

CURRICULUM TRENDS IN ONE HUNDRED KANSAS HIGH SCHOOLS
BETWEEN 1925 AND 1935

by

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this research is primarily to discover curriculum trends developed in Kansas high schools in the decade closing in 1935. This study has been confined to third class cities and rural high schools. The curriculum will not be as rich in these schools as in first and second class cities. This means that the elective subjects must be more rigidly selected to fit the needs of the students. Quite often a student will come to the writer and request that a certain subject be added to the curriculum. After carefully explaining to the student why the subject is not being offered, the student will generally reply, "The course is offered in most schools." What the student has in mind is that the subject is being offered in larger schools.

The primary reason for this research is to inform the writer through survey what has been the recent curriculum trends in third class cities and rural high schools in order to better equip him in making curriculum adjustments with the current trends. It was the purpose of the writer to secure definite information on the following questions:

1. What subjects are being offered by the small high schools in Kansas?
2. Is there a tendency for some subjects to increase and a tendency for others to decrease in curriculum emphasis?

3. Are some high schools offering certain subjects at the expense of more desirable ones?
4. What are the most common teaching combinations where instructors must teach in more than one subject matter group?
5. What are the different methods of arranging the daily schedule?

PROCEDURE

Using the 1925 State Educational Directory, a list was made of all Kansas high schools having six or more teachers, excluding consolidated schools and not including first and second class cities. Only those schools having six or more teachers in 1925 were used in order to eliminate as far as possible error due to the alternation of subjects from year to year. The Principal's Annual Reports for the high schools of Kansas were studied at the State Department of Education. From a total of 120 schools, the reports for only 100 schools were found for the school year 1924-25. The subjects offered by the 100 schools were tabulated. The method of arranging the schedule, the teaching combinations, and the course of study for each school was studied. This procedure was followed for the same schools 10 years later. The following schools were used:

Alma	Colony	Mankato
Almena	Corning	Marquette
Altoona	Delphos	Medicine Lodge
Argonia	De Soto	Miltonvale
Arma	Douglass	Moran
Ashland	Downs	Morrill
Assaria	Elkhart	Mount Hope
Axtell	Ellinwood	Mulvane
Baldwin	Ellis	Natoma
Barnard	Ellsworth	Ness City
Belle Plaine	Erie	Mortonville
Bird City	Eskridge	Oakley
Blue Rapids	Ford	Oskaloosa
Bucklin	Fowler	Overbrook
Burlingame	Frankfort	Pawnee Rock
Burr Oak	Gaylord	Peabody
Cawker City	Glasco	Perry
Cedar Vale	Glen Elder	Phillipsburg
Centralia	Greensburg	Plainville
Cheney	Highland Park	Pleasanton
Clear Water	La Crosse	Quinter
Clifton	Leon	Riley
Clyde	Mc Louth	Rossville
Coldwater	Macksville	Russell

St. John	Stafford	Wamego
Seaman	Stockton	Washburn
Sedan	Sylvan Grove	Washington
Sedgwick	Syracuse	Waterville
Severy	Tonganoxie	Wathena
Shawnee Mission	Troy	Wetmore
Smith Center	Valley Center	Wilson
Solomon	Valley Falls	Winchester
South Haven	Wakeeney	
Spearville	Wakefield	

REQUIREMENTS OF THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

The requirements of the State Board of Education determine to a certain extent the subjects offered by Kansas high schools. No mention will be made of the requirements of the State Board of Education prior to 1925. The requirements prior to that date have little or no bearing on this problem.

In 1925 seven units of the fifteen necessary for graduation were required subjects, as follows:

English	-----	3 units
Mathematics	-----	2 units
(Including Elementary Algebra and Plane Geometry)		

Science ----- 1 unit
 (Exclusive of Physical Geography,
 Physiology, and Elementary Science)

History ----- 1 unit

The subjects were arranged into the following five groups:

1. English

Composition

Literature

2. Mathematics

Algebra

Geometry

Trigonometry

3. History and Science

Ancient History

Medieval History

Modern History

English History

American History

Civics

Citizenship

Economics

4. Science

Elementary Science

Physical Geography

Agriculture

Physiology

Botany

Zoology

Chemistry

Physics

Biology

5. Foreign Languages

Latin

French

Spanish

In August, 1925, a radical departure was made from the old system of required subjects. The new requirements which included a system of majors and minors were as follows:

1. Two majors of three units each:

The first major in English.

