and poorly paid. The increasingly complicated task of school plant maintenance makes it essential that competent maintenance personnel be employed. Public school maintenance workers are often added to the pay roll with scant attention being given to their capabilities and personalities. In order to obtain maintenance employees who will render the right kind of service in the public schools, salaries and work loads must be adjusted so that they equal or better those of industry. Maintenance standards will be improved in the public schools when those in charge of the public schools realize the importance of well kept buildings and grounds.

The effort that goes into school maintenance work should be well planned. The school custodial employee
should be able to plan his work in an intelligent manner. The custodian should be interested in learning more about his job. When the school administrator and his assistants have the responsibility of employing the custodial staff, they will be careful to select men and women who can work together cooperatively as a team to eliminate or at least improve substandard conditions relating to school plant maintenance. In maintaining a school plant it is important, according to Johnson, that the educational factors be considered before other factors.¹ The administrator should respect the opinions and judgment on the part of the custodial employee as a parent and as a practical man, but the administrator will have an understanding of sound educational practices which may make his conclusions different from that of the custodian. Practice which seems wrong from the maintenance employee's point of view can often be justified from the educational standpoint. It is quite natural that there will be differences of opinion among people, but the fact should not prevent friendly relations and friendly cooperation. It is important to have at the head of the public schools, well qualified, high-type administrators. The school maintenance staff is responsible directly or indi-

¹. Johnson, Ralph M.T., "Look Here, Mr. Montgomery...," School Executive 70: August 1951, 52.
rectly to the head administrator of the school. Mort and Reusser assert that the school board should give the administrator full power and responsibility and hold him accountable for the successful operation of all departments of the school system.¹ This will eliminate the multiple authority and executive control which exist in many of the public schools.

The housekeeping program in a school plant is a cooperative enterprise in which each member of the school system participates to some extent. A lack of understanding of the importance of school housekeeping by any one group of school employees will nullify the work done by others. The custodial workers and teachers have a joint responsibility in maintaining clean, attractive, comfortable buildings. The teacher can help immeasurably by teaching his or her pupils to avoid scattering paper on the floor or grounds, to avoid the tracking into the building excess dirt and mud, and to avoid marking and marring the walls of the building. Teachers should understand that the custodian has his regular schedule of work, and should not expect too much of his time. Teachers should know what periods of the day the custodian is available for other than routine tasks. On the

other hand custodial workers should expect to give assistance when it is necessary and when it will promote the work of the educational program. Viles writes, "The diplomatic janitor does not refuse to perform tasks outside his assigned duties." It is important for the custodial employees and teachers to develop a mutual understanding of the duties and obligations of each in relation to the educational program. Respect and cooperation of children and teachers to the building-service employee is encouraging. Children should be encouraged by their teachers to assist the custodian and also to develop a feeling of responsibility toward their school and its upkeep. On the other hand the custodial worker should be a person who is friendly and patient with the school pupils.

Hynds suggests that the best way to develop successful human relationships among the school staff is to adopt the Golden Rule. Hynds says that to "do unto others as you would have them do unto you", is a basic rule in human relationships and that it is the only sure and safe foundation upon which to build understanding and accord among men.

People must use every bit of common sense, ingenuity, sound judgment, knowledge, psychology, and understanding at their disposal to find practical ways of making the Golden Rule work. If the maintenance employee is made to feel that maintenance work is vital, meaningful, and important to the educational program, the maintenance employee will render a higher type of service to the school. Sound personnel administration is based on good psychology. Sumption alleges that the administrator must never lose sight of the fact that the school staff members are human beings first of all, and then teachers and custodians afterward. If a job is well done at the school plant, the administrator should tell the individuals responsible. This will add considerably to the staff members' feeling of well-being. The maintenance worker will feel that the maintenance work is vital to the program of education. In the community school of today there is no place for the old-time janitor whose chief work was to sweep the floors and heat the building. But there is a definite place in the school system for the modern custodian, who is equipped with training, experience, and initiative to maintain high school maintenance standards so essential to a good educational environment. There is no need

for a school building to have dingy walls, oily floors, and smelly toilets. Cooper writes, "School buildings should be kept as comfortable and cozy and livable as a well-kept home."

The modern school custodian reaches the building first in the morning to prepare it for the activities of the day. The custodian takes charge of the school building after the teachers and pupils have completed their duties for the day. The custodian is the caretaker, the engineer, and the person having direct responsibility for the comfort of the occupants of the building. The maintenance employee who does his work well contributes much to the efficient operation of the school system. Viles propounds that the best custodian is the custodian who does his work quietly and thoroughly. Viles stresses that he should be neat, clean, and orderly in the performance of his duties.¹

The maintenance employees of public school plants hold positions that are more important than is generally realized. A study made by the National Education Association concluded that the defects in school housing facilities caused 285 thousand teachers to lose annually no less than two million teaching days. The principal defects listed in this report are: Lack of comfortable rest rooms for teachers, noise out-

¹ Viles, N. E., op. cit., 9.
side the classroom, defective ventilation, dusty classrooms, lack of sanitary and convenient equipment for drinking water, improper lighting, and lack of sufficient and sanitary toilet facilities.¹

Much of the study made by the National Education Association points directly to custodial upkeep. Emphasis throughout the study is placed on the importance of proper care and upkeep of the school plant. The maintenance employee must be versatile in performing duties around the school plant. Womrath concludes that the custodial engineer should be an economist in the use of supplies, a sanitarian, a moralist, a first class housekeeper, a sociologist, a diplomat, a maintenance engineer, and an expert mechanical engineer.²

The maintenance employee should be an economist, for he is expected to keep a check upon, and economize in the use of: schoolhouse fuel, light, water, supplies, and all the commodities which are used by him in performing his duties and which involve expenditures amounting to thousands of dollars every year. The maintenance employee should be a


sanitarian, because he must keep the school building and premises, with their fixtures, furniture and equipment in such a state of cleanliness and sanitation as to avoid conditions which might lead to illness among the boys and girls and other employees in the school building, or result in fatigue and languor, or, possibly, in serious physical defects.

The maintenance employee should be a sociologist, with a clear conception of his social relationship with principals, teachers, children, and the community in which he works, and with precise appreciation of the needful cooperation between himself and principals, teachers, and parents. The custodian should have a keen sense of what constitutes right and wrong conduct and behavior, as in many cases he must help with the supervision of the activities and discipline of the children in the school corridors, toilet rooms, shower rooms, swimming pools, and on the playgrounds.

The custodian should set an example of living for the boys and girls, as he is the only one in the schoolhouse personnel who comes into continuous daily contact with every child for the full period of the child's life in the school, as well as at other times when neither principal, teacher, nor parent is present, such as before and after school, at recess, at night, and on Saturdays and holidays.
when the children are on the playgrounds. By his dispo- 
sition, character, personal appearance, patience, honesty, 
kindliness, and forebearance, he should set an example for 
right conduct which will be an influence for good in the 
lives of children.

The maintenance employee should be tactful in his con-
tact with principals and teachers in connection with his 
duties and the enforcement of rules and regulations, and in 
taking and giving advice and orders. The custodial worker 
should be an expert housekeeper, able to establish standards 
of right domestic living in those with whom he comes in con-
tact through the example he sets by the cleanliness of the 
schoolhouse floors, windows and toilets; the neatness and 
orderliness of the contents of closets, cupboards, store-
rooms, and attics; and the neat condition of the grounds 
and every part of the school building and premises.

The maintenance employee should be a safety engineer 
as he must be familiar with the causes of fire and traffic 
hazards and have knowledge of how to remedy them. The 
maintenance worker should be an expert mechanical engineer, 
with an extensive knowledge, both theoretical and practi-
cal, of many kinds of boilers and types of heating plants; 
of coal, gas, oil, and electric furnaces; of plumbing and 
sanitary equipment; of motors, generators, and lighting
systems; and of ventilation and the movement, tempering, humidifying, and cleansing of air.

