

FEASIBILITY STUDY OF UTILIZING ST. MARYS
COLLEGE FACILITIES FOR U.S.D. 321

by *JLG*

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Kansas in 1896 had 9,284 school districts. In a pioneer society academic achievement was secondary to obtaining a livelihood from the soil. This type of background developed the one-room rural school which was to become one of the important focal points of the community. It was the one-room school that served as the focal point for box suppers, spelling bees, community sings, and other social actions. Needless to say, in rural Kansas much sentiment became attached to the local school districts and attempts towards unification were met with strong disapproval. It wasn't until 1945 that the first major attempt towards reorganization took place. But as was to happen again in 1961, the legislation towards reorganization was declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court. The 1963 legislature was determined to enact a sound reorganization law that would be constitutional. The 1963 law provided for incorporating all territory of the state into school districts that offered instruction from grades one through twelve with authority to operate kindergarten and, under certain conditions, junior colleges. Amendatory legislation was to follow in 1965 to correct problems and inequities that could not be foreseen in 1963.¹ As a result of unification of existing school districts there were 330 school districts

¹Adel F. Throckmorton, Kansas Educational Progress 1858-1967, pp. 82-88.

in Kansas on July 1, 1968. Of this number of school districts, 310 were unified and twenty were non-unified.²

Under the minimum requirements of H.B. 377 many advantages of unification were realized. First of all, each district would maintain grades one through twelve with coordination of the total educational program. Previously, elementary and secondary school districts existed as separate entities. Second, the entire school system of each unified district was under the control of one board of education and was administered by a single administrative and supervisory staff. Third, it made all property in the district available to support the entire educational program. Unification also permitted all citizens in the locality to have a voice in the entire educational program. It also fostered more effective use of tax revenue because school funds could be spent more advantageously through limiting competition between elementary and secondary districts; centralized purchasing; and provision of able administration of the finance and business affairs of the district. Through unification, teacher preparation also improved since it enabled specialization with a resulting reduction in the number of preparations. Unification also permitted utilization of special services personnel such as a school nurse; school psychologist; remedial reading specialist; special education teachers for the homebound and the handicapped; counselors; and adult education teachers. Further, through consolidation of schools the students derived the benefits of improved

²George D. Keith, "Unification Report", (Unification Division Kansas State Department of Public Instruction, 1968), p. 1. (Mimeographed.)

libraries, more audio-visual materials, and improved laboratories. Additionally, unification strengthened local control of education through an increase in flexibility of the educational program.³

Although school reorganization has reduced the number of school districts in Kansas from 1,848 in 1963 to 330 in July of 1968 many small, expensive, and inefficient high schools continued to operate. For instance, according to the 1967-1968 Unification Report there were 257 four year high schools with less than two hundred students. Of this number of schools only one was classified as comprehensive, and in this school a large number of classes with from one to five students was required in order to qualify for the rating. The report went on to show that out of a total of 35,515 high school classes in all districts there were 2,253 classes with from one to five pupils and 4,670 classes with from six to ten pupils. Therefore, it was noted that about twenty per cent of all high school classes within the State of Kansas during the 1967-1968 school year had enrollments of ten or fewer students.⁴

The basic philosophy underlying the advantages of school unification has not been achieved within the State of Kansas. Because in studying the 1967-1968 Table of Unified Districts Maintaining More Than One High School, it was noted that seventy-seven districts maintained more than one high school; a high school being defined as including grades nine through twelve. The seventy-seven districts

³"Advantages of Unification", (Unification Division Kansas State Department of Public Instruction, 1964), pp. 1-2. (Mimeographed.)

⁴Keith, op. cit., pp. 3-4.

contained 188 high schools. Of this number, only nine high schools outside of the populated areas of Kansas City, Wichita, and Topeka, which incorporated eighteen separate high schools of various organization, had an enrollment greater than three hundred students. Conversely, during the 1967-1968 school term there were 162 in the category that maintained less than three hundred students.⁵ During the previous school year there were also 146 single high school unified school districts which maintained schools with less than three hundred students.⁶

Kaw Valley Unified School District 321 was one of the seventy-seven unified school districts which maintained more than two high schools during the 1967-1968 school term. Kaw Valley School District consisted of 303 square miles of territory and was formed from ten individual school districts.⁷ The district in 1968 had an estimated tangible valuation of \$11,727,601 with a budget of \$637,936.⁸ Its September 1968 enrollment was 1,084 students. During the 1968-1969 school term Kaw Valley School District maintained elementary schools at Emmett, St. Marys, Delia, and Rossville with high schools at St. Marys

⁵"Table of Unified Districts Maintaining More Than One High School, 1967-1968", (Unification Division Kansas State Department of Public Instruction, 1968), (Mimeographed.)

