

RECENT TRENDS IN SCHOOL DISTRICT REORGANIZATION

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## INTRODUCTION

The educational systems of the United States have undergone great changes since public education became an important part of the American way of life. The number of pupils attending the schools has increased immensely as a result of the philosophy behind our educational program. The ideal is that every child in the nation should have the opportunity to attend a school in which he can fully develop his potentialities. However, many schools, for various reasons, do not have the necessary facilities for such development. As our culture becomes more complex and the needs and interests of the youth increase, the schools must keep pace with the times. In order to realize that changes have been made, one has only to take note of the many closed country schools that now remain idle while pupils, who at one time would have attended them, take advantage of the enriched curriculum offered by the larger schools.

## TYPES OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS

The American public school system has always been a function of the local community. As the country expanded, schools were established wherever the need was felt and the "little red school house" became one of the characteristics of the American people. Legally, however, the state is responsible for education. Such authority was granted by the Tenth Amendment to the Constitution

of the United States. Since no state can effectively administer its entire public educational system, the states have created local subdivisions or have placed responsibility on general governmental subdivisions already established. Thus, delegated authority, local autonomy, and local responsibility have become characteristics of the public school system in every state (24).

Although the basic units of local school administration are of a great variety almost any school will come under one of the following classifications (7):

**The Common School District.** Created only for school purposes with a board or official assigned necessary powers for maintaining and conducting a school or schools.

**City School Districts.** Usually a separate corporation which is independent of the general municipal government, with the term city used only as a means of classifying the district. Other characteristics are those similar to the common school district.

**Town and Township School Districts.** In the New England states, school districts usually have the same boundaries as the towns. Some states - Indiana, Iowa, Illinois, Michigan, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, and a few others - have set up their school districts to include the same boundaries as the townships. These districts function along the same lines as the common school district in so far as the school board, levying of taxes, and other duties are concerned.

**The County School District.** In this type of school district one of two methods is usually used. The entire county may be a

school district or those parts of the county outside of independent units may go to make the district. Each county has a board of education and a superintendent of schools but does not, as a rule, make use of the other county officials.

High School Districts. Set up to provide high school facilities. They are often coterminous with townships, counties, or cities, as in California, and usually include the territory of one or more elementary school districts. The high school districts have separate tax rates which have nothing to do with tax rates on the same property for elementary school districts.

#### NUMBER OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND SIZE OF SCHOOLS

As late as 1942 there were approximately 100,000 basic units of school administration in the 48 states (7). Of these basic units 90,000 were of the common school district type which usually has one school and one teacher. Town or township districts made up 4,328 while 641 were districts that included an entire county. Three hundred and eighteen included all of a county except those parts that were included in independent units. Independent units made up about 7,000.

Twenty-seven states had the common school district type of organization which includes the greatest number of districts (7). Among these states Illinois with 10,466 leads in total number of school districts. Missouri had 8,520, Minnesota 7,657, Nebraska 6,985, and Kansas with 5,775 would rank sixth. Delaware had the

least number of districts with 15.

There were 9 states with the town or township system of school organization (7). Pennsylvania heads the list with 1,551. Indiana, with 948, was second and Rhode Island had the least number of districts, 39.

Twelve states made up the group using the county system (7). These states had very few districts when compared with the other states. Georgia had 125 to top the list while Maryland with 23 was at the bottom.

The number of schools in the United States totaled 198,878 (7). Elementary schools accounted for 169,905, secondary schools numbered about 28,973, while the other 90,000 consisted of one teacher schools.

The size of schools ranges from the one teacher units on up to those with thousands of students and 200 or more teachers (7). However, the small school is predominant. In the nation as a whole there were about 90,000 one teacher elementary schools, 170,000 elementary schools had an average of about 100 pupils each, and 29,000 high schools with an average of about 190 pupils each. The typical rural high school was a small institution with not more than 100 pupils and 5 or 6 teachers.

Kansas had 4,267 operating school districts during the 1948-49 school year (28). Of this number, 2,893 were classified as one teacher districts, 743 as two or more teacher elementary school districts, 214 districts had two or more teacher elementary units as well as high schools, 304 rural high schools, 23

community high schools, 12 first class city districts, and 78 second class city districts.

