

A STUDY OF SENIOR TRIPS  
IN KANSAS HIGH SCHOOLS

by

LEO RAYMOND GRIFFING

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## INTRODUCTION

Early senior excursions were termed "senior sneaks" and were virtually just that. A tradition grew up that each class would "play hooky" in a group one day out of their senior year. Soon other classes enhanced the excitement of the occasion by attempts to disrupt highly secretive plans. Tricks, battles, and all sorts of barbarisms ensued. It became a source of headaches to school administrators everywhere. They first attempted to curtail the custom by threats to the culprits who continued the practice.

Finding that threats only served to add adventure to the event and that they could not dismiss the class wholesale, some administrators hit upon cooperating with the custom by offering supervised treks which were glamorized by greater distance and duration, lasting into the weekend. It soon became the "smart thing" to outdo the previous class or some nearby school. Newspapers publicized the larger plans, and, just previous to World War II and gas rationing, elaborate trips to California, Old Mexico, and Canada were becoming common.

Although postponed into the summer months, these more extensive trips still required the supervision of the school. To the school administrator's burden of actually chaperoning the trip was added ever-increasing supervisory chores connected with sponsoring money-making activities which frequently began back in the class's freshman year. These long trips were not confined to the larger schools. In fact, they flourished most in the small com-



munity. The largest schools soon found that the longer trips were entirely too much of a financial burden with their senior classes numbering too large to be able to arrange accommodations. But the administrators of the middle-sized and smaller high schools, which made up the larger number of all the schools in the state, began to wonder whether their main job was running concession stands and managing magazine sales to raise money for senior trips, sometimes four years in advance of the trip, or to administer the educational programs for which they thought they had been employed.

Glamorous as these guided tours appeared in the headlines, many were the graying heads and balding spots they brought to the individual supervisors. Although, generally, the students had come to accept the presence of a supervisor on their excursion because their parents were more likely to cooperate with transportation and financing, there was still the element of "sneak" involved as the seniors attempted to see what worldly adventures they could collect on the side for colorful retelling to underclassmen when they returned home. Accidents, unfortunate incidents, and unsavory stories were rampant as the "hey-days" returned after the war.

Many parents and supervisors alike desired that these excursions should be turned into educational tours, and there was a general trend for school administrators to attempt this amid the horseplay the seniors had heard was traditionally theirs. After experiencing the headaches and heartaches of these annual affairs, listening to the gibes and criticism of their communi-

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ties, some comments even costing the employment of the supervisor, it was small wonder that many school administrators voiced recommendations that extended trips be abolished. They agreed, however, that in many communities just making such a recommendation would not solve the problem. The practice had become too widespread and ingrown.

## PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

### Importance of the Study

This study was made for the purpose of discovering facts that might be of assistance to school administrators who are faced with their first experience with senior trips and to those who have sponsored senior trips but feel that there is a need for improvement in the type of senior trip as it has developed. Many administrators have felt that the senior trip is a truly educational aid and that it should be included in their school program; while other administrators have objected ardently to the senior trip as an extravagant waste of time and money and stated that it definitely has no place in a sound school program. This subject is undoubtedly controversial. Only with wholehearted cooperation of all administrators, boards, parents, and state officials who are all informed of realistic facts can action be taken to improve senior trip practices.

## Statement of the Problem

This is a study of the current practices, attitudes, and policies regarding senior trips in representative high schools in Kansas. This study particularly seeks answers to four major questions. In addition, a review of administrators' remarks are included.

The questions are:

1. What is the most desirable type senior trip as to the length in days and in miles traveled?
2. What procedure should be used in setting up a successful trip?
3. What are the attitudes of administrators and the reactions of communities towards senior trips?
4. What policies should be established by the school administrator and the school board in regard to senior trips?

The factors used in this study are the attitudes, the opinions, the facts, and the suggestions as presented by the school supervisors answering the questionnaire. From this a summary is presented of what was being done by representative high schools of Kansas. In addition to this summary, the writer presents conclusions and recommendations relative to senior trips that might be of value to those school officials who are faced with the problems of these activities.

This study is limited since it deals only with the high schools of one state--Kansas. In addition, this study covers only a sampling, amounting to about one-third of the high schools



in this state. However, it was felt that the schools contacted were representative of the high schools involved in this problem.

### Scope of the Study

The schools to which questionnaires were sent were chosen at random from the Kansas Educational Directory of 1954-55, trying to get as representative a sampling as possible of high schools ranging in enrollment from 22 to 285 students. The writer purposely did not choose a school over 285 enrollment as it is generally understood that, because of their large senior classes, they cannot sponsor a senior trip and have already set definite school policies that prevent such trips. High schools smaller than 22 enrollment were not deemed suitable for this study as the number of seniors would be so small that a true picture of the problems connected with senior trips could not be obtained there. Questionnaires were sent to 200 high schools of Kansas. A great number of these schools were known to have conducted senior trips.

Out of the 200 schools sent questionnaires, 123 were of Class A, 36 schools were Class B, and 41 were Class C, as classified by the Kansas State Department of Public Instruction. Of the 200 questionnaires sent out, 169 were returned. All 169 returns were considered usable in one sense, although only 155 took trips and 14 did not take trips. The reasons given by those not taking trips appeared to have a bearing on the problem and are



mentioned later in this report. Of the 169 questionnaires returned, 105 were from Class A schools, 30 were from Class B schools, and 34 were from Class C schools.

### Definition of Senior Trip

The term senior trip, as used in this study, is defined as a trip formerly known as "senior sneak," consisting of one or more days, which is taken by members of the senior class before or after graduation.

### METHODS OF SECURING DATA

#### Sources of Data

The first step of this study was one of reviewing available written material on this subject. The Kansas State College Library contained some resource material on the subject, but showed very little research had been done pertaining to this problem.

The next step was securing information concerning the current practices of senior trips in representative high schools of Kansas by sending questionnaires to the administrative head of the schools selected. These questionnaires (Appendix A) were to be completed by some member of the school personnel who was in charge of the senior trips in that school. In nearly every case it was completed by the superintendent or principal of the school.

## Presentation of Data

After all questionnaires were returned, a tabulation of all responses to the questions was made. The findings were summarized in the form of tables, and the percentages were computed. These facts, along with the administrators' comments, were studied and evaluated. Then the more essential data were selected and compiled into this report.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Only a small amount of material concerning senior trips could be found in the Kansas State College Library. Six reports found in periodicals were the most useful. Three surveys somewhat similar to this report were found. One was a personally conducted survey made in 1952 by Murle Hayden, a school superintendent at Lincoln, Kansas, the results of which were published in School Activities in March, 1954. The second was a school opinion poll taken by the Nation's Schools in 1953. Horace Powell, Staff Writer for the Kansas Teacher, surveyed school administrators of Kansas regarding "senior sneaks" and his findings were published in April, 1949. One other magazine article was a description of a tour actually taken by a senior class, and two other articles related how to plan and organize school tours.

## Hayden's Study

Murle M. Hayden,<sup>1</sup> superintendent of the city schools at Lincoln, Kansas, made a study of senior trips in 82 schools in Kansas in 1952. He sent questionnaires to schools ranging in enrollment from 150 to 300 students and received replies from 75.

Sixty-one schools indicated that they sponsored an event similar to a senior trip; seven stated that they sponsored no such trip; and two reported that the trip was sponsored entirely by parents.

Reports from 53 schools showed that their trips were taken during the school term, but ten said that they made their trip after school was out in the spring.

In reply to the question of how the trip was financed, 28 schools reported that the trip was financed by the use of class funds; four schools said that it was financed by individuals; and 31 used a combination of class funds and individual funds.

It was apparent from Mr. Hayden's study that most small high schools had an annual senior day or sneak ranging from one to seven days. It also showed that the administrators were trying to eliminate these senior days and to substitute something in their place that would be of more educational value.

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<sup>1</sup> Murle M. Hayden, "Study of Senior Class Days in Small High Schools." School Activities, March 1954, 25:221-223.



## School Opinion Poll

In 1953, the Nation's Schools<sup>1</sup> conducted a survey of senior trips in 500 high schools. Their questionnaires contained two main questions:

1. Can one really tell how much educational value students get from these trips?
2. How should they be financed?

About two-thirds of the school superintendents contacted favored some kind of trip for their seniors. They agreed, however, that the trips should be controlled and that all seniors should take part in them. Some administrators claimed that there was definite educational value in the raising of the money and the planning of the trip.

