Mr. Haehnlen is Assistant Professor of Educational Psychology and Director of the College of Education Teacher Placement Bureau. Prior to his coming to the University of Hawaii in 1957, he was the Education Director for the U. S. Air Force in Japan. He has also been a public school teacher and a Supervisor at the University High School. With degrees from Gettysburg College and Western Maryland College, he is currently a Ph. D. candidate at Colorado State College.

Recently a personnel director of a large western school district returned from a cross-country trip in which he had attempted to recruit teaching personnel for his school district for the coming school year. He was tired and discouraged. He had interviewed hundreds of prospective teachers at college after college and had received little encouragement. Everywhere he traveled, he found himself dealing in a highly competitive market, since he was but one of many seeking the services of newly-trained teachers. He had traveled almost 5000 miles at considerable expense to his school district, and he knew his superintendent and school board expected far better results than he had achieved.

In his discouragement, the personnel director succumbed to fantasy. He wished that there was some place where many potential teaching applicants could be concentrated so that they could be interviewed at one location—a place where the prevailing pay scale was below that of his school district, where the teachers were highly trained, where competition for their services from other school districts was practically nonexistent, a place that offered something “different” in the background, training, and culture of its teachers that would be an asset to his school district. But, alas, he realized that no such utopia for personnel directors existed.

Although the personnel director and his problems described in the two preceding paragraphs are fictitious, his counterpart does in reality exist. Furthermore, there does exist a place which meets the criteria described in our personnel director’s dream. That place is Hawaii. To avoid a stampede to travel agencies by personnel directors who may read this article, perhaps the writer should describe the educational environment he perceives in Hawaii today.

BRIEF BACKGROUND OF HAWAII SCHOOLS

The training and placement of teachers in Hawaii are unique when compared with those in other states. To understand the complexities of the situation, it is necessary for the writer to provide a brief background of the public school system in Hawaii and the institution which has educated the majority of its teachers.

There is but one school district in the state of Hawaii, administered by an appointed superintendent and an appointed school board. This single district includes approximately 6,000 certificated personnel and 160,000 students. There is a single salary schedule; consequently, there is a complete absence of competitive salary schedules such as are found in the public schools of the other 49 states. The result is little mobility among teachers within the state.

A paradox exists in that, although public school teachers in Hawaii are the highest trained in the nation, their salaries are approximately 20% lower than the median salaries in far-western school districts (1). Hawaii, at the same time, has the dubious distinction of standing forty-ninth in the nation in pupil-teacher ratio (2).

All hiring and interviewing for public school teaching positions is done through a single personnel office at the state level. All professional school personnel who desire placement in the public schools of Hawaii apply to this office. As a result, placement offices in the state have a relatively minor role in the assignment of public school personnel within the state. Not only are the
state and local school boards one and the same in Hawaii, this board does not have fiscal powers. Fiscal powers are retained by the state legislature and local city and county governments.

PROBLEMS CREATED THROUGH POLICIES AND LOCATION

There is in existence in Hawaii a three-year residency rule mandated by state law at the elementary level, and to a large extent, adhered to at the secondary level. This law has the effect of giving job preference to all local residents who are minimumlly qualified, over any non-resident, irrespective of teaching ability. The result is that approximately 80% of all professional school personnel in Hawaii are graduates of the University of Hawaii, approximately 10% are local residents who attended mainland institutions, and approximately 10% were originally non-residents who were recruited from the mainland due to a lack of locally qualified residents. Since there are but three teacher-training institutions in Hawaii (3), and two of these have attained the status of four-year institutions only within the past few years, this means that almost 5,000 of the 6,000 public school personnel in Hawaii were educated at the University of Hawaii.

There is evidence of a problem of geographical location generating a provincial attitude in Hawaii. Since many of the professional school personnel have never left the Islands, they are unaware of the implications of competitive salaries, elected school boards, and local school boards with fiscal powers. Hawaii is located 2,200 miles from the next nearest school district; consequently, public school personnel, when compared with their counterparts on the mainland, are less sophisticated and, in many cases, virtually unaware of the job opportunities and recruiting practices elsewhere.

On the island of Oahu, where Honolulu is located, are approximately 4,000 public school teachers. Each year the College of Education of the University of Hawaii graduates about 700 certificated teachers. The College of Education has had a five-year program for the education of teachers for over 25 years which accounts for the public school teachers in Hawaii ranking first in the nation in years of college preparation for teaching. In addition to its undergraduate program, the College of Education has M. Ed. programs in the fields of Elementary Education, Secondary Education, History and Philosophy of Education, Educational Administration and Supervision, Educational Psychology, and Educational Communications. The establishment of doctoral programs is currently under study.

PLACEMENT SERVICES IN COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

The Teacher Placement Bureau of the College of Education was established in 1961 primarily to aid its graduates in obtaining job placement on the mainland. For many years the College of Education graduated just enough teachers to meet the needs of the state public school system. During the past ten years the College of Education has almost doubled in size (4), and teachers are now being graduated in excess of local demand.

The Bureau has grown rapidly since its inception three years ago. Early in 1965, the Bureau will move into new quarters which will facilitate increased service to its graduates and visiting recruiting personnel.

Although Hawaii-trained teachers are to be found all over the world, the majority of Hawaii's out-of-state placement is in southern California. Each year, approximately a dozen southern California school districts send personnel representatives to Hawaii to interview prospective teaching applicants. In 1963, upwards of 200 teachers left Hawaii for mainland teaching positions. Approximately half of the teachers leaving Hawaii were in-service teachers with several years' teaching experience.

In spite of these recent changes in teacher placement, the primary problem facing placement personnel in Hawaii continues to be the scarcity of mainland recruiting personnel. Many personnel officers, especially on the west coast, are not permitted to come here to recruit teachers, because Hawaii is regarded as a Polynesian vacationland involving distance and expense. There is also the inference that taxpayers' money can be spent more justifiably than traveling to Hawaii to recruit teachers. Actually, the state of Hawaii is only five hours by jet plane from all large population centers on the west coast. The total cost of a five-day trip to Hawaii from the west coast including room, board and transportation is less than $500.

As travel to Hawaii becomes more commonplace in the future—for business and professional people as well as tourists—the placement picture will undoubtedly change. In the meantime, the College of Education continues to graduate a great many superior teachers, many of whom will stay here to teach but an increasing number, undoubtedly, will seek teaching contracts elsewhere.

REFERENCES


3. University of Hawaii, Chaminade College, Church College of Hawaii.