



1991

Meeting the Challenges of Growth: Glenbard Township High School District 87–1915 to 1970

Susan J. Bridge
Loyola University Chicago

Follow this and additional works at: https://ecommons.luc.edu/luc_diss



Part of the [Education Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Bridge, Susan J., "Meeting the Challenges of Growth: Glenbard Township High School District 87–1915 to 1970" (1991). *Dissertations*. 2925.

https://ecommons.luc.edu/luc_diss/2925

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Theses and Dissertations at Loyola eCommons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Loyola eCommons. For more information, please contact ecommons@luc.edu.



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 License](#).
Copyright © 1991 Susan J. Bridge

MEETING THE CHALLENGES OF GROWTH:
GLENBARD TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT 87--1915 TO 1970

by

Susan J. Bridge

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the School of
Education of Loyola University of Chicago in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Education

June 1991

In loving gratitude
to my two Nicks
whose hugs, muffins,
and endless understanding
got me through.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am extremely grateful for the generous support provided to me by many people as I completed this dissertation. In particular, I wish to thank the members of my committee: Dr. Max Bailey, Dr. Joan Smith, and Dr. Lawrence Wyllie. Their patience, good humor, and wisdom as they helped me limit my scope and hone my writing style were limitless and very much appreciated.

In addition, I must thank all those members of the District 87 communities who gave so generously of their time in personal or written interviews. I am deeply indebted to Mr. Stuart Stone, of The Glen Ellyn News, for providing me access to the treasures of his archives. To the District 87 administration, especially Superintendent Robert Stevens, and to the members of the Glenbard School Board, I express my gratitude for their constant support and cooperation as this undertaking slowly came to completion.

And finally, I must thank my two families, those with whom I work and those with whom I live. To my dear friends on the Building Administrative Team, Mary Bennett, Bob Johnson, Frank Lodico, Kathy Robbins, and Bruce Viernow, and throughout the entire staff of Glenbard West High School: you are my motivation. And to Nick Jr. and Nick III: you are my anchor.

FORWARD

The purpose of this dissertation is to provide a historical review of how Glenbard Township High School District 87, located in Glen Ellyn, Illinois, met the financial and physical challenges of district growth from 1915 to 1970.

Chapter I examines the growth of the district from its founding in 1916 through the construction of its first campus in 1923. The increasing influence of Glenbard's first principal, Fred L. Biester, as the primary source of direction for the district in the years from 1918 to 1929 is also examined.

Chapter II reviews first how the Glenbard district survived the economic challenges of the 1930s and The Depression in particular. The chapter also gives a description of the personal means Mr. Biester used to broaden his influence as an educator to increase local community support for a steadily growing district. The chapter then considers the relative stability of the school district as Biester led it through the years of World War II, focusing residents' attention on the numerous ways in which the students' academic programs and extracurricular activities were designed to assist the war effort. Funds were meager and growth was minimal during the war years. However, accounts of the district's return to normalcy and the increased financial

demands caused by a renewed growth rate from 1946 to 1949 conclude the chapter.

Chapter III recounts the extremely rapid growth of the district during the 1950s. The chapter also discusses the district's successful campaign to add a separately housed gymnasium to the original campus, a facility which was dedicated in 1958 in honor of Mr. Biester's four decades of service to the district. The chapter concludes with the district's successful efforts to finance the construction of Glenbard's second campus, Glenbard East High School. Evident throughout the decade is the great extent to which the success of these campaigns was dependent upon the community's respect for the only principal/superintendent ever having served District 87, Fred. L. Biester.

Chapter IV reviews the growth of Glenbard during the 1960s from a two- to a four-high-school district. Also examined is a major change in district leadership. After Biester's death in 1962, Dean W. Stoakes became superintendent of the district, which would double in student population between that year and 1970. He would encounter a community which had once been comfortable with paternalistic leadership provided by a single man but which now demanded increased participation in district decisions in return for taxing itself more heavily to support district needs.

This dissertation chronicles how one district continued to meet its financial and physical needs, over fifty-five

years, to become a multi-high-school district. It also serves to illustrate that, when finance and facility issues are simple, a great deal of influence in the hands of very few is acceptable. As residents must give more money, however, in support of their schools, they will assume a greater degree of control.

VITA

The author, Susan J. Bridge, is the daughter of Robert and the late Lydia (Kolyja) Jaeger. She was born in Chicago on July 26, 1946.

Her elementary education was obtained at Eugene Field School in Elmhurst, Illinois. She received her secondary education at York Community High School in Elmhurst. In June 1968, she was granted a Bachelor of Arts degree in the Teaching of English from the University of Illinois, Champaign/Urbana. She received a Master of Arts in English in August 1969 from the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, Virginia.

The author began her teaching career in Glenbard Township High School District 87 at Glenbard East High School in Lombard, Illinois. After teaching English at Glenbard East for eleven years, she was appointed chairman of the English department at Glenbard South High School in Glen Ellyn, a position she held for the next six years. In 1986, she was named Assistant Principal for Instruction at Glenbard West High School in Glen Ellyn and held this position until she was named principal of Glenbard West as of July 1, 1989.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
DEDICATION.	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
FORWARD	iv
VITA	vii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.	viii

Chapter

1. GLENBARD FROM 1915 TO 1929.	1
The Birth of Glenbard Township High School District 87	
Enter Mr. Biester	
On the Referendum Road--1922 and 1926	
2. GLENBARD FROM 1930 TO 1949.	17
The Depression's Gradual Impact on District 87	
District 87's Immunity Comes to an End	
Sustaining Local Support	
On the Referendum Road--1938	
State Pronounces District "Excellent"	
"F" is for Forties, Fred, and Frugality	
On the Referendum Road--1940	
"Blueprints for Victory"	
A Return to Normalcy	

3. GLENBARD FROM 1950 TO 1959. 43

- Rapid Growth Renewed at Glenbard
- On the Referendum Road--1951
- The Relief Proves To Be Temporary
- On the Referendum Road--1956
- A Tribute to Mr. Biester
- The End of the One-Man Era

4. GLENBARD FROM 1960 TO 1970. 68

- Goodbye, Mr. Glenbard
- Hello, Dr. Stoakes
- The Growth of DuPage County
- Possible Mandate for District Reorganization
- On the Referendum Road--1962-63
- Increased Support, Increased Demand
- A More Responsive Curriculum
- On the Referendum Road--1965
- On the Referendum Road--1967
- A New Face and an Increased Concern
- On the Referendum Road--1968
- Redefined Relationships
- On the Referendum Road--Three's the Charm:
1969-70

SUMMARY 117

APPENDIX. 120

SOURCES CONSULTED 121

CHAPTER 1

GLENBARD FROM 1915 TO 1929

The Birth of Glenbard Township High School District 87

Secondary education, as provided by Glenbard Township High School District 87, started haltingly. The story of its early development began with the influx of people from Chicago who came to Glen Ellyn, Illinois, twenty miles west of the city. By the 1890s, many were visiting this small village for recreational purposes. They built summer cottages and stayed to enjoy the lakes, ponds, and generally bucolic atmosphere. The location of Glen Ellyn directly on the Northwestern railroad line enhanced the convenience of this town as a resort area for many city dwellers.

Glen Ellyn's residents wanted to provide advanced preparation for their young people. In 1894 one room in the school house was reserved for what was referred to as "a course of advanced study."¹ Soon the problem of finding adequate finances to provide for growing educational needs would prove to be the most persistent challenge this school community would face in the decades to come. Depressed financial conditions in the early 1900's caused this town's

¹Jean McConochie, Lois Schlacks, and Fred Weiser, "Glenbard: 1915-1923," student essay, TMs, May 1953, original in Glenbard West High School library, Glen Ellyn, Illinois,

one room of advanced study to be discontinued. Wheaton, Illinois, the farming town immediately west of Glen Ellyn, shared Glen Ellyn's interest in developing a real high school and, in the first few years of the 1900's, periodically asked the residents of Glen Ellyn to join them in building such a school. But Glen Ellyn citizens repeatedly refused to ratify a proposal to construct such a high school as a joint venture with Wheaton, keeping their aspirations targeted instead on the eventual construction of a school in their own town. And so, Wheaton built its own secondary facility.

Until such a local dream could be realized for Glen Ellyn, their older students attended Wheaton High School on a tuition-paying basis. By the fall of 1915, Wheaton's rates were raised to a level which Glen Ellyn residents thought were too high. Thus, they appealed, through their grammar school board of education, to Illinois' State Superintendent of Education, Francis Blair, for permission to establish their own secondary school. Permission was delivered by DuPage County Superintendent of Education R.T. Morgan on 15 September 1915.

Financially unable to build a new facility, the grammar school board rented a portion of the DuPage County Bank Building in downtown Glen Ellyn, gathered fifty freshmen and sophomores, and hired a faculty of two, Miss Erin McMechhan and Mr. Arthur Holtzman, who was appointed the school's first principal. He was a graduate of North Central College in

Naperville, Illinois, with teaching experience in a private school (A chronology of key district personnel is provided in the appendix).