The big warning from administrators who had had experience with the senior trip was that special attention should be given to the planning of the trip. They specifically pointed out that the trip should be in some way integrated with other school work, that teachers who act as chaperones must be skilled not only in handling pupils but in gaining real value from sight-seeing, and that parents must be in on the planning and must assume some responsibility in the trip. Most of the superintendents agreed that headaches were less on short trips than on long trips.

This poll showed that a large majority of the senior trips

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<sup>1</sup> School Opinion Poll, "Are Senior Trips Worthwhile?", Nation's Schools, November 1953, 52:64.

were financed by the students, either wholly or in a great part. Herein was a big problem because many students could not afford the price unless they spent their four years in high school intent on money-making schemes and constantly irritating the local merchants into making contributions. Many of the superintendents felt that these senior trips were growing into a monster and definitely getting larger each year. Some felt that too much time was spent on ways to raise the money for the trip, thus hurting other worthwhile activities in the school.

From the results of this poll it seems evident that administrators need a greater evidence than they now have of the educational value of senior trips. However, assuming such trips are worthwhile, the schools must work hand in hand with the community to iron out the problems of financing such trips.

#### Powell's Survey

A survey conducted in 1948 by Horace B. Powell,<sup>1</sup> Staff Writer for the Kansas Teacher, showed distinct evidence that school officials did not favor the original "sneak day." In regard to the more recently developed senior trips or year-end excursions the opinion was divided. There were 99 administrators who said, "O. K."; 58 said, "No"; and 43 took no definite stand.

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<sup>1</sup> Horace B. Powell, "Sneak Day--No; Year-End Excursions--Maybe," The Kansas Teacher, April 1949, 57:12.

## Barrington's Excursion

In line with the thought that senior trips should be made more purposeful, F. C. Thomas<sup>1</sup> related his experiences during a trip to the nation's capital on a senior trip in 1953.

Barrington High School took their trip to Washington, D. C., after school was out in the spring. It cost each student approximately \$100 of his own money on this 15-day tour. In addition, the students raised about \$2500 in various ways such as plays, magazine sales, etc., to help finance the trip, and the school board paid for the meals and hotel accommodations of the sponsors. The students helped make plans for the trip and assisted in making arrangements for getting the parents and students together to draw up a set of rules and regulations to be followed while on the trip.

Barrington seniors traveled by chartered bus. Both the students and their parents had an itinerary giving the time of arrival and departure, approximate mileage to be covered each day, and the addresses of the hotels where stops were to be made. The group was divided into teams with a captain for each team to report the actions of his team to the sponsors. Each student was moved to a new position in the buses each day to prevent horse-play. Mr. Thomas said that it was very important that the right kind of sponsors be chosen. In summarizing his report, Mr. Thomas

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<sup>1</sup> F. C. Thomas, "Travel with a Purpose," National Educational Association, May 1954, 43:277-279.



stated that he felt this trip was "a bridge for the gap between the supervised classroom and the democratic self-disciplined atmosphere of adulthood."

### An FFA Tour

H. Christensen<sup>1</sup> reported some points regarding his trip with FFA boys that have similarities with the senior trip problem.

Mr. Christensen suggested that it is important to have at least one board member and two parents along on such a trip. These three should fill the following functions:

1. Assist and act as witnesses in case of accidents.
2. Help control students by enforcing regulations.
3. Give parents and students a feeling of well-being.
4. Act as camp supervisors, safety inspectors, etc.
5. Provide opportunities for adults to see the program in action.

He also stated some rules which might be helpful for a trip of this kind:

1. Have reliable bus operators and be properly insured.
2. Do not travel too far each day.
3. Fire is an important risk. Take great precautions.
4. At every bus stop announce leaving time.

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<sup>1</sup> H. Christensen, "Organization of Summer Tours and Trips," Agricultural Educational Magazine, November 1946, 19:97.

5. Give safety instruction and have first aid material.

### An Educational Trip Problem

Since it is suggested that senior trips should be made more educational, some suggestions for trips that are taken on school time are quoted from an article by Charles Neal.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Neal stated that, if an educational trip is to be worthwhile, there are at least ten definite characteristics that it must possess, such as:

1. It must have a value as a functional type of learning.
2. It must take the student to actual places so that studies can be made under natural conditions.
3. It must afford the student many varied natural conditions.
4. It must make for a higher correlation between the theoretical phases of education and practical experiences so difficult to obtain within the bounds of the schoolroom itself.
5. It must be interesting and stimulating to the student.
6. It must bridge the gap between school and home life.
7. It must stimulate discussion.
8. It must tend to create within the student a more critical nature of things about him.
9. It must provide material for additional study.

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<sup>1</sup> Charles Neal, "Solving an Educational Trip Problem," School Activities, April 1949, 20:249-279.

10. It must afford the most effective type of visual education.

Mr. Neal said that the one serious objection to school excursions is that they interrupt the regular routine of the school program with disastrous results. In order to keep the student's work up with the rest, he suggested the following plan:

1. Students secure in advance the blank permits for educational trips from the principal's office.

2. When the student satisfies a respective teacher that he has completed the assignment for the day or days missed for the trip, that teacher writes on the student's permit the name of the subject and signs her name.

3. Before the group leaves for the trip, every member must turn in his completed educational trip permit to the principal's office.

## PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

### Return of Questionnaires

A total of 200 questionnaires (Appendix A) was sent out. There were 169 questionnaires returned. Table 1 is a general analysis of the returned questionnaires.



Table 1. Return of questionnaires.

Description	: Number of schools :	: Per cent
Questionnaires sent to	200	100.0
Questionnaires returned	169	84.5
Sponsored a senior trip	155	77.5
Did not sponsor a senior trip	14	7.0
Questionnaires not returned	31	15.5

The 155 schools who indicated that they sponsored a senior trip were used in this study of findings. Some comments of the 14 schools who returned questionnaires but reported that they did no longer or never had sponsored senior trips are quoted in the report of administrators' comments. All 200 schools to whom questionnaires were sent are listed in Appendix B.

#### Number of Seniors

The second question (Appendix A) in the questionnaires dealt with the number of seniors in each school. Of course, the number of seniors depended somewhat on the size of the school. The smallest group of seniors from one school was four, and the largest group was 50 seniors. A total of 3,255 seniors from 151 high schools in Kansas were reported as going on senior trips. Four schools did not report the number of seniors participating in their trip. The average number from each school reporting the number was 21.5. Table 2 shows the number of seniors and how

Table 2. Number of seniors going on trip.

Number of seniors :	Number of schools :	Per cent
4	1	.65
6	3	1.96
7	5	3.23
8	5	3.23
9	6	3.87
10	7	4.52
11	1	.65
12	11	7.10
13	6	3.87
14	2	1.30
15	6	3.87
16	7	4.52
17	9	5.81
18	3	1.96
19	5	3.23
20	4	2.55
21	6	3.87
22	5	3.23
23	5	3.23
24	4	2.55
25	4	2.55
26	3	1.96
27	6	3.87
28	2	1.30
29	1	.65
30	2	1.30
31	1	.65
32	4	2.55
33	1	.65
34	1	.65
35	2	1.30
36	3	1.96
37	1	.65
38	2	1.30
39	2	1.30
40	1	.65
41	1	.65
42	1	.65
43	1	.65
44	4	2.55
45	1	.65
46	2	1.30
47	1	.65
48	1	.65
50	2	1.30
Not given	4	2.55
3,255	155	100.0

many schools had this number.

It was noted that 57 per cent of these schools had less than 21 seniors, only 22 per cent of the schools had more than 30 seniors, and 21 per cent had between 21 and 30 seniors. This shows that most schools face a problem of planning for a group of less than 30 seniors plus sponsors or chaperones.

### Length of Trip in Days

The results obtained by Question 3 in the questionnaires showed that the length of the trip in these 155 schools ranged from 1 to 16 days. The most popular length trip, according to this study, was a trip of three to five days; however, about 22 per cent of the schools took longer trips. Table 3 shows the number of days that were spent on the various length trips and the number of schools taking that length trip, as well as the percentage of schools that take a trip of that duration.

Table 3. Length of trip in days.

Length in days	Number of schools	Per cent
1	17	10.97
2	7	4.51
3	29	18.71
4	41	26.46
5	27	17.42
6	8	5.16
7	8	5.16
8	4	2.59
9	4	2.59
10	2	1.30
11	1	.65



Table 3. (concl.)

