

1979

Options for Facing Declining Enrollments in the Westfield School District

Michael S. Shonk
Eastern Illinois University

Recommended Citation

Shonk, Michael S., "Options for Facing Declining Enrollments in the Westfield School District" (1979). *Masters Theses*. 3139.
<https://thekeep.eiu.edu/theses/3139>

This is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Theses & Publications at The Keep. It has been accepted for inclusion in Masters Theses by an authorized administrator of The Keep. For more information, please contact tabruns@eiu.edu.

PAPER CERTIFICATE #2

TO: Graduate Degree Candidates who have written formal theses.

SUBJECT: Permission to reproduce theses.

The University Library is receiving a number of requests from other institutions asking permission to reproduce dissertations for inclusion in their library holdings. Although no copyright laws are involved, we feel that professional courtesy demands that permission be obtained from the author before we allow theses to be copied.

Please sign one of the following statements:

Booth Library of Eastern Illinois University has my permission to lend my thesis to a reputable college or university for the purpose of copying it for inclusion in that institution's library or research holdings.

April 27, 1979
Date

Author

I respectfully request Booth Library of Eastern Illinois University not allow my thesis be reproduced because _____

Date

Author

pdm

OPTIONS FOR FACING DECLINING ENROLLMENTS

IN THE WESTFIELD SCHOOL DISTRICT

(TITLE)

BY

MICHAEL S. SHONK

FIELD EXPERIENCE
THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF

SPECIALIST IN EDUCATION

IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL, EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS

1979

YEAR

I HEREBY RECOMMEND THIS THESIS BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING
THIS PART OF THE GRADUATE DEGREE CITED ABOVE

April 27, 1979
DATE

ADVISER

April 27, 1979
DATE

DEPARTMENT HEAD

OPTIONS FOR FACING DECLINING
ENROLLMENTS IN THE
WESTFIELD SCHOOL DISTRICT

BY

MICHAEL S. SHONK

B. S. in Ed., Eastern Illinois University, 1972
M. S. in Ed., Eastern Illinois University, 1976

ABSTRACT OF A FIELD STUDY

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Specialist in Education at the Graduate School
of Eastern Illinois University

CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS
1979

The field experience consisted of presenting options available to the Westfield School District, Westfield, Illinois, when faced with the fact that in the school year 1982-83, the enrollment in Westfield high school district #201 will fall below an average daily attendance figure of sixty. At this point the district will no longer be eligible to receive revenue from the state of Illinois in the form of state aid.

The field experience began by compiling background information on the history of the district and general information about the community of Westfield. An unusual fact that the study had to deal with was that the Westfield school system is designed as a dual district. There are two separate boards of education--one for the elementary district #105 and one for the high school district #201. An advantage to the dual district set-up is that revenue is received from taxing in both districts. As the field study reveals, a disadvantage is when and if a consolidation were to take place, the dual district must consolidate as a unit district.

The second part of the field experience dealt with options available to the Westfield school system when faced with the fact that the enrollment in the high school district will fall below an average daily attendance figure of sixty and the loss of state aid becomes a reality. Three of the options dealt with in the study involved

consolidation with a surrounding district. The surrounding districts include Kansas, Casey, and Charleston. Another option available to the Westfield district is to "split" the district which would enable surrounding districts to annex a part of the existing Westfield district. Those surrounding districts that could annex part of the Westfield district are Kansas, Casey, Charleston, and Martinsville. A fifth option the field study dealt with concentrated on a self-supporting district. The last option considered in the study was a temporary solution that would keep the dual district intact for two years. This involved going ahead and taxing in the high school district and using this tax revenue to pay tuition to surrounding schools which would allow the Westfield students to attend that selected school.