⁶"Summary of Unified School Districts in Kansas", (Unification Division Kansas State Department of Public Instruction, 1967), pp. 1-12. (Mimeographed.)

⁷Ibid., p. 7.

⁸Louis E. Holaday, "A Report to the Board of Education Kaw Valley Unified School District 321, concerning the 1968-1969 budget", August, 1968.

and Rossville. Also contributing to the enrollment of St. Marys High School was the parochial elementary school at St. Marys.

According to Mr. Holaday, Superintendent of Unified School District 321, "The board is of the opinion that every patron of the district wants an education system second to none in the state. However, this goal cannot be realized without a building program of some sort."⁹ The board also noted that the district was offering a high school curriculum which was geared to the average student, and the curriculum did not have enough vocational education courses. It also did not meet the needs of the six to twelve per cent of the student body that had a level of mental ability below that normally considered sufficient to perform high school work satisfactorily.¹⁰ At the other extreme, the present program did not satisfy the needs of the twenty to twenty-five per cent of the students who were very capable and should be able to do advanced work satisfactorily.¹¹ After considering the above facts and others, such as overcrowded and unsafe conditions, the board voted to work towards one comprehensive high school.¹² Commitment to a building program by the board of education showed that it was concerned about the limited opportunities available to the students of the district. But

⁹News item in The Saint Marys Star, September 19, 1968.

¹⁰Secondary School Committee, "Proposal For The Secondary School Curriculum", (A Report to the Board of Education Kaw Valley Unified School District 321, 1966), p. 1. (Mimeographed.)

¹¹Ibid.

¹²News item in The Saint Marys Star, September 26, 1968.

Kaw Valley School District in trying to accomplish unification realized a difficult task since it did not provide the necessary facilities, and like most districts undergoing unification, lacked the finances necessary to carry out a building program that would meet the philosophical goals of unification.

Statement of the Problem

It was the purpose of this study to (1) evaluate the physical plant facilities of St. Marys College in terms of established educational criteria, and (2) evaluate St. Marys College facilities in terms of criteria established by Unified School District 321.

Importance of the Study

A number of critical situations faced those who were responsible for the educational program of Unified District 321. Some of the problems were brought on as a result of unification of school districts, and others were a result of population growth, and general deterioration of facilities.

One of the basic problems facing the district was the crowded conditions which existed at its attendance centers. For instance, St. Marys Grade School was designed for ninety-two students but during the 1968-1969 school term maintained an enrollment of 185 students. St. Marys High School had a capacity rating of 150-160 students, and during the same term, had an enrollment of 205 students with a projected 1972-1973 enrollment of 221. Rossville High School, which also had a rated capacity of 150-160 students, had an enrollment of 167 students

with a projected 1972-1973 enrollment of 197. Rossville Grade School was under similar crowded conditions and had to purchase a mobile classroom. After adding the trailer it still contained a class of thirty-eight students and a class of forty-two students.¹³

The elementary facilities of Emmett and St. Marys were also in poor structural condition in addition to being overcrowded. For instance, according to the November 8, 1968, State Fire Marshal's School Inspection Report, Emmett Grade School, which was a two-story rock structure, had open-wood stairways with poor electrical wiring. And St. Marys Grade School, which was a two-story rock structure with a basement had three foot open-wood stairways in poor condition, and poor electrical wiring. It also had a general rating of very poor for the old part and fair for the new part with poor exits and poor frame interiors.¹⁴

Adding to crowded conditions facing the district was the questionable status of Immaculate Conception Grade School with its 191 students. On December 12, 1968, the Parents Club met to discuss the questionnaire sent out to determine the wishes of the parents concerning the future of the school so that a plan of action could be formulated.¹⁵

¹³News item in The Saint Marys Star, September 19, 1968.

¹⁴"School Inspection Report", (State Fire Marshal Department State Office Building, Topeka, Kansas 66612), November, 1968.

¹⁵Parents Club meeting, Immaculate Conception Parish Hall, St. Marys, Kansas, December 12, 1968.