Length in days	Number of schools	Per cent
12	2	1.30
13	1	.65
14	2	1.30
15	1	.65
16	1	.65

### When Trip Is Taken

After tabulating the fourth question as to whether the trip was taken on school time or not, it was found that more than one-third of the schools reported they took their trip on school time. About 27 per cent took their trip after the school term was ended. A little more than a third gave their answer as a combination of school time and non-school time. This combination meant that the trip extended over some school time and into a weekend as it was not likely that a school would be sponsoring a senior trip during the closing of school activities. Therefore, this third group designated "combination" and the first group designated "on school time" would actually both be before the end of the school term. Table 4 shows the number of schools and the percentages which chose each time for their senior trip.

Table 4. When trip is taken.

Time	Number of schools	Per cent
On school time	58	37.42
After school is out	42	27.10
Combination	55	35.49

Question 5 pertained to what time of year the trip was taken. All schools answering stated that they took their senior trip in the spring.

#### Methods of Transportation

The mode of transportation to be used for the trip is one of the most vital problems for many groups in the planning of their senior trip. In this study the most popular method of transportation was shown to be private cars, closely followed by school buses with chartered buses being third. Table 5 shows the number of schools using the different methods of transportation.

Table 5. Methods of transportation.\*

Method	Number of schools	Per cent
Private cars	68	43.86
School bus	41	26.45
Chartered bus	36	23.23
Train	10	6.46

\*Some schools indicated more than one method of transportation, i. e., school bus to nearest depot then transferring to a train.

#### Length of Trip in Miles

According to the returned questionnaires used in this study, the distance traveled by the seniors on their trips varied from 100 to 4500 miles. The average number of miles covered by senior classes was 1,021 miles. Actually, more than 50 per cent of the schools taking trips limited their distance to only a few hundred miles, but the 52 schools who took trips covering several thousand miles raised the average figure out of proportion. Table 6 shows the approximate number of miles and the number and percentage of schools that are in each division.



Table 6. Approximate number of miles trips cover.\*

Miles	:	Number of schools	:	Per cent
100		5		3.23
200		12		7.74
300		11		7.10
400		11		7.10
500		15		9.68
600		9		5.81
700		8		5.16
800		8		5.16
900		4		2.55
1000		17		10.97
1100		2		1.30
1200		8		5.16
1300		2		1.30
1400		1		.65
1500		16		10.32
1600		1		.65
1700		1		.65
1800		3		1.96
2000		6		3.87
2400		1		.65
2500		3		1.96
2800		1		.65
3000		2		1.30
3500		1		.65
4000		3		1.96
4500		1		.65
Not given		3		1.96
Total		155		100.00

\*In a few instances the miles reported was changed to the nearest 100-mile division.

### Financing the Trip

Questions 8, 9, and 10 regarding who, when, and how the senior trips were financed proved interesting. This part of the survey shows clearly why the complaint from administrators regarding the increasing burden of supervising fund-raising activi-

ties is becoming loud and widespread. This phase of the senior trip project brought forth as many objections as did the problems connected with planning and chaperoning the actual trip. Detailed remarks will be found in the section on administrator opinions. Nearly every school had this problem (Table 7), and it was not seasonal as is seen in examining Table 8, noting that fund-raising often begins in the freshman year. This would mean that all four classes in the high school would be scheming simultaneously regarding money-making ventures mentioned in Table 9.

Of the 155 schools reporting that they made senior trips, 106 senior classes raised the entire amount for their expenses by participating as a group in activities to raise money for the class fund. Forty-five more classes used this method, but found it necessary to supplement the class fund with personal funds. This showed that actually 151 of the 155 schools were busily engaged in fund-raising activities for this all-important class fund. The remaining four schools stated that raising money for the trip expenses was an individual problem, although in one case the board assisted. Table 7 shows who furnished the funds, the number, and the percentage of schools that are in each division.

Table 7. How trips are financed.

Method used	Number of schools	Per cent
Class raising money	106	68.39
Students own money together with class funds	45	29.00
Students own money	3	1.96
Students own money supplemented by board of education	1	.65

The answers to the ninth question in the questionnaire showed that the money-making activities mentioned in the table above, more often than not, began early in the class career--in fact, as early as the freshman year in 58 per cent of the cases. Table 8 shows the year money-making activities commenced.

Table 8. When fund-raising begins.

Year activity begins	Number of schools	Per cent
Freshman year	90	58.06
Sophomore year	6	3.87
Junior year	39	25.14
Senior year	17	10.97
No time spent	3	1.96

Six methods were listed in the question asked regarding the ways in which class funds were raised for the trip, and a space was provided for any other ways the school might use. The most popular method of fund-raising was the class play, used by 147 schools or 94.84 per cent of the schools reporting. The second most popular method was concession stands at school functions.



This was used by 132 schools or 85.16 per cent of those reporting. Most schools used several or all methods listed. Table 9 shows the methods used in raising money, the number of schools, and per cent using each method.

Table 9. Methods of raising money.

Method	Number of schools	Per cent
Plays	147	94.84
Concessions	132	85.16
Food sales	93	60.00
Annuals	65	41.94
Carnivals	62	40.00
Magazine sales	31	20.00
Donations	25	16.13
Outside work	20	12.90

#### Cost Per Student of Trip

The amount of money required for a senior trip depends necessarily on the number of days to be used for the trip, the distance covered, the number of individuals involved in the trip, etc. The cost per student on the trip varied widely in the 155 schools reporting they took a senior trip. Obviously the schools taking the longer trip required more money per student than the schools taking the shorter or one-day trip. The question was asked in such a way as to discover the amount that an individual would need on such a trip.

The least amount spent by each student on a senior trip was reported by one school who gave \$2 as the individual cost. It

was noted that this school used private cars for transportation and was gone only one day, traveling no more than 100 miles. The largest amount spent by each student on a senior trip was \$150 per individual. This figure was reported by two schools who took trips of 15 to 16 days. It seemed that the average amount spent was approximately \$10 per individual per day on a trip.

According to the table, it is evident that more schools reported between \$25 to \$50 cost per student. These figures coincided with the facts in Table 3 citing the popularity of the three to five-day trip. Table 10 shows the various amounts of money used per student and the number of schools and per cent reporting each cost.

#### Problem of Seniors Staying at Home

Out of the 155 schools taking trips, 92 reported that all seniors went on the trip. Fifty-four indicated that all did not go, and nine made no comment. Of the 54 reporting that all seniors did not go, 50 said that the money was not divided among those that stayed at home, and four indicated that they did divide the money. Five schools mentioned that, if all the seniors did not go, the ones left behind were required to go to school. One school pointed out that racial problems caused some seniors to stay home from the trip. The majority of the others gave the cause of seniors staying home had to do with illness or a job.

Table 10. Approximate amount of money used per student.

Amount	Number of schools	Per cent
\$ 2	1	.65
5	3	1.96
8	2	1.30
10	8	5.16
15	11	7.10
20	10	6.46
25	19	12.26
30	16	10.32
35	8	5.16
40	14	9.03
45	5	3.23
50	17	10.97
60	5	3.23
65	3	1.96
70	1	.65
75	4	2.59
80	2	1.30
100	5	3.23
150	2	1.30
No answer	19	12.26
Total	155	100.00

#### When Destination Is Chosen

Indication was made by 144 schools that plans as to where to go on the trip were made in the spring of the senior year. Ten schools did not state when plans were made, and one school had a set board policy as to where the seniors could go.

#### Who Sets Limit on Distance

The answers to the question regarding who sets the distance the class may travel showed great variation as to who partici-



pated in the decision. In 27.1 per cent of the schools reporting they took trips, the decision regarding the distance to be traveled was made by the administrator. The board of education joined the administrator in making his decision in an additional 21.29 per cent of the schools reporting. However, in 12.26 per cent of the schools the board apparently was not concerned but allowed the administrator and students to choose the distance, but in another 12.26 per cent of the schools the board made the entire decision. Four schools, or 2.55 per cent, stated that their board had a standing policy as to where they went. Another group making up 6.46 per cent of the answers reported that the board, administrator, and students met together to make the decision. In only five schools it was left up to the students alone, and another five let the students decide while guided by a policy already set up. Seven schools required the meeting of administrator, board, parents, and students in setting up the distance.