The second major from one of the remaining groups.

2. Two minors of two units each:

One minor is required in social science unless social science has been selected as the second major.

3. One-half unit of Constitution of the United States is required of all students before graduation.

4. The remaining units may be selected from any one or more of the six subject matter groups.

An additional group of subjects was offered in 1925 under the heading of Vocational and Fine Arts, making a total in all of six subject matter groups. The additional group of Vocational and Fine Arts was divided into three parts as follows:

Commercial subjects

Commercial Arithmetic

Commercial Geography

Pennmanship

Bookkeeping

Typewriting

Shorthand

Commercial Correspondence

Commercial Law

Industrial subjects

Woodworking

Iron Work

Mechanical Drawing

Sewing

Cooking

Printing

Bookbinding

Drawing and Designing

Music and Art

Chorus and Rudiments of Music

Orchestra and Glee Club

Music Appreciation

Theory and Harmony

Vocal and Instrumental Music

The only other changes in 1925 were the addition of Constitution and Sociology to the social science group, and the addition of German to the foreign language group.

The requirements in 1925 show no change from 1925 with the exception that one year of mathematics or a laboratory science was required for graduation. Mathematics refers to Algebra and Geometry. Science refers to Biology, Botany, Chemistry, and Physics. The Vocational and Fine Arts group was divided into three separate groups: industrial subjects, commercial subjects, music and art. The addition

of two more subject matter groups made a total of eight from which the student could obtain his major and minor requirements.

The following changes were made in individual subject matter groups. Public Speaking and Journalism were added to the English group. General Mathematics was added to the mathematics group. The social science group was made to include Vocations, International Relations, and Psychology. Ancient History was dropped from the social science group. Auto Mechanics, Vocational Agriculture, and Vocational Home Economics were added to the list of industrial subjects. One new subject, Drawing and Painting, was added to the music and art group. The detailed revised curriculum for 1935 is as follows:

- | | | |
|---------------------|---------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. English | | 4. Social Science |
| Composition | | World History |
| Literature | | Ancient and Medieval History |
| Public Speaking | | Modern History |
| Journalism | | American History |
| 2. Mathematics | | Civics |
| Algebra | | Citizenship |
| Geometry | | Economics |
| Trigonometry | | Sociology |
| General Mathematics | | Constitution of the United States |
| 3. Foreign Language | | Vocations |
| Latin | Spanish | International Relations |
| French | German | Psychology |

5. Science

Elementary Science
 Physical Geography
 General Agriculture
 Physiology
 Botany
 Chemistry
 Physics
 Biology

6. Commercial subjects

Commercial Arithmetic
 Commercial Geography
 Penmanship
 Bookkeeping
 Typewriting
 Stenography
 Commercial Correspondence
 Commercial Law

7. Industrial subjects

Woodworking
 Iron Work
 Mechanical Drawing
 Printing
 Auto Mechanics
 Bookbinding
 Drawing and Designing
 Vocational Agriculture
 Cooking

Sewing

Vocational Home Economics

8. Music and Art

Chorus and Rudiments of Music
 Orchestra and Glee Club
 Music Appreciation
 Theory and Harmony
 Vocal and Instrumental Music
 Drawing and Painting

<u>Subject</u>	<u>1924-25</u>	<u>1934-35</u>	<u>Increase or decrease</u>
General Science	76	82	+ 6
General Agriculture	95	57	-38
Industrial Geography	0	5	+ 5
Physical Geography	16	21	+ 5
Physics	100	75	-27
Physiography	3	0	- 3
Physiology	85	55	-32

The decline in offering the subject of General Agriculture is explained in terms of the trend in many high schools to offer much of this subject matter in Biology and Physical Geography save in those schools where greater emphasis is placed on the specialized offering of Vocational Agriculture. A number of schools offered General Agriculture and Physiology due to the requirements of the Normal Training course.

Foreign Language

Table II shows a decided trend away from the ancient past and the so-called cultural subjects. The slogan at one time was to improve your

English by studying foreign languages. Now the trend is to improve your English by taking more English. The decrease in Spanish, French, and Latin is due to the trend in offering more English in the form of applied subjects as Journalism, Public Speaking, and Business English. Latin was required by some schools in 1925 but there was no evidence of such a requirement in 1935.