Using personal interviews, financial reports, district studies, and a random survey questionnaire, recommendations and conclusions were made dealing with the dilemma facing the Westfield school system in the near future. The recommendations and conclusions from the study will be made available for future considerations by the Westfield boards of education.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter

I. INTRODUCTION.....1

II. LOG OF ACTIVITIES.....11

III. HISTORY AND BACKGROUND OF THE
WESTFIELD SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY.....1

IV. OPTIONS AVAILABLE TO THE WESTFIELD
SCHOOL DISTRICT.....3

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....13

Appendix

A. ENROLLMENT INFORMATION AND
PROJECTED ENROLLMENT FIGURES.....23

B. TAX LEVY.....25

C. COURSE OFFERINGS AT WESTFIELD
HIGH SCHOOL.....27

D. RANDOM SAMPLING QUESTIONNAIRE.....30

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

For some period of time school districts in the state of Illinois have faced declining enrollments. The elementary and high school districts in Westfield, Illinois, currently face this problem. The effect on the districts' future will be reported in this study. This study will deal with the current problems caused by the declining enrollments in the Westfield school districts, what alternatives are available to the districts for solving these problems, and recommendations for solving these problems.

Consolidation with a larger district seems to be more of a reality each day for smaller schools in the state of Illinois. This consolidation will either be a voluntary one or a mandate from the state.

This study will involve a brief history and background of the current dual districts in Westfield as well as the current status. What possibilities are in the future for the dual districts of Westfield will also be studied and reported on. This study will be directed toward discovering what alternatives are available for keeping the schools open and what alternatives are available if the enrollments reach such a level that closing one or both schools is necessary. A study of the districts' enrollments, transportation, curriculum, and finances will be used to determine alternatives.

The results from this study as well as a questionnaire will be used to make recommendations. Personal interviews, past records, a survey, financial reports, and personal studies will complement the field experience which will uncover facts on which to base the recommendations. The results of this field experience will be made available to the board of education at Westfield for future considerations.

CHAPTER II

LOG OF ACTIVITIES

For the Week of:

August 14

Information on the Westfield school district and community was gathered.

August 21

Informal chat with Gerald Eaglin, Superintendent, at Marshall, Illinois.

September 2

Gathered tax levy information and obtained multiplier.

September 9

Worked on enrollment facts and projections.

September 16

Compiled information regarding state aid.

September 23

Research in library concerning consolidation of school districts.

September 30

Research in Illinois school code on laws affecting consolidation, dual districts, ADA, state aid, etc.

October 7

Compiled data on district and course offerings.

October 14

Gathered data on transportation of Westfield students and surrounding districts.

November 11

Preparation of questionnaire; distribution of questionnaire; random survey.

December 2

Compiling data from questionnaire.

December 9

Compiling data from questionnaire.

December 16

Compiling data from questionnaire.

January 15

Gathered information from auditor's financial report.

January 22

Personal interviews with principals at Casey and Kansas, Ron Biery and Charles Humphrey.

February 5

Interview with village board member.

February 12

Finished compiling data from questionnaire.

February 19

Gathered information from auditor's report.

March 3

Recontacted Casey and Kansas for more information; also contacted Terry Weir, Business Manager, Charleston.

March 10

Looked for article covering meeting at Casey on consolidation. Found article in local paper discussing the meeting and happenings.

March 17

Writing and rewriting final copy and conclusions.

CHAPTER III

HISTORY AND BACKGROUND OF THE WESTFIELD SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY

In 1920 there were six rural schools in the community surrounding Westfield, Illinois. They were Johnson, Lee, Briscoe, Richwood, Oilfield, and Greenwood. In the late 1940's the rural schools started consolidation and adding their students to the enrollment of the Westfield schools. Oilfield was the last rural school to close in 1958. At the present time, two districts are in operation in the Westfield community. Elementary district #105 provides education for students in grades kindergarten through eighth grade and high school district #201 provides education for students in grades nine through twelve.

The village of Westfield is a small rural community of seven hundred and fifty people that is located at the intersections of state route 49 and the Lincoln heritage trail. The main interest, economically speaking, is agriculture. Corn, soybeans, small grain, and livestock are the major products within the school districts' boundaries.

Westfield has no medical services available but there is an ambulance service. The closest services are in Casey and Charleston about twelve miles south and northwest of Westfield respectively.

Part of Westfield's working force are farmers, a few run small businesses, and others commute to work in surrounding cities and towns. The easy access to surrounding

areas from Westfield makes commuting to work an attractive proposition.

Two main religions are found in the community--Methodist and Baptist. Some of the power structure in the community lies within these two churches.