Rapid development of academic programs, staff, and facilities followed immediately, setting a pace which would abate only rarely in the next several decades. In 1915, the Glen Ellyn grammar school board (which was still monitoring this secondary program) soon realized its need to provide a complete four-year high school due to increasing enrollment and demand for more complex programs. And so, in 1915 this newborn school system faced its first of many tax issues. For the grammar school board found that it did not have adequate taxing power to raise enough revenue for a four-year program and its accompanying costs. A separate high school board of education had to be elected and a separate district formed. On 27 December 1915, under the guidance of the newly elected president of the secondary board, Louis J. Thiele, the Glen Ellyn Township High School District 87 was formed. Students from Lombard, the town immediately east of Glen Ellyn, as well as from a few other nearby villages, began to enroll in the school, forcing the board in 1916 to rent additional classroom space in the bank building. By 1917, the number of teachers had grown from its original two to six, still led by Mr. Holtzman. But his leadership ended in the spring of 1918 when he left the high school's principalship to enter military service. Who would now provide direction for this fledgling

district?

Enter Mr. Biester

Mr. Holtzman provided one last service for Glen Ellyn high school prior to leaving for the armed services: he chose his successor. That man was Fred L. Biester, a man who arrived in 1918 and stayed until his death in 1962. Having met Biester at college and through Y.M.C.A. work, Holtzman saw in this young educator the potential for leadership which he felt the growing district would require. Thirty-five years later, in his dedication to a student-composed history of the Glenbard district, Holtzman would offer an evaluation of his 1918 employment suggestion: "Never has a recommendation of mine turned out so well!"¹ Mr. Biester soon earned the affection title of "Fred L." He also developed a reputation for being energetic, insightful, and worthy of the residents' trust. This trust gave him a firm mandate to lead the district through the challenges its growth would create over the next four decades.

Biester was born in 1887 in Belvidere, Illinois, a farm town about a hundred miles northwest of Chicago. Having earned his teaching degree from North Central College, Fred. L. began his career in education by teaching mathematics and physics and coaching several sports. He did this for three

¹Ibid.

years at Naperville High School and then one year at East Aurora High School in nearby Aurora, Illinois.

When he arrived at the doors of Glen Ellyn High School in the fall of 1918, it was still packed in increasingly tight quarters above the bank. What he found was a skeletal academic program in need of development. Without developing a full course of study, Glen Ellyn High School would risk not receiving full state accreditation. During his first year as principal, Biester worked with his staff and school board members to articulate an academic program, "The First Annual Course of Study," and begin its implementation.³ By clearly spelling out those courses required of all students for graduation, identifying additional electives which would provide future assistance to students in college or commerce, and sharing this new curriculum with the appropriate state officials, Biester ended his first year as principal in 1918 with full accreditation for the high school.

Now that Glen Ellyn had a bonafide secondary program, Mr. Biester urged his school board to find a larger, more suitable facility. The town of Glen Ellyn was experiencing moderate growth, as were the towns surrounding it, and choice sites for such a structure were beginning to disappear. By August 1919, twenty-five acres of hilltop land east of the center of

³Glen Ellyn Township Board of Education, "The First Annual Course of Study," TMs, September 1919, Glenbard Township High School District 87 archives, Glen Ellyn, Illinois.

town were purchased by the district from Mr. Charles R. Raymond for eight thousand dollars. The lot included five hundred feet of frontage on Crescent Boulevard, the entire hill, and Lake Ellyn, a small recreational lake immediately to the north of the hill. With a credible program developed and a prime site secured, Fred L. and board members realized quite soon that building an adequate facility on that hill would require funds beyond the means of Glen Ellyn residents alone. Biester urged the board to reconsider a proposal which had earlier faced repeated rejection--the possibility of unifying with another town in building a common high school. Since Wheaton already had its own facility and since several Lombard students were already attending Glen Ellyn High School, it was to the voters of Lombard to which Biester urged his board to turn. Biester asked Lombard's residents to petition the county superintendent of schools for direct annexation of Lombard to the Glen Ellyn high school district. He emphasized that the school's site was nearly in the geographic center of the newly proposed joint district and that the resulting school would be among the largest and most comprehensive in DuPage County, housing at its start as many as four hundred pupils.

More than 75 percent of Lombard's voting population signed a petition, and on 25 April 1921, the two high school districts were officially consolidated. Mr. Biester sponsored a contest among the high school students to provide an

appropriate district name in honor of the recent marriage. "Glenbard" was the winning entry. Thereafter, the district's official name was Glenbard Township High School District 87. '4

On the Referendum Road--1922 and 1926

Lombard's residents had become part of the Glenbard district, creating an additional responsibility for Biester. He had to show them, along with the voters of Glen Ellyn, that the present cramped quarters, adequate in 1918, would not accommodate the nearly three hundred students predicted to enroll by the fall of 1922. He emphasized that comprehensive course offerings demanded expanded facilities which would provide laboratories for science classes and manual training, a real gymnasium, and an auditorium, all now lacking and sorely needed. He and the board stressed that the bond market was unusually strong and that several large contractors were awaiting an opportunity to bid.

The school board assisted Biester's efforts by writing a promotional article, "The Story of Glen Ellyn High School," which appeared on the front page of the 8 February 1922 Glen Ellyn. Its function was to promote the professional stature and credibility of Mr. Biester as he campaigned for increased financial support for the high school. The article reminded local residents that "it was the good fortune of your Board of

'McConochie, "Glenbard: 1915-1923," 6.

Education to secure the able, conscientious services of Mr. F.L. Biester, the present incumbent, under whose leadership the school has become fully accredited, so that our graduates may now enter any of the Western Universities [sic] without entrance examinations."

Aware that they had to deal directly with a question which would be asked repeatedly by residents throughout the years of growth to come, the board asked and then answered, "How will passage of this referendum affect taxes?"⁵ Glenbard's response was that no immediate increase was expected because community growth would very likely result in increased valuation. District money presently used for rental of the bank facility would be used for interest payments on the necessary bonds. The principal and the board had laid their groundwork for this first referendum carefully, and their care paid off, for on 11 February 1922, the voters in Glen Ellyn and Lombard accepted two proposals. One approved the building of a new high school, and the other accepted the issuance of bonds to pay for it. Construction began on 17 March 1922 and continued rapidly, with the laying of the cornerstone on 10 September 1922. Glenbard High School's first classes in the new building on Honeysuckle Hill were held on 19 April 1923 with the final dedication taking place on 5 May 1923.

⁵"The Story of Glen Ellyn High School," The Glen Ellyn, 8 February 1922 (Glen Ellyn, Illinois) , 2.

Mr. Biester must have been pleased by the somewhat romanticized description in the Glen Ellyn News of that important act in the district's history, the scene for which he had been so instrumental in setting the stage:

The chilly days, the hammering and the pounding, the unfinished rooms, the turmoil and confusion of the hurried moving, and the incessant association of carpenters, plumbers, and electricians are all forgotten as if they had never been. Tradition is beginning to grow, like the clinging ivy on its stone walls, around the rooms and halls of Glenbard Township High School.⁶

The first section of Glenbard High School which was open had been planned for a maximum of four hundred students. Although the plan was to allow eventual expansion to capacity for one thousand, that plan was still some architects' renderings kept in Fred L.'s office. Those architects, of the firm of Collidge and Hodgson, the same firm which had designed Chicago's Art Institute and its Public Library, had planned an impressive building in English Collegiate style, of red brick and Bedford stone trim and fitted throughout with leaded glass windows. Highly regarded for its imposing appearance, Glenbard High School was also soon crowded. Having opened in the autumn of 1923 with 360 students, its population had

⁶Henry J. Firley, "History of Glenbard's Growth," Glenbard staff essay, TMs, 1963, original in Glenbard West High School library, Glen Ellyn, Illinois, 5.

swollen to 645 by the fall of 1926.

Three factors encouraged this growth. First, Biester and his staff had chosen a centrally located site for the school with a Northwestern railway station just across the street. Second, they had raised a physically attractive facility. And third, they had implemented a sound, fairly comprehensive secondary curriculum. Glenbard became a magnet for students from nearby towns such as Bloomingdale to its north and Downers Grove to its south, towns which had not yet built high schools.⁷ Commenting on the already crowded conditions of their new school and observing the increasing enrollment of non-district students, one Glen Bard writer, unaware that this town had already constructed a high school, remarked that "the students crowding in from Oak Park need a school of their own." Perhaps sensing the negative tone of his remark, the young journalist concluded, "We are glad that they are here though."¹ While the students might have found these circumstances tolerable, Mr. Biester and the school board found the already crowded conditions and likelihood of Glen Ellyn's continued growth to be a cause for concern . . . and another referendum.

Biester recommended that the district hold another

⁷"New Building & Increased Enrollment," The Glen Bard, 25 October, 1925, 6.

¹Ibid.

referendum in February of 1926, asking the residents of the Glenbard district to approve the issuing of \$60,000 in bonds which would yield an annual interest of 5 percent and be repaid by 1946. Adding a new element of direct mail advertising to this campaign, the principal went to work sending personal letters to over eight hundred voters in Glen Ellyn and Lombard, focusing especially on the parents of present students and those of students in the feeder elementary schools. In his letter, he particularly stressed the students' need for an additional twenty-two classrooms, a cafeteria, and a library. His letters met with what most would call success. They brought out 244 Glen Ellyn voters of whom 239 approved the bond issue. One hundred twenty-four Lombard residents responded, with 113 approving the district's request. Fred L. got the funds for the new classrooms, the library, and the cafeteria. The new monies also provided for a new office and a phone booth!