Also facing the district were the curriculum proposals submitted by the Secondary School Committee which recommended a comprehensive high school to correct program deficiencies.¹⁶

The school board realized the need for additional facilities and therefore obtained the services of professor John Gilliland of Educational Planning Laboratories of the University of Tennessee to assist them in their planning. With the assistance of professor Gilliland, the high school teachers of the district drew up a set of educational specifications to meet the curriculum needs of the future. By building one comprehensive high school the board of education was attempting to provide for the immediate building needs of the district.

After studying the educational specifications, an architect drew up a preliminary building design for a site between St. Marys and Rossville. A bond proposal for \$2,170,000 was then submitted to the voters of the district in the 1968 general election and was decisively defeated by an unofficial vote of 1,298 against and 450 for.¹⁷ An analysis of the results of the election showed a number of factors were involved in the defeat of the bond proposal. One of the most important was the obvious tax increase which would have been imposed upon the citizenry. A second concern, especially in St. Marys and Emmett, was

¹⁶Secondary School Committee, "Proposal For the Secondary School Curriculum", (A Report to the Board of Education Kaw Valley Unified School District 321, 1966), p. 18. (Mimeographed.)

¹⁷News item in The Saint Marys Star, November 7, 1968.

the concern that not enough information had been given to the possibility of utilizing vacated St. Marys College.

It was the purpose of this study to provide information concerning St. Marys College facilities and the feasibility of using the facilities to satisfy the building needs of the district. As a result, the writer desired to answer the questions of the concerned citizens and thereby assist in remedying the building problems of the district.

Limitations

This study was limited to evaluation of the facilities of St. Marys College in terms of evaluation criteria developed by the College of Education, Kansas State University.

The writer did not possess the architectural competency required to determine the cost of a remodeling program of any existing facility.

Curriculum designs employed within the study were incorporated through recommendations of the Secondary School Curriculum Committee and the Educational Specifications Committee.

Further, this study was limited to the physical plant facilities as they applied to the entire educational program and did not propose to measure total district attitude towards incorporation of St. Marys College.

Definition of Terms Used

As a guide to the reader and to prevent misunderstanding, the following terms are defined according to their use in this report:

Elementary School: An elementary school which offered an educational program for grades kindergarten through eight.¹⁸

High School: A high school which offered an educational program for grades nine through twelve.¹⁹

Comprehensive High School: A program of course offerings of fifty units as outlined by the State of Kansas.

Unified School District No. 321: The school district organized under the authority of Kansas H.B. 377.²¹

St. Marys College: A Jesuit School of Theology, formerly a men's liberal arts college, which was located at St. Marys, Kansas

¹⁸Carter V. Good (ed.), and Winifred R. Merkel, Dictionary of Education, 2nd ed., p. 197.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 268

²⁰Adel F. Throckmorton, Rules, Regulations, Standards, and Procedures for Accrediting High Schools, State Department of Public Instruction Bulletin 201, Revised, 1967, p. 10.

²¹Rev. Stat. Kansas, 1963, H.B. 377, Sec. 2.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Research for this study was conducted in the library of Kansas State University; the Kansas State Department of Public Instruction Offices; and the Unified School District No. 321 Office in St. Marys, Kansas. In determination of the feasibility of utilizing St. Marys College to satisfy the needs of the District, it was imperative that basic considerations of good plant practice were understood. At the same time, it was also necessary to review the findings of the previous studies conducted within the district in order that their recommendations and suggestions could be given careful consideration.

Basic Considerations

An analysis of the College feasibility, required recognition of the trends in education and construction. Reida, in his discussion of ten significant trends in education, wrote of the two distinct realities which must be realized in planning a building program. He stated that it must be realized that changes have occurred in educational methods and techniques. This does not necessarily mean that the basic goals have changed, since in most cases the new innovations have not changed the educational philosophy. And secondly, it must be understood that tremendous advances have been made in construction technique and building materials.¹

¹George W. Reida, "Trends in Schoolhouse Construction." (School Facilities Section, Kansas State Department of Public Instruction, 1965), p. 1. (Mimeographed.)