The size of the Westfield school district is 42.6 square miles. With two attendance centers the district employs twenty-three certified employees and nine non-certified employees. Included in the nine non-certified personnel are one nurse, two cooks, three custodians, two bus drivers, and one secretary. The total assessed valuation of the district is \$6,445,408. Tax rates and enrollment figures are included in the appendix. The Westfield school system operates as a dual district. One superintendent oversees both districts but there are two separate boards of education. Each attendance center has its own building principal. The district receives revenue from taxing in both districts. The 1978-79 tax rates are found in the appendix.

OPTIONS AVAILABLE TO THE
WESTFIELD SCHOOL DISTRICT

There are six alternative solutions to the declining enrollments in the Westfield school districts. Four of them deal with consolidation, one involves a self-supporting system, and the other deals with a temporary solution. There are several combinations of the consolidation alternatives. In this field experience four of them were examined separately.

The rumor of Westfield consolidating with the Casey unit district is nothing new. In 1976 a meeting was held at Casey high school to consider this point. In the January 22, 1976, issue of the Westfield Review, the weekly newspaper, several facts were uncovered that are still points to consider for a consolidation of Westfield and Casey. Present at the 1976 meeting were Martinsville, Casey, and Westfield. The meeting was attended by some two hundred persons. Bob Miller, regional superintendent, discussed the legal steps for a consolidation. They are as follows:

- 1.) A petition bearing more than 200 signatures in the proposed district would be required. Miller made the point he would like the signatures to be representative of each area, but legally they all could be from only one school district except one each from the other involved district(s).
- 2.) The dual district at Westfield would have to be dissolved to consolidate with a unit district.
- 3.) Outlying territory could petition out and into another district with approval.
- 4.) The petition would be filed and a public hearing held by the regional superintendent, but the state superintendent could override any decision.
- 5.) Legal notices would be published and elections held in each district with one voting place in each district.

- 6.) A majority of the total combined vote could rule regardless of whether the smaller districts had a majority for or against.

Several hard feelings resulted from this meeting and no action was taken at the time.

The possibility that the Westfield schools could consolidate with the Casey unit district still exists. A look at some of the advantages to this consolidation are:

- 1.) Casey is the largest district that is closest in mileage to Westfield than any other surrounding district--ten miles.
- 2.) Casey's enrollment of four hundred seventeen would make an easier adjustment for the Westfield students than a much larger district.
- 3.) Students from Westfield would find it easier to participate and be a part of extra-curricular activities and programs.
- 4.) Both districts have similar curriculums but Casey presents an expansion of curriculum to the Westfield students.
- 5.) Westfield would remain a part of the Clark County school system.
- 6.) Tax rates would actually decrease for people in Westfield.
- 7.) Graduation requirements of sixteen Carnegie units are the same in both districts.
- 8.) The consolidation would mean increased assessed valuation for Casey giving them more money to draw from.
- 9.) Costs would decrease because of not having to maintain attendance centers in Westfield and a decrease in administrative staff and faculty would decrease costs.
- 10.) Casey would be assured of being able to offer upper level courses--i.e. physics, chemistry, calculus.

To expand on one of the advantages mentioned above concerning expanded curriculum for the Westfield students, the following points are cited:

- 1.) Westfield students would now be able to take four years of a foreign language.
- 2.) Upper level math offerings would be available-- Calculus.
- 3.) Other courses offered at Casey not offered at Westfield would be:
 - a. Consumer Math
 - b. Ceramics and Macramé
 - c. Industrial Arts
 - d. Office Machines, Business Law, Data Processing
 - e. Marching Band

The course offerings at Westfield are listed in the appendix. There is nothing offered at Westfield that is not being offered at Casey.

Athletic programs that would be available to the Westfield students that they can not now participate in are tennis, golf, girls basketball, boys track, and football.

In addition many rules and regulations are quite similar in the two districts, particularly policies on absenteeism and graduation requirements.

If the Westfield high school students were sent to Casey, the following additions might be necessary--four sections of English, two sections of social studies, two sections of math, and one section of science. As the enrollments in classes vary from year to year, sections in elective classes might be added as needed. The junior high students could be absorbed in the already existing programs. If an attendance center was not kept in Westfield, an additional six staff members would have to be hired. According to Jim Koss, superintendent at Casey, the high school has room for an additional one hundred students.