Several unique situations were cited, such as one school where the parents and students decided where the destination would be since the sponsors were made up wholly of parents and the trip was taken after graduation. In another school the administrator, parents, and students met to decide how far the trip should go; and in a third school the board and the administrator were guided in their decision by the amount of money that the students had raised. It was interesting to note that six other schools left the entire decision of distance up to the matter of how much money had been accumulated by the close of the senior

year.

Table 11 shows the results of the tabulation regarding decisions of who sets the distance to be traveled on the senior trip.

Table 11. Who sets limit on distance.

Who determines distance	Number of schools	Per cent
Administrator	42	27.10
Administrator and board	33	21.29
Board of Education	19	12.26
Administrator and students	19	12.26
Students	15	3.23
Administrator, board, and students	10	6.46
Administrator, board, students, and parents	7	4.51
Amount of money	6	3.87
Students guided by school policy	5	3.23
Board policy	4	2.55
Students and parents	1	.65
Administrator, students, and parents	1	.65
Administrator and board (amount money)	1	.65
No answer	2	1.30
<b>Total</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>100.00</b>

#### Parents' Permission

In response to the question as to whether the school required written permission from the parents for a student to go on the trip, 86 schools or 55.48 per cent stated that they did. Several schools had a long set of rules that the student signed that he would obey while on the trip. Failure to obey these

rules would cause the individual to be sent home at the parents' expense. Sixty-eight schools or 43.88 per cent reported that they had no permission blanks signed. One school gave no comment. Table 12 shows the analysis of the answers pertaining to parents' permission.

Table 12. Permission obtained from parents.

	: Number of schools :	: Per cent :
Yes	86	55.48
No	68	43.88
No answer	1	.65

#### Itinerary of Trip

A question regarding the making of an itinerary of the trip brought the information that 103 schools make a plan as to how the student will spend his time on the trip. The most exacting and complete itineraries were made by schools who traveled by chartered bus or train. There were 51 schools who said that they made no itinerary. One school did not answer this question.

#### Educational and Free Time

The question concerning the amount of time spent on educational activity during the senior trip was answered in various ways.



About one-fourth of the schools indicated that three-fourths of the time on the trip was allotted to educational activities, and an additional 9.68 per cent and 20.65 estimated the educational time at two-thirds and one-half, respectively. Some of these stated that their only free time was the two or three hours allowed the students during the evenings of the longer trips that the students might relax and have a free choice of activity such as shows or shopping. As many as 13.55 per cent went so far as to report that all their activity was of educational nature. By grouping the predominately educational trips together, it was noted that more than half of the schools were making an effort to make the trip primarily of educational nature.

Of the approximately one-third of the schools not conscientiously concerned with the educational value of the trip, 28 schools stated that they made no specific plan for anything of educational nature, although the students were under supervision of sponsors as much as possible. Two schools estimated that they used about one-fourth of the time, and three schools reported one-third of the time could be counted of educational nature. There were 16 schools who were not willing to weigh their trips educationally.

Tables 13 and 14 show detailed analysis of this tabulation.

Table 13. Educational time spent on trip.

Amount of time	Number of schools	Per cent
All	21	13.55
Three-fourths	38	24.52
Two-thirds	15	9.68
One-half	32	20.65
One-third	3	1.96
One-fourth	2	1.30
None	28	18.06
No answer	16	10.32

Table 14. Free time for students on trip.

Amount of time	Number of schools	Per cent
All	28	18.06
Three-fourths	2	1.30
Two-thirds	3	1.96
One-half	32	20.65
One-third	15	9.68
One-fourth	38	24.52
None	21	13.55
No answer	16	10.32

### Sponsors

The sponsors and their part in the excursion are very important factors in the senior trip. The success of the trip depends in a large degree upon the sponsors. Out of the 155 schools reporting that they took a trip, 101 schools or 65.16 per cent said that their trip was sponsored entirely by members of the faculty. In most cases the sponsors consisted of the administrator and his wife. In 47 schools or 30.33 per cent the sponsors were made up of the faculty and parents. There were

three schools that said that the trip was taken after school was out in the spring and that they were sponsored entirely by the parents with the faculty or administrator having no jurisdiction over the trip. Four schools made no comment to this question. Table 15 shows the methods of sponsoring, the number, and per cent of schools using each method.

Table 15. By whom trip sponsored.

By whom	Number of schools	Per cent
Faculty	101	65.16
Faculty and parents	47	30.33
Parents	3	1.96
No answer	4	2.55

In response to the question regarding the number of students per sponsor, the answers from the 155 schools taking trips varied a great deal. The most common number of students per sponsor, so answered by 34 of the schools, was one sponsor for every ten students. The next most popular decision proved to be one sponsor for every five students. Other answers varied extremely from one sponsor per student, in a school where the trip was taken with parents after school was out, to a school that felt that one sponsor could handle 25 students. Table 16 shows the number and per cent of schools that selected each plan.



Table 16. Number of students to a sponsor.

Number of students per sponsor	:	Number of schools	:	Per cent
1		1		.65
2		1		.65
4		5		3.23
5		31		20.00
6		14		9.03
7		2		1.30
8		5		3.23
10		34		21.94
15		15		9.68
20		7		4.51
25		1		.65
2 sponsors per class		4		2.55
No answer		35		22.58

### Insurance

A question in the questionnaire regarding the kinds of insurance deemed necessary for senior trips brought the information that, in many cases, more than one kind of insurance supplemented the coverage. Twenty-four schools that traveled by school bus were covered by school bus insurance only, while 18 other schools traveling in their own bus felt it necessary to carry special trip insurance to supplement the coverage while actually in the school bus. Thirty-six schools traveled by private car and felt sufficiently covered by the insurance on the private vehicles, but 11 other schools supplemented the private car insurance with special trip insurance. Forty-six schools reported using special travel insurance only; however, it was noted that a goodly number of this group mentioned that they were traveling on chartered public buses but wished additional

coverage. Of the 13 schools who reported they carried no insurance, two mentioned they were traveling by train, therefore, had that insurance; and seven others were on chartered buses, thereby also had public carrier coverage while on the vehicle. The other four in this group did not explain why they did not feel insurance necessary. Seven schools out of the 155 failed to answer this question. Table 17 gives the detailed results of this tabulation.

Table 17. Types of insurance.

Types	Number of schools	Per cent
Special trip insurance	46	29.68
Private car	36	23.23
School bus	24	15.48
School bus and special	18	11.62
None	13	8.38
Private car and special	11	7.10
No answer	7	4.51

#### Reactions of Communities

The next to the last question in the survey was an attempt to learn the sentiments of the various communities toward the senior trips as they have developed to the present time in each locality. Since this questionnaire was completed by a member of the faculty, it necessarily would be the school's interpretation of the sentiment, and many communities had apparently taken a passive attitude toward what had become traditional there. In a few places the parents and others had become interested and had

taken an active interest in the planning and participation, while the survey reflects that many only expressed an attitude when something unpleasant occurred on one of these tours.

From the 155 schools completing questionnaires, 112 administrators reported that their communities were favorable toward senior trips; however, many of the administrators added a note that their community favored a trip only because it had become a tradition and that nothing of a serious nature had happened as yet. Seventeen reported that the sentiment toward the senior trip was highly unfavorable, and this was usually due to some unfortunate happening occurring on a previous trip. Another 17 reported that the sentiments in their communities were divided. Nine of the schools failed to answer this question. Table 18 gives the tally on this issue.

Table 18. Attitude of community toward senior trips.

Attitude	:	Number of schools	:	Per cent
Favorable	:	112	:	72.26
Unfavorable	:	17	:	10.97
Divided	:	17	:	10.97
No answer	:	9	:	5.80

#### Opinions of Administrators

The last question in the survey asked the administrators if they considered the educational value to the students of a senior



trip worthy of the time and money spent in fund-raising activities and actual school time used. The answers to this question were surprisingly negative. Although the writer, from reviewing literature and discussing the problem with other administrators, felt sure there was a rumbling of displeasure against senior trips, most surveys reviewed showed that few individuals were ready heretofore to openly state their negative vote on a questionnaire. Eighty-six of the administrators from the 155 schools taking senior trips reported that they did not consider the educational value of the senior trips worthy of time and money spent; 64 administrators felt that the trips were worthy of the effort and money; and five schools did not appear willing to respond to this question. Table 19 shows the breakdown of these responses.

Table 19. Administrators' opinions regarding worth of senior trips.