In spite of this victory at the polls, Biester remained concerned that he had been unable to bring out a larger number of the voters whom he viewed as most directly affected by this decision, the students' parents. He made the following observation about this referendum:

The most striking thing about this election was that out of the three hundred and sixty-five who did take the trouble to vote, were only a hundred who had children in high school. Mr. Biester wonders what

must be done to get the parents to vote.'

Biester Deepens Support Base

Passage of the 1926 referendum provided fairly prompt relief for Glenbard's crowded classroom conditions, and by autumn of 1928 a fourth-story addition containing many of the new classrooms was completed. The facilities were adequate for the present population. Biester, however, continued to forge as strong a link as possible between Glenbard High School and the adults who would pay its bills, aware that the establishment and maintenance of such a relationship would determine the likelihood of his school's future needs being met. One of the tools which he used to forge this bond was the interscholastic program. An avid fan of sport himself, Biester recognized early on that a successful, competitive athletic program made fans of many local residents who never sent children through Glenbard's halls. From its earliest days, Glen Ellyn and Wheaton had developed a friendly rivalry. It began over facilities when Glen Ellyn refused to join Wheaton in building a school, believing that they could eventually do so on their own. As one Glenbard student later reflected, the earliest tuition paying students attending Wheaton High School "naturally felt they were better than

⁹"Voters Pass Referendum," The Glen Bard, 12 February 1926, 5.

their Wheaton counterparts -- they just didn't have any way to prove it."¹⁰ Athletics became their means of proof, for once Glenbard was built, the rivalry between the two schools moved to the playing fields.

Mr. Biester must have seen the value such intense athletic competition would have in building local interest and pride in the high school. In fact, as he dedicated the new campus back on 15 May 1923, he used that moment of concentrated communal attention to emphasize the potential growth of some of Glenbard's programs, with athletics featured prominently:

Here on a knoll where fresh air is abundant, here where at this time of year all nature unfolds and wafts its cheering atmosphere through all the building, here with a playground at the foot of the building where training, sport and fund may be had . . . we have made a fine beginning but even that is not completed. I wish that someone could catch the vision I have tonight of hundreds who are to come here and the service that would be rendered if other facilities were provided. . . . I wish someone could catch a vision of what five or ten thousand dollars could do in the development of our athletic field.¹¹

¹⁰Ralph Covert, "Wheaton-Glenbard Rivalry Provided Violence, Victories," The Glenbard, [revised logo], 26 February 1979, 28.

¹¹"Biester's Talk Moves Audience," The Glen Bard, 6 June 1923, 11.

Football was the first to develop into a very popular sport among west suburban high schools. Having had a head-start of a few years, Wheaton had already established itself as a school known for its fine football teams. By the time the Glenbard campus had been occupied three years, Glenbard's "green and white [Glenbard's school colors] avalanche swept its way to the undisputed [1926 West Suburban Conference] conference football championship."¹² Wheaton had been defeated. This performance must have pleased Biester, for Glenbard athletic programs had become a source of local pride in and support for the school. Its newspaper, The Glen Bard, was quick to point out that growing local support: "Credit for such a position is due not only to the veteran team, but to Coach Charles 'Bud' Butler, and to the support given by the students and the townspeople."¹³ Also at this time, a group of parents began a booster organization and organized the first of many annual Green and White nights at the local Glen theater, the profits from which went to the Glenbard athletic programs. The winning athletic tradition begun at this time would continue through the coming decades, as would the loyalty of Glenbard's residents, first to athletics and later to many additional elements of Glenbard's academic and

¹²"Defeat West Chicago in Sea of Mud," The Glen Bard, 17 November 1926, 1.

¹³Ibid.

extracurricular activities and its administrators.

One fortuitous event in the winter of 1927 increased the Glenbard communities' conviction that their head administrator was well worth their support. In March of that year, the growing Naperville unit school district in which Biester had taught prior to coming to Glen Ellyn offered him the position of superintendent of their district. Although the position reportedly carried with it a significantly larger salary than his earnings with Glenbard, he rejected the offer. His students expressed quite clearly the joy they felt upon his decision to stay at Glenbard:

In the nine years that he has been principal of Glenbard [1918-1927], he has had no small part in its development. His progressive ideas, his methods of work and his fairness to all have been important factors in the steady advance of the school;

We all thank you, Mr. Biester, for choosing to remain with us. We hope that in the future we will give you no cause to regret that decision.¹⁴

By the end of the 1920s, conditions in District 87 which he had led now for over a decade gave Mr. Biester no cause to regret his decision.

He had helped Glenbard to develop respected academic and athletic programs. He had successfully garnered and sustained

¹⁴"Mr. Biester Remains," The Glen Bard, 30 March 1927, 2.

enough financial support from the community to build a facility which was not simply considered efficient and appropriate to meet contemporary educational needs but beautiful as well. In light of the challenges he would face in his next thirty-two years of leadership, perhaps, however, his most significant accomplishment during the 1920s was his success in establishing himself as a respected educational leader and community member whose advice and vision were worth following. He had filled a most vital position in an era when Glenbard Township High School District 87 was still small enough for one man to maintain a secure grasp on its direction.

CHAPTER 2

GLENBARD FROM 1930 TO 1949

The Depression's Gradual Impact on District 87

The positive tone of District 87 which Mr. Biester had been so instrumental in establishing during the 1920s continued into the era of The Great Depression. Glenbard had been somewhat insulated from the effects of the stock market crash of 1929 by the planning done by Mr. Biester and the school board and by the financial support the community had provided in the late 1920s. The 1930-31 school year was one in which Glenbard High School's students, staff, and community supporters enjoyed completion of several improvements to its facility which were financed without the need for an additional referendum. Always cognizant of the need to provide impressive settings where taxpayers could join with students to enjoy the fruits of Glenbard's growing extracurricular program, Glenbard's principal persuaded the board to make major improvements to the school's athletic field and auditorium.¹ Receiving initial attention was the

¹"Changes to Improve Athletic Field, Gym," The Glen Bard, 14 May 1930, 19.

playing field, where much of the local community gathered on autumn afternoons to witness the continuing domination of Glenbard's football team in the West Suburban Conference. This team had been acknowledged in the late twenties by The Chicago Tribune and The Chicago Examiner as one of the finest football teams in the state.¹ Biester pushed for improvements in the facilities which would better showcase public events. Prior to 1930, football fans had strained to see their team's plays from nearly ground-level seating. The principal convinced the board to raise the south bank of the playing field to provide for elevated viewing (and sorely needed additional parking spaces.) Also before 1930, basketball games, plays, and concerts were held in the same facility, the gymnasium. A stage had been constructed at one end of the playing floor, providing minimal space for theatrical and musical performances and limiting its use for athletics. Biester convinced the board to complete a new auditorium which would also allow removal of the gym stage and addition of sixteen feet of playing space. These changes supported the growth of these extracurricular programs and provided more comfortable accommodations for their audiences.

Participants and fans of the many programs using these improved facilities were pleased. When asked by a Glen Bard

¹"Established Hilltopper Sport Teams Enjoy Continued Success While . . . ," The Glen Bard [60th Anniversary Edition] 26 February 1979, 24.

reporter about his expectations for the 1930-31 school year, Biester expressed his satisfaction with what had already been accomplished by September: "Mr. Biester was quite pleased with Glenbard's physical growth spurt and declared to this student that he thought that 1930-31 might be 'the best in the history of Glenbard.'"³ Students also shared Biester's sense of pride. As one pupil observed, "Visitors often remark favorably about the beauty of the location. These new improvements will increase their admiration!"⁴

District 87's Immunity Comes to an End

Regardless of its auspicious entry into the decade of the 1930s, District 87 did not remain immune to the increasing impact of a deepening national depression on Glenbard's local economy. The recent completion of these facilities was fortuitous, for by 1932-33, the district began to feel a fiscal pinch which affected its programs, personnel, and even its calendar for the next several years. The major cause of Glenbard's diminishing financial security was a decrease in the values of local real estate. The district's assessed valuation had been set at \$11,916,000 in 1931-32, but by 1932-33 it had diminished to \$10,704,000. Since taxes on property

³"Plan to Enter New Unit After Winter Holidays," The Glen Bard, 10 September 1930, 3.

⁴"Clean-up of Glenbard Improves Appearance," The Glen Bard, 6 June 1931, 17.

values served as the major source of income for public schools, such a reduction in property values meant less money available to educate each student.

Mr. Biester and the school board were faced with the difficult task of cutting programs and curtailing any plans for further physical expansion while accommodating a steady increase in student population. The doors had opened in the fall of 1931 to 900 pupils; by the autumn of 1934, 1120 had arrived. In a June 1932 interview with a Glen Bard reporter inquiring about the probable effects of decreased revenue upon Glenbard's programs in the upcoming school year, Mr. Biester first explained that salaries would have to be cut, aware, perhaps, of the political wisdom in emphasizing any sacrifices required of staff members. Turning then to programs, he stated that library funds would be reduced by 50 percent, that little new money would be available for badly needed equipment in Glenbard's science laboratories, and that the school's extensive athletic program would be somewhat curtailed. And since the daily operation of a physical plant such as Glenbard's was costly, the length of the school year would be shortened by two weeks.⁵ The depression had reached the ivied walls of Glenbard.