These are goals which should challenge alert, capable, well-trained custodians and custodial-engineers. Even the best teachers could hardly do more than measure up to standards comparable to these.
Chapter II
THE SCHOOL MAINTENANCE EMPLOYEE AND HIS JOB

Status of the Employee

To define the position held by men and women who are engaged in housekeeping and maintenance in the public schools, many different titles are used. Such titles as janitor, engineer, custodian, porter, handyman, cleaner, and others are used to identify the school maintenance employee. Maid, cleaner, scrubwoman, and other titles are applied to women who do cleaning and housekeeping in the public schools. Sometimes names that are used to designate the school maintenance worker do not carry much dignity. The school maintenance employee is sometimes spoken of in a slighting manner, implying that the work is not particularly important and that almost anyone who can swing a mop or push a broom can qualify for school maintenance work. Linn and Brainard\(^1\) set forth the idea that it is preferable to think of the maintenance man as a custodian and the maintenance woman as a maid, as these classifications carry more dignity for workers and add much to their self respect.

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In the survey done by the writer it was found that about 58 per cent of the maintenance workers of the school are still referred to as janitors.

Table I.
Title of School Maintenance Employees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Janitor</th>
<th>Custodian</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principals</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per Cent</td>
<td>57.7</td>
<td>42.2</td>
<td>99.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To many persons the word janitor is connected with the handy-man of former years, who started the fires in the morning and kept the school building and grounds passably clean. People thought of the janitor at one time in a disrespectful way, but more and more the school and community are respecting his position in the school system. The maintenance worker merits the respect, confidence, and approval of all his associates on all levels when he does his job well. The principals and teachers represented in the table above were asked to keep in mind the average school maintenance worker at the respective schools which they represented. The question was asked: "Does the school maintenance employee do his work well at the school plant?"
The following table shows the results.

Table II.
Quality of Work done by Maintenance Employees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>118</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per Cent</td>
<td>49.3</td>
<td>42.7</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>99.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Over 50 percent indicated that the average maintenance worker at the school plant was not doing a high quality maintenance service. The cause might be one or a number of things. The maintenance employee could be overloaded with work and could not do a thorough job in the time allotted. The hours per day may be too long, and his pay too meager, or the worker may not be trained. The administrators and teachers may not respect and recognize the custodial employee's position. The custodian should feel more fully his appropriate role in the educational plan. This may be brought about by proper recognition of the importance of maintenance work on the part of all school personnel. Every normal person wishes to be recognized as a valued member of society and more specifically as a valued member of his group. Proof of this is pointed out by Sumption, executive officer, College of Education, University of Illinois, when he says, "Humanity's hunger for
recognition is visible on every hand in badges, medals, loving cups, innumerable honorary positions and offices, and last but not least in public parades."¹ When the school maintenance employee is told that a job is well done, the worker's value is recognized and this should bring a response. Response will help in binding the school staff together in a common enterprise. The complete school staff as well as the community should experience a fellowship of effort. The maintenance worker will become more and more effective in maintaining the school plant as the worker realizes that he is a part of a group which is working effectively. Cooper, assistant-secretary, American Association of School Administrators, stresses that in many places the work of the school custodian is regarded as a cheap "flunky" type of service.² Part of the reason for this was the fact that the people employed to do school maintenance had no mechanical skill and but little knowledge of heating, ventilating, power and plumbing systems. The school maintenance worker was provided with few tools, while today the tools required are numerous. Following is


² Cooper, Shirley, "Not A 'Flunky'!" National Education Association Journal 40: March 1951, 203.
a list of various tools needed by the school maintenance worker:
Table III.

Recommended Assortment of Tools for Small Custodial Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 handsaw, 8 point, sharp</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Assortment of files—3/4 inch, mill and rat-tail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 rip saw, 5 point, sharp</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 3/4 inch wood chisel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 pair pliers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 1/4 in. cold chisel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 claw hammers</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1 cape chisel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 ball peen hammer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 six foot rule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 hack saw</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 fifty foot steel tape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 pair tin snips</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 set 1/4 to 3/4 inch star drill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 screw drivers, large, medium, small</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1 set punches, small</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 stillson pipe wrenches, 24, 18, 14, 8 inches</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 wrenching bar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 carpenter's square</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 fourteen inch sweep brace with set of wood bits from 1/4 to one inch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 triangle square</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 inch in 1/8 inch sizes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 putty knives</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1 carpenter's level and plumb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End wrenches of assorted sizes (1/4 to 1 1/2). These can be combined with an open end and a box wrench on opposite ends to take care of nearly all repairs. These will take care of hexagon and square heads.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 pair pump packing pliers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 six inch pipe vise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 pair wire cutters</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 six inch bench vise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 pair bolt cutters</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 bench plane (wood)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 seat wrench with handle to fit steam traps of make used in building</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1 flashlight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 glass cutter</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 draw shave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 special wrench for washbowls</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 wood rasp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 seat wrench with handle to fit steam traps of make used in building</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1 crowbar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 special wrench for washbowls</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 round point shovel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 pair post hole diggers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2 six foot iron clamps                                 (for repairing furniture, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 seat wrench with handle to fit steam traps of make used in building</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1 set door check repair tools (order from manufacturer of door checks used in building)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 glass cutter</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 doweling gauge for repair of furniture with dowels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 special wrench for washbowls</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 set pipe dies 1/8 to 3/4 inch, standard thread</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 seat wrench with handle to fit steam traps of make used in building</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1 pipe cutter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 glass cutter</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 pipe reamer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 special wrench for washbowls</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 set of taps and dies for both standard and S.A.E. bolt threads</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

School custodians should keep tools in good working order and use them for the purpose for which they were intended. The purchasing agent for the school will need to replace small worn-out and broken tools each year. Custodians should use due caution in the use of tools and see that they are in their proper place when not in use. In caring properly for the maintenance tools the custodian will need a tool locker in which the tools may be kept safely. Students and teachers wishing tools will need to check them out from the proper maintenance employee much the same way that library books are checked out of a school library. Poor quality tools will need to be purchased often and will give poor service. Good quality tools are more economical over a period of time.

More and more the schools will rely heavily on the school custodian to keep up minor repairs at the school plant. In former times the appreciation of the school personnel and the community to the maintenance worker and his job was rather indefinite, however over the past decade conditions have changed for the better for the maintenance employee. The custodial employee has a great responsibility to protect the large investment in the school building. The custodian is a school representative and must carry on as the agent in the building. The modern maintenance
worker must go beyond that of sweeping floors and keeping fires, and assume custody of the school property.

From the numerous titles given to school maintenance employees, it must be obvious that the performance expectations or requirements differ. The performance expectations of an engineer will be considerably different from the performance expectations of a person having the qualifications of a janitor. The efficient and economical maintenance of any multi-roomed public school building requires cooperative help on the part of all employees and occupants of the building, and in large school systems requires that one person have the responsibility of directing the performance of the multitude of tasks that are required in maintaining a public school plant. In many school systems the maintenance staff consists of a head custodian or a superintendent of buildings and grounds who directs the work of the maintenance crew. Various names are applied to school maintenance workers to indicate certain specific jobs, but Resch\(^1\) maintains that actually, there is no line of demarcation as far as school building operation is concerned.

Women who are employed to do public school maintenance work can be of great service to the school staff. They have had more practice and experience in certain phases of housekeeping than men. Barbour asserts that women are highly conscious of floor conditions and take particular notice of school floors as they have similar problems at home.¹ In large schools women assistants are needed to supervise girls' toilet rooms. The presence of the maid will prevent marks on the walls, water on the floors, misuse of toilet seats, waste of paper, and loitering. In many places a part-time school maid may be employed if a full-time assistant is not required. Women have proved to be particularly efficient in such types of work as sweeping and dusting, cleaning of woodwork, and washing glass. Women can do many odd jobs in helping maintain a school building. Thompson adds that in addition to housekeeping work at the school plant, care and supervision of girls' toilets, and the services in the women's rest room, it is good public relations to have a maid about the school building. Thompson declares that in many cases a job is

¹ Barbour, Julius, "p.h.d.'s and the Care of Floors," National Schools, 41: February 1948, 60-62.
done easier and better by women than by men.¹

Qualifications of School Maintenance Workers

Standards for general qualifications for school building custodians may seem hard to determine because many men are employed in larger school plants to do specific jobs for which each is best qualified, whereas, in smaller school plants one man may be required to do all tasks connected with the maintenance of the buildings and grounds. In most schools it is necessary that the custodians have a wide range of abilities and qualities. It is necessary to set up some general qualifications for the custodians in terms of age, health, experience, education, citizenship, character and habits, appearance, variety of abilities, marital status, intelligence, and pride. In a survey of one hundred fifty-one principals and teachers from schools in the State of Washington, the question was asked: Which qualities would they give the highest consideration concerning the school custodian? The following table indicates the characteristics

and their rank:

Table IV.
Qualities of School Maintenance Employees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character and Habits</th>
<th>Principals &amp; Teachers</th>
<th>Per Cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>74</td>
<td>49.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intelligence</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variety of Abilities</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizenship</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pride</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous Experience</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Status</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>151</strong></td>
<td><strong>99.7</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the preceding table over 49 per cent of the principals and teachers placed character and habits at the top of the list. Intelligence was second with a rating by over 12 per cent, while education appeared eighth on the list with only 2.6 percent. Age was next to the last on the list while health was fourth. This would indicate that principals and teachers do not consider age of school maintenance workers a hindering factor as long as the health of the individual is good. This is in agreement with the Department of the Army. This Department indicates that the maximum for employing mainten-
ance workers is forty-five to fifty years old. But the Department propounds that some of their best custodians are beyond this age.¹

Age and health are important factors to consider when employing public school maintenance personnel. A maintenance worker can be too old and his health can be so as to make him unsuited for the active job of school maintenance. Physical ability is considered more important than age for custodial workers already employed. Many schools will not employ a new custodian who is less than twenty-five or more than fifty years of age.² The following table records the results of the survey made by the author to determine the age of maintenance workers employed in the school plant.

Table V.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age in Years of Maintenance Worker</th>
<th>20-30</th>
<th>30-40</th>
<th>40-50</th>
<th>over 50</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>35.9</td>
<td>39.3</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Department of the Army, Custodial Services, Repairs and Utilities. Washington 25, D.C., June 1948, 60.

The result of this tabulation shows that over 39 percent of the maintenance workers are over fifty years of age, while slightly more than one-fifth of the school maintenance employees are as young as thirty years of age. In many school systems there is a definite age at which custodians may retire, but in many systems there is no definite age limit for the retirement of maintenance men from active service. If no retirement age has been set up, some school boards permit the maintenance workers to remain in service until the worker is physically unable to do the work satisfactorily. Barbour contends that all school boards should adopt a compulsory retirement age. If the boards would adopt a compulsory retirement age, there would be an incentive for younger men to "hire out" to the school district since they would know that the top jobs would become open sometime. The school board should play fair by employing no one over forty years of age if the compulsory retirement age is sixty, and especially if it takes twenty years to earn a full retirement. The state or city can encourage team membership by extending the same accident and retirement benefits to custodians as to other of the school staff. This is done in Michigan, Barbour points out, where one retirement board operates under the same law and provision in granting retirement
benefits for all regularly employed school staff members including custodians.\textsuperscript{1} This will encourage young energetic workers to file applications for school maintenance positions which may be open in the future.

The many different jobs required in and around a school plant demand a man of some agility and in good physical condition. Handicaps such as partial deafness and lack of good vision makes it difficult for a maintenance man to perform his work in a safe and satisfactory manner. Such work of the custodian as firing the furnace, cleaning windows, making repairs around the buildings, and many other tasks involve much risk for the custodian who is not sure of his footing on ladders and window ledges. The worker must be physically able to do the heavy lifting required around the building. If the administrators and school boards employ custodians who are physically unable to do the maintenance job satisfactorily, there will be complaints throughout the community because of the poor service rendered. If the younger men are trained and hired to maintain the public schools, they will have more years of service to offer the school district. A study of Michigan’s non-teaching personnel verified the advanced age of

\textsuperscript{1} Barbour, Julius, "The Custodian Makes the School Team," Nations Schools 43: February 1949, 66.
this group. In 1944 the median age of Michigan school custodians was fifty-six years. Approximately one-half of the employees were over fifty-six. For this group of custodial employees the median number of years of service was only seven years.¹ Custodial work is skilled work, worthy of the best efforts of healthy men. Since the object of all custodial service is to increase instructional efficiency, health and age standards should be raised, and a suitable salary offered so as to attract younger and healthier men.

In addition to physical strength, the custodial worker must be free from contagious diseases. All school maintenance employees should be required to conform to the same health regulations as teachers. Thorough physical examinations should be given and there should be a six-month probationary period to determine the employee's fitness for maintenance in the school system. In the State of Washington no contract of any school employee including the maintenance worker, who comes in direct contact with the students in any school shall become operative until such employee has filed with the local superintendent of schools,

¹ Clifford, J. M., The Economic and Social Status of The Non-Teaching Personnel in Michigan Public Schools, Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of requirement of degree of doctor of philosophy in the University of Michigan, 1944.
a health certificate, issued by the State Department of Health. Following is a copy of an identification card which is to accompany a roentgenogram of the school employees chest. This is required of all persons employed in any public, parochial or private school, including colleges and universities in the State of Washington.

SCHOOL EMPLOYEE'S X-RAY EXAMINATION--IDENTIFICATION CARD

Name............................ Age........Sex........
Address..................................................
Occupation.............................School..................
X-ray film taken by....................Address..................
Date film taken.....................Film No..................

City........................................

Note: All information is strictly confidential. No results of the examination will be issued to other than the above employee and his private physician.

Clifford suggests that medical examinations be given to the maintenance staff by the school physician. Clifford also suggests the use of mental and psychological tests.2


These tests are important to prevent employing persons who show signs of emotional instability. If possible all schools should have prospective custodians screened by a psychiatrist to determine their fitness to work and to be exposed to the children. The prospective maintenance employees who do not rank high on this test should never be employed in the public schools. It is generally agreed that the custodians personal qualifications are highly important, because of his close daily contact with teachers, pupils, and the public. The medical examination must establish the fact that the employee is free of communicable diseases and physically capable of performing the required duties, and the psychiatric tests and screening will eliminate the worker who is emotionally unstable. An article in Nations Schools points out that too frequently qualifying examinations for school maintenance employees as to physical and mental fitness are perfunctory and superficial.¹

A more careful and thorough check should be made by the persons giving the examinations and tests.

In River Forest, Illinois, each custodian is required to take a physical examination, including a Wassermann or Kahn test. The custodian is sent to a psychiatrist to be

¹. Editor, "Who is The Right Custodian?" Nations Schools 41: January 1948, 58ff.
screened. State laws of Massachusetts for school maintenance employees require a physical examination, including a Wassermann and Kahn test and mental examination. R. L. Divall, business manager and clerk of the public school system of Worchester agrees that all such measures are a safeguard and should be required. D. J. McCunn, assistant superintendent of Pasadena City Schools, Pasadena, California, says, "Screening applicants is definitely a safeguard to the maintenance of a high quality of personnel in the custodial department."

Since maintaining a school plant includes a great many types of services, requiring a variety of skills, abilities, and knowledge, the applicant for school custodial employment would give better and more immediate service if the applicant had already had some experience in maintenance work. A capable custodian is expected to have at least a working knowledge of the fundamental requirements of the overall task of maintaining a school plant, however the custodian is not expected to be a skilled craftsman in each of the several building trades. The operating activities of the public schools are sometimes assigned to men and women with no former experience in this area. Linn says,

1. Ibid., 53ff.
"It has always struck me as incongruous that a community will spend large sums of public money for its civic plants and then sometimes carelessly entrust their care to untrained, unskilled and unsupervised men.\(^1\) Some school authorities reason that with a new building little needs to be done in the way of maintenance, consequently maintenance workers are hired that have no mechanical skill and but little knowledge of heating, ventilating, power, and plumbing systems. Many times a keeper is employed who will work for a low wage, and who is looking for an easy job. The blame is not to be placed on the custodians and the low quality of their work, but rather on school authorities who are responsible for the selecting of the maintenance employees. Reeves and Ganders agree that it is important that the applicant for public school maintenance have previous experience. A carpenter, a plumber, an electrician, a mechanic, an industrial fireman or engineer, a janitor of an office building will have backgrounds that will be useful in school janitorial services. Any special training for school janitorial-engineer service should be given weight when hiring a person.\(^2\) On the other hand, Norrix and Viles


advance the thought that several years of experience in firing a boiler or in cleaning up around a plant is little recommendation for the position of custodian for the public schools. The public school maintenance employees need to know the "why" as well as the "how" of custodial services. Therefore it is not necessary that the building service employee be thoroughly trained when beginning his employment at a school plant, but some training is desirable. The custodial employee who knows methods and materials will always be more efficient and waste less in time, equipment, and money. The untrained man is always more inefficient because he lacks knowledge of proper practices in maintaining a school plant.