Table II. Showing the number of schools offering the different foreign language subjects in 1924-25 and 1934-35

Subject	1924-25	1934-35	Increase or decrease
German 1-2	1	5	+ 4
German 3-4	0	1	+ 1
French 1-2	6	2	- 4
French 3-4	2	2	0
Latin 1-2	86	66	-20
Latin 3-4	78	56	-22
Latin 5-6	20	8	-12
Latin 7-8	5	1	- 4
Spanish 1-2	27	20	- 7
Spanish 3-4	11	10	- 1
Spanish 5-6	0	1	+ 1

If it were not for the fact that many schools removed German from their curricula during the World War, German probably would have shown a decrease during the years of this study rather than an increase. The number of schools offering German in 1925 would have been greater under normal conditions.

Music and Art

Table III shows a decided trend to emphasize those subjects training the student for the wise use of leisure time and giving him the opportunity to receive training that will aid him to appreciate and enjoy the more worth while things in life. Along with the large increase in the music offerings there is a trend toward giving music subjects more consideration in making out the schedule and also giving academic credit for student participation in musical organizations. In 1925 many of the music subjects were offered after school hours or at a time when it would be impossible for all students to participate. All of the schools in 1935 had special periods for music alone.

Table III. Showing the number of schools offering the different music and art subjects for the years 1924-25 and 1934-35

Subject	1924-25	1934-35	Increase or decrease
Art	1	6	+ 5
Band	1	55	+52
Chorus	7	72	+65
Drum Corps	0	1	+ 1
Glee Club	40	93	+53
Music Appreciation	14	31	+17
Orchestra	12	72	+60

The small amount of offering in Art is a good example of how the small schools fail in offering as rich a curriculum as you would find in many larger schools. The small schools need to offer more Art. This can be done in many schools by substituting Art for a less desirable subject.

Normal Training

Table IV shows one of the most outstanding and desirable trends is the big decrease in the offering of Normal Training subjects. Out

of 84 schools offering the course in 1925, only 16 offered the course in 1935. Two schools offered Methods and Management although the school did not offer the complete Normal Training course. Methods and Management was offered in one school in order to keep in attendance tuition students desiring the Normal Training course. Methods and Management was offered to aid the students in taking the county examinations. The decrease in Psychology is partly due to the decrease in Normal Training and partly to the decrease in Physiology. Psychology and Physiology were generally offered together except in the schools offering Normal Training.

Table IV. Showing the number of schools offering the different Normal Training subjects for the years 1924-25 and 1934-35

Subject	1924-25	1934-35	Increase or decrease
Arithmetic Review	84	16	-68
Geography Review	84	16	-68
Grammar Review	84	16	-68
Methods and Management	84	18	-66
Psychology	92	57	-35
Reading Review	84	16	-68

The big decrease in Normal Training is due to the following:

1. There is a realization on the part of many school board members and the general public of the need for better trained teachers. Curriculum revision in the grades has created a greater need for better trained teachers. Many schools formerly hiring teachers without college training, now desire college graduates with special preparation for the grades taught.
2. A tendency on the part of school executives to discourage Normal Training. Some schools offer Normal Training merely because the board of education expects the additional students to pay at least the salary of the instructor.
3. The frontier has disappeared. Many parents are beginning to realize the best inheritance, and perhaps the only inheritance, they can leave their children is a good education.
4. It was generally expected that the state legislature in its recent session would rule out Normal Training altogether.
5. An increased supply of better trained teachers due at least in part to the depression and the decrease of employment in other fields.

Social Science

Table V shows a decided trend to make the social science subjects a study of more recent subject matter with special emphasis on subject matter giving citizenship training and promoting international good will and understanding. Ancient History, offered in 42 schools in 1925, was eliminated in all schools and also from the course of study in 1935. World History, a new and more modern subject, is taking the place of Ancient and Medieval History and Modern History. Ancient History was required by a number of schools in 1925. Greek History and Roman History, offered in one school in 1925, were not offered in 1935. American History, offered in all schools in 1925, showed a decrease of two in 1935. American History was required by most schools in 1925. There were few schools requiring the subject in 1935. Citizenship replaced Community Civics with a small gain. One-half unit of Constitution, required for graduation in 1935, replaced Civics. Civics was a one-unit subject in most schools. International Relations, a new subject offered in 45 schools, was used as a second semester subject following Constitution. The economic, political, and social conditions of one country may affect the other nations of the world. International Relations is a realization of the need for our youth to know something about the economic, political, and social conditions of foreign countries.