From 1932 to 1934, Mr. Biester began his campaign to obtain additional funding for education to offset diminished

⁵"Financial State Affects Budget," The Glen Bard, 15 June 1932, 14.

local revenues. In the 1920s, he had understood the need to use school programs to nurture local identification with, pride in, and support for the new high school; in the 1930s, he recognized that the times demanded he enter a new arena of political activity. He set to work as an active, articulate, and visible advocate for revising the process through which Illinois funded its schools in order to provide some tax relief for his local constituents back home. By 1934, Biester was elected to the key position of legislative chairman of one of Illinois' largest teachers' associations, the Illinois State Teacher's Association [ISTA], later known as the Illinois Education Association [IEA]. An indication of the esteem in which he was already held at this time by fellow educators across the state was contained in the letter nominating him to the executive committee of the ISTA:

Mr. Biester is a good school man. He is well-known through the state for his numerous activities. He is sincere and speaks his convictions fearlessly. He has the respect of those who know him. We are asking you to support him for the State Executive Committee because he will render valuable service to this association in this capacity.⁶

As he represented educators across the state, his suggestion for improving the financial picture for local districts was simple:

⁶"State Teachers Appoint Biester, The Glen Bard, 16 January 1934, 1.

The income should come from a larger state distribution fund out of new sources rather than from any increase in property tax. We [Mr. Biester and the ISTA] are asking that the state fund be increased from ten and a half million dollars to thirty million, of which at least twenty-eight [sic] percent should go to high schools.⁷

He concluded by emphasizing the importance of citizen involvement, urging that "students and patrons who don't want courses thrown out or hours cut should push for this larger fund."¹

To assure that as many people as possible would support the solution proposed by the ISTA and Biester, he began to take advantage of that medium most likely to enter daily the greatest number of homes across the state. That medium was radio. In March 1935, he began a series of radio addresses on the plight of school finance in Illinois, carrying his message to the listeners over WLS radio. The titles of some of these speeches, such as "Public Education is a State Obligation" and "Illinois Needs Larger School Fund," suggest he was continuing to state, persistently and directly, that Illinois simply must give local school districts more money. Understanding the need for administrative leadership and responsibility, Biester lay the task for improving the State's

⁷"Illinois to Stop Aid for Schools," The Glen Bard, 20 February 1935, 1.

¹Ibid.

troubled school finances clearly upon the state's top administrator: "'The delay in helping the schools now rests with Governor Horner. The path to more money from the state goes directly to the executive mansion.'"

His extensive efforts in the mid-thirties to effect major changes in Illinois' school funding process did not result in any significant revisions. His active leadership, however, in this attempt enhanced Biester's reputation and professional influence beyond the borders of his own district and resulted in his election as president of the newly renamed and reorganized Illinois Education Association (IEA). Increasing his stature in Glenbard as well, this position as IEA president provided him with a new platform from which he would participate in statewide debate on educational issues for years to come.

Sustaining Local Support

Mr. Biester knew that continuing community support for Glenbard during these hard times would be difficult. Such support would have to be sustained by programs and policies at home which would deepen that bond between the school and the community. As in the 1920s, Glenbard's principal looked to maintaining some of that support through the school's athletic program. He kept the spirit of athletic competitiveness alive

⁹"Mr. Biester Gives Radio Lecture Over WLS," The Glen Bard, 17 April 1935, 6.

for many students by establishing extensive intramural programs in football, basketball, and baseball. Glenbard's athletic programs continued to thrive under Coach 'Bud' Butler who, by 1936, had helped Glenbard earn six West Suburban Conference championships in football, three in track, and one in basketball.

Careful, nonetheless, to prevent Glenbard's athletics from being the main reason for the school's successful reputation, Biester became involved in a statewide campaign to make academic proficiency a requirement for athletic participation. He used his membership on the Illinois High School Association's [IHSA] legislative commission to secure the establishment of academic eligibility rules to students participating in IHSA interscholastic competition.¹⁰

Parents and residents approved. Because of the school's reputation for well planned, successful athletic programs, Mr. Biester also rose to prominence within the more extensive community of athletic educators. By the mid-thirties, he was delivering keynote addresses on the qualities of outstanding secondary athletic programs to one of the nation's largest high school athletic associations, the National Federation of High School Athletics Association. By the end of the decade, he had been elected first to the IHSA board of control and

¹⁰"Eligibility Rules May See Changes," The Glen Bard, 4 November 1931, 1.

then to its presidency.¹¹ Meanwhile, Glenbard's athletes continued to provide inexpensive and exciting entertainment for communities experiencing a deepening financial depression.

These increasing financial constraints opened another avenue through which Mr. Biester would strengthen the affinity between Glenbard and its communities. As more families became less able to provide for a variety of needs, the school assumed a few additional responsibilities. By 1932-3, Glenbard had instituted annual dental and health examinations for all students. This information was then shared with their families. Through this program, the school became an even more vital resource to its residents.¹²

Recognizing another need Glenbard could meet, Mr. Biester secured his board's approval in 1937 to begin an adult night school. By September of that year, local residents began attending classes in Spanish, French, English literature, photography, sociology, and guitar. Meeting twice a week, each course cost its adult participant two dollars per semester. Glenbard had become not only a respected source of education for adolescents but an institution which offered entertainment, health care, and education to its entire extended community.

¹¹"Principal Biester Speaks in Louisville," The Glen Bard, 18 December 1935, 1.

¹²"Physicians Conduct Annual Examinations for Health Check-up," The Glen Bard, 10 October 1938, 2.

During the 1930s, Glen Ellyn's high school remained stable, led by a principal and a school board whose actions during that time served to reinforce its position as a cornerstone for its communities. That position, while fortunate, was not accidental, for Mr. Biester and the board had watched the school's population continue to grow throughout those lean years while being served by a facility which had last been expanded in 1930. The time for a referendum had come once more.

On the Referendum Road--1938

Although an attempt to pass a referendum in 1938 seemed foolhardy, the timing of this campaign was well chosen. Residents were pleased with the appearance of the high school in their midst. They felt that students were offered a sound curriculum, good instruction, and a variety of successful extracurricular programs. They felt that much credit for the school's success must be attributed to the efforts of Fred L. Biester, who was celebrating his twentieth anniversary with the district. To observe this occasion, the students began the 1937-8 school year with their newspaper, The Glen Bard, singing the principal's praises:

President of the Illinois Education Association!
Member of the board of trustees for Naperville
College! Member of the board of control of
Illinois High School Athletics! Tail Twister
of the Lions Club! [!] And last, but not least,
for twenty years beloved principal of Glenbard

High School. Who is this illustrious, renowned, distinguished person? Right! It is Fred L. Biester, who is celebrating the twentieth anniversary of his first year at this school¹³

He had led the school through two decades of progress and growth, and the communities were grateful. Hoping that such gratitude might be transformed into support for a referendum, Biester and the board seized the moment. They urged the residents to help the school flourish through increased local funding. As the 1937-38 school year ended, the principal began to broadcast the school's needs for more science labs, more space for shop and household management classes, a darkroom for the photography program, and further expansion of the gymnasium. On 10 September 1938, District 87 voters were asked to approve a \$120,000 bond issue to expand and rehabilitate the school's facilities. This referendum brought out the largest number of voters ever to participate in any District 87 election. They approved the request by a narrow margin of victory.¹⁴ Shortly after the Depression had ended, District 87 had convinced its tax payers to increase their financial commitment to their secondary education program.

¹³"Mr. Biester Gives 20 Years Service," The Glen Bard, 22 September 1937, 1.

¹⁴"Work Begins on Addition," The Glen Bard, 20 September 1938, 1.

State pronounces District 'Excellent'

While still in the midst of its latest renovations in May 1939, Glenbard High School was visited by Mr. P.E. Betting, an inspector from the office of the State Superintendent of Instruction. His job was to evaluate the overall management of and academic programs within the Glenbard system. Upon completing his inquiry, Mr. Betting mirrored the high esteem in which the students, parents, and local residents held their secondary school and its administration. He concluded his written report for the state by highlighting the positive relationships upon which he felt this excellence had been founded:

The general administration, operation, and management of the school are excellent, as are the politics of the board and community relationships. Pupils generally were courteous, interested, and attentive. . . . My general impression is that yours is a very good school.¹⁵

As the events chronicled so far have shown, this positive evaluation of District 87's educational program was not accidental but was rather the product of some very careful planning done under the constant supervision of one leader, Fred. L. Biester.

¹⁵"State Inspector Gives Glenbard High Rating," The Glen Bard, 16 May 1939, 1.