Education in terms of schooling is becoming more important when considering prospective applicants for maintenance services at the school plant. It seems that there are no definite qualifications in terms of years of schooling for custodians. There are several different types of custodial positions and some require that the custodian have more general educational training than do others.

Many school boards require that the custodian have the equivalent of an eighth grade education. The minimum educational requirement for the school custodian is that the worker be able to speak the English language and be able to read and write reports and records. The custodial employee should have a background that enables him to understand the organization, purpose, and function of the public school system. The written application of the worker will furnish evidence of literacy. The school maintenance employee does not need to be a scholar, but all school employees will need to be able to read and write, and at least an eighth grade education. Tuthill stresses the thought that many present-day building service employees did not have the opportunity to attend school. However, at the present time public schools are easily accessible to almost everyone. If the young applicant for school maintenance work has not availed himself of the educational opportunity offered by the free public school system, the applicant would probably not be capable of rendering a high type of maintenance service to the school district. Generally school administrators will agree that school

maintenance work ranks in importance with other public service occupations. Therefore school custodial maintenance should have the same educational requirements as other public service occupations. This usually means a high school education or its equivalent. Ganders and Reeves made a study of the status of the school maintenance employee in which samplings of different geographical areas in the United States were taken and it was found at that time that the amount of education ranged from inability to read and write to college graduation.1 Norrix, Superintendent of school in Kalamazoo, Michigan, goes a step further than others and suggests that it is highly desirable that school custodians, at least those in charge of buildings, have some college training.2 To attain this standard the school districts would have to pay those custodial employees who are charged with responsibility of the children's welfare and school district's property, a salary sufficient to secure well-trained college people. Brainard sums up the custodian's educational qualifications by proposing that it is desirable that the school maintenance worker have as much edu-


cation as possible. The more education the custodian has had, the more likely the worker is to appreciate the problems of education and the worker will therefore be more cooperative toward the educational program. School maintenance employees now in positions where they have given many years of satisfactory service should not be dismissed because of lack of formal schooling. Service should be honored.

The public school maintenance employee should be a citizen of the United States, and a resident of the community in which the maintenance work is to be done. The custodial employee living in the community in which he works will take greater interest in the school system and render a higher type of maintenance service.

Character and habits of all school employees rank high, or at the top of the list of qualifications when considering applicants for the public school staff. This definitely includes the school maintenance employees. The custodian of the school has an important influence on the lives of the school children. In the smaller elementary school the custodian is often the only male employee of

the school system with whom the boys and girls have intimate contact. Habits and character of the worker are noticed especially by growing children. Many of the boys and girls go to the custodian for advice and many children model their actions after the actions of the custodian. The influence exerted makes it important that the worker be clean in body, mind, and habits. The school maintenance employee should be the type of person with whom the parents are willing to have their children associate. The school custodian should have a character and reputation that is above reproach. Viles stresses that the parents of the community realize that the custodian's work, character, and habits may directly or indirectly affect the physical and moral welfare of the boys and girls attending school. 1 It becomes essential that the custodial employees have habits that merit the respect of pupils, teachers, and patrons. Surliness, excessive familiarity, vulgarity, the use of profanity, laziness, use of liquors, or the chewing of tobacco in and around the school building will bring quick criticism from parents. The custodian who does not like children nor have

the ability to get along with the boys and girls will need to secure employment elsewhere. The school maintenance person who is fair but firm in dealing with children is usually able to secure their respect and cooperation. The custodian who is domineering around the school or who caters to children of influential parents will not be well liked by the community and members of the school staff. Since children copy adults, the custodial worker at the school plant can have a good influence over the lives of the children if his habits, attitudes, actions, and character are of the right type. For the sake of the boys and girls attending the school, the custodian should be a gentleman always and avoid the use of profane or foul language. The public school is an institution attempting to teach children good habits and how to enjoy the better things of life, and maintenance workers around the school plant must not possess habits or tastes that are considered undesirable. The hope of the future of America depends on the schools of today. The American Association of School Administrators propounds that growing boys and girls are conditioned by every experience which enters their lives. The Association maintains that too little attention has been given to school environment upon the development
of the youth. School authorities are willing to admit that children are "conditioned" by the school environment, yet the school authorities remain quite indifferent to actual working situations.

Walt Whitman brings out clearly the importance of rearing children in the right kind of environment through the following lines:

"There was a child went forth every day, And the first object he looked upon, that object he became, And that object became a part of him for the day, or a certain part of the day, or for many years, or stretching cycles of years."

--Walt Whitman

The importance of employing school employees that have a high, noble type of character and possessing a high standard of habits cannot be overemphasized.

Following is a list of statements pertaining to the attitude of public school custodians to his work in and around the school plant, and to other persons at the school plant. The good school building service employee will possess the following qualities:

Table VI.

Qualities of Maintenance Workers

1. Pleasant and cheerful around teachers and pupils.
2. Interested in school and its program.
3. Courteous and considerate of adults and children.
4. Loyal to other employees of the school system.
5. Treats pupils fairly and alike.
6. Treats visitors courteously.
7. Friendly and sociable.
8. Performs duties without grumbling.
10. Does his work well.
11. Uses his spare time to advantage at school.
12. Speech free from vulgarity.
13. Looks presentable.
15. Speaks a good word for the school whenever possible to the public.
17. Thinks carefully before reprimanding school pupils.
18. Refrains from political and community squabbles.
19. Exercises patience.
20. Exercises tact in dealing with people and students.

The investigator found that a high percentage of the public school custodial employees ranked high in appearance and personal cleanliness. Clean, immaculately uniformed custodians are better workers and more loyal employees than those who present a slovenly appearance. The author of the article, Uniforms Make Better Employees, points out that clean uniformed custodians render better service to the
school and contribute to better community relations.\textsuperscript{1}

Differences of opinion exist among school officials as to how the problem of custodian uniforms can best be handled. School districts have raised objections to supplying uniforms to workers at no cost. School officials argue that school maintenance employees appreciate the uniforms more when the maintenance worker purchases them, while other school authorities maintain that where uniforms are required they should be supplied at no cost to the custodian. Differences of opinions are also found regarding the maintenance of the custodial uniforms. Some say that the laundering of the uniforms should be the responsibility of the school, while others contend that the maintenance employee should take care of the uniforms and keep them in good repair. Some school districts would like to encourage the adoption of a standard uniform type of dress for custodians, while other school districts suggest that a certain amount of flexibility and freedom of choice is desirable. Many would agree with John J. O'Brien, supervisor of maintenance at Lynn, Massachusetts, who states simply but effectively that the school committees should furnish the uniforms, keep them clean and make the wearing of them

\textsuperscript{1} Editor, "Uniforms Make Better Employees," \textit{Nation's Schools} 41: March 1948, 50-62.
a requirement.\textsuperscript{1}

The uniforms for maintenance employees of the school plant whether supplied by the school or purchased by the custodian, comprises a grey cotton shirt, black bow tie, and either gray or dark trousers. Khaki may be substituted for grey. Older clothes, jumpers, or protective work coats are suggested for work in the boiler room or during the performance of heavy duties. Long work coats may be used over the custodians other clothing when he is doing menial work, sometimes of a dirty nature, and the work coat is taken off when the custodian is finished with the more or less dirty work. If this is not done the regular clothing of the custodian remains dirty throughout the school day. This certainly detracts from the maintenance employee's general appearance within the school building, especially at times when there are meetings of the mothers' council, or conferences between teachers and parents, or evening meetings of the parent-teachers association. The custodian will be accepted more readily as an integral part of the educational program if he is clean and neatly uniformed. The custodial worker will need to give attention to bodily appearance and cleanliness. This includes

\textsuperscript{1} Ibid., 60-62.
frequent bathing, daily shaving, proper care of the hair, and clean teeth. Soap and water are cheap and plentiful and the school maintenance worker can keep himself reasonably clean and presentable at least most of the time.

The following results concerning personal cleanliness and presentability of school custodians were tabulated by the writer after a survey relating to these qualities.