One of the basic trends of construction which this study was concerned with was flexibility. Reida discussed the three types of flexibility suggested by Caudill: (1) immediate flexibility was that which consisted of some type of folding partition or divider, (2) overnight flexibility was that which could be easily accomplished by removable partitions, and (3) over-the-summer flexibility was that which could be easily achieved, at some expense, in a few weeks.² Gilliland, in writing of feasibility discussed four types of flexibility: (1) daily flexibility which can be obtained on a moments notice, (2) frequent flexibility which may involve moving heavier and more complex items of equipment and furnishings, (3) infrequent flexibility which could be achieved at somewhat greater expense and would involve changing more permanent equipment and furnishings, and (4) long-range flexibility which could provide for varying conditions with ease through careful planning.³ The need for planning to achieve flexibility was further brought out in a study by Hendry which was concerned with analyzing factors affecting secondary schools utilizing team teaching. In his study he found a significant difference between the needs of team and non-team teachers concerning facilities.⁴

²Ibid., p. 5

³John W. Gilliland, et. al., "Educational Specifications For Kaw Valley High School, St. Marys, Kansas", School Planning Laboratory, pp. 7-8.

⁴William Warwick Hendry, "Faculty Concern About Select Factors in Secondary Schools Utilizing Team Teaching", Dissertation Abstracts, 27: 2783, 1966.

Since buildings should be designed to fit the educational program, this study had to be cognizant of curriculum changes taking place. Allen has stated that there are three kinds of educational innovations:

(1) those consisting of new ideas and approaches to existing problems, (2) those made possible as a result of new technologies, and (3) those arising from needs and demands on the educational system as a result of social change. He went on to mention that we cannot prepare students for jobs and responsibilities that are clearly understood, well-defined, and stable as we know them to exist today.⁵ Cawelti in his national survey of innovative practices in 7,237 accredited high schools identified twenty-seven innovations. From his study he made the following observations:⁶

- (1) The diffusion rate for the acceptance of new ideas is now more rapid than ever before in the history of education.
- (2) Schools and states vary greatly in participation. Cost appears to be a retarding factor affecting their acceptance.
- (3) A search of the literature indicates the effect of different treatments or strategies of learning over a meaningful period of time is lacking.
- (4) The search of the literature also suggests that there are relatively few authentic innovators in the field of education.

⁵Dwight W. Allen, "Innovations in Elementary and Secondary Education", 1965 White House Conference on Education, pp. 136-137.

⁶Gordon Cawelti, "Innovative Practices in high schools: Who does what -- and why -- and how", Nation's Schools, 79:56-74, April, 1967.

- (5) The abandonment rate of some of the new programs stresses the need for careful planning.
- (6) Schools should develop discrete goals, a system for continuous evaluation, and a willingness to acknowledge weakness in planning for change.

In reference to the previous study by Cawelti, the editor of Nation's Schools has said:

Perhaps the most significant statistic in the study shows that the average accredited high school uses six of the twenty-seven innovations listed in the survey. If this study were conducted again in five years, and we hope it is, we'd bet that the average of six would double and probably triple.⁷

Littrell, through analysis of the literature, consultation with subject matter specialists, and discussion with teachers, presented a concise list of curricula practices in existence. In addition he gave judgment on the direction which the present practices appeared to be moving.⁸ It was reiterated that innovations have to be planned very carefully since in some cases they require special spaces and spatial relationships. As brought out by Stahl in his study of cost of programs for the academically gifted, special programs often call for additional money.⁹

⁷Aaron Cohodes (ed.), "Everyone worries about assessment these days", Nation's Schools, 79:55, April, 1967.

⁸J. Harvey Littrell, "Current Practices and Trends in the Elementary and Secondary Curricula", (Kansas State University College of Education Bulletin, 1966 Revision), pp. 1-18. (Mimeographed.)

⁹Martin LeRoy Stahl, "Program Opportunities and Per-Pupil Costs of Services For The Academically Gifted", Dissertation Abstracts, 27-88, 1965.

Another trend which has an effect on a building or remodeling program was the increasing number of summer programs offered. As pointed out by the Research Division Bulletin, there are more and more summer programs each year even though the length of the school year has not increased appreciably within the last five years.¹⁰ This study required that the trend of an extended school year be given careful consideration since it would have an important effect on a program housed within the College facilities.

A second basic consideration of the study that had an effect on the feasibility of utilizing St. Marys College was that of the adaptability of the school site. According to Reida, "a poorly arranged or underdeveloped site, like a badly designed or partially equipped classroom, defeats in part the very purpose for which it was obtained."¹¹ He went on to mention the factors to look for in a good site. Suitable areas for physical education, parking, loading and unloading pupils, outdoor laboratories, drives, walks, recreation, and supplementary space are some factors which had to be considered. Gilliland further noted that the relationships of learning spaces, auxiliary areas and service areas must provide for a free interchange of personnel without conflict of function.