'F' is for Forties, Fred, and Frugality

Glenbard Township High School District 87 entered the 1940s with adequate facilities and programs of high quality. Yet its leaders were in a somber mood. While careful planning and implementation in the past had resulted in present needs being met, the next few years loomed ahead ominously. Several years of a nationally depressed economy were, of course, affecting emerging suburban communities just as they were more rural or urban areas. In Glen Ellyn and Lombard, both rapidly becoming "bedroom" communities from which many commuted to their jobs, the value of those "bedrooms," indeed of the entire home, had dropped drastically over the previous decade. In 1930, Glenbard had budgeted \$119,000 to educate 840 students; in 1940, Glenbard had only \$87,000 to educate 1122 students in programs which were becoming more costly. Emphasizing the seriousness of the financial picture, the \$87,000 would be available only through the school board's decision not to levy at the district's usual 80 percent of the allowed rate but to go immediately to 100 percent.¹⁶

Over the preceding twenty years, Mr. Biester and the school boards had developed a reputation for frugality and a history of developing outstanding programs and maintaining an impressive facility while spending less per pupil than

¹⁶District 87 School Board and Fred L. Biester, "The Critical Condition Faced By The Glenbard High School District #87: How Can We Maintain Our Present Standard?" District 87 pamphlet, TMs, March 1940, original in District 87 District Administrative Center archives, Glen Ellyn, Illinois, 1.

neighboring districts of comparable size. In 1940, the average cost of educating a high school student in Illinois was \$150.00 per year. The average per pupil expenditure within the West Suburban Conference schools was \$133.00. That same year Mr. Biester and the board were struggling to maintain their programs at a cost of \$119.00 per student. Mr. Biester had indeed been fiscally frugal, a trait likely recognized and valued by tax payers. However, teachers paid a portion of the cost, for this frugality had been accomplished in part by cutting salaries. The education fund tax rate had remained unchanged while costly building projects were completed and annual operating costs were supported through increased borrowing. Thus, by 1940, District 87 had \$50,000 in outstanding tax anticipation warrants. Having just received the results of its quadrennial reassessment showing a substantial decrease in assessed valuation within the district, Biester and the board knew that continued borrowing was not prudent.¹⁷

Since the financial problems faced by Glenbard over the past few years had been shared by surrounding districts as well, they were also searching for a means to greater fiscal stability. Most of the schools in the West Suburban Conference (WSC) had limited their education fund tax rate to one dollar per one hundred dollars in assessed valuation, as had District 87. But while, one by one, every other school in

¹⁷Ibid.

the WSC had taken to their voters a request to boost this rate to \$1.50, Glenbard had not followed suit. Mr. Biester had been busy passing building referenda. Biester, speaking for the board, was proud of their past restraint:

Through the years, in every way consistent with economical operation, we have aimed to develop a first class High School, fully comparable to those of similar communities. That we have succeeded in, we believe, evidenced by our 'accredited' standing and general reputation.¹⁸

But he joined the board in fearing that such continued restraint would soon endanger that standing by requiring deeper cuts in areas where 'flesh wounds' had already been inflicted: in teachers' salaries, in new program development, and in extracurricular activities. It was time to pay attention to the education fund tax rate.

On the Referendum Road--1940

For this campaign, Biester and the board members co-authored a pamphlet entitled "The Critical Condition Faced by Glenbard High School District #87: How Can We Maintain Our Present Standard?" Explaining how the past ten years had been especially demanding on any taxing bodies dependent primarily upon income from property taxes, the pamphlet stated the current problem with typical Biester frankness: "We have been

¹⁸Ibid., 3.

confronted by an increasingly serious financial problem which we must now finally put to you."¹⁹ A referendum requesting approval of a fifty-cent increase in the education fund tax rate to \$1.50 was set for 23 March 1940. On that date, a total of 2195 voters went to their polls, nearly four hundred more than any previous number voting in the district on a school-related issue. The communities' awareness of the past frugality of District 87 and the administration's evidence that it was falling far behind comparable districts in providing adequate funding for its educational programs resulted in a victory in the voting booth. In Lombard, 606 residents were in favor of this 50 percent increase in the education fund tax rate while 235 were opposed. Glen Ellyn passed the measure by 1720 to 298. Fifty-six ballots were spoiled. This final tally brought to a successful conclusion the only referendum District 87 would hold during the 1940s.

"Blueprints for Victory"²⁰

Victorious in its campaign on the homefront to raise additional revenue, District 87 now joined the nation in its war efforts. Glenbard focused its energies for the next few years on educational programs and student activities which,

¹⁹Ibid., 1.

²⁰"Blueprints for Victory, " The Glen Bard, 21 April 1943, 4.

while continuing to provide students with a good education, would also support an Allied victory in World War II. It was to these efforts that Mr. Biester turned his attention for the next few years. The rate of growth had leveled off. In 1940, 1122 students had enrolled at Glenbard. In 1948, the number was 1136. With his 1940 building program completed and a new education tax fund rate secured, the principal threw his energies into helping students, and in turn their entire community, to meet the challenges and adjust to the privations which came with a national war effort.

Biester might have known that the stability of his high school was pivotal to the stability of the towns it served. He might have felt that, if Glenbard High School could thrive during years of war, it would be stronger when peace returned. Two decades earlier, on 15 May 1923, Mr. Biester had opened Glenbard's doors with a challenge to its first students. He had asked rhetorically which type of student this new institution would produce, a student whose primary interests were selfish or a student whose first duty was to society. He stated his belief that one type of training prepared a student to look out only for himself; the other would sensitize him to the needs of others. In Biester's opinion, the type of education Glenbard provided within those newly constructed walls must be the latter:

The first type of training develops a selfish, narrow-minded individual who seldom makes the world better and who most people gladly shun. The second develops the type of men and women

who have led their generations to provide for those who are to follow. Depending upon which of these types of individuals this institution shall set itself to train shall be found the answer as to whether or not the investment here made will pay. ²¹

Concluding his comments on that dedication day, Mr. Biester urged these Glenbard pioneers to accept his credo that "service is really the greatest thing we have to give."²² Over the next few years, he promoted programs which helped his students develop a greater spirit of giving.

By 1942, Glenbard's students had caught his spirit, for they were urging each other to put up with the privations which a distant war had brought to the doors of their homes and their school. One Glen Bard editor from late 1942 expressed this attitude eloquently:

Life has been extremely pleasant for us in our years of growing up. Now for the first time we have been called upon to lend our services. Enter in with all you have. Don't fail to realize that sacrifices today will bring victory and a life worth living tomorrow.²³

11. ²¹"Biester's Talk Moves Audience," The Glen Bard, 6 June 1923,

²²Ibid.

²³"Cooperation is Vital," The Glen Bard, 21 October 1942, 2.

Although those sacrifices were not drastic, they did affect Glenbard. The cafeteria experienced shortages. Mr. Biester urged students and staff to smile as they faced meatless meals, rationed coffee, and pasta in place of pie.²⁴ He was instrumental in curtailing a traditional exchange program of which he had been a founder. For the past several years, the West Suburban Conference schools had continued an exchange policy for convocation programs, designed to foster interscholastic understanding and respect among students within the conference. However, in 1942, Glenbard's principal voted to end this program, for such cross-conference travel put unnecessary wear on the tires of school buses. The government was urging schools to eliminate any unnecessary use of these buses. These WSC convocations were not considered necessary and were canceled "for the duration," a phrase that Glenbard was to hear repeatedly from its leader over the next few years.

What wore out tires also used up gasoline, and gas was at a premium. The fuel shortage hit Glenbard's athletic program especially hard, a program Mr. Biester had supported energetically over the years. Nonetheless, he announced in 1942 that school buses could no longer be used to transport athletic teams or supplies and urged volunteers with private cars to drive the teams to games on other campuses. Mr.

²⁴"Shortage of Food Touches Cafeteria," The Glen Bard, 16 December 1942, 1.

Biester was, of course, one such volunteer. Students were made aware that these constraints on resources created by the war were borne equally by everyone, even their principal:

A certain farmer boy who has to drive to school from Lisle every day has a 'C' [ration] card as the most prized possession of his belongings. One teacher drives every day from Chicago, picking up four other teachers on the way, so she really needs all the gas her 'C' card allows.' F.L.B. [Fred L. Biester] has only a 'B' card himself! ¹⁵

During the war years, Biester promoted new courses and course adjustments which reflected the needs of a nation at war. Junior and senior girls were offered household management to assist them later with family management, budgeting, and financing purchases, should their men not be around to assist. This course even covered nursing skills helpful to a single head of a household. An equally timely first-semester course in aeronautics which was a basic ground course in flying was offered to all students; astronomy completed the second semester of the year.¹⁶ Perhaps in response to the nation's call for physical fitness, the principal and the board instituted the requirement that

¹⁵"Rationing Brings School Problems," The Glen Bard, 16 December 1942.

¹⁶"Course Study Reveals Changes," The Glen Bard, 27 May 1942, 5.

physical education of some kind be taken by all students each semester. This course included health, hygiene, and at least two periods per week of physical activity.

Biester urged his staff to examine many classes which had been offered for a long time and to adjust their focus on the war effort. In October of 1941, the art classes began to make "V for Victory" pins, painted in Glenbard's green and white.¹⁷ By 1943, sewing classes concentrated on how to reconstruct old garments to stretch clothing budgets. Glenbard's shop classes taught those fundamentals of machine construction and repair essential to the nation's Construction Battalions or Seebes. And mechanical drawing students found themselves learning skills necessary "in filling the needs of mechanized warfare on both home and foreign fronts."¹⁸ Physics classes were restructured as well to emphasize radio technology and electricity, knowledge essential for many military positions. Uncle Sam put out a call in 1943 for high school farm labor. Twenty Glenbard boys answered. They participated in a course which trained them to be productive farm workers through an intense Glenbard classroom phase of instruction acquainting them with farm life and then through

¹⁷"Art Classes to Sell Victory Emblems," The Glen Bard, 1 October 1941, 1.