Opinion	Number of administrators	Per cent
Not worthwhile	86	55.48
Worthwhile	64	41.29
No answer	5	3.23

### Summary of Findings

The results of this survey showed that senior trips in many moderate-sized high schools in Kansas have become an extensive

project of the schools and that an increasing number of administrators are beginning to weigh the value of such time-consuming ventures against their educational worth. The number of seniors making the trips depended mostly on the size of the school. The length of time taken for senior trips varied considerably from school to school. The most popular number of days was shown to be from three to five days, with many schools showing a preference for a one-day trip. All schools reporting took their trips in the spring, and about three-fourths of them took their trips before the close of the school term. Nearly half of the schools traveled by private cars. Other methods of transportation in order of popularity were school buses, chartered buses, and trains. The distance traveled on the trips varied from 100 to 4500 miles, with more than half of the schools taking trips of less than a thousand miles.

The majority of the schools depended upon using class funds for financing the trips. Therefore, fund-raising activities have become major problems in most schools since most of the classes begin their money-making campaigns in their freshman year. The most popular methods of money-raising were plays and concessions at school activities. The cost of the trip varied from \$2 to \$150 per student according to the duration of time taken and distance traveled, but the average cost on the trip appeared to be about \$10 per student per day. Illness, jobs, and race prejudice difficulties seemed to be the only reasons any senior stayed home from the trip, and little effort was made to divide class funds among those staying home.



All schools indicated that the final decision regarding the destination was not made until the last semester of the senior year. The limitation on distance to be traveled was set by the administrator, the board, or the combination of both in over 60 per cent of the schools. A little more than half of the schools felt it necessary to have a written permission from the parents of the students who were making the trip. A majority of the schools made complete itineraries of their trips before leaving in order that the parents would be aware of the plans. More than half of the schools reported that a half to three-fourths of the time spent on the trip was planned to be of educational nature. The free time allotted to the students on the trip consisted mainly of two to three hours in the evening for shopping or shows. Nearly all of the schools used faculty members as sponsors, with the administrator usually acting as one of the sponsors. Parents were used for part of the sponsors in some schools. The number of students per sponsor varied greatly from school to school with five to ten students per sponsor being the most common solution. Most of the schools felt that some type of insurance was necessary. About three-fourths of the communities were reported as favoring senior trips. However, over half of the administrators signified that they did not feel that the trips were worthy of the time and money spent on them.



## COMMENTS OF ADMINISTRATORS

The last question in the survey brought forth vigorous comments from the school administrators who answered the questionnaire. They were asked to give their personal feeling as to whether they considered the educational value to the students of senior trips to be worthy of the time and money spent in the fund-raising activities and actual school time used. Space was given for them to justify their answers, but many became so aroused by the implications of this question that the defense of their opinion was continued onto the back of the questionnaire and sometimes extended to an appended sheet. This proved to be one of the most interesting parts of this entire study.

The writer felt that these responses were valuable to this report in that they give realism to the statistical figures. Therefore, many of these statements are being included in whole or in part in this portion of the report, and an attempt has been made to group the remarks according to the various attitudes toward this problem.

## Comments Favoring the Trip

Those who had had very pleasant experiences with senior groups and felt that they had the problem well in hand were enthusiastic in their praises of the senior trip tradition. The following statements are a lively sampling from those administrators who favor senior trips:

I think senior trips are like anything else--a class for example. If the teacher is lazy and not interested in her job, if she doesn't plan and organize, she had better stay home. I have seen senior trips that other schools have made where the sponsors were unwilling to stay with the students and plan things for them to do. The trips are a failure. It takes work, planning, and a lot of knowledge in handling students. I have taken ten senior classes all over the South, to Miami, Florida, and to the Florida Keys. I have never had a trip that I didn't enjoy. We plan to leave for Florida and New Orleans in two weeks--I can hardly wait. That's how I feel about senior trips.

Our trips are short and we do not have to make special efforts to raise money. The students go through the Ford assembly plant, visit police court, municipal airport--have experiences of eating in nice restaurants, of staying in a nice hotel--see ice follies, big league baseball, etc.

The trip is over a weekend and we have never taken over two school days. I don't favor two or three week trips.

The whole trip gives the class a unity. We feel that even though most of the trip is recreational that there is education in that. This year the class toured General Motors plant in Kansas City....the evenings and all time at a resort (were free time).

I feel as much is learned in community and social living in the group activities to raise money as in the actual trip itself.

The enthusiasm of the students is greater in the fund-raising endeavors--making for better business training. Students have better geographic knowledge of their own country and its people and business.... All the time is educational and everything is planned on the theory it is educational, otherwise we could not sanction such a trip on school time and funds.

(Gives) business training in handling money and goods, budget planning for excursions. (Community) likes to keep them near home. (1 day, 100 to 150 miles.)

The only trip a great many of the students ever take. See new country, meet new people. Meet students from other schools.

Maybe not so much educational but I believe most



seniors have a fond remembrance of their trip and the good time and things seen....These trips are a big responsibility....I have seen groups on trips that I certainly couldn't approve of their behavior.

Our classes go to Colorado most of the time and visit in and around Colorado Springs and Denver. They say that it is educational for teachers to travel during the summer months and some colleges sponsor summer tours whereby the teacher receives college credits for going on the tour. If teacher travel is educationally sound, then I believe that high school students could gain by traveling.

Personal opinion I suppose but I have sponsored trips of this kind for 17 years. I took a senior class from Summerfield High School to Colorado Springs and Denver 17 years ago. It was hard to find a place to stay as they told me then they had never had a class in their camps before....

Creates good school morale and good fellowship. Industrial visits are educational....We are definitely opposed to long "senior excursions."

I feel that a trip to a city is of particular value to rural youth. Many of them will probably live there in the future, thus the expense is worthwhile.

We don't try to see how far we can go, how long we can stay, how tired we can make the students.... Ours is just an outing--no need to alarm. We are not in the distance and time spent contest.

Very little school time used to raise money. Helps keep their interest up to graduation time as they do not leave until after graduation. Some students have not had opportunity for such a trip.

A fitting climax to graduation. Knowledge of travel and travel courtesies. Knowledge of the area and wholesome democratic planning and good fun. Faculty seldom get to live with students in out-of-school situations. This activity affords an excellent opportunity. It is their trip under proper supervision. This trip will be my 20th personal experience with seniors....I feel the preparation which is necessary in getting the students ready for the trip is a very worthwhile experience for both mental and physical development. Sponsor and student relationship is also important as it pertains to the wholesomeness of the trip.



This trip is properly supervised and planned. Many pupils never have another chance to travel in their lifetime. It certainly makes American History more meaningful to them.

It might possibly be overdone, but there are many advantages. Many of our students have never stayed in hotels or been in a large city. This gives them a chance to have these experiences while we can help them and tell them what to do.

Although we do not have an instrument by which to measure the values to be derived from such educational tours, I am confident that they definitely have a place in the school program and should be planned far enough ahead that the most can be obtained from such tours....I am aware that there is considerable sentiment against such trips but within the limits of my experience with such tours I find that if they are well planned and thoroughly thought out ahead of time, there will not be any problems and everything will work out fine. I believe some who are against this sort of project are lazy and emphasize or exaggerate the possible dangers and problems which might arise but seldom do.

#### Comments Against the Trips

Those administrators who voted that senior trips were not worthwhile opposed them just as vigorously as the others had praised them. The following statements are from those who had definite opinions disfavoring senior trips:

Personally I think these sneak days do not have one per cent value educationally. I have been at this place only two years and inherited this custom. I cut it down to two days, and my next year hope is to get it eliminated completely. I usually find the schools that have them, some even up to seven days, have low educational standards, weak administrators, and parents not interested in education. This practice should be outlawed. I know of no educational benefits!

I believe it should be curtailed or required to be educational in scope.

I have gone on several trips and the students had a fine time and thoroughly enjoyed themselves. Undoubtedly they learned a few things but I do not think that such a trip can be justified. It is not up to the school to provide such experiences. Too much time is spent in making money for the trip and school work takes a back seat....The senior trip has been discouraged by the Board of Education here. They used to take a trip of several days or more in length but this was stopped several years ago. I wholeheartedly approve.

Really if the values are educationally sound the transportation cost should be a tax (board cost) and normal senior activity to pay incidentals.

Our one-day trip is all that I can favor. If much work not done by the faculty in advance, this one day can become a wasted orgy.

Senior sneaks have gotten out of hand. From the original one-day affair they have grown to be a big business deal--for others--and expensive for the school. A former principal at this school permitted students to miss a week of school....The money could be better spent on class memorials, etc. ....But I am afraid they are here to stay! And sponsored is better than unsponsored.