Table VII.

Presentability and Personal Cleanliness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Looks Presentable</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Cleanliness</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>470</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per Cent</td>
<td>60.6</td>
<td>35.9</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>99.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

About 40 percent of the school custodians represented in this sampling ranked average in personal cleanliness and presentability, while over 60 percent ranked high. If the persons in charge of selecting and retaining the maintenance personnel could tactfully stress the importance of these two qualities with the custodial staff, the 60 percent could be raised considerably.

In the following table will be shown the results found
by the writer after a survey concerning custodial uniforms.

Table VIII.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Uniforms</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>34</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>87.5</td>
<td>99.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Over 87 per cent of the principals and teachers answered that the custodian did not wear any special type of uniform, yet over 60 percent indicated that the custodian is personally clean and looks presentable. This shows that a custodial employee may be presentable without wearing a special type of uniform, although many school authorities contend that uniforms make better custodial employees.¹

Since school building maintenance service comprises scores of different activities, the school maintenance employee must have a variety of abilities. Variety of abilities rank high on the list of personal qualifications when considering maintenance workers of school plants. The types of repairs in and around a public school plant are legion and necessitate a wide range of abilities. All in all, the school maintenance employee must be a person

¹. Ibid., 60-62.
with many skills. Especially is this true in smaller school systems when one or two custodians have charge of all maintenance. The custodian must take care of the engineering jobs such as operating the heating plant. This involves knowledge of fuel combustion and proper firing practices if efficiency in boiler room operation is to be achieved. The school maintenance employee must have a working knowledge of the operation of electric motors, fans, pumps, and other related mechanical equipment. The custodian must have an understanding of illumination principles and artificial lighting systems. The custodian must understand basic principles of ventilation and be able to repair these mechanical devices. If the school sites are landscaped there will be jobs involving the trimming and feeding of plants, grass, and shrubs. The public school custodian will need to possess knowledge along these lines as well as having some knowledge and skill in such trades as carpentry, painting, electricity, plumbing, and masonry.

It is anticipated that there will be some tasks for which a skilled mechanic from outside the school system should be employed. These instances are becoming less frequent as the custodians improve in their ability to care for school buildings. Viles declares that it is
generally agreed that the custodian should be selected on the basis of his ability to do the job. Viles states that many school officials accept new men without investigation, hoping that the new man will be better than the previous one.\footnote{Viles, N. E., op. cit., 26.}

Intelligence ranks high or near the top of the list of qualifications of a school custodian or building service man, while education was placed lower on the list. Many may think that intelligence and education are the same, but according to Alanson D. Brainard, intelligence and education are not the same. Brainard writes in this vein. "There are many intelligent people who have not had the opportunity of attending school, yet they have good minds and can take responsibility." Public school custodians must think for themselves.\footnote{Brainard, Alanson D., Handbook for School Custodians. University of Nebraska Press, 1948, 10.} Many times in maintaining a public school plant the maintenance worker will need to make immediate decisions. The complicated task of school plant maintenance makes it essential that a man be employed for the position who will be able to plan his work in an intelligent manner. Tuthill declares, "My
interpretation of intelligence is the realization of responsibilities and the ability to act on them fully and effectively. Keeping abreast of the times is basic to intelligence. The old method of doing maintenance jobs about the school plant may not always be the best way. Materials and methods in maintaining school buildings and grounds are changing from day to day. The best method of finishing a school floor today may not be the best method tomorrow, therefore the custodial employee must be alert and keep abreast of the changing times. In regard to tools and materials used in maintaining the school plant, the intelligent custodian will know what, when, and how much to use of both. The intelligent school maintenance employee can and will follow directions given to him by his superiors. The intelligent custodian will also remember directions from day to day and not require being retold every time the same situation comes up. The alert intelligent maintenance worker will be oriented to new work quickly and easily, and be slow to forget. The Department of the Army writes. "Select maintenance employees with the intelligence to understand directions quickly and hav-

ing the ability to learn readily. Economic operation demands that workers learn quickly, make few mistakes, and be alert. Mort and Reusser point out. "An analysis of the production capacity of a person reveals several factors which are quite definitely influenced by intelligent skill and initiative." Mort and Reusser also state that it can be demonstrated that the "intelligence and efficiency" of the worker vitally affect production. This would apply to the school custodian who should produce clean healthful surroundings in and around the public school plant.

Maintenance employees should be selected who have pride. The custodian of the school must have pride in his work as well as in his own personal qualities. If the school building and grounds are kept at a high level of cleanliness, the children and grown-ups who come in contact with the school plant are swayed by the good example. If on the other hand the building and grounds are dirty and unsightly because of carelessness or indifference, the boys and girls of the school will become careless and indifferent in and around the school plant and in their school work. The school custodian has a large contribution

1. Department of The Army, op. cit., 60.
to make in the aesthetic development of the school plant, thus contributing directly to the aesthetic development of the boys and girls by keeping all parts of the school building clean and taking pride in maintaining beautiful school grounds. Buildings, equipment, and grounds must be kept in such excellent condition that community, teachers, and pupils will take great pride in helping maintain them in such condition. The care and condition of the school plant certainly catches the visitors' eye. Whether the impression is good or bad depends to a large degree upon the pride the custodian has taken in his work.

Brainard stresses that the good school maintenance employee will have pride in his maintenance work, pride in his personal appearance, and pride in the understanding of the school.¹ Tuthill declares that the school maintenance employee should have the responsibility to himself to gain from his job the greatest degree of self-satisfaction. The custodian must take pride in doing the job in such a manner as to reflect credit to himself.² Knoll alleges that where morale is high, and there is a sense of personal responsibility on the part of each employee, there will be more

¹ Brainard, Alanson D., op. cit., 11.
² Tuthill, Chester L., op. cit., 3ff.
pride, and higher standards will be maintained.¹

A school maintenance employee should exercise patience in dealing with school employees, teachers, pupils, and the public. The school maintenance employee is thrown in contact with boys and girls and adults with different habits, dispositions, and points of view. Patience and tact is necessary on the part of the custodian. The custodian who is tolerant of others, and who uses good common sense, and who understands what is expected of him as a public employee should be able to avoid many misunderstandings that might lead to unpleasantness.

The following table taken from a survey by the author indicated that over 40 percent of the custodians do not exercise enough patience.

Table IX.
Patience of Maintenance Workers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exercises patience</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>125</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>232</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Per cent | 53.9 | 42.2 | 3.8 | 99.9 |

In showing the building to visitors the custodian must be patient. The custodian must treat visitors courteously and be willing to show them around the school plant when the superintendent or the principal of the school is not at liberty to do so. The custodian may grow tired of showing people through the school building, but the custodian must never show it.

The custodian should be understanding in his dealings with boys and girls of the school. Van Oot says, "The relationship between the custodian and the teachers, principal, and students involve a knowledge of elementary psychology and the practice of tact and diplomacy." The school custodian will not be expected to punish children but should report serious misbehavior to the proper person. Brainard maintains, and almost all school authorities agree that the custodian "should not assume nor exercise authority or control over pupils except within the limits authorized by the superintendent." As a general rule Brainard says that the custodian should follow the policy of at once reporting all violations of school regu-

lations to the superintendent or principal in charge.¹

If the school custodian is friendly and likes boys and girls, the boys and girls are more likely to listen to the custodian. Children will cooperate more when they like the custodian and understand what he is trying to do.

The school building custodian should be a dependable employee of the school system. The superintendent of the school plant knows the importance of maintenance work. The superintendent of schools wants to feel that the custodian is absolutely reliable and dependable. Because of being in close contact with the school custodian and his work, the principals and teachers will know something of the custodian's reliability.

In a survey the writer found the following results concerning the dependability of school maintenance employees.

Table X.
Dependability of Maintenance Workers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dependable</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>67.6</td>
<td>27.6</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>99.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ Brainard, Alanson D., op. cit., 14.
More than 67 percent of the custodians ranked high in dependability according to 235 principals and teachers, while over 30 percent ranked average and low. Since the superintendent of schools is responsible for the operation of the school plant, the superintendent wants to feel that the maintenance worker can be trusted to do the maintenance work without constant supervision and direction. The superintendent intends for the custodian to do, without grumbling, the hundreds of different little jobs always coming up in and around the school plant.