¹⁸"Blueprints for Victory, The Glen Bard, 21 May 1943, 4.

eventual placement on farms near the Chicagoland area.¹⁹ Also in 1943, Glenbard High school began counseling all boys soon turning eighteen to take specialized coursework designed to prepare them for entrance into the armed forces. Mr. Biester was the counselor, leading a series of meetings to discuss with these boys their preparations for military life. He urged those who had not signed up for aeronautics during the first semester to do so and to enroll in the special physical education program which included regulation army calisthenics and obstacle courses, with student leaders appointed as corporals, in charge of their own divisions.

While our country's entrance into World War II had an impact on what happened in Glenbard's classrooms, the effect was even more profound on student attitudes and activities. Students were continuing to demonstrate some of that selfless spirit which Mr. Biester had praised two decades earlier:

We are likely to forget that this is an 'all-out' or 'total war.' To keep us reminded and to organize our efforts so that we can really accomplish something, the Ipso Facto [Student Cabinet subcommittee] is taking charge of the war program at Glenbard. It can do nothing, however, without the support of every faculty member and student. Each of us must make the salvage, USO and defense stamp campaigns launched mean more than a mere duty to carry out. All should be carried forward in a spirit of cooperation, generosity, and

¹⁹"Students Enroll For Farm Labor," The Glen Bard, 5 May 1943,

kindred spirit.³⁸

Students and staff did respond. Glen Ellyn and Lombard watched and frequently joined in as Glenbard met their principal's challenge. They began correspondence committees to ensure that local servicemen received mail from the homefront. The efforts of Ipsos Facto spread to other extracurricular groups. Glenbard's band formed a special thirty-five member unit to play as draftees left from the local train station. Regular band concerts focused on patriotic music, and the Glenbard choir added to the effort their free Victory Sing, weekly patriotic concerts in which choir and community joined together to vent their feelings through song. The Pinnacle (Glenbard's yearbook) joined in by going through all their metal plates from their past publications and sending them to the government in response to its metal reclamation effort.

Glenbard's drama students created a fictional soldier, Private Glenn Bard, and wrote a play in which he was presented for adoption to the student body. Glenn was a huge success. On Pearl Harbor Day alone, students invested \$3,776.70 in war stamps and bonds to buy Glenn a jeep. This activity led to even broader involvement as students spread their efforts throughout Glen Ellyn and Lombard, canvassing every home to

³⁸"Cooperation is Vital," The Glen Bard, 21 October 1942, 2.

assist in raising funds for the purchase of a fighter plane. ³¹

Student war efforts continued in the summers as well, when Glenbard students helped in Red Cross work, packing food boxes, making surgical dressings, or taking training which prepared them to provide adequate home nursing services while so many of the nation's doctors and nurses were abroad. The students and staff of Glenbard High School had done much during those war years of 1940 to 1945 and met Mr. Biester's expectation of service above self.

A Return to Normalcy

In March 1945, Dick Gysendorfer returned from naval duties in the Atlantic to resume his studies as a junior at Glenbard High School and then go to college aided by the G.I. Bill of Rights.³¹ Dick was District 87's first veteran to return to its classrooms, an event which signaled the beginning of a return to normal, peacetime life. The "normal" purpose of Glenbard had always been to prepare its students to succeed once they left its sanctuary. In 1946 to 1949, while some students were beginning to consider college, most students planned after graduation to seek such success in the

³¹"Bard Bonds Bag Military Fighter," The Glen Bard, 20 January 1944, 1.

³²"Gysendorfer First Vet to Return to Glenbard," The Glen Bard, 14 March 1945, 4.

workplace. Students were bringing to their classes a renewed interest in gaining skills which enhanced their employability. Many more were now seeking parttime jobs which would not simply provide income but would be valuable work experience as well.³³ Although these years were not a time of curricular expansion, a few additions were made. Occupational preparation was targeted, for Mr. Biester and the staff understood that the war was over and that the world of work was waiting. One such course, office practices, met with immediate success. Its practical hands-on preparation for a career in office work addressed a need for many of Glenbard's girls. As they themselves expressed it,

As a result of the businesslike atmosphere and technical training of the Office Practice class, girls obtain summer jobs ranging from typing and general clerical work to billing machines and comptometer operation. The practical experience gained from the Glenbard course and summer jobs aids in securing a permanent position after graduation.³⁴

This need to intensify assistance in career planning was also addressed through new career-related clubs and through interdepartmental efforts as well. Mr. Biester felt that, in

³³"Poll Reveals Jobs in Popular Favor," The Glen Bard, 8 October 1947, 5.

³⁴"Office Practice Class Gains Business Skill," The Glen Bard, 10 December 1948, 3.

spite of this renewed emphasis on job skills, Glenbard should be doing more. In March 1949, he instituted what would become an annual event, the Glenbard Career Planning Week. It began with an all-school assembly stressing those personal characteristics students would need to be successful in the world beyond Glenbard. Throughout this week, special programs in six general career fields were presented. The exact nature of specific jobs, the training these jobs required, the benefits a student should expect from such a job, and the character traits most predictive of success in these fields were presented. District 87 had become aware that its students wanted more career counseling and was beginning its efforts to meet that need.

The 1940s had provided a different set of challenges for Glenbard's leadership. As it experienced a respite from growing numbers of students, a national emergency had engaged the attention of all. Mr. Biester had been able to abate his frequent campaigns for adequate facilities and financial resources to lead Glenbard's students through the sacrifices of war and back into the opportunities of peace. But such peace was about to usher in a growth spurt which would make the 1950s the most demanding decade of Mr. Biester's leadership in District 87. It would also be his last.

CHAPTER 3

GLENBARD FROM 1950 TO 1959

Rapid Growth Renewed at Glenbard

The size of Glenbard High School's student population had remained constant throughout the 1940s. A total of 1122 had enrolled in the fall of 1940; by the autumn of 1948, the number had only grown to 1136. The district had not felt a need for expansion since its last building referendum in 1938. That stability, however, ended soon. Between 1948 and 1950, Glenbard's student number grew to 1368, an addition of 232 new students within two years and a growth rate far exceeding that of the preceding eight years. By 1950, Glen Ellyn's District 41 elementary schools were already considering the need to make boundary changes to accommodate more comfortably the 1800 students who were to enroll in their one junior high and four elementary facilities. But boundary changes alone did not provide adequate classroom space fast enough. In 1951, first grade programs across the district were cut from full-day to half-day sessions, and four new classrooms were being constructed in the two buildings which could be adapted

properly. ¹

Aware of these overcrowded conditions, Mr. Biester and the school board began in the summer of 1950 to seek funds which would allow advanced planning for another Glenbard expansion. The principal called to the board's attention a recent federal act which, as of 1950, permitted the federal government to assist local governmental bodies in completing plans and specifications for necessary expansion of facilities. The act recognized in particular the national need for additional school space and provided funds to shorten the time necessary to complete such expansion. Interest-free federal loans were made available to fund architectural services prior to a successful bond referendum.¹

Biester was confident that local residents would pass such a referendum in the near future, given groundwork carefully laid by the district. He urged District 87 to apply for a federal loan in order to save precious time in completing any addition once approved by the voters and to facilitate the board in obtaining more accurate cost estimates for such expansion. Agreeing to this approach, board members directed the principal to complete an application form. On Wednesday, 24 January 1951, Mr. Biester received word from Washington that a planning loan of \$15,860 had been approved for Glenbard

¹"overcrowding Again Creates Problems in Glen Ellyn Schools," The Glen Ellyn News, 12 July 1951, 1.

¹"Glenbard Gets Federal Loan," The Glen Ellyn News, 25 January 1951, 1.

District 87. It was to be repaid if and when the addition were actually built.

Engaging the services of architect Clarence A. Jensen, Mr. Biester began to plan both the new addition and an effective referendum campaign. With a 1950 enrollment figure of 1368, a projected 1951 figure of 1800, and a projection of nearly 2800 for 1960, he felt the need to move swiftly and submit the district's financial requests to the voters by the end of 1951. To this end, Biester continued his use of radio broadcasts to foster his image as a respected educational authority. As the Illinois High School Association grew in size and significance, so did Biester's active participation as a member, an officer of its Board of Directors, and an articulate spokesman for the value of secondary athletic programs. In these roles, he participated in such radio talk shows as "Prep Journal of the Air," on WTAQ out of west-suburban LaGrange each Saturday. Here he presented his perspective on subjects about which he had developed a good deal of expertise, such as "The Relationship Between the Principal and High School Sports Activities."¹ These presentations helped him sustain his administrative reputation as a man of vision whose lead was being followed throughout the state by advocates of strong secondary education programs. He was no doubt convinced that this reputation had served him

¹"Fred Biester To Be On Station WTAQ," The Glen Ellyn News, 25 January 1951, 3.

and his district well in passing past referenda.