Table V. Showing the number of schools offering the different social science subjects for the years 1924-25 and 1934-35

Subject	1924-25	1934-35	Increase or decrease
American History	100	98	- 2
Ancient History	42	0	-42
Ancient and Medieval History	48	24	-24
Citizenship	0	26	+26
Civics	100	0	-100
Community Civics	20	0	-20
Constitution	0	100	+100
Current History	0	1	+ 1
Economics	49	64	+15
English History	3	1	- 2
Greek History	1	0	- 1
International Relations	0	45	+45
Modern History	66	33	-33
Problems in Democracy	6	0	- 6
Roman History	1	0	- 1
Social Civics	0	9	+ 9
Sociology	21	58	+37
Vocations	1	13	+12
World History	0	52	+52

English

Table VI shows a decided trend to offer English subjects in the senior year which will enable the student to apply the knowledge obtained in the first three years of required English. The increase is in such applied English subjects as Journalism and Public Speaking and the increase of Business English in the commercial group, sided in the decline of fourth year English. The trend away from the foreign languages was responsible in some schools for the increase in the English subjects.

Table VI. Showing the number of schools offering the different English subjects for the years 1924-25 and 1934-35

Subject	1924-25	1934-35	Increase or decrease
Debate	4	1	- 3
Dramatics and Expression	5	5	0
English 1-2	100	100	0
English 3-4	100	100	0
English 5-6	100	100	0
English 7-8	59	50	- 9
Journalism	0	10	+10
Library Methods	0	1	+ 1
Public Speaking	7	19	+12

Mathematics

Table VII shows a modern trend on the part of a few schools offering a General Mathematics course. The trend is to offer General Mathematics to students who are not capable of handling Algebra or Geometry.

The increase in third year Algebra, Solid Geometry, and Trigonometry is too slight to be considered as a trend. The increase in third year Algebra, Solid Geometry, and Trigonometry is perhaps due to an increased demand for the subjects as preparation for college courses requiring mathematics. Fewer schools list Algebra and Geometry as required subjects.

Table VII. Showing the number of schools offering the different mathematics subjects for the years 1924-25 and 1934-35

Subject	1924-25	1934-35	Increase or decrease
Algebra 1-2	100	100	0
Algebra 3	49	53	+ 4
General Mathematics	0	8	+ 8
Plane Geometry	100	98	- 2
Solid Geometry	45	47	+ 2
Trigonometry	0	1	+ 1

Commercial Subjects

Table VIII shows a trend toward first year commercial subjects giving specialized training toward commercial positions. First year Bookkeeping, first year Typewriting, first year Shorthand, and Business Law show large increases. The decrease in second year Bookkeeping and second year Shorthand is probably a trend to leave the more advanced commercial training to business colleges. The increase in second year Typewriting is due to the fact it is a popular course with most students. Second year Typewriting is desired by the student wanting a "snap" course and by the student who does not have much reasoning ability. Industrial subjects and subjects in music and art would be much better for many students lacking in reasoning power. Second year Typewriting offers very little to the student with the exception of increased speed and accuracy. Increases in speed and accuracy are of little use to the student unless he goes immediately into a position where such speed and accuracy are needed. Both speed and accuracy are gradually lost without practice. Some schools offer second year Typewriting and do not offer even the first year of Shorthand. Junior Business Training, a new subject, is offered in eight schools and is usually used as a second semester subject following Business Law which shows a large increase. Investments and Salesmanship show little or no change. There is a tendency for the schools taking out Normal Training, to offer more

commercial subjects even though they may offer few if any other industrial subjects.

Table VIII. Showing the number of schools offering the different commercial subjects for the years 1924-25 and 1934-35

Subject	1924-25	1934-35	Increase or decrease
Bookkeeping 1-2	67	83	+16
Bookkeeping 3-4	11	8	- 3
Bookkeeping 5-6	0	1	+ 1
Business English	2	7	+ 5
Business Law	32	47	+15
Commercial Arithmetic	51	63	+12
Commercial Geography	26	16	-10
Investments	1	0	- 1
Junior Business Training	0	8	+ 8
Pensmanship	31	13	-18
Salesmanship	1	1	0
Shorthand 1-2	45	59	+14
Shorthand 3	10	8	- 2
Typewriting 1-2	62	97	+35
Typewriting 3-4	20	40	+20

Industrial Subjects

Table IX shows a decided trend to make the curriculum to better fit the needs of the students and community. Many of the students in the small high schools come from the farm. The smaller the school, as a rule, the greater the percent of farm youths in the school. According to Bruner (1932), 80 percent of the students he studied continue to live in the same community or in similar communities after graduation. The increase in the first three years of Vocational Agriculture and the first two years of Vocational Home Economics is a much desired trend to train the farm boys and girls for the things which they will do after graduation.