In 1948-49 Kansas had 622 public high schools (18). A breakdown into the type of administrative units in use found 16 first class city high schools, 69 second class city high schools, 203 operating under a common school district, 309 rural high schools, and 23 community high schools.

Adding the number of private high schools maintained in 1948-49 (18) to the public high schools would give a total of 671 high schools operating in Kansas. Fifty-six high schools had over 300 students, 149 had from 100 to 299 students, 224 high schools had 50 to 99 students, and 242 had less than 50 students.

#### CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE SCHOOL DISTRICTS

It would be impossible to recommend any particular school district organization as being the best. For example, a county serves certain purposes in some states that would be entirely different in other states. In the south, the county is of first importance as a governmental unit, but it has almost no significance in the government of New England. Counties also differ as to density of population, topography, natural wealth, communication, and transportation. The same could be said of any other type of organization. Thus, there appears to be no single form of organization that will fit every situation better than any other system.

It is possible, however, to cite certain characteristics that are necessary for an effective organization, regardless of the type being used (2). Since the American public school is a function of the community, it may be said that the community is one of the more important aspects of the school program. This is especially true of the small high school with less than 100 pupils and which constitutes nearly 40 per cent of the nation's high schools. The effective school district is organized around community life and draws strength from it in every possible way. The school should be the natural center for bringing the pupils and their families together. Even though the adults do not attend the schools, what is taught, along with the many extra-class activities, should be a topic of conversation in the home. In this way the school and home exchange different ideas and attitudes (3). Neither should the fact be overlooked that the school facilities will be used on many different occasions by the adults.

The school district should be large enough to support the school adequately without undue hardships on the tax payers and yet be small enough, in terms of topography, transportation, and communication, to make efficient administration possible. Studies in several states have shown the extremely wide variations in assessed valuation of taxable property per child (7). Oklahoma, for instance, could raise \$1.50 per pupil annually in the poorest county as compared with \$750 in the richest district if equal tax rates existed throughout the state. A study of the counties in California showed valuations ranging from \$4,952 per pupil in



the poorest county to \$30,592 in the richest county.

The educational program should meet the educational needs of the district. The needs of a community in which wheat farming is the predominant occupation will differ considerably from the large city. While communities will differ in their particular needs, their programs will be similar in that they will attempt to provide an educational program that will stimulate and guide each individual in developing his abilities to their fullest extent for useful, satisfying living.

The afore-mentioned characteristics of effective school districts, along with many others, are interrelated and one could not function properly without others.

#### THE NEED FOR REORGANIZATION

The need for reorganization of our school districts has long been recognized by educators and laymen who have given serious thought to the matter (25). These people have sensed the futility of trying to operate schools for the atomic age in school districts better adapted to the muzzle-loader days (26). A large majority of present school districts cannot give the educational program necessary to meet the ever-increasing problems of everyday life. Nor are the school districts preparing the youth of the United States to cope with problems of the future.

Perhaps the greatest need is in the small rural school districts which make up a large percentage of the nation's schools.

Students attending such schools suffer educationally as well as from lack of proper health measures. Studies have shown that very few of the small schools have the services of a school nurse or a doctor. Inadequate dental care often causes the unnecessary loss of teeth. In many instances children do not have a hot, nourishing noon meal (7).

The small rural school very rarely offers any subjects beyond the three R's. Subjects such as vocational agriculture, home-making, business practice, health and physical education, art, music, and industrial arts are quite often neglected or, if offered, do little more than scratch the surface. The extra-curricular program, one of the needed phases of present day educational standards, is either very limited or lacking entirely (27).

The school building itself often fails to meet satisfactory requirements. The student of today spends much of his time in school and modern standards emphasize the size, shape, color scheme, lighting, seating, and equipment which will make the school a pleasant place in which to work. In a recent study in New York state, it was found that entirely too many of the noncentralized schools did not meet these standards (28). Rooms were too high, of odd shapes, with insufficient glass area and artificial lighting, poor window arrangement, worn and dingy wood floors, flimsy doors and dark or soiled wood work. Blackboards and bulletin boards along with storage closets and bookcases were frequently lacking. Another article found too often was the old, fixed seat of the nonadjustable type.