¹⁰"Length of School Year", National Education Association Research Bulletin, 43:103-105, December, 1965.

¹¹George W. Reida, A Manual For Evaluating School Facilities, p. 6.

¹²Ibid., p. 7.

¹³Gilliland, op. cit., p. 14.

A third basic consideration which had to be observed in appraisal of the facilities was that of the building structure itself. Reida said that the gross structure of a building should be durable, fire-resistant and meet national and city building codes.¹⁴ The National Council of Schoolhouse Construction also discussed the factors of school plant safety in respect to structural safety, fire resistance, fire protection, circulation safety and convenience.¹⁵ A point of emphasis most appropriate to this study was that "buildings of three or more stories should be fire-resistive throughout except that wood may be used for floor covering and trim".¹⁶

By determination of the space requirements the study was in essence concerned with the size of the schools. Consequently, the size of the school had to be determined. In his study of optimum school size Ovaitt found that high schools with an enrollment less than four hundred students tends to pay a higher per pupil cost for an inferior educational program.¹⁷ In retrospect, Conant has stated "I early became convinced that a high school must have a

¹⁴George W. Reida, A Manual For Evaluating School Facilities, p. 12.

¹⁵National Council of Schoolhouse Construction, Guide For Planning School Plants, 1964 ed., 94-103.

¹⁶National Council of Schoolhouse Construction, Guide For Planning School Plants, 1958 ed., p. 155.

¹⁷Stanley Wixon Ovaitt, "A Study of the Optimum Size of the High School", Dissertation Abstracts, 27:1229, 1966.

graduating class of at least one hundred to function adequately as a comprehensive high school."¹⁸

Gilliland has related that administrative spaces should be readily accessible to students, teachers, and parents.¹⁹ The Council, in addition, stated that in planning the required spaces for administrative purposes factors such as number of pupils served, type of school, educational program and special services, and community use of the school should be considered.²⁰

Determination of feasibility of utilizing St. Marys College also relied on achievement of optimum standards for general classrooms, laboratories and special classrooms, and central facilities. The Council described those characteristics desirable in functional learning spaces.²¹ An analysis of the educational spaces at the College required the understanding that there is a certain amount of inflexibility inherent in the educational spaces required. Educational Facilities Laboratories wrote of two kinds of inflexibility found within a school. First of all, there are certain rooms such as laboratories which contain facilities that are unique to a particular field of study. And secondly, a high proportion of

¹⁸James Bryant Conant, The American High School Today, p. 14.

¹⁹Gilliland, op. cit., p. 16.

²⁰National Council of Schoolhouse Construction, Guide For Planning Schoolhouse Construction, 1964 ed., p. 72.

²¹Ibid., pp. 32-63.

classrooms are large in size and under loaded.²² The Laboratory also discussed the increased cost of providing for laboratory facilities and suggested ways of overcoming the added expense in terms of space and money.²³ In the area of planning required for the Instructional Materials Center, Hayden presented an overview of the facilities and services available as exemplified by the ten demonstration libraries located throughout the State of Kansas.²⁴

A fourth basic consideration of the study which had to be observed in analysis of the College was the service facilities. The Kansas School Health Advisory Council discussed five environmental factors which create a truly functional school not only from a physical standpoint but also from an emotional point of view.²⁵ Reida also emphasized similar factors and presented, with recommendations, principles affecting good lighting in the school.²⁶ Gilliland wrote about the general environment of the school and stated that the "environmental controls will allow personnel within the school to

²²John X. Jamrich, "To build or not to build: A Report on the Utilization and Planning of Instructional Facilities in Small Colleges", Educational Facilities Laboratories, p. 37.

²³"Educational Facilities Laboratories College Newsletter No. 4", Educational Facilities Laboratories, pp. 2-3, May 1964.

²⁴"See the Demonstration Libraries . . . in Action", Kansas State Department of Public Instruction, pp. 1-31.

²⁵Kansas School Health Advisory Council, "Environmental Committee Report", (Kansas State Department of Public Instruction, 1966), p. 2. (Mimeographed.)

²⁶George W. Reida, "Artificial Lighting For Modern Schools: A Guide for Administrative Use", pp. 1-42.