One of the problems brought up at the 1976 meeting was the increased cost for transporting the students from the outlying areas. A consolidation between Casey and Westfield would result in eighty more square miles per day to the Casey district. A central pick-up point for the town students could be established at the high school. Casey's transportation costs are approximately fifty cents per mile. For a school year this would represent an increased cost of approximately seven to ten thousand dollars. Some factual information about the Casey unit district is listed below:

Assessed valuation	\$29,091,488.00
Per pupil cost	1,074.64
Total district enrollment	1100
Square miles in district	154.34 sq. mi.
Tax Rates:	
Education	\$1.60
Building	.375
Transportation	.12
Working Cash	.05
Fire and Safety	.05
Municipal Retirement	.1032
Bond and Interest	.2087
Insurance	.1032
TOTAL	<u>\$2.6101</u>

The second consolidation to consider is one involving Westfield and Kansas. The Kansas unit district adjoins the Westfield district on the east and north boundaries. Kansas is only eight miles from Westfield and the school is located on the south and west side of Kansas. The advantages of a consolidation of this type were discussed through a personal interview with the principal at Kansas, Charles Humphrey.

Very few advantages of such a consolidation became apparent from this interview.

The possibility of keeping an attendance center at Westfield was more realistic than had been expected. The possibility of even converting the Westfield high school building into a junior high school building came up in the discussion. Kansas' enrollment fluctuates.

With only a total enrollment of approximately three hundred sixty in the entire district, a consolidation with the Kansas unit district may only be a temporary one. The only curriculum addition would be industrial arts as far as the Westfield students would be concerned. Even though the advantage of consolidation with a school district with a similar environment would exist, the lack of course offerings would be a drawback. In the Kansas Elementary School, the first three grades could handle the increase in pupils from the Westfield grade school because they have two sections with fifteen in each section. One more section of fourth grade would need to be added as well as one more fifth and sixth grade section. The grade school at Kansas is equipped for smaller children. The restroom facilities, furniture, water fountains and the like are built for this age group. Speaking in this manner a junior high attendance center remaining at Westfield would be a possibility. This set-up would be similar to the present Scotland-Chrisman system.

The following financial information and district data from the Kansas unit district was made available:

Assessed valuation	\$21,835,172.00
Per pupil cost	1,653.28
Total district enrollment (ADA)	359.72
Square miles in district	98
Tax Rates:	

Education	\$1.60
Building	.3207
Transportation	.12
Working Cash	.05
Fire and Safety	-0-
Municipal Retirement	.0553
Bond and Interest	.219
TOTAL	<u>\$2.3650</u>

A third consolidation possibility is one involving the Charleston unit district and the Westfield districts. Charleston bounds Westfield on the west and north. Each morning two Charleston district buses travel the same roads as the Westfield buses. Charleston's facilities and equipment, activities, and programs would indeed be inviting and advantageous to the students and parents of the Westfield school system.

It is obvious the students may have more difficulty in adjusting from Westfield to Charleston because of the size difference between the two towns and school systems. Also, the students at Westfield might find it difficult to participate in the extra-curricular activities because of the increased competition. But on the other hand, some students might find their interests broadened because of the number and variety of activities to choose from. Several

of the Westfield students are more vocational oriented than college bound. The job and career opportunities for these students of course would be expanded. The probability of maintaining an attendance center in Westfield is more realistic than in the other two consolidation possibilities that have already been discussed. In talking with Terry Weir, business manager for the Charleston school district, the following information was made available:

Assessed valuation	\$97,436,724.00
Per pupil cost	1,287.02
Total district enrollment	3138
Square miles in district	231
Tax Rates:	
Education	\$2.35
Building	.375
Transportation	.12
Municipal Retirement	.1555
Fire and Safety	.0452
Tort Liability	.0608
Working Cash	.05
Bond and Interest	.6129
TOTAL	<u>\$3.7694</u>

The last consolidation possibility should be viewed even though an in depth study will not be done in this study. The possibility of a county school or schools has been discussed in various circles. Westfield lies at the northwest corner of the county while the other three county schools--Marshall, Casey, and Martinsville--align themselves along state route 40. The length of time that Westfield students would be on the bus each day is discouraging. This is mentioned only as an alternative but not as a serious approach in this study.