Reeves declares that a public school maintenance worker who is married is usually more dependable and stable than a single one. Reeves and Ganders state that the custodian who is married is less likely to leave his employment.\(^1\) As a general rule a married person would be more sympathetic and understanding with children. However it would not be fair for the school board to employ a married person for school maintenance unless he is paid a suitable salary. In Aberdeen, Washington, the school authorities state that they prefer custodians who are married and have children in school.\(^2\) A survey done by the writer shows

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that out of 239 replies from principals and teachers from 19 counties in Washington, 223 state that the custodians at their particular school are married, while only 16 custodians were single. This sampling would indicate that about 93 percent of the school custodians are married people.
Chapter III.

CONDITIONS AFFECTING SCHOOL MAINTENANCE

Working Conditions

The amount of hours per day the maintenance employee works will vary in different communities. Thompson says that he would like to see schools adopt a forty-hour week for the maintenance workers, which Thompson says, "Is the practice in many localities over the nation." This would not be possible in many localities or areas where cold climate requires heavy firing in the winter time, or in farming communities where a day's work is determined by the demands of the seasons. The work day for custodians consisted of long hours not many years ago, while by 1948 the condition had improved some, but it was still not up to conditions in other occupations. Many school systems still employ custodians nine and ten hours per day. Little justification can be made for practices which require school maintenance workers to work more than eight hours per day or forty hours per week.

John E. Phay, who is in charge of research of New Jersey State Department of Education at Trenton, found that in cities of the United States above 100,000 in population that only forty percent of the cities reported that their custodians working day was eight hours, while in 1946 the percentage was 46.4 percent. Less than 10 percent of the cities above 30,000 in population in the United States have a forty hour normal work week. The forty-four hour week applied to more cities than any other weekly work period. A sizable number of cities have a normal work week of forty-eight to fifty hours or more.¹

A survey made by the writer found the following results existing in Washington concerning the length of the custodial work day.

Table XI.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hours Per Work Day</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>78.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to forty-one superintendents and principals

from schools in the State of Washington over 78 percent of the custodial force have an eight-hour work day.

In addition to long hours of work the maintenance employee has had heavy work loads. Work loads should be reasonable, because standards of service rendered will not be acceptable if the load is too heavy. Schools can have poor standards of maintenance service but have excellent custodians but who can not possibly do the work of two or three people. Linn avers, "Able men with impossible work assignments tend to become frustrated when they find that their best efforts fall short of the desired marks." If satisfactory school maintenance service is desired there must be an adequate number of workers to carry on the job. The normal work load, according to the Department of the Army, is the amount of work a worker can perform in an eight-hour day. If the number of hours calculated to a worker is greater or less than eight hours by more than one hour, an adjustment should be made in the work assignments. There are a number of methods of computing the maintenance worker's load now in general use. Many school

2. Department of The Army, Custodial Services, Repairs and Utilities. Washington 25, D. C., June 1948, 60.
authorities think that hardly any of them are suited. The methods are usually based on square feet of floor area, number of classrooms, and on the number of pupils enrolled. The floor area may not be reliable since buildings with the same floor area will present different maintenance burdens because of the difference in age of surfaces, type of floor, climatic and atmospheric conditions, and other variables. Basing custodial loads on the number of classrooms may be objectionable, because the modern school buildings have classrooms of varying sizes. Libraries, activity rooms, music rooms, shops, and other special rooms offer cleaning problems different from a regular classroom. Pupil enrollment method of determining custodial load is not a sound method since the capacity of the school building is either under or over its normal capacity. A more or less number of children in a classroom does not alter to any great extent the activities of the custodial service.

Carson suggests a method of finding custodial work loads called "room equivalent". A "room equivalent" is the amount of work that can be performed, on the basis of

reasonable expectancy, by the average custodian in half an hour. It applies only to cleaning, but cleaning is the most complex and constant factor in determining work loads. To find how many "room equivalents" there are in a school building, it is necessary to measure the building and thus determine how many daily half-hours of labor will be necessary to keep it clean. Since the "room equivalents" represents half an hour's work for each employee, theoretically one worker could be assigned sixteen "room equivalents" for an eight-hour day. It is not feasible to assign the theoretical maximum because of extra, unforeseen duties always coming up, therefore a work load of about fourteen "room equivalents" would constitute a reasonable daily assignment for the custodial worker. Carson relates that this practice has been followed in Pittsburg public schools for many years and has proven very satisfactory. The "room equivalent" method has the following advantages: 1

1. It is adaptable to large or small schools.
2. It is sufficiently flexible to take care of many variables.
3. It can be ascertained for any school by conducting time and motion studies on the premises.
4. It can be adjusted to varying situations.
5. It furnishes objective evidence to support the custodial cleaning assignments.

1. Ibid., 58-60.
One familiar and timely problem for administrators is the determining, assigning, and evaluating work loads and cleaning standards of the school maintenance staff. Haphazard job assignments lead to discontent over duties and responsibilities of the maintenance workers. Michelson suggests that when work assignments are made that each custodian be furnished with a detailed description of the rooms and areas he is to clean together with an itemized list of duties such as dusting, mopping and cleaning chalkboards and windows.¹ When new assignments or adjustments are made, there should be a trial period of a month or so for ironing out difficulties and misunderstandings.

The following table shows the result of a survey done by the writer in which almost 30 percent of the custodial workers are overloaded with work.

Table XII.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Custodian Overloaded With Work?</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>70.7</td>
<td>99.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The custodial salary schedule is being increased. The Pontiac public schools set a new salary schedule each year based on what other concerns are paying for year around workers in similar classifications. Pontiac paid the following salaries in 1949-50:

1. Engineer Class A...$293.00
2. Assistant engineer. 270.50
3. Fireman class A... 248.50
4. Fireman Class B... 235.50
5. Engineer Class B... 270.50
6. Custodian Class C... 250.50
7. Head Custodian...A. 262.50
8. Asst. Custodian... 231.50
9. Maids, full time... 176.67

An attractive salary schedule constructed and administered will attract and retain the best personnel. Mort and Reusser state. "...those communities which spend more, get more in the way of service."2

In a study made by Phay in 1945-46 salaries of school maintenance workers were increasing, ranging from 800 dollars to 4700 dollars a year in cities above 30,000 in population. In about three-fourths of the cities increases represented basic salary raises, while about one-fifth of

the cities had granted salary supplements only, such as cost-of-living bonuses. Nearly one-fourth of the cities did not have salary schedules for their custodians while about three-fourths did have them. Phay says that in order to establish a basis for the purpose of salary scheduling, custodians should be classified according to their positions. Actual salaries are dependent upon cost-of-living adjustments added to or subtracted from these basic amounts.\(^1\) Linn contends that since it takes from three to five years before a capable individual can become a skilled custodian, there should be three to five increments on the salary schedule. The amount of each increment should be of sufficient size to be "felt" by the worker.\(^2\)

**Labor Groups**

To obtain better salaries and working conditions many school maintenance workers have joined organized labor groups. Phay\(^3\) stresses that today thousands of school custodians are a part of the some fifteen million

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members belonging to organized labor groups. This is a vital issue confronting school boards. The attitude of school administrators concerning labor unions for school maintenance employees range from one extreme to the other. Some administrators state that custodians who did not like the way things were could quit their jobs, while other administrators are in favor of custodians belonging to labor unions.

In a survey made by the writer, the question was asked to forty superintendents and principals from schools in Washington if the custodians at their particular schools belonged to a custodians' labor union. The following table is a tabulation of the results.

Table XIII. Custodians Belonging to Labor Unions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>77.5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Over 77 percent of the school administrators stated that custodians at their school plant did not belong to any labor organization, while 22.5 percent did belong to an organized labor group. In this same survey the writer
asked the administrators' opinion about whether the school custodian should belong to a custodians' labor union. The administrators answered as shown in the following table:

Table XIV.
Should the Custodian Belong to a Labor Union

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>No Ans.</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>34.2</td>
<td>65.7</td>
<td></td>
<td>99.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For various reasons almost 66 percent of the school administrators indicated that a custodians' labor union is unnecessary. In some of the schools that had no labor organization for custodians, the administrators thought a labor union would be desirable. Phay has done research in this area and found that, of all cities of the United States of 30,000 population or more, only 8.6 percent or 21 cities reported that their custodians belonged 100 percent to organized labor groups. The A. F. of L. was the national organization to which the majority of custodial unions were affiliated.\(^1\) Strength of unions is not meas-

\(^1\) Ibid., 25-27.
ured by membership alone. The extent to which the unions can determine the rules and regulations under which their members work is more important than membership. Collective bargaining furnishes legal means through which custodial labor unions may influence boards of education. Conditions that allow the school maintenance worker no chance of appeal to an arbitration board or some grievance committee do not help establish democracy in public schools.

