

CHAPTER IX

Construction and Uniformity of Schools and of the Furniture Which They Contain

The schools should be arranged in such a manner that both the teachers and the students can easily fulfill their duties. The seats should be on the same level, whether low or high. The entrance door in so far as possible should be placed in such a manner that the students need not pass through another classroom in order to reach their own.

When school is held in a room which opens upon the street or upon a common courtyard, the windows must be at least seven feet above the ground, so that people passing are not be able to see into the school.

It must also be so arranged that there are restrooms for the children. It would be bad for them to go out into the streets.

The classrooms must have good daylight and good air. For that reason, there must, if possible, be windows at both ends of each classroom for ventilation.

The classrooms should be at least 18 or 20 feet square. At most, they should be 25 feet square. Classrooms that are very long or very narrow are inconvenient.

The small and medium-sized classrooms should be at least 15 to 18 feet square. The communicating door should be so situated that the teacher's chair can be placed against the wall opposite this door.

The benches of the students should be of different heights. That is, there should be benches which are 8, 10, 12, 14, and 16 inches high. They should be from 12 to 15 feet long, completely joined and fastened securely. The boards of each bench should be about an inch and a half thick and 6 inches wide. Each bench should have three sets of legs, each consisting of two uprights with a crossbar at the bottom. In each one of the lower classrooms, there should be two benches which are 8 inches high for the smallest students; three benches which are 10 inches high; and three benches which are 12 inches high for the medium-sized and larger students. The number of these benches can be diminished or increased according to the total number of the students.

In each large classroom, there should be a number of tables, depending on the number of the students, for writing exercises: two of the highest for the largest students and the other tables lower for the medium-sized and the smaller students. All of the tables should have benches of the same length. The highest tables should be 2 feet 3 inches high at the back and 2 feet 1 inch high at the front. This is done in order to give a slope to the table. The benches for these tables should be 16 inches high. The lowest tables should be 2 feet high at the back and 1 foot 10 inches high at the front. The benches for these tables should be 14 inches high. The tops of the tables should be 15 inches wide and at least an inch and a half thick. They should be 9, 12, or 15 feet in length (in proportion to the size of the classroom). Each table should be supported by three trestles or table supports. The top of each trestle should be as long as the table is wide (about 3 inches thick and 5 inches wide). The 3 uprights (which should be joined and fastened securely into the top) should

each be 2 inches square and should open out toward the bottom. At the bottom, the spread should be of about 15 inches. This will give solidity and balance to the trestle. Each support should be attached to the table with a large squareheaded screw. The screw should be set in the table in such a manner that it is even with the surface, that it passes through the table and the trestle, and that it is fastened underneath with a bolt.

On the table, there will be as many leaden inkwells as necessary, each one to be used by two students.

If some teacher should later on find another manner of constructing these writing tables which would be easier and more solid, that teacher will propose this new manner to the Superior before making use of it.

The charts of the alphabet and of the syllables will be arranged in the following manner. They will be the same in all the Houses of the Christian Schools .

These charts will be at least 2 feet 4 inches long and 1 foot 8 inches high, not including the border.

The letters and syllables will be placed one above another in the form of a column, as is indicated on the models of the two charts.

The chart of the alphabet will be divided into two parts as indicated on the model. The first part consists of the small letters. The second part consists of the capital letters. Each part will contain six lines. Each line will contain five letters, diphthongs, and letters joined together and therefore being counted as only one letter (for example: ft, fl, fl). The same is true with other examples. The table of small letters and the table of capital letters will be separated one from another by a space of about three inches, so that there will be a distance of three inches between the last letter of each line of the first part and the first letter of each line of the second part. For instance, there should be a distance of three inches between the small e, which is the last letter of the first line of the first part, and the capital A, which is the first letter of the first line of the second part. The same is true of the other lines.

The first stroke of each letter in both parts should be at least an inch and two-thirds distance from the first stroke of the following one. The lines should be at least three inches distant one from another.

The second chart, which is of syllables of two and of three letters should contain seven lines. Each line should contain seven syllables. The first three, the fifth, and the sixth syllables of each line should be syllables of two letters. The fourth and seventh lines should consist of syllables of three letters, all as is indicated on the model. There must be at least two and two-thirds inches after each syllable, that is, between the end of one syllable and the beginning of the next. The lines should be about 3 inches apart.

The chart of French and Roman numerals will be 3 feet 8 inches in height and 7 feet long. It will be divided into two panels.

In the first panel, a large sheet of paper will be pasted. On that paper, the French and Roman numerals will be printed. In the other panel, the chart of the vowels, the consonants, the punctuation marks, and the abbreviations will be pasted .

In each classroom in which connected sentences are written there will be: a large board, 5 feet in length and 3 feet in height, consisting of two panels. On each panel, two examples in arithmetic can be written. For examples in division, an entire panel will be required. This board should be attached to the wall in the most convenient place, the bottom about 5 feet above the floor and the top slanting forward. The two panels of this board are painted black with oil paint so that it will be possible to write examples upon them with chalk. The board should be made like this model.

The chairs for the teachers in each classroom will measure 20 inches from the seat to the footstool. The footstool, which will be attached to the chair, will be 12 inches in height and 18 inches from the seat to the top of the back. The chairs will have straw bottoms.

There will be a chest or cupboard in which to put away the papers and other things used by the teachers and students.

In each classroom, there will also be a picture of the Crucifix; of the Blessed Virgin; of Saint Joseph; of the Holy Guardian Angel; and of the five rules mentioned in Article V of Chapter II (Signs Which Are Used In The Christian Schools) of Part Two. All of these will be pasted upon heavy backs or framed.

Finally, there will be in the classroom of the writers a little bell. This is the bell which will be rung for the school exercises.