Inability to attract and keep well qualified teachers is another handicap of the small school. Even though some of the best teachers are in the small schools it is difficult to keep them there. As soon as the larger schools recognize the good teachers' abilities they offer higher salaries, better tenure, and more favorable working and living conditions. The small school teacher must usually teach several subjects and it is little wonder that they move to the larger schools when the opportunity arises. The per-pupil cost of instruction is usually excessively high as a result of the necessity of each teacher having so many classes with few students. The principal must often devote much of his time to teaching leaving little time for the administration and supervision of the school. The wealth in taxable property behind each student is usually lower in rural areas than in the larger towns and cities, thus adding to the evils of the small school (2).

#### CHANGES WHICH HAVE BEEN MADE IN THE PAST TEN YEARS

The changes made in school district reorganization have been unique in that no two states have gone about the task of modernizing in the same way (25). Many factors - tradition, geographic and economic conditions, local governmental organization - have tended to produce sectional patterns but the particular action taken by the different states has been of a varied nature. States in which the small local district is the basic unit of administration

have made the most progress in redistricting. The present trends in school district reorganization tend to mark one of the most significant movements in the history of American education. It proves once again the ability of the American people to meet adverse problems.

Although there are still some states which have done nothing in the way of modernizing their school districts, those which have made remarkable progress. The following brief descriptions will include any reorganization undertaken by the states (24):

#### Nationally

Alabama. Alabama has a modified county unit type of organization which has been in effect since 1901. The only changes have brought about a reduction in the number of independent city districts. There are now 41 city systems and 67 county systems.

Arizona. The local district type of organization makes up the Arizona school systems. The majority of the districts serve only the elementary school. At present there is no redistricting program in progress.

Arkansas. The Arkansas legislature passed a bill in 1948 which set up a district in each county composed of all districts which had less than 350 pupils. This reduced the number of school districts from 1615 to 424.

California. California adopted an optional reorganization plan in 1945 because of a need for more integration between

elementary and secondary schools. A 1947 amendment to the bill provided for an election of the proposed districts instead of each component district. The law also provides for county committees, trustee areas in unified districts. Little has been done since 1948 but the number of districts was reduced from 2497 to 2244 between 1945 and 1948.

Colorado. A permissive reorganization act was passed by the 1949 legislature. The act provided for county committees, approval or rejection of plans by the State Commissioner of Education, and final approval of the voters in the proposed new district. By October, 1949, one county had reorganized, 12 were almost reorganized, and several counties had general plans completed.

Connecticut. Although not engaged in any major redistricting activity some towns have federated for high school purposes. Thirteen towns have organized three regional high school districts.

Delaware. The State Board of Education was authorized by recent legislation to combine two or more school districts by referring the question to the people in the involved districts. The outcome is determined by a majority vote.

Florida. A school omnibus bill passed in 1947 set up one school district in each county. The bill also included a number of advances in state support for schools.

Georgia. The adoption of a new state constitution in 1945 provided that each county, exclusive of independent school districts, shall compose one school district. This action set forth

the present 159 county systems and 28 independent city systems.

Idaho. The 1949 legislature amended the 1947 reorganization law to make it stronger. The law provides for county committees, a state committee with power to approve or disapprove proposals of the county committees, and final approval or rejection by the voters in the proposed new district. If any district is not organized by July 1, 1951, the county committees will have the authority to reorganize subject only to the approval of the state committee. No election will be held. As of December 1, 1948, 561 districts had been eliminated as a result of 73 elections.

Illinois. The School Survey Act of 1945 reduced the number of districts from 11,955 to 4,950. Action is started either by petition or by recommendation of the survey committee. Any proposed district must contain at least 2000 people and have an assessed valuation of \$6,000,000. Election results of the territory involved determine the outcome. The law also states that free transportation shall be provided.

Indiana. A 1949 law permits school trustees of two or more school districts to consolidate their school districts unless 50 legal voters petition for an election. The proposal can be defeated if a majority of the voters in any district vote against it. It is also possible to initiate a proposal for consolidation by a petition signed by 50 legal voters in each district.