An option available to the Westfield school district that does not involve consolidation is a self-supporting system. Even though it may not be feasible in the future, it should be considered as a possible alternative. A short-term answer to Westfield's declining enrollments is to tax at such a rate in the district allowable by law to support the district without state support. For Westfield to support the district locally, a tremendous burden would be created for the taxpayers. A study of the districts' current finances revealed the following:

	District #105	District #201
Education Fund Receipts:		
Property Taxes	\$ 61,000	\$ 64,000
State Aid	91,000	47,000
Federal Aid	5,600	16,000
Disbursements	143,000	125,000
Building Fund Receipts:		
Property Taxes	29,000	29,000
Disbursements	16,000	31,600
Trans. Fund Receipts:		
Property Taxes	8,000	8,000
State Aid	6,000	8,000
Disbursements	8,000	12,000
Municipal Retirement:		
Property Taxes	1,600	1,600
Federal Aid	600	
Disbursements	3,600	2,000
Working Cash Receipts:		
Property Taxes	3,300	3,300
Disbursements	-0-	-0-

According to the above information, the local commitment for district #201 would increase to \$71,000 to make up for lost state and federal aid. Only the high school is being

considered for supporting itself as the elementary district could still operate with the aid of state funds as their enrollments would still meet the state ADA requirement. Raising the education fund tax rate to \$2 per \$100 of assessed valuation in district #201 would bring in a total revenue of approximately \$172,000. As can be seen from the aforementioned information and at existing costs and prices, the district could operate by supporting itself. At today's inflationary rate figures of nine to ten percent, it would soon become extremely difficult for Westfield citizens to support the district without receiving state aid.

A fifth alternative to be considered would definitely be a short-term answer to the situation of the high school district's enrollment reaching a level that the loss of state aid would be inevitable. This alternative consists of going ahead and taxing in the high school district and using these tax dollars to pay tuition to an adjoining district for each student. The law allows this for two years. This would assure keeping the elementary district intact for a few more years. The Casey unit district per pupil cost is \$1,074.64; Kansas' is \$1,653.28; Charleston's is \$1,287.02. In 1982-83 assuming an ADA of fifty-five,

the high school district would have to raise the following amounts locally to maintain this option. To send the high school students from Westfield to Casey would take \$59,105. In order to send them to Kansas, the amount to be raised locally would have to be \$90,930.40. For students to be sent to Charleston would require \$70,786.02. The current revenue from taxes in the high school district is \$64,000. Even though a short-term solution, the possibility of sending the Westfield high school students to Casey does exist.

Through the process of annexation, it is possible that the Westfield districts could be split. Those students living in the southern part of the district and east could be annexed into the Casey and Martinsville school districts. Those students living east of route 49 and north of the Lincoln Trail could be annexed into the Kansas district. All other students including the town students could be annexed into the Charleston district.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

One of the bases for recommending which alternative is best was a questionnaire. A copy of the questionnaire is in Appendix D.. A random survey was taken of the taxpayers living in the Westfield school district to determine their attitudes, habits, and thoughts on the subject of consolidation. The results of the study are found on the following pages. From this survey, recommendations will be made for finding a solution to the problem the Westfield high school district will face when the enrollment falls below sixty and loss of state aid results. As a result of these two, the district would face consolidating or coming up with an alternative solution.

Included in the participants of the survey were 54 female and 46 male respondents. Most of the respondents, 44%, ranged in the age group 35-50 years of age. The distribution of the other age groups were 15 between the ages of 18-25, 14 between the ages of 25-35, and 14 participants were over 50. Thirteen failed to respond to the question of age. The survey questioned people who had resided in Westfield an average of 19.8 years.

Most people surveyed, 65%, cited small town living as the reason for living in Westfield; 43% liked the school system; 33% responded as having their occupation in Westfield; 25% cited taxes and property values as their reasons for living in Westfield. Seventy-five percent of those surveyed currently have children attending the Westfield schools.

Questions eight through eleven on the survey form were designed to see where the people's interests might lie if a consolidation were necessary. This survey was to substantiate the viewpoint that where people work and shop will be the most likely place to send their children to school if consolidation were necessary. Of the 58% who do not work in Westfield, 50% of those work in Charleston, 9% work in Casey, less than 2% in Marshall, and 20% work in Mattoon, Paris, or Martinsville. Seventy four percent of those surveyed do less than 25% of their shopping in Westfield. Of those, 91% shop mostly in Charleston.