On the Referendum Road--1951

As the federally funded planning stage for Glenbard's building got underway, this expansion became more extensive. It eventually encompassed three different proposals: the purchase of additional acreage for the district; expansion of the present high school building; and construction of a new physical education facility. These three proposals became the bases of the propositions brought to District 87 residents on 15 December 1951. The first proposal asked voters to approve a \$25,000 purchase of twenty-five acres of farm land located eight blocks northeast of the present campus. This land would be held for future growth of outdoor physical education and athletic programs. The Glen Ellyn Park District's having permitted the high school to use its property directly across Crescent Boulevard reduced the immediacy of this need, but such available farm land was becoming scarce. The second proposal requested funding for a \$.9 million addition to the already overtaxed building, enlarging its cafeteria and adding sixteen standard classrooms, two new shop rooms, and additional practice space for vocal music. Voters had approved a similar request in the past. This time, however, they could see the proposed additions in great detail, due to the plans begun by Biester and the architect ten months earlier. They were assured that cost estimates were accurate

because they were so current. The third proposal was unique in the district's history, for Mr. Biester and the school board were asking the residents to construct a completely new building, to expand the district in a more visible way. Such construction had not been done since 1923. The new structure, built either directly west or north of the school, would house the boys' physical education program. The need for such a facility was based on the fact that present overcrowding prevented Glenbard's juniors and seniors from enrolling in any physical education classes, which was in violation of the state law requiring each high student to have two hundred minutes of physical education each week. The cost of this new facility would be \$1 million.

Mr. Biester and various members of the school board spoke throughout the communities, emphasizing three arguments in support of these referenda. First, without such expansion, some Glenbard programs would not meet the spirit, let alone the letter, of Illinois law. Second, failure to pass the proposals would endanger the district's ability to continue meeting the standards of the North Central Association. Finally, and perhaps of greatest impact on local residents, a defeat at the polls would mean that the educational facilities and opportunities at Glenbard would no longer equal, let alone surpass, those provided by the other schools in the West Suburban Conference, a standard against which Glenbard always

measured itself.' These arguments met with general support, somewhat modified by residents' concerns about their increasing tax bills. Two days before the vote, a Glen Ellyn News editorial in support of the referenda referred to these concerns:

Assuming that most of us are being taxed heavily as it is, there is the natural tendency to scream immediately at the suggestion of any further increases. Therefore, many are opposed to the Glenbard expansion proposals on that basis alone. The question is, is this fair?

and--

Certainly it's going to cost money to keep up present school standards -- but what doesn't today? If we're going to fight higher taxes (which, granted, might be a good idea), should we begin by blocking necessary steps in keeping our school standards up to par?⁵

Such concerns over increasing taxes had been heard before. But for the first time, a new argument against district expansion was voiced which could threaten the continued marriage of Glen Ellyn and Lombard as one school district. A few Glen Ellyn residents were beginning to express resentment that the high school located in their town (which could presently accommodate all Glen Ellyn students comfortably) was once more being expanded to make room for

⁴"Voters Will Be Asked To Approve Proposals For Glenbard Expansion," The Glen Ellyn News, 8 November 1951, 1

⁵"How Important Is It To You?" The Glen Ellyn News, 13 December 1951, 4.

Lombard's students. Some were suggesting that Glenbard High School was being transformed gradually from "a friendly community sized institution" into "a mamouth educational factory."⁶ A small minority of residents were demonstrating a renewed territoriality and urged voters to refocus the educational vision by "adjust[ing] our educational programs to our village and fringe area requirements now that the present high school will be adequate for our own boys and girls for years to come."⁷

The growing concern over taxes and the appearance of this insular attitude seemed to have had some effect on the electorate. On 15 December 1951, Principal Biester faced the only financial defeat of his long career with District 87. Two of the three referenda were rejected by the voters who turned out in a smaller number than usual. A total of 1666 persons voted, only a third of those eligible to do so. The land purchase failed by a vote of 722 to 820 while the gym met defeat by 580 to 1014. The proposal to build a \$.9 million addition, however, passed by 964 to 641. The academic programs would have more room, but physical education and athletics would continue to feel severe constraints.

Mr. Biester and the school board faced even further obstacles with the one issue which had been approved.

⁶Arthur G. Vogel, "The High School Expansion Problems," The Glen Ellyn News, 13 December 1951, 4.

⁷Ibid. 5.

Although the plans were drawn and the board was ready by 17 December 1951 to advertise for and accept construction bids, they were prevented from doing so until 10 March 1952. The Illinois Supreme Court and the Federal Security Agency were the impediments to immediate progress. First, there was a suit before the Supreme Court which contended that the law under which three hundred districts, including Glenbard, had held elections since 1 July 1951 contained an illegal definition of a legal voter. On 7 February 1952, the Supreme Court affirmed the validity of the law and announced that the district could proceed to market bonds after a three-week waiting period.

The second obstacle was created by the district's need for steel and copper to construct its new addition. These two materials were considered critical by the Federal Security Agency which determined whose immediate needs justified federal release of such materials for purchase. Mr. Biester went to work to convince the agency that the district's population explosion justified the agency's early decision to release these materials.¹ He succeeded, and on 10 March 1952, the school board accepted construction bids. The expansion, the first to be done at the school since 1938, began on 2 April 1952 and continued well into 1953.

¹"Two Obstacles Overcome In Glenbard Expansion," The Glen Ellyn News, 7 February 1952, 1.

The Relief Proves To Be Temporary

The plaster on the new walls had barely dried when renewed pressure from continued growth was felt. The sixteen additional classrooms and shop areas provided a short-lived relief soon nullified by class sizes growing as high as thirty-nine to a section. Enrollment projections based on 1955 student enrollment in the elementary feeder schools were cause for additional concern. They were as follows: 1956-7: 2021; 1957-8: 2462; 1958-9: 2766; 1959-60: 2835; 1960-61: 3058; 1961-62: 3321; 1962-63: 3516; and 1963-64: 3903. Mr. Biester faced these projections with the knowledge that Glenbard High School's downtown site contained only 14.1 acres, far less than was needed to contain a building which could accommodate a population eventually approaching 4000.

The need for increased physical education and athletic facilities did not abate, either. Physical education teachers and district coaches pulled no punches in fighting for a new facility. They were aware that Mr. Biester had been a strong advocate of physical fitness and interscholastic athletic competition throughout his distinguished career. They also knew that he would enjoy greatly leaving as his visible legacy to Glenbard a brand new gymnasium. These teachers and coaches spoke openly of Glenbard's failure to provide the two hundred minutes of physical education mandated by the legislature, reminding the public that "Glenbard is violating a law every

day!"⁹ Indeed,

Glenbard was guilty as charged, providing only 165 minutes per week for freshmen, 110 for sophomores, and none at all for juniors and seniors. Summing up the situation, Mr. Robert Metcalf, the school's basketball coach, stressed that "Glenbard's physical education facilities are inadequate for a school of 500, let alone one of 1600 to 2000 students."¹⁰ The most popular solution was once again a facility which would house boys' athletics, leaving the present gym to the girls. This "battle of the bulge," as it was dubbed by the students, was being felt throughout life at Glenbard. By 1956, the senior class of nearly five hundred had to be split into two groups on graduation night to allow any guests to attend the ceremony. Students and parents were not pleased. One member of the Class of 1956 denounced the need to split the class, contending that "in spite of the problems involved, the seniors should be graduated as one group on this night, the most important in all four years of high school, to preserve the true spirit of graduation."¹¹

The unnerving question which had been asked in late 1951 by a small but vocal minority was asked once more: shouldn't Lombard have a school of its own? This time the speaker was

⁹"Coaches Express Opinions on Gym," The Glen Bard, 12 December 1954, 7.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹"Battle of the Bulge," The Glen Bard, 16 March 1956, 1.

Fred L. Biester, and his goal was to provide adequate, efficient facilities for all of Glenbard's students. The final outcome of a new facility in Lombard would make that town an equal partner in the district. Such a new facility would relieve the overcrowded halls of Glenbard for the foreseeable future and move Mr. Biester and District 87 into an increasingly complex job of managing a multi-high school district.

As the board considered multiplying its number of buildings, it began to rethink the arguments in favor of constructing a new gymnasium for Glenbard High School whose Glen Ellyn population alone had outgrown the capacity of its original physical education facilities. Such district expansion would require its residents to pass the largest referendum it had ever faced. Would the educational reputation Mr. Biester and Glenbard High School had developed over the past four decades, coupled with its irrefutably crowded conditions, be enough to convince voters to shoulder an additional tax burden?

As in the past, the principal and the board would not leave the outcome to chance but would mount an energetic campaign to secure passage of the referenda. For Mr. Biester, already in his late sixties, this campaign would be special for it would result in a monument to his dedicated service. It would also be his last campaign.

On the Referendum Road--1956

The referendum of 1956 would prove to be unlike those in Glenbard's past, not just in the magnitude of the district's financial request but in its long-term impact on present and future students and families within District 87. Aware that voters with high school students would surely be affected by their children's attitudes about splitting the district into two schools, Mr. Biester organized a student poll which posed two questions: Did the students support the division of the district into two separate high schools? Did they support the construction of a new gymnasium on the original campus? While 89 percent of the students recognized the immediate need for a new gym, students were not quite as enthusiastic about dividing their school. Those opposed to splitting their graduating class rallied behind claims that "united we stand, divided we fall" and "our athletics will be ruined!"¹² The majority, however, recognized that two separate schools would relieve the present overcrowding, allow for more individual scholastic and athletic attention, and provide extracurricular opportunity for twice as many students in musical, dramatic, and governmental organizations. Many students from Lombard also understood that money they presently had to spend on

¹²"Students Stress Need for Expansion," The Glen Bard, 25 May 1956, 1.

personal transportation back to Glen Ellyn for school activities could be diverted to other uses. The time saved by eliminating a daily commute added up as well.