Iowa. The 1945 legislation provided for a permissive plan of redistricting. Each county board of education is required to make a survey and submit a plan to the voters of each affected

district. A majority of the votes cast in each district is necessary for approval. The disappointing results in Iowa have been caused by the majority provision.

Kentucky. In 1934 the common school laws of Kentucky were rewritten. The enactment of a redistricting law provided for the county to be the administrative unit except in cities of the first four classes. More than one-third of the 1932 school districts have been eliminated.

Louisiana. Louisiana's school system is made up of 64 county units and 3 city units. The state officials feel that the consolidation of schools within districts is the only problem and consider it as a local problem.

Maryland. The county plan of organization has always been used by Maryland and there has been no serious talk of changing it.

Massachusetts. There has been some talk of the formation of regional school districts but no major reorganization activity is under way.

Michigan. Michigan has eliminated approximately 2000 districts since 1912. The present permissive statute finds the school districts slowly but surely reorganizing. The plan is not a comprehensive, state-wide program but does have requirements as to the assessed valuation and area included.

Minnesota. The 1947 plan is quite similar to other successful plans. The law provides for county survey committees, a state commission for advisory purposes only, and final approval or

rejection of the proposal by the people, with a majority vote of both urban and rural areas necessary for approval. The decision as to making a survey lies with the school board members of each county and in several counties initial action has been killed at this point. Under the 1947 law 225 districts have been eliminated.

Mississippi. Some local consolidations have occurred in recent years but there is no state wide campaign for school district consolidation.

Missouri. A redistricting law was passed in 1948. County boards must submit any specific plan to the State Board of Education for approval or rejection. Final approval is determined by a majority vote in the proposed new district. As of October, 1949, 84 new districts had been formed thus eliminating about 1000 component districts.

Montana. Comprehensive reorganization laws failed to pass the 1947 and 1949 legislature. Montana has a law which makes it mandatory to close a district that has not operated a school for three years. This law plus voluntary action has reduced the number of districts from 2131 to 1250 in the past 15 years.

Nebraska. The 1949 legislature passed a reorganization law which is similar to the Minnesota plan. County committees are set up but do not have to make a survey. The state committee functions only in an advisory capacity. The people vote on proposed plans, with rural and urban territory each constituting voting units.

Nevada. Local consolidations are permitted but Nevada has



no reorganization program. Local boards are responsible in such matters and there has been a gradual decrease in school districts.

New Hampshire. A proposed reorganization law was defeated in 1949. New Hampshire does have a reorganization statute but it is ineffective.

New Jersey. There is a law which permits consolidation of districts, but little progress is made under the law. New Jersey school districts have had the same boundaries as the municipality since 1902.

New Mexico. Since 1941 the State Board of Education has had the authority to consolidate districts within the state without a vote of the people. Districts in which the average daily attendance falls below the prescribed minimum must be dissolved and attached to other districts. About one-half of New Mexico's school districts have been consolidated.

New York. New York has had reorganization laws since 1914. A special meeting of the people could decide on the reorganization of school districts. The 1925 legislative work provided state financial support and quotas for buildings and transportation. Since 1925 almost 6000 districts have been eliminated with the formation of central districts.

North Carolina. The county unit of school administration has been in effect since 1923. In 1933 another law requiring further reorganization reduced the total of school districts again. Districts are still being eliminated through the encouragement of a program involving \$50,000,000 in state aid. The

North Carolina schools are highly consolidated.

North Dakota. Passed in 1947 North Dakota's reorganization law is of the permissive type. County committees submit plans to a state committee for approval or disapproval. Final passage depends on the necessary majority vote of the people in the proposed areas. Of the first 10 plans voted on, 7 were approved and 3 were defeated by the voters.

Ohio. The 1943 legislation concerning school district reorganization ended in failure. In 1947 a permissive type law was passed which follows the work of other states. The County Boards of Education may reorganize districts unless a majority of the voters file a petition against it. Thus far there has been a decrease of approximately 100 districts.