Senior trips can be and are a headache to school administrators.

We have been successful in allowing only one day for a senior "Skip Day." We definitely feel that senior excursions have no place in the school activities.

It is traditional! Educational value is secondary!

As we do not sponsor senior trips, I probably am not qualified to make any comments from the standpoint of experience; however, judging from a distance, it seems that the disadvantages outweigh the advantages. In the first place, our school is nearly "over-activated" now (other schools may not be); secondly, it appears that it would be very difficult to select a trip which would be satisfactory to everyone; thirdly, each year the class would want to go farther which would mean raising more money, etc. With modern transportation, radio, television, travel magazines, motion pictures of all kinds available to practically every student, more or less to some degree, it seems quite



difficult to justify a senior trip or "sneak."

I think they (the community) are waiting for something serious to happen on a trip--then they would rule it out.

(Community) wants trips stopped.

I believe the trips should be taken before graduation if they are to be taken at all. Community attitude causes difficulty in securing sponsors.

I believe the money-raising activities more than offsets any advantages.

I believe the majority (of communities) are against it....It has degenerated to practically a three or four day trip to a resort.

In my opinion it is questionable.

Most of it is foolishness. I wish the State Department of Education would outlaw "senior trips."

A few were not so vehement but still could not condone senior trips so expressed it this way:

Our seniors this year have voted NOT to take a trip....The sentiment of the community is rather unfavorable since last year when a girl was supposed to have gotten "pregnant" on the trip....I think the educational value is doubtful.

I doubt if it (the trip) is worth all the time and money spent, however I can certainly see some educational benefits from such a trip. We always go to Colorado Springs, visit Royal Gorge, State Prison, Seven Falls, Will Rogers Shrine, etc.

We have a policy that all money must be raised outside of the school with the exception of the school carnival which takes a little time. The profits of the carnival are divided between the junior and senior classes. I am not in favor of giving concessions and everything in the school to the seniors. The trip here is traditional. They had been going to Colorado for a number of years. It is hard to stop.

(Community) very much in favor. Not so with merchants.

There are arguments both pro and con. If handled



properly they can be of benefit....We plan to discontinue them after 1956 trip due to size of class (32).

Many never leave state (otherwise), however, the responsibility is way too much.

It is here, but other places I have taught--No! Our students here go for an educational experience. They are not interested in petting parties, have no boy-girl problem or cliques. Other schools I have been in were the opposite....I have been opposed to all senior trips until I came here, because they were a headache. But here everyone is interested and cooperative. I enjoyed helping the seniors plan this year's trip and both my wife and myself are anticipating a grand weekend....leaving tomorrow.

#### Suggestions of Administrators

Many of those including comments had suggestions that they felt were helpful to the success of a senior trip. Some of the comments that were in the form of suggestions are listed here:

I find that as far as seniors are concerned our discipline problems are few as they know their conduct largely governs whether or not they can go on such a tour regardless of how much effort and time and money they may have contributed to this project.

I have personally been on 12 senior trips, in state and out of state....Senior trips are successful depending on the detail of plans, student-kept bus, home and school training, etc. Most of all the trip must not be too long--well-organized to an hour. I can tell you within 45 minutes where we will be, where we eat, etc....

Benefits are directly in proportion to the efficiency with which the trip is planned and sponsored. It can be absolutely valueless or it can be the finest experience of the child's student life. The sponsor holds the answer to its success. It can be a pleasure trip filled with educational experiences or it can be a pleasure trip only. It can also be the biggest mess of trouble any school ever got into.

We call all parents and students in (by me, I am instructed to by the board) and tell them that the seniors will be graduated before the trip and that the school will turn the money over to the parents. The trip is parent-sponsored and has nothing to do with the school. We hope they will (and they always do) invite the EX-sponsors.

We usually have a session with our seniors and lay down the law. If you don't you will have trouble....Drinking is always a problem. We handle it by saying we will immediately return home and cancel their diplomas. If one bunch gets out of line there will be no more senior trips for future classes. Personally I would hate to make the trip after graduation. I feel that a great deal can be accomplished by talking to individual troublemakers before the trip starts. If you can gain their cooperation for the good then your success is certain.

In some schools the "fund-raising" activities seem to be a problem. Here the students perform a service in handling the activities. Our concessions are self-organized and they pay off.

Parents are in favor and this year extremely disappointed with those who do not go. This year is our first big trip, 107 miles being the longest previously. In the past educational value was little. We may never take a big one again, but we plan on this one to determine our future course. We will visit one national park and four national monuments plus three or four historical museums this year.

Nothing (done about seniors who stay home). We always see what their reason is. If it's money or clothes we see that they get help. Most cases it is a job or marriage that keeps them home. They usually prefer or do not help earn the money.

All (administrator, board, students, and parents) work it out together. It makes a nice project and a fine educational experience. Our meetings with parents before we go makes it (permissions) unnecessary.... Our committees meet and make general plans but final plans and itinerary are made as we go. This gives us a chance to stay as long as we like or leave as we like. No deadlines to make is what we like for more fun and education. We call home each evening, in some cases every other evening. Planning committees and activities are all an educational experience. Each day we see many things of educational value. I contend that the half day we spend at Vicksburg each year is



better than a "cold" course in History of Civil War. Natchez, New Orleans, Pensacola, Ocala, all these towns are noted for their things to see. Very little time is given for them to be free from the group. I believe most of the time on the trip they are doing things they wish to do. This orientation and attitude all comes in the early planning.

### Summary of Comments

The comments of the administrators were included in this report because it was felt that they would give a more vivid picture of the senior trips as they are regarded by the school personnel who dealt with the trips.

As one reads this portion it is obvious that senior trips are definitely a controversial issue among high school administrators in Kansas. It will be noted that there were administrators who were very much in favor of the senior trips because of favorable experiences on preceding trips. There were also administrators just as ardently not in favor of the trip because of unfavorable experiences on past trips.

It appeared that the constituents of a successful trip varied from community to community. Planning was essential, but opinions regarding duration of a trip were varied. Some who take long trips are sold on them, but others have found the sacrifices too great for longer trips and have compromised on shorter trips. Many would like to quit them altogether, and some have already or are in the process of tapering off.



## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This study of senior trips was based upon information contained in questionnaires returned by 169 representative high schools of Kansas with enrollments from 22 to 285 students. From studying the facts thus received it was obvious that the practice of sponsoring an annual senior trip has become an integral part of many moderate-sized Kansas high schools. In some schools these trips have had the wholehearted support of the administrator and the community, while in other schools, they were not favored by the administrator and were only being carried on because they are more or less of a tradition.

The survey revealed that, although the senior trips were virtually the same in all schools, they vary considerably in detail from school to school. All senior trips were tours or excursions, taken by high school graduating classes and sponsored by school authorities or parents, in which the students went to some destination outside of their own environment. However, factors varied widely from school to school as the means of raising the funds for the trip, the distance traveled, the time allotted to the trip, the mode of transportation, when the trip is taken, choice of destination, and other activities of the trip.

A large number of the schools usually visited some historic place or industrial center while other schools made trips to some scenic recreational resort. These senior trips usually can be assumed to be of some recreational and educational value. They bring to the young people involved advantages of visiting

many sections of the country, observing the people and customs, working cooperatively in a group, enjoying unusual recreational activities, broadening their knowledge, and providing them with cherished memories.

The writer searched the survey for answers to the four questions set up at the beginning of the study. Here are the findings as they pertained to each question:

1. What is the most desirable type senior trip as to the length in days and in miles traveled?

From the findings on the returned questionnaires, the most popular trip appeared to be of three to five days in duration, with the distance traveled not more than a thousand miles for the round trip. These trips, somewhat shorter than the highly publicized longer ones, were favored because they were not so expensive as to make fund-raising activities overburdensome, and the students were not so likely to become overtired and troublesome. The majority of schools took a minimum of school days extending their trip into a weekend. This type of trip could be taken before school was out while the sponsors still had jurisdiction over the students. Other schools who favored longer trips chose going after school was out because less school time would be lost and a longer trip could be taken without hurrying. Nearly all the schools agreed that the trip should be of educational value and yet provide some opportunities for recreation.