According to Resch\(^1\) a movement has originated and is taking shape to set up a National Association of School Building Operators. Membership for such an association will emerge from the levels of greatest interest; namely, the supervisory level, and the training level. The training level will be the predominating element. This will consist of persons who have become outstanding in school building operation in their local communities. Immediate objectives of this group may be ways and means of standardization of training methods and requirements, and a formation of a code of acceptable practices and procedures.

Training and Responsibilities

In a survey the writer asked forty-four school administrators if there was any in-service education provided for the maintenance workers at their schools. The following results were tabulated:

Table XV.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td>68.1</td>
<td>99.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Only fourteen or about 32 percent of the administrators indicated that in-service training was given to custodians. The administrators were asked to list the agencies offering this training. The fourteen Washington administrators listed the following:

Table XVI.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The school</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County agency</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State agency</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colleges</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unions</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>14</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Some custodial training is being offered by various agencies, however according to Hopper, it should be the duty of the State Department of Education to provide an adequate program and proper facilities for custodial training. This state program should be distributed so as to be easily available to every custodian in the state. Most custodians will not be able to afford the expense necessary to attend a training school unless the school board can set aside a fund to be used in helping the custodian pay this expense. One way to secure good inexpensive training on the job is to invite a representative from the factory to come to the school to demonstrate how to use and care for equipment, especially in new schools. School authorities are beginning to realize that training of the school custodian is a serious business which has been given far too little attention. Crone reveals the need for custodial training through the following lines:

"Anything worth doing is worth doing well. If one lacks the knowledge of how to do a task, it becomes difficult, uninteresting and tiring, but the person who has his work explained to him, is shown how it should be done, and is


taught to do it himself—in other words, one who is trained—can perform the task more easily, more effectively, and with greater personal satisfaction."

Pioneer work in training of engineers and custodians was begun in Minneapolis under the leadership of Womrath. The training program as developed there consisted of two separate and distinct courses: First, all new employees were required to attend an auxiliary training school conducted in one of the large high schools for a period of six months. Second, all employees who successfully passed the first probationary period of training were required to attend a regular custodial training school until their training was complete. Following the lead of Minneapolis, training courses for custodians are now offered in a number of centers. Short courses for school custodians are offered in many colleges and universities, some of them being University of California, University of Wisconsin, University of Texas, Purdue University, and Ohio State University. Following is a list of ways a custodian may train and keep abreast of current school plant operation:

1. Reading magazines, bulletins and books.
2. Attending local meetings for custodians.
3. Attending regional or state custodial schools.
4. Visiting custodians in other schools.
5. Having membership in custodial associations.

Training of custodians will, in time, reduce costs through better care of floors, floor coverings, and fixtures, and in the care and use of maintenance machines.

Bliss proposes the following steps in the installing and operation of a program of in-service training of non-teaching personnel of the public school system:

1. The superintendent of schools should explore the possibilities of a training program.
   a. By analysis of particular problems of his school system which need solution.
   b. By analysis of the Qualifications of non-teaching personnel.
   c. By extensive reading of literature bearing on the subject.
   d. By conference with persons who have had experience.
   e. By a survey of what other schools have accomplished along this line.

2. The superintendent should convey the results of his study and investigation to his key subordinates.

3. Group meetings of key subordinates should be held. (Assistant superintendent in charge of instruction, personnel, business management, building and grounds, chief librarian, etc.)

4. The matter should be presented to school principals.

5. Enlist the participation of various groups of workers. (Viewpoint of workers should be given real effect)

6. Present the proposal to the Board of Education.

7. After approval application should be made for state and federal aid.

8. Select a Head or Principal of In-Service Training.

Responsibilities

Linn concludes that the public school maintenance employee is responsible for the following:

1. The custodian is responsible for the care of costly property that needs constant attention to prevent undue wear and tear, depreciation, and expensive repairs.

2. He is responsible, in part, for the safety of the teachers and pupils in his building, and for reporting and removing hazards and other dangerous conditions that might result in accident or fire.

3. He is responsible, in part, for the health of teachers and pupils, because he can control to some extent the health conditions within the building.

4. He is responsible for maintaining standards of cleanliness that will encourage habits of cleanliness on the part of others.

5. He is responsible for maintaining standards of neatness that pupils may be influenced to adopt.

6. He is responsible, in part, for providing conditions that tend to make for better teaching and learning.

7. He is responsible for developing good will for
the institution through a courteous, cheerful,
and helpful attitude.

8. He is responsible for effecting economies in
operation by preventing the needless waste or
careless use of supplies, equipment, water,
electricity, and fuel.

School administrators and school boards are greatly
responsible for proper care and maintenance of school
plants. The responsibility of a school board is first
of all its responsibility to the children over which it
has jurisdiction. This responsibility is to provide the
best possible educational opportunity possible to give
the children of the community under the existing circum-
stances. It would be true economy for the school board to
employ at a good salary a superintendent who is well
trained and efficient, and false economy to employ a med-
iocre man who will accept less money and give poorer
service. The superintendent is then held responsible for
the successful operation of the school maintenance pro-
gram. The superintendent will be responsible for employ-
ing, supervising, and evaluating the school maintenance
employees. The custodians will receive instructions from
the superintendent except in larger schools where it may
be necessary to have intermediate administrative officials.
The superintendent and custodian should be co-workers. It
would be well for the maintenance worker and the superintendent to make frequent inspections of the school plant together. This tends to develop cooperation. A frank and courteous discussion will clean up any differences of opinion, if the official and worker are fair minded.

The principal of the school works with and as the superintendents assistant in being responsible for care of the school plant. Viles says that the principal in each building should have general control of the building and the activities therein.1 Custodians should confer with and take orders from the principal on the care of the building over which the principal has control. Where more than one custodian is employed in a building the assistant custodian should work under the supervision of the head custodian. If the school maintenance task is large enough to have a superintendent of Buildings and Grounds, all maintenance workers should be responsible to him and the superintendent of Buildings and Grounds should in turn be directly responsible to the superintendent of schools.

On the following page a diagram is shown of the or-

Table XVII.
Organization for Janitorial Service

Board of Education

Superintendent of Schools

Superintendent of Buildings

Supervisors

Supervisors of Custodial Service

Head Janitor Engineer

Engineers

Janitors
Assistants
Apprentices

Principals

Teachers

1. Ibid., 23.
ganization of custodial services. The board of education or the board of trustees is designated by law as the control body for the local school system. The board employs a superintendent of schools to serve as leader and he delegates to various other officials, principals, supervisors, and the superintendent of buildings and grounds, certain duties and obligations. It will be noted from the foregoing diagram that the custodians and head custodians also receive some direction from the principal of the building. This dual responsibility seems inevitable. Since the work in each school building is for the purpose of promoting the educational program in that building, it is understood that the principal is in charge of this program. The custodian may receive instructions for all tasks that immediately affect the educational program from the principal of the building and receive instruction for the technique of his work, and be responsible to the superintendent of buildings and grounds. In some instances people lose sight of the fact that building operation and maintenance are not ends in themselves but rather means to an end, which is the education of boys and girls. Many times school boards employ school maintenance workers without consulting the superintendent of schools. In a
survey the writer asked forty-one Washington school administrators if they had any authority in selecting school custodians. Twenty-six of the administrators indicated that they had much authority, eleven indicated that they had very little authority, and four indicated that they had no authority in selecting the school custodian. The following tabulation was made:

Table XVIII.
Authority of Administrators to Select Custodians

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Much</th>
<th>Very Little</th>
<th>None</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>63.4</td>
<td>26.8</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>99.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The superintendent should have full authority to recommend to the school board men who go to make up his maintenance staff. The superintendent is employed to execute the policies of the school board. Clifford says, "If the school board does not interfere by taking over administrative functions, the superintendent is generally able to do a satisfactory job of executing plans and
policies.  