Oklahoma. The 1947 legislature authorized the State Board of Education to disorganize those districts with an average daily attendance of less than 13 and annex the territory to other districts. In 1949 legislation allowed the State Board to call an election in an affected area providing a petition signed by a majority of the voters of the area was received. In two years approximately 2000 rural districts have been disorganized.

Oregon. A reorganization law was passed in 1939, but it was ineffective because it permitted rejection of proposals by vote in each component district. The law became inoperative in 1941 by its own terms and was repealed in 1949 because it was no longer in effect.

Pennsylvania. The 1947 law was of the permissive type. The

County Board of Directors prepared reorganization plans and submits them to the State Council of Education for approval or rejection. If approved the plan is submitted to the people and passed if a majority of the voters in each district favor the proposal. Very little progress has been made since the bill was passed.

Rhode Island. Rhode Island does not have a reorganization program of any kind. However, a survey involving nine towns has been made.

South Carolina. South Carolina is one of the few southern states which makes use of the small local district plan. The need for reorganization has been recognized and a law was passed in 1949 authorizing county study committees. Thus far very little has been done but there are indications of forthcoming efforts to improve the situation.

South Dakota. The 1949 legislature rejected a plan for permissive reorganization on the modified county level. Plans are now being carried forward for the presentation of a bill in 1951.

Tennessee. There doesn't seem to be any problem in Tennessee. For over 30 years the school districts have been operating on a modified county unit plan with 95 county systems and 53 city and special school districts. The city and special school districts are gradually being absorbed by the county units.

Texas. County boards were given permission by the 1949 legislature to annex districts that failed to operate a school for two successive years. In 1934 Texas had 5600 districts.

This number had been reduced to 4412 in 1948 and to 2800 in 1949.

Utah. With few exceptions Utah has operated on the county unit basis since 1915. There are 40 school districts in the state.

Vermont. Legislation in 1945 and 1949 permit the organization of union district high schools and joint contract elementary or high schools. Reorganization has extended to only one joint contract secondary school.

Virginia. Since 1922 Virginia has had a modified county unit system. There are 100 county districts, 25 city districts, and about 26 special town districts. Towns with a population of 1000 or more make up the special districts.

Washington. Washington has more or less set the pattern for reorganization in several other states. Permissive legislation was passed in 1941 after previous studies provided the information which was carried on to the people. The law provided for county committees, a state committee, and final approval by a vote of the people in the proposed new districts. By 1945, 1400 school districts were reduced to 670 and 90 per cent of the children were attending school in reorganized districts. The responsibility for continuing the program was turned over to the State Board of Education and the State Department of Public Instruction in 1947.

West Virginia. West Virginia adopted the county unit plan of organization in 1933 and has made no further attempt to change the program. The law reduced the number of districts from 398 to 55.

Wisconsin. County school committees were given the power to order the reorganization of school districts by the 1947 legislature. In 1949 the law was changed to require a referendum on a reorganization order if a county committee desires or if 10 per cent or 500 petitioners ask for an election. The necessary majority must carry the plan when an election is held. School districts have been reduced from about 6400 in 1945 to 5800 in 1949.

Wyoming. Wyoming adopted a program much like that of Washington in 1947. In 1949 appropriations for carrying out the program was increased from \$5,000 to \$10,000. Actual reorganization has been very slow.

#### Kansas

Prior to 1945 there was very little legislation in Kansas concerning school district reorganization. A glance at 1942 statistics comparing the relative positions of the 48 states in certain matters pertaining to the schools brought out several important factors (15). Kansas ranked third in total number of school units, 13th in area, 29th in population, 30th in expenditure per pupil, 42nd in pupils per teacher, and 46th in enrollment per school unit. It can be seen that Kansas did not occupy a favorable position as far as schools were concerned.

Although schools in Kansas had been closing spasmodically for years, the situation brought on by World War II undoubtedly played an important part in the reorganization movement. Many

teachers were called into the armed forces while others entered into the work of the various defense factories throughout the nation. The shortage of teachers as well as the shortage of materials and supplies forced many schools to close their doors.