The decrease in the first two years of Home Economics and the first year of Manual Training is due to schools replacing the subjects with Vocational Home Economics and Vocational Agriculture. There is a tendency for schools offering the first two years of Home Economics to add a third and a fourth year. There is also a trend for schools offering the first year of Manual training to add a second year. Schools offering Manual Training tend to offer one or two years of Mechanical Drawing as shown by the increases in these subjects.

Table IX. Showing the number of schools offering the different industrial subjects for the years 1924-25 and 1934-35

Subject	1924-25	1934-35	Increase or decrease
Home Economics 1-2	94	84	-10
Home Economics 3-4	88	76	-12
Home Economics 5-6	13	31	+18
Home Economics 7-8	1	4	+ 3
Home Management	0	1	- 1
Manual Training 1-2	69	67	- 2
Manual Training 3-4	33	50	+17
Manual Training 5-6	2	1	- 1
Manual Training for Girls	1	0	- 1
Mechanical Drawing 1-2	13	19	+ 6
Mechanical Drawing 3-4	1	8	+ 7
Mill Work	0	2	+ 2
Vocational Agriculture 1-2	20	35	+15
Vocational Agriculture 3-4	7	34	+27
Vocational Agriculture 5-6	0	7	+ 7
Vocational Home Economics 1-2	4	13	+ 9
Vocational Home Economics 3-4	2	13	+11

CONCLUSIONS

There is a realization of a need to offer subjects which will serve as a better guide through life and as a result there is a tendency to look to the future instead of the past. There is an increase in subjects giving preparation for life in a democracy and promoting international good will.

The major and minor requirements of the State Board of Education has been a great help in permitting more group and free electives as shown by the increase in vocational and cultural subjects.

The increase in vocational subjects, cultural subjects, and subjects dealing with man's relation to his environment tend to make the high school a finishing school for the student who will not attend college.

Many schools tend to use only the present requirements of the State Board of Education as shown by the decrease in the number of schools requiring Algebra, Geometry, Physics and Foreign Language.

Some schools are offering additional commercial subjects to the exclusion of more desirable subjects which would tend to make a finishing school. More Art should be offered by this group of high schools.

The increase in Vocational Agriculture and Vocational Home Economics is a trend to give boys and girls living in rural communities the op-

portunity to train themselves for the things they will do after graduation.

SUMMARY

In the field of science, subjects are being offered which will give a broad general survey of this field for the students who will not attend college and it will enable the students having a desire for further study in science to more wisely select the subjects for special study.

Special emphasis is being placed on General Science and Biology as subject matter dealing with the relation of man to his environment. The decline in the offering of General Agriculture is due to the increase in Vocational Agriculture.

More English is being taught in the form of such applied subjects as Journalism, Public Speaking, and Business English. The foreign languages have decreased greatly due to the emphasis placed on more modern and applied subjects, which will aid the student in solving his problems in later life.

The large increase in all music offerings is due to a trend to emphasize the wise use of leisure time and the appreciation and enjoyment of more worth while things in life. The high schools are lacking in the offerings of Art.

One of the most desired trends is shown in the big decrease in Normal Training due to the realization of a need for better teachers and the lack of state aid since 1924.

Social science subjects show a decided emphasis toward more recent subject matter giving citizenship training and promoting international good will. Ancient History has been eliminated while more emphasis is being placed on modern History, International Relations, Sociology, and Vocations. General Mathematics is offered to appeal to the students who do not intend to enter college. General Mathematics is more popular than the traditional subjects of Algebra and Geometry which are offered only because of college requirements.

Many schools have added Shorthand, Typewriting, Bookkeeping, and Business Law. In a number of cases the increase of these subjects has been at the expense of subjects which would tend to make the high school a finishing school.

The number of schools offering Vocational Agriculture and Vocational Home Making in their curricula has increased in proportion to the changes in attitude of the school authorities toward the high school as a finishing school. The schools offering these subjects have dropped General Agriculture, Manual Training, and Home Economics.

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