An astounding fact evolved from the survey. Forty percent of the people responding to the survey did not feel there was a possibility that the Westfield schools would be closed in five years. Sixty-one percent had never been to a school board meeting. Two respondents were not aware that the public could attend school board meetings. Although, the enrollment figures included in this study revealed that one or possibly both attendance centers will be closed within five years, forty percent of the respondents refused to believe this fact. Knowing this, 84% were opposed to consolidation, 8% favored consolidation, and 8% were undecided.

From the survey 76% would favor a tax increase over consolidation to keep the schools open. Given these two choices 14% favored consolidation and 10% did not respond to the question. If a consolidation took place, 85% said they would remain in Westfield rather than move to another locality, while 4% were undecided. Ninety three percent

avored keeping an attendance center in Westfield. This statistic alone should weigh heavily upon any recommendations made from this study. Surprisingly enough, 4% did not favor keeping an attendance center in Westfield. Of these, 50% had children in the school system. Three percent did not respond to the question. The popular choice as far as what kind of attendance center the people would prefer be maintained if consolidation were necessary was a kindergarten through eighth grade building. Fifty percent favored this type; 12% favored a kindergarten through sixth grade; 10% wanted a kindergarten through twelfth grade; 8% desired a nine through twelfth grade set-up; 4% a seventh through twelfth grade; and 3% favored a kindergarten through fourth grade.

Sixty percent of those surveyed were satisfied with the present school system in Westfield. Of the 40% not satisfied, lack of course offerings and a lack of facilities and equipment were cited as the reasons for their dissatisfaction. Other problems with the school system as seen by the respondents are listed below:

- 1.) Teachers and personnel need to take more interest in the students.
- 2.) Grade school playgrounds need improvement.
- 3.) Lack of public interest and school spirit.
- 4.) Poor coaching.
- 5.) Help from the teachers in discipline.
- 6.) Conflicts among people.
- 7.) More interest from the school board to improve the schools.
- 8.) Too much parent and board interference in school affairs.

- 9.) Teacher pets.
- 10.) Better teachers.
- 11.) Discipline
- 12.) Need for teachers to attend and participate in extracurricular activities.
- 13.) Student achievement.
- 14.) Too college oriented; need for more vocational training.
- 15.) More individualization.
- 16.) Better music department.
- 17.) The fifth and sixth grades being in the same building with the high school.
- 18.) Superintendent.
- 19.) Better handling of the business affairs of the district.

After studying the following options and the results of the survey, the following conclusions have resulted.

A consolidation with Kansas is not feasible. Even though the wealthiest of the surrounding districts, the lack of facilities and course offerings are negative aspects to this consolidation. The same problems that are found at Westfield which were mentioned above would also be found in the Kansas district as well as most smaller districts. Also at the current time, there is speculation that Kansas may consolidate with the Paris unit district. A consolidation with Kansas may be a temporary one.

A self-supporting system is possible now, but when the time comes for something to be done, the rate of inflation will make this alternative unrealistic. The amounts required to run the district, assuming only a 7% inflationary rate, over the next four years would be:

1979-80	\$184,040
1980-81	197,272
1981-82	211,162
1982-83	225,943

As is quite apparent, the district would reach a point

where legally or feasibly it could not support itself.

Taxing in the district and sending these tax dollars to another district in the form of tuition is a temporary solution. The district's revenue from local taxes in the education fund is \$64,000. Westfield could send its students in the high school to Casey based on these current figures. This alternative leaves out Kansas because the amount required would be \$99,224. To send the students to Charleston would require \$77,221. All of these figures are based on sixty students at current per pupil costs in each district. This temporary solution would cut out two districts and really does not solve the problem after the two years in which this may be done. This writer cannot recommend this as an answer to the problem.

A comment from this study that needs to be mentioned is that a split in the district would be disaster for Westfield as a community. If people choose to send their children to one of the four surrounding districts available, the identity with Westfield would be lost. It is the feeling of this author that Westfield would die as a community if a split resulted.

Eliminating four of the six alternatives, only two are left to be considered—consolidating with Casey or Charleston. One must realize that either of these alternatives would mean several of the staff from Westfield would be out of work as a result of the consolidation.