Another factor involved in the teacher shortage was the certification of teachers. It has not been long since there were 197 different certifying agencies in the state. The State Department of Education is now the sole certifying agency and all teachers must fulfill the state requirements in order to qualify for a valid teaching certificate.

The rural population of Kansas has been decreasing for many years. Consequently many schools are closed because of the lack of pupils of school age. The transportation problem would be considered along with the lack of pupils since the improved roads, highways, automobiles, and busses, make it much easier for parents to send their children to a graded school thereby receiving the benefits of the more varied program, more experienced teachers, and larger number of pupils.

One of the most important reasons for closing schools was the desire to reduce school expenditures and taxes (15). Many districts lacked adequate financial resources in the form of taxable property and the excessively high per-pupil costs made it cheaper to close the schools and send the pupils to other schools. The per-pupil cost of operation of one teacher districts in Kansas was \$191.19 during 1948-49 (18). The per-pupil cost of other types of districts included \$147.53 for common school elementary districts,

\$148.46 for common school districts maintaining an elementary school as well as a high school, \$118.51 for first class cities, and \$113.21 for second class cities.

High school operating costs are considerably higher than the elementary expenditures per pupil. The per-pupil cost of the high schools during 1948-49 found the rural high schools leading with \$360.55, community high schools second with \$288.43, common school districts third with \$285.22, second class cities next with \$202.90 and first class cities with \$190.02 (18).

After 4 years of study the legislature passed, in 1945, a reorganization law that found county committees, appointed by the county commissioners, making final decisions establishing a new district. The people were not given the opportunity to vote upon the proposal. Recourse for adjustment of grievances was to the courts only (13).

By March, 1946, 1292 elementary school districts had been eliminated. One county had completed its reorganization, 6 counties almost completed, all but 52 of the counties had made some progress on reorganization (15).

On March 1, 1947, there had been a net reduction of 2,671 elementary school districts. In the two years the law had been in effect, 3,042 districts had been disorganized, leaving a total of 5,441 districts (17).

Even though Kansas had maintained a rapid pace in the disorganization of districts there was much opposition to the law. A rural school association was formed in an attempt to keep the

rural schools rural. Many personal factors were involved in the battle but the chief reasons seemed to center about taxes, transportation, emotional opposition, and loss of local control (13). Finally, in a case carried before the Kansas Supreme Court, on June 27, 1947, the 1945 law was declared unconstitutional.

The 1947 legislature had foreseen the possibility of such difficulties and consequently passed validating acts which arranged for an indirect election of the county committees. The act also validated all final orders of the county reorganization committees up to March 1, 1947. The status of the reorganized districts was determined constitutional by the Supreme Court in a case brought up in October, 1947.

#### REVIEW OF RECENT CHANGES

The progress made in school district reorganization has not been easy. Many people simply did not want to give up anything that had become such a part of the American way of life. Extreme localism was perhaps the biggest single obstacle to reorganization (25). Possibly the best example of such extreme localism was the battle between two small Indiana towns (19). Only  $4\frac{1}{2}$  miles apart the towns had maintained separate school districts since their founding. Last summer the elected school trustee attempted to consolidate the school systems. The smaller of the towns immediately protested even though the features of the plan had been announced. They did not want to lose their high school.



The citizens of the smaller town gathered at the high school to discourage the workers who came to get the school equipment and a few even engaged in fistcuffs during the encounter. A few days later, with the aid of 67 state troopers, another attempt was made to move the school furniture (20). This attempt also ended in failure. The trustee decided to get out of town after his life had been threatened four times.

Fortunately, the movement has not been met with such great dissatisfaction in all localities. A few years ago an effective consolidation of schools in and around Eugene, Oregon, occurred (11). Realizing their problems the people attacked them in a successful manner. A careful study of the situation was made. Arguments, pro and con, were presented at many public meetings. Every effort was made to see that the people would go into the matter with open eyes. A successful election was held and the people believe that they have moved in the right direction (4).

The success of the Eugene, Oregon, consolidation brings out the necessity of a good public relations program. Many people, including school superintendents and teachers, do not fully understand the basic principles involved in reorganization (1). The school personnel must become leaders in reorganization activities and assist in getting the information to the people. Lack of understanding is the third most commonly mentioned problem concerning school district reorganization (26).