Chapter IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Purpose

The purpose of this problem was to find out what place the maintenance worker holds and should hold in the modern public school system. The writer, through extensive and intensive library research and by means of a questionnaire, noted the difference in standing of the school maintenance worker of the old school and the maintenance worker of the modern school. The following questions were kept foremost in mind while making this study:

1. How important is the maintenance worker to the successful operation of a modern school plant?
2. What should be the qualifications of a person holding this position?
3. What responsibilities should be shouldered by the maintenance worker?
4. Who is responsible for employing, supervising, and evaluating the maintenance personnel?
5. On what organization, if any, may the maintenance worker rely for better pay, greater job security, and better working conditions?
6. Should all school maintenance personnel attend in-service training classes?
7. Who should provide in-service training for maintenance employees?

Procedure

After reading books and current professional literature pertaining to different phases of public school maintenance and school maintenance employees, the writer compiled a list of questions to be used as a basis for the investigation of the problem. Data pertinent to the problem was gathered through use of extensive and intensive library research. In addition to library research the writer obtained data by use of the questionnaire and personal interview. Two hundred thirty-nine questionnaires answered by school superintendents, principals, and teachers from nineteen counties in the State of Washington were returned to the investigator. These administrators and teachers were active in Washington schools during the 1951-52 school years.

Conclusions

Current professional literature and survey data indicate that during recent years much attention has been given to the improvement of public school building facilities and to the methods of maintaining these facilities. The school maintenance worker has come to be
considered an integral part of the public school system. A number of conclusions that have developed from this study will be discussed under several headings.

**Status**

The old type of janitor received his position through pull or friendship and often knew little of building care. This janitor is being replaced by well trained men who are willing to put forth some effort to give adequate service. The maintenance worker who sees in his job only the tasks of firing the furnace and on occasional sweeping of schoolrooms has no place in the modern school building. Not until a majority of the school building maintenance departments are manned by alert, capable, well-trained custodians will the buildings render the services for which they were intended. Within the past decade or so conditions have changed for the better for school maintenance workers. The maintenance worker's unique position today commands respect. The modern, well trained maintenance worker must be thought of and respected as a valued member of the school staff along with the administrators, teachers, and others. The importance of the maintenance worker's position at the school plant cannot be denied. A school must have administrators; it must
have teachers, and the pupils must be housed in a building, and the building must be maintained by capable, responsible maintenance employees.

Respectable titles such as custodian and maid should be used to denote the position held by school maintenance men and women. Titles such as these carry more dignity. Because of experience in certain phases of housekeeping and because of public relations, a maid may be of great service in helping maintain the school plant. The survey showed the following:

1. About 50 per cent of the school maintenance personnel still go by the name of janitor.

2. Almost 50 per cent of the school maintenance personnel are rendering only a fair to poor service of school maintenance.

3. Former school janitors were provided with few tools, while the modern custodian is required to use and care for a great number of tools and machines.

4. More maintenance tools and machines are necessary because of the increasing number of new and improved school building facilities to maintain and repair.

With more understanding and recognition from school administrators, teachers, and others of the school staff, the custodians would render a better service to the public schools.
General Qualifications

Men and women who are to do school maintenance should be well qualified before assuming the full responsibilities of that position. Some important qualities to consider, listed in order of preference are: Character and habits, intelligence, variety of abilities, health, citizenship, pride, previous experience, education, age, and marital status.

1. One of the most important qualification of any school employee, including the custodian, is character and habits.

The outstanding reason for this is that boys and girls are great imitators and lasting habits are being formed. To many children, the custodian is an ideal. To the minds of school children, the custodian makes the school operate, therefore, the school maintenance worker should be the type of person who parents would have their children imitate. Other reasons for ranking this characteristic high are: its influence on the community, its effect on visitors coming to the school plant, and its affect on the general educational program.

2. It is important that the school maintenance worker have a great deal of intelligence.

This is important because there are school maintenance responsibilities to be acted upon fully and effect-
ively; there is a need for capacity to learn new methods of maintenance while on the job; there is a need for understanding directions quickly; and there is a need for the custodian to plan his work for himself. When employing school custodians it would be well for school authorities to employ the use of intelligence tests.

3. Having a variety of skills and mechanical ability is necessary if the school custodian is to render adequate service.

This is especially true in smaller schools where one or two custodians are to do all the maintenance work. This characteristic is important because of the need of repair and upkeep of maintenance machines, need for correct ventilation, lighting, and heating service, need for landscaping of school sites, trimming and feeding of grass, plants, and shrubs, and the need for painting, plumbing, and carpenter repairs. The maintenance worker will be given preference who has the ability to do the job satisfactorily.

4. Health is important. Only physically fit men and women should be employed for school maintenance. The worker should be screened by a psychiatrist.

There are many reasons why the school maintenance employee must be in good health, physically and mentally: The custodian must be alert to protect the safety and
health of occupants in the school building; many maintenance tasks involve much risk for the school custodian; heavy lifting and digging jobs in and around the school plant require strength on the part of the maintenance employee; and maintenance workers should not be employed in the public schools who show signs of emotional and mental instability.

5. The public school maintenance employee should be a citizen of the United States.

6. Pride is an important characteristic of any school maintenance employee.

The school custodian who has pride in personal cleanliness and appearance will be more dependable, will be accepted more readily by the community and other members of the school staff, will be more loyal to the school staff. In presentability and personal cleanliness about 60 percent of the school maintenance employees ranked good, while about 40 percent ranked fair and poor. This survey also showed that only about 14 percent wore special types of custodial uniforms.

7. The school maintenance applicant will be given preference if he has had previous experience in maintenance work.

The applicant for school maintenance work need not be a skilled mechanic but previous experience in some phase of maintenance work will serve as a background for school
maintenance.

8. Some formal education is necessary in regard to the school maintenance applicant.

There is no standard set for educational qualifications for the school maintenance employee, however most school authorities will agree that the worker should have at least an eighth grade education plus as much more education as possible. Education will help the custodian understand the "why" of school maintenance in the public school system.

9. The age at which the maintenance employee begins his service for the school district should be considered.

Beginning school custodians should be between the ages of twenty-five and forty-five years. Compulsory retirement age for the school custodian is being considered. The writer found that 39 percent of the custodians were over fifty years old, however many over fifty are doing satisfactory school maintenance work. Younger employees will have more years of service to give to the school district.

10. Marital status of the school maintenance employee may be an important quality to consider because of the following reasons:

The school custodian who is married is less likely to leave his employment; is more sympathetic and understanding with children; and is more dependable. The
writer found that about 90 percent of the custodians in Washington were married.

Responsibilities

To a great extent the public school custodian is responsible for the following in connection with the educational program:

1. Responsible for the care of costly property.
2. Responsible for safety.
3. Responsible for health.
4. Responsible for standards of cleanliness.
5. Responsible for standards of neatness.
6. Responsible for better teaching and learning.
7. Responsible for creating good will.
8. Responsible for effecting economies.

The local school board is responsible for employing a competent superintendent of schools. The superintendent of schools is responsible for the operation of the educational system over which he is head. The school superintendent must be given full power by the board to carry out the plans and policies of the school system, and should be held accountable for the successful operation of all departments of the school system including the maintenance department. The superintendent of schools will have the power to recommend to the school board the employing, retaining, and evaluating of the school maintenance personnel. The school superintendent will cooperate with the
principals and superintendent of buildings and grounds in the operation of the school maintenance department. Public school maintenance is not an end in itself, but rather a means to an end—the betterment of education for boys and girls.

There is a joint responsibility of the school superintendent, the school staff, the local board of education, and the state department in organizing and operating an in-service training program for school custodians. The local board and the school superintendent are responsible for working out a wage scale, working hours, and work load that is fair and reasonable for the school custodian. This is based upon similar employment in industry. The writer found that in Washington 78 percent of the school plants were employing the eight-hour day, forty-hour week for school maintenance workers.

Only the minority of school custodians belong to an organized labor union. However, contrary to the wishes of school authorities, the percentage belonging to organized labor groups is increasing every year. The outcome may be a National Association of School Building Operators. In some instances these labor organizations are helping with the in-service training of school custodians. For the benefit of the educational program, all school maintenance
operators should have the privilege of in-service training.


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