2. What procedure should be used in setting up a successful trip?



In order to have a successful trip there must be extensive planning. Guided by the interested supervision of the administrator, sponsors, parents, and a definite board policy, the students should have a part in the actual planning of the trip, in making rules and regulations to be obeyed, in selection of the destination, in making the reservations, and in attending to other necessary details. When so consulted, the students will be more cooperative and their trip will have more meaningful educational value for them.

3. What are the attitudes of administrators and the reactions of communities towards senior trips?

More than half of the administrators were not in favor of the senior trips as in current practice. Another 40 per cent of the administrators felt that they had enough educational value to be worthy of the responsibility involved and the time spent.

The administrators ardently against the trip related unpleasant experiences occurring on previous trips and complained of extra burdens created in their already overcrowded schedule. Most of the administrators agreed that the trip should be thoroughly planned and supervised if it were to be worthwhile. Many felt that the trips should be more educational, that too much school time was being spent in money-raising endeavors to finance the trip, and that the responsibilities of such a trip probably outweighed the trip's educational advantages. Some administrators thought that the State Board of Education should set up some definite rules governing senior trips. In most cases the commun-



ity's reaction was favorable toward the senior trip mainly because they were of traditional nature and as long as nothing of serious nature happened on a trip.

4. What policies should be established by the school administrator and the school board in regard to senior trips?

The board of education and the administrator should get together to set a definite school policy as to the length of the trip in miles and days, thus assisting in ending the long, expensive trips and the competition between classes and school to outdo one another. The board and administrator should also have a definite policy that senior trips would continue only so long as the students' conduct warranted their continuation. As well, they should have a set policy that all trips would be under the jurisdiction of the administrator and sponsors and have the full sanction of the board. Other policies which have been helpful had to do with who the sponsors on the trip should be, what mode of transportation is most suitable in the peculiar situation of the school, and what amount of time could be advantageously set aside for the fund-raising activities commonly used for financing the senior trips.

The amount of educational value received, which should be of prime importance if the trip is to achieve its purpose, depends largely upon the extensive preliminary planning of worthwhile educational objectives. However, regardless of planning, many unforeseen problems often confront administrators and sponsors on a senior trip, such as discipline problems, highway accidents,

sickness, injuries, destruction of public property, disagreements, use of alcoholic beverages, sexual problems, exaggerated accounts of happenings, and parents' disapproval of methods used in handling problems on the trip. Even these problems can be lessened if certain policies are set up prior to the trip and adhered to by all concerned.

All these problems and countless others connected with the money-raising activities and the human problems involved while getting a group of individuals to work together add up to an unestimable burden of responsibility. The big question appears to be whether the value received by students is really worth all the burden of responsibility thrust upon the persons placed in charge of these senior trips.

The answer to this question was one of the main conclusions this study hoped to reach, and, as well, it was wondered if the educational values of a senior trip warranted the time spent on the trip and in fund-raising activities. The majority of the administrators contacted indicated clearly that they could not consider senior trips of enough educational value to warrant the time spent on fund-raising and on the actual trip. They also thought that the responsibility involved was too great for the educational benefits derived from them. However, they find it almost impossible to break down the senior trip tradition so ingrained has it become. Some suggested the need for a statewide movement toward curtailing such trips or stopping them completely.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

After a careful perusal of the information from the questionnaires and a study of the available material on senior trips, the following recommendations were made:

The board of education and administrator should draw up definite policies governing senior trips in their particular community, especially on these points: limitation of distance, limitation of days, who should be the sponsors, mode of transportation, and the amount of time that can be spent on fund-raising activities.

The State Department of Public Instruction should provide Kansas high schools with a list of suggested minimum standards and policies to help boards of education, school administrators, and communities in anticipating and meeting problems which grow out of senior trips.

The senior trip should be a definite part of the school program but using a limited amount of school time and not be allowed to disrupt the regular classes and other activities.

The students and parents should be included in the planning of the trip, building toward a feeling that they have a definite part in the plans and in setting up standards of conduct and things to be accomplished.

The planning committee of a senior trip should be encouraged to include predominance of educational elements and to build a complete itinerary.

Additional study should be made into the legal aspects in or-



der to clearly define the position of the parents, the administrator, the students, the board, and sponsors as to their liabilities on such a trip.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Appreciation and gratitude are extended to Dr. O. Kenneth O'Fallon and to Dr. H. Leigh Baker for their assistance in helping choose an adequate subject, their skillful guidance and patient encouragement, and their inspiring interest.

Thanks are also due to the 169 school administrators who took time out of their busy spring schedules to complete and return the questionnaires, making the facts available for this report, and particularly to the ones who took the added time to write detailed comments and suggestions and include samples of permit blanks, itineraries, and detailed plans of successful senior trips.

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## APPENDIX

## APPENDIX A

## SENIOR EXCURSION QUESTIONNAIRE

Directions: Most of the questions can be answered by placing a check mark (x) in the appropriate blank at the right. There are a few questions that will require a brief explanatory reply.

1. Do your seniors take a trip? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
 If your answer is "No", you need not answer the rest of these questions.
2. Number of seniors in your school. \_\_\_\_\_
3. How long does your trip last? \_\_\_\_\_ days
4. Is the trip taken (1) on school time \_\_\_\_\_  
 (2) after school is out \_\_\_\_\_  
 (3) combinations \_\_\_\_\_
5. Do you take the trip (1) in the spring \_\_\_\_\_  
 (2) in the fall \_\_\_\_\_  
 (3) in the summer \_\_\_\_\_
6. Do you travel by (1) school bus \_\_\_\_\_  
 (2) chartered bus \_\_\_\_\_  
 (3) private cars \_\_\_\_\_  
 (4) \_\_\_\_\_
7. What is the usual distance traveled on the trips? \_\_\_\_\_ miles
8. How is the trip financed? (1) students own money \_\_\_\_\_  
 (2) board of education \_\_\_\_\_  
 (3) by students raising money \_\_\_\_\_  
 (4) \_\_\_\_\_
9. If the money is raised by the students, when do they begin their money-raising activities?  
 (1) Freshman year \_\_\_\_\_

(2) Sophomore year \_\_\_\_\_

(3) Junior year \_\_\_\_\_

(4) Senior year \_\_\_\_\_

10. How is the money raised by the student?

(1) Plays \_\_\_\_\_

(2) Annuals \_\_\_\_\_

(3) Concessions at school  
activities \_\_\_\_\_

(4) Donations \_\_\_\_\_

(5) Carnivals \_\_\_\_\_

(6) Food Sales \_\_\_\_\_

(7) \_\_\_\_\_

11. What is the average cost of the trip per student? \_\_\_\_\_

12. Do all seniors go on the trip? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If your answer is "Yes" to this question, you need not answer Question 13.

13. What is done about seniors who stay home?

14. If the money is raised by class activities, is it divided equally among all seniors even though they do not go on the trip?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

15. When are plans started as to where the class will go?

16. Who determines how far the class shall go on the senior trip?

(1) Administrator \_\_\_\_\_

(2) Board of Education \_\_\_\_\_

(3) Students \_\_\_\_\_

(4) Parents \_\_\_\_\_

(5) Other (Please list) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



17. Is permission received in writing from all parents for students to go on the trip? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
If answer is "Yes," please send copy of permission blank.
18. Is a complete itinerary made in advance and given to the students and parents as to how the time will be spent on the trip? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
19. Does this itinerary give information so that the group can be contacted on any day at a certain place and time? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
20. How much of the time on the trip has been planned for educational purposes? (Give example of activity which you consider has educational purpose.)
21. How much of the time on the trip is allotted to students to do as they wish?
22. How is the trip sponsored? (1) By faculty \_\_\_\_\_  
(2) Faculty and parents \_\_\_\_\_  
(3) \_\_\_\_\_
23. How many students are allotted to a sponsor? \_\_\_\_\_
24. What type of insurance is carried on the students while traveling?  
(1) Regular school bus insurance \_\_\_\_\_  
(2) Regular coverage on private car \_\_\_\_\_  
(3) Special trip insurance \_\_\_\_\_  
(4) \_\_\_\_\_
25. What is the sentiment in your community regarding the senior excursions?
26. In your personal opinion do you consider the educational value to the students worthy of the time and money spent in fund-raising activities and actual school time used? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If your answer is "Yes," give examples of benefits to justify your answer.

If you wish a summary of the results of this study, sign your name below. Otherwise you need not sign.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

Onaga, Kansas  
May 2, 1955

Dear Mr.