The state of Washington has been mentioned as having one of the better laws conducive to reorganization. Washington was one

of the first states to attempt the program and the power of the legislature to provide for the consolidation of political subdivisions was greatly questioned (5). The Washington Supreme Court ruled in favor of the law after a somewhat stormy lawsuit in the lower courts. Other states, patterning the Washington law, have been more successful. Illinois, for example, has made great progress without the necessity of the courts. The Illinois plan has been extremely democratic in nature (22). New York State reorganization has gone forward to the point where approximately 85 per cent of the geographic area of the state considered suitable for centralization has been centralized (27). Consequently 411 central districts make up an area that once contained 6000 districts.

The financial problem is another obstacle in the reorganization program (23). In those states in which the support of schools is largely left to the local school district, tremendous inequalities in tax burden exist, and the smaller the district the greater the inequalities tend to be. For this reason it is not difficult to see why residents of the wealthier districts hesitate in voting themselves into larger units with higher taxes. It is indeed a problem to sell the low-tax people on higher taxes (26).

Although Kansas has been successful in reducing the number of elementary school districts, very little has been done with the high schools. This does not mean that the high schools are being ignored. The Kansas State Teachers Association has recognized the problem and has issued a bulletin for those people who

wish to secure the background of high school problems, especially in Kansas (13). The solution for the Kansas high schools seems to center around state aid, equal rates of assessment, the unification of many small high schools, better transportation, and the improvement of the high school staff.

The Kansas Association of School Boards is another group that has been working toward the betterment of the Kansas high school. This group has issued a plan for financing Kansas high schools (14) and has distributed it about the state in order to give the public a look at the needs of the schools. The plan, similar to that of the Kansas State Teachers Association, establishes the principle of state aid for high schools, guarantees each high school a minimum program, encourages the improvement of high schools, and equalizes property taxes levied for the support of high schools.

The success of the various reorganization programs can be realized when it is considered that the 119,000 school districts in the United States 10 or 12 years ago have been reduced to approximately 87,000. Dr. Kenneth E. McIntyre, assistant professor of Education at the University of South Dakota, has been quite active in the reorganization program and gives the following summation of the situation (24):

Seldom, if ever, in the history of American education has there been activity of greater significance than the present movement in the field of school district reorganization. Educators, who traditionally discount the ability and willingness of the American people to make changes when changes are due, now have clear evidence that John Q. Public can act with startling rapidity if the need is convincingly demonstrated to him. Although

it is true that redistricting has been a largely unheeded need for several decades in most states, we can no longer say that nothing is being done about it. In certain states, school officials are actually afraid that redistricting is moving too fast.

#### CONCLUSIONS

It can readily be seen that school reorganization is a most difficult task and no one particular method could function in all instances. Neither should reorganization be considered the answer to all of the problems of education. Reorganization does not guarantee good schools, but, if well done, can improve the situation in places where good schools do not exist. However, there are conclusions that can be drawn pertaining to school reorganization:

1. A public relations program must get information about school district reorganization to the people.
2. The school superintendents and teachers will have to assume leadership in the reorganization program.
3. Tax levies will have to be made more uniform in the various school districts.
4. State aid would be necessary in many instances.
5. Better school services, such as health, guidance, vocational opportunities, and supervision can be provided in the larger school districts.
6. Transportation in larger districts can be carried on more economically.

7. The larger units could offer better pay and living conditions to teachers.
8. Better learning and teaching conditions would exist.
9. Classes which are too small would be eliminated.
10. The tax payer would get more for his money.
11. The extra-curricular program would have more opportunity to improve.
12. The per-pupil cost in many cases would be lowered.
13. Reorganization plans should be submitted to the people of the proposed district for a vote before the proposed district becomes legal.
14. The improvement of transportation facilities has helped the reorganization movement.
15. The evils of local autonomy must be overcome.
16. The public does not fully understand just what is meant by reorganization.
17. A study of the existing situation should be made before any definite plans are proposed.
18. The nation, as a whole, has recognized the need for reorganization and acted accordingly.
19. The smaller states do not need an immediate reorganization program.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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