Furnished with these student opinions and recognizing the influence of such data with parent/ voters, Biester and the District 87 administrative team began compiling their defense of a referendum package totaling \$4,760,000. This sum would provide for land acquisition and construction costs for the future Glenbard East High School as well as the construction of a new gymnasium at the Glen Ellyn campus. The proposed thirty-acre site for the new high school was located in Lombard on south Main Street, three-quarters of a mile north of Roosevelt Road and occupying most of what in 1956 was the Daniel F. Zwilling farm. With new housing developments springing up to its west, east, and south, this location would later prove to make the school as central to its local population as Glenbard High School had been from the start for Glen Ellynites. Construction of the new gymnasium on the Glen Ellyn campus was expected to cost \$878,000, with the remaining \$3,882,000 going for the new school. This facility was planned for an opening population of 1250 with the capability of expanding to accommodate up to 2000 students.

Mr. Biester and the school board were asking residents to pass a larger referendum than ever before and to approve a major, irreversible organizational change in the district which would have a significant impact on all Glenbard students

from the day that Glenbard East would open its doors. Recognizing the magnitude of their requests, the administration provided more detailed supportive materials than had been done for previous referenda. Mr. Biester was especially sensitive to the need to address in detail the impact which passage of this referendum would have on the personal finances of local residents. With the district administrators, he co-authored a pamphlet entitled "Before You Vote," which was distributed widely throughout Glen Ellyn and Lombard before 25 May 1956, the date selected for the election.¹³ Home owners were aware that the value of their property was increasing with the growth spurt DuPage County was beginning to experience. In 1956, the pamphlet explained, District 87 had an assessed valuation of \$116 million. At that level, passage of the proposed referendum would require a maximum tax increase of thirty dollars per year on each ten-thousand-dollar valuation. However, the district was quick to point out that as the valuation of the district would continue to increase, the thirty-dollar increase would be decreased proportionately. Wanting voters to remember the vastness of the area served by District 87, the writers of the brochure included a district map showing the expanse of land containing the seven elementary districts which fed into the high school district. Perhaps to emphasize to these elementary districts

¹³Glenbard Township District 87 Board of Education, "Before You Vote," TMs, May 1956, Glenbard Township District 87 archives, Glen Ellyn, Illinois, 4.

the importance of their affirmative vote, the 1955 assessed valuation of each feeder district was also included:

Glen Ellyn, District No. 41 - - -	\$53,884,000
Lombard, District No. 44 - - - -	\$46,712,000
Wagner, District No. 89 - - - -	\$5,590,000
Marquardt, District No. 15 - - -	\$2,902,000
Bloomington, District No. 13 - -	\$2,765,000
Queen Bee, District No. 16- - - -	\$2,741,000
Cloverdale, District No. 93- - -	\$1,534,000

These figures made clear as well the equal financial partnership of Lombard in District 87. Biester and the board hoped that this might offset any arguments that Glen Ellyn taxpayers were being unfairly burdened to supply a minor partner with its own high school. Voters were also reminded that the district encompassed several elementary districts where much land was still available and future major development was likely.

Two other financial arguments were presented. Building a centrally located school in Lombard would save the district as much as \$1500 a month in student transportation expenses since the number of students needing busing would decrease significantly. And while the administration and the school board did admit that it would be more costly to run two schools than one, they predicted that the actual difference in

cost between building a new school and continuing to add on to Glenbard would be no greater than between ten to fifteen dollars per ten thousand dollars of valuation.

Other supporting arguments addressed the district's need to be fair to all of its constituents and to continue to provide a quality education for its students. Lombardians were reminded that, within a few years, they would have a school of approximately the same size and academic scope as the original Glenbard, a school which would also serve "as a focal point for community spirit and support."¹⁴ Both towns were warned of the continued congestion resulting if expansion of one Glenbard was the residents' response to growing enrollment. The final argument emphasized the doubled extracurricular opportunities which would result from an additional campus. Extra weight was given to the fact that the number of interscholastic athletic teams, a carefully nurtured source of community pride, would now be doubled, and intramural programs which had essentially been eliminated by cramped facilities would be revitalized. With the breathing space an additional campus would provide, "hundreds of students, boys and girls who do not make regular interschool teams [would have] a real program of intramural sports and games after school and on Saturdays."¹⁵ Little was said specifically about the new gymnasium, but the deep interest

¹⁴Ibid., 5.

¹⁵Ibid.

Mr. Biester had in securing such a facility and the fact that its opening would likely coincide with his fortieth anniversary in the district did not escape those residents whose trust he had earned over those four decades.

Mr. Biester's final campaign was a successful one, for on 26 May 1956 the communities of District 87 approved its request for \$4,760,000 in additional funds. The site and new school were approved 4180 to 1450; the gym passed by 3335 to 2143, and the bonds to fund both were accepted 3807 to 1740.¹⁶ One financing issue, however, placed a final obstacle in the road to a new campus and a new gym. Before any bonds authorized by this referendum could be sold, District 87 became involved in a detachment case in the courts. Residents in Bloomingdale, concerned by rising costs of education in District 87, sought unsuccessfully to removed themselves from the school district. During this hiatus, interest rates increased beyond the expected rate the voters had authorized on 26 May. Therefore, on 25 October 1957, the district returned to its residents to request the issuance of \$1,240,000 in bonds at a higher rate of interest. By 790 to 160, the voters approved the request. Step one toward the development of a multi-high school district had been completed.

¹⁶"High School Expansion Approved," The Glen Ellyn News, 31 May 1956, 1.

A Tribute to Mr. Biester

Construction proceeded at the Lombard site and ground was broken for the new gymnasium. Life at Glenbard High School continued under very crowded circumstances, with a jammed cafeteria, inadequate locker space, and a physical education program unable to fulfill state requirements. The library seated only one hundred twenty students but served a population exceeding two thousand. In fact, 2,334 pupils were predicted to enroll in classes at Glenbard for the 1958-9 year; an actual enrollment of 2,418 surpassed that prediction. These heights were reached even though some relief had come in the fall of 1956 through the opening of Lake Park High School, 40 percent of whose students had formerly attended Glenbard. While construction proceeded, students fell over each other inside and outside Glenbard's present facilities.

In the autumn of 1958, five emergency classrooms were set up in the unfinished locker rooms of the new gym, being built to the west of the school across Ellyn Avenue.¹⁷ Although most students appeared good humored throughout 1957 to 1959, when East was still under construction and Glenbard High School was about to burst with nearly 2600 students, the comments of a few told the real tale. Freshman Louise Stibbings recalled, "One day the halls were so crowded that for a few seconds I was lifted up and carried along by two

¹⁷"Glenbard Needs More Classrooms Next School Term," The Glen Ellyn News, 15 May 1958, 1.

boys-- I hope it never happens again!" Sophomore Betsie Blocker complained, "Everybody else is walking on my feet but me.'" And senior Nancy Rutledge described students' hallway demeanor simply as resembling "human bulldozers!"¹¹

The first true relief from such packed conditions came with the opening of the new gymnasium in the fall of 1958. The final cost of this three-thousand-seat facility was \$.9 million. Those who knew Fred L. Biester's firm belief in physical fitness and healthy athletic competition sought an appropriate tribute to this support. To express the communities' gratitude for his forty years of leadership, the board and town residents decided to name in his honor the first building to be constructed since 1923. It was a building dedicated to making youth strong and fit. On 7 December 1958, an appreciative district packed the stands beneath the vaulted ceiling of this new edifice to witness its dedication as the Fred L. Biester Gymnasium. A bronze tablet bearing this incscription was installed in its foyer:

Fred L. Biester Gymnasium

1958

Dedicated to Fred L. Biester, teacher, principal, and superintendent since 1918, in recognition of his devotion to the education and inspiration of our youth.

¹¹"Students, Teachers All Agree, 'Crowded Halls Not for Me!'" The Glen Bard, 3 October 1958, 2.

Having recently given Mr. Biester the title of Superintendent in recognition of the position he had actually filled since his arrival so long before, the district felt the plaque should memorialize that fact as well. At this time, Mr. Biester was seventy-one years old and undoubtedly aware that his years as leader of this growing district must soon end. He savored the moment, delivering a dedication address which reflected clearly his deep belief in the potential benefit of this new facility for the youth of the district. He viewed the building as symbolic of his belief that a strong body was conducive to a strong mind and spirit:

The real contribution this building makes is that it is a step in the right direction in assuring our young people that they might never again have to face a Pearl Harbor. Here we will train ourselves physically. Here we will come to know we live in a free country, a free America. Here we will live it idealistically and really feel it. . . .

. . . This is a great hour for me because here you will inherit the ideals of a better youth, a stronger youth, a prepared youth, and if you will live benefitting the American idealistic system, we will all be doubly honored by a school of which we, our fathers and mothers, and the whole world can be proud.¹⁹

This was perhaps Mr. Biester's greatest hour. By 1958, he had led the district through four challenging decades to

¹⁹"Biester Gym Beacon for National Preparedness," The Glen Ellyn News, 12