This study, under the direction of Dr. O. Kenneth O'Fallon, Department of Education, Kansas State College, is an effort to define the current trend of practices concerning senior trips or excursions in small high schools of Kansas.

These senior trips, originally dubbed "sneaks," have been a frequent topic of discussion in formal and informal groups of school administrators for many years. Although most principals are aware of the trend toward longer and more expensive trips and the increasing magnitude of problems involved, little conclusive data has been compiled on the subject. This study does not propose to reach an absolute solution to the problems; however, the findings should provide some concrete observations about current practices. Our specific aims are (1) to arrive at conclusions concerning educational values of such trips when compared with the time and money involved and (2) to determine whether the continuation of such practices is justified.

Aware of the limited time you have to assist us, we have designed the questionnaire to be completed as quickly and as simply as possible. Most of the answers can be completed with a check mark; a few will require short varying replies. We certainly hope you will find it convenient to complete the questionnaire at once and return it in the enclosed addressed envelope. I will be personally indebted to you for your few minutes taken in returning the completed form. However, since we are confident that most of the principals we are contacting are also interested in this problem, we are offering to mail you a summary of the findings if you indicate a desire by signing your name and address in the space provided at the close of the questionnaire.

Very truly yours,

/s/ L. R. Griffing



## APPENDIX B

## A LIST OF SCHOOLS TO WHOM THE QUESTIONNAIRES WERE SENT

Ada	Cuba	Inman	Nortonville
Admire	Denison	Ionia	Oakley
Agra	Dighton	Irving	Oberlin
Alma	Dover	Jetmore	Onaga
Almena	Durham	Kanopolis	Osage City
Alta Vista	Effingham	Keats	Osborne
Andover	Ellis	Kensington	Oswego
Anthony	Elmdale	Kipp	Overbrook
Appanoose	Elwood	Kirwin	Oxford
Argonia	Emmett	La Cygne	Palco
Arlington	Enterprise	Lakin	Parker
Arma	Erie	Lansing	Paxico
Ashland	Eskridge	Lebo	Peabody
Attica	Everest	Lecompton	Perry
Assaria	Fairview	Lenora	Phillipsburg
Axtell	Frankfort	Leonardville	Portis
Barnes	Frontenac	LeRoy	Powhattan
Baxter Springs	Galena	Lewis	Pretty Prairie
Beattie	Galesburg	Lincoln	Protection
Benton	Garden Plain	Lindsborg	Quinter
Bern	Gardner	Linn	Randolph
Berryton	Genesco	Little River	Reserve
Bird City	Glasco	Longford	Riley
Blue Mound	Goff	Lorraine	Riverton
Blue Rapids	Gove	Louisburg	Rossville
Buffalo	Greeley	Lucas	Rosalia
Bucklin	Green	Lyndon	St. George
Burlingame	Greenleaf	Mahaska	St. Marys
Burns	Greensburg	Manter	Sabetha
Bushton	Haddam	Marion	Scandia
Burr Oak	Hamlin	Mayetta	Scranton
Canton	Hanover	McCracken	Sedan
Carbondale	Havensville	Medicine Lodge	Sedgwick
Centralia	Hazelton	Meriden	Seneca
Chase	Hepler	Miltonvale	Silver Lake
Cimarron	Hiawatha	Minneapolis	Smith Center
Circleville	Highland	Moline	Soldier
Claflin	Hill City	Montrose	Solomon
Clifton	Hillsboro	Moran	Spring Hill
Clyde	Holton	Morrowville	Sterling
Coldwater	Horton	Mullinville	Sublette
Colony	Hoxie	Munden	Summerfield
Conaway Springs	Hoyt	Neosho Falls	Syracuse
Corning	Hugoton	Netawaka	Taylor
Courtland	Ingles	Nickerson	Tonganoxie

Tribune  
Troy  
Valley Falls  
Vermillion  
Viola

Wakefield  
Wamego  
Washington  
Waterville  
Waverly

Weir  
Westmoreland  
Westphalia  
Wetmore  
White City

Whiting  
Wilsey  
Wilson  
Woodbine  
Zenda

## APPENDIX C

## PERMISSION BLANK

May \_\_\_\_, 1955

State of Kansas  
County of

School District #

We the undersigned parents of \_\_\_\_\_ do hereby give our consent for \_\_\_\_\_ to go on the senior tour with the class of 1955. We do hereby release, The Board of Education; School District # \_\_\_\_\_; The Superintendent, \_\_\_\_\_; The Principal, \_\_\_\_\_; The sponsors; and all other members of the class from all liability during the trip or any incurred from the result of the trip.

We understand that the sponsors will do all things that they deem necessary to eliminate accidents and hazards of the trip. Therefore, we have instructed \_\_\_\_\_ to obey all instructions as set forth by the sponsors. In case \_\_\_\_\_ fails to obey said instructions, we give the sponsors permission to send \_\_\_\_\_ home by train or bus at our expense.

I \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ do hereby  
(Signature of Father) (Signature of Mother)

by solemnly swear and agree to all terms as set forth in the above agreement, so help me God.

Subscribed and sworn to before me this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_  
1955, A. D.

My Commission Expires \_\_\_\_\_



A STUDY OF SENIOR TRIPS  
IN KANSAS HIGH SCHOOLS

by

LEO RAYMOND GRIFFING

B. S., Kansas State College of Agriculture  
and Applied Science, 1947

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AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Department of Education

KANSAS STATE COLLEGE  
OF AGRICULTURE AND APPLIED SCIENCE

1955

## PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study was made for the purpose of discovering facts that might be of assistance to school administrators who are faced with their first experience with senior trips and to those who have sponsored senior trips but feel that there is need for improvement in the type of senior trips as they have developed. As well, a particular concern of this study was to try to arrive at a conclusion as to whether the educational value received from senior trips was worthy of the responsibility involved and the time spent on the trip and in fund-raising activities.

## METHOD OF SECURING DATA

The first step in this study was to review the available written material on this subject. The Kansas State College Library contained some periodical material on the subject, but it was soon evident that little research pertaining to this problem has been done up to this time.

The next step was securing information concerning the current practices of senior trips in representative high schools of Kansas with enrollments of between 22 and 285 students. Questionnaires were sent to the administrative head of the 200 high schools selected. Upon the return of 169 completed survey forms, the findings were summarized into tables, studied, and evaluated, then the more essential data were selected and compiled into

this report.

## SUMMARY

The results of this survey showed that senior trips in many moderate-sized high schools in Kansas have become an extensive and time-consuming project of the schools and that an increasing number of administrators are beginning to weigh the educational value of such time-consuming ventures.

All senior trips were tours or excursions, taken by high school graduating classes and sponsored by school authorities or parents, in which the students went to some destination outside of their usual environment. However, factors varied widely from one school to another as the distance traveled, the time allotted to the trip, the mode of transportation, when the trip was taken, the choice of destination, how funds were raised, and other activities regarding the organization of the trip.

The most desirable type of senior trip according to the findings of the survey appeared to be a trip of three to five days in duration and not exceeding one thousand miles round trip. Such trips, somewhat shorter than highly publicized longer trips, were favored because they were not so expensive as to make fund-raising activities overburdensome and the students were not so likely to become overtired and troublesome.

The best procedure to use in setting up a successful senior trip is to provide for extensive planning. Guided by the active supervision and interest of the administrator, the sponsors, par-



ents, and a definite board policy, the students should have a large part in the actual planning of the trip, in making rules and regulations to be obeyed, in selection of destination, and other necessary details. As they work out the detailed plan together, all will understand the responsibilities involved, and a trip of more meaningful educational value will result.

More than half of the administrators were not in favor of senior trips as they existed in current practice. Some felt that the trips should be made more educational, that too much time was being spent in money-raising endeavors to finance the trip, and that the responsibilities involved in the project were becoming burdensome. Most communities reacted favorably toward the senior trip because of their traditional nature and as long as nothing of serious nature happened on a trip locally.

A definite policy, set up by the board and the administrator, as to length of the senior trip in miles and days had been shown to be of assistance in curtailing long, expensive trips and the competition between classes and schools. Other policies as to transportation, sponsors, and fund-raising activities were helpful in keeping some of the troublesome problems under control.

The main conclusion from this study was that the majority of the administrators indicated clearly that they could not consider senior trips of enough educational value to warrant the time spent on fund-raising and on the actual senior trip. They also thought that the responsibility involved was too great for the educational benefits derived therefrom. Some expressed the

desire that such trips should be curtailed or stopped completely by a statewide movement.