Through informal discussions this writer discovered that people in the Westfield district prefer, if they had a choice, consolidating with Casey. They cited the drug and alcohol problems in the Charleston schools and the debt of the district as reasons why they did not want their children going to Charleston. Casey has the room for the high school students and could absorb the sixty enrollment projected in 1982-83.

In addition the people in the Casey district might favor this consolidation because it would bring in additional revenue to the already troubled district and prevent a tax referendum vote to increase taxes. Casey has already defeated one referendum. The people there might find it inviting to draw more money because of the increased assessed valuation. A positive factor necessary for consolidation would be present--people from both districts would benefit.

Several of the problems mentioned as a result of the questionnaire would be resolved in the Westfield district. Also inviting to Westfield is the feasibility of keeping an attendance center at Westfield. Even though fifty percent of those surveyed preferred a kindergarten through eighth grade building, a kindergarten through sixth grade would almost be assured. This alternative seems to be a very positive alternative available to the students and parents in the Westfield school system.

Nevertheless, the recommendation of this study is to consolidate with the Charleston school district. While this may not be the favorite alternative of the people, it is one that should be examined carefully. The questionnaire brought out two facts. Of those who work outside of Westfield, 60% work in Charleston. Of those responding, 70% do their shopping in Charleston. It seems the interests of the people in Westfield lean toward Charleston.

Westfield would almost be assured of having an attendance center, again probably a kindergarten through sixth grade building. This might be inviting to Charleston because it is the recommendation of this study that the students in Hutton township be sent to Westfield. This might eliminate a few of the overcrowded classrooms in the elementary buildings in the Charleston district. Of course Charleston would benefit from increased revenue. The obvious positive factors for the Westfield students are the increased course offerings, better facilities and equipment, and opportunities in several different areas.

The selling point as far as Westfield is concerned is the possibility of growth in the community. Three factors should be considered that could result in the growth of Westfield--property values in the village, small town living, and the Mill Creek watershed project. Westfield would be

right in the middle between people's work and recreation. The Mill Creek Watershed project which includes a lake and recreational facilities is certain to attract people to the area. With property values low, Westfield might grow as a result of being right in the middle of work and pleasure. People might be attracted because of the advantages of small town living, an attendance center in the town, and the fact the junior and senior high students would reap the benefits of a larger school system. All of these factors would help the Westfield community grow.

For all the reasons listed above, and in spite of a necessary tax increase for Westfield citizens, it is the recommendation of this study that the taxpayers of Westfield seriously consider petitioning to the Charleston school district for a consolidation. Such action would, of course, require attempts to change present citizen attitudes on consolidation.

While writing the results of this study, another element surfaced that could affect the entire situation. In an interview with one of the trustees of the village board, it was discovered that the possibility of a corporation locating within the Westfield school district has become a reality. Some of the particulars are vague at this time and this information is not known to a lot of people. This author could not obtain much specific information.

Nevertheless one year ago during the winter of 1978, a letter was received along with other information from a corporation asking the village board to fill out forms pertaining to the possibility of this corporation locating in the area. Several months later another letter was received which stated that Westfield had been selected as the number one choice for the location of a new facility. From the information that could be obtained, the facility would be an underground government storage facility that would employ some eighteen hundred persons. The ground for the facility would be located east of Westfield and would include four forty acre lakes. The exact location of the facility is not known for fear of land speculators taking advantage of property values. The exact function of this facility is not known to the writer's source. The land has already been surveyed and approved.

Nothing was heard by the village board members concerning this matter for approximately nine months. In January, 1979, another letter was received asking the village not to give up hope. Congress had to approve the shifting of funds to be allocated to build this facility and Westfield was definitely considered as the top choice for its location.

An effect that this situation would have on the future of the Westfield school districts is hard to comprehend at this time. The impact on the school and community would be tremendous. If all of this can be confirmed and becomes a reality, a whole new situation arises for the future of the Westfield school system.

If this facility is not developed, then alternatives have been considered for coping with the problem that faces Westfield in 1982-83. When the enrollment in the high school district falls below the state requirement, Westfield must come up with an alternative for the education of those students living in the Westfield school district. This study has examined options available, and the recommendations made have been based upon the information presented in this study for consideration by the boards of education in Westfield for dealing with a problem that they will face in the near future.

APPENDIX A
Enrollment Information
and
Projected Enrollment Figures
for Westfield Schools

Enrollment Information

1978-79 Enrollments:

Kindergarten	14	Kindergarten thru Fourth	72
First Grade	14	Kindergarten thru Eighth	131
Second Grade	17	Fifth thru Eighth	59
Third Grade	17	Fifth thru Twelfth	141
Fourth Grade	10	Ninth thru Twelfth	82
Fifth Grade	10		
Sixth Grade	12		
Seventh Grade	14		
Eighth Grade	23		
Ninth Grade	17		
Tenth Grade	25		
Eleventh Grade	18		
Twelfth Grade	22		
TOTAL	213		

Projected High School Enrollment

1978-79	82
1979-80	83
1980-81	79
1981-82	66
1982-83	59
1983-84	46
1984-85	49
1985-86	54
1986-87	58

APPENDIX B
WESTFIELD SCHOOLS
TAX LEVIES FOR 1978-79

TAX LEVES FOR 1978-79

Westfield Public Schools

<u>Fund</u>	<u>District #201</u>	<u>District #105</u>
Education	.96	.92
Building	.25	.25
Transportation	.12	.12
Municipal Retirement	.06	.07
Working Cash	.05	.05
Fire and Safety	.05	.05
Insurance	<u>.16</u>	<u>.16</u>
TOTAL	1.65	1.62

1978-79 Assessed Valuation = \$6,445,408.00

1978-79 Multiplier = 1.4993

APPENDIX C
COURSE OFFERINGS AT
WESTFIELD HIGH SCHOOL

COURSE OFFERINGS AT
WESTFIELD HIGH SCHOOL

Art I
Art II
Art III
Agriculture I
Agriculture II
Agriculture III
U. S. History
Government
World History
Modern Problems
Psychology
Cooperative Education
Home Ec. I
Home Ec. II
Family Living
Child Care I
Child Care II
Office Practice
Shorthand I
Shorthand II
Typing I
Typing II
Driver Education
Health Education
Consumer Education (General Business)
Bookkeeping
English I
English II
English III
English IV
Vocational English
General Mathematics
Algebra I
Algebra II
Plane Geometry
Math IV
General Science
Biology I
Biology II
Physics
Chemistry
Basic Musicianship
Nursing
Band
Chorus
Physical Education

APPENDIX D
RANDOM SAMPLING QUESTIONNAIRE

The following questions are directed toward acquiring the taxpayers of the Westfield School districts' feelings and information that will be used in a study for consolidation of the Westfield Schools. All information will remain confidential.

1. Sex M F
2. Age 18-25 25-35 35-50 50 or over
3. Occupation _____
4. Place of Birth _____
5. Number of years resided in Westfield _____
6. Why do you live in Westfield? (Check all that apply)

Born & Raised here Occupation here

Property values Taxes Prefer Small town Living

School System
7. Do you presently have children in the Westfield school system?

Yes No
8. Do you work in Westfield? Yes No
9. If no, where do you work?

Charleston Casey Marshall Other (please specify) _____
10. What percentage of your shopping is done in Westfield?

Less than 10% 10-25% 25-50% 50% or more
11. If less than 50% in question 10, do you shop mostly in:

Terre Haute Charleston Casey

Other (please specify) _____
12. Do you believe there is a possibility of the Westfield schools will be closed in 5 years? (check one)

Yes No
13. Do you favor consolidation? Yes No
14. Which do you favor?

Consolidation Tax increase to keep present schools open?

If Westfield consolidated with a surrounding district would you:

Remain in Westfield ___ Move to another locality ___

Do you favor keeping an attendance center in Westfield?

Yes ___ No ___

If you answered yes, what grade level?

K-6 ___ K-8 ___ K-4 ___ 9-12 ___ 7-8 ___

Are you satisfied with the present school system in Westfield?

Yes ___ No ___

If you answered no, why are dissatisfied?

Lack of Facilities & Equipment ___ Staff ___ Taxes ___
Lack of Course Offerings ___ Other (Please Specify) ___

What problems do you see in the Westfield Schools?

None ___ Other (Specify) _____

Have you ever been to a School Board Meeting?

Yes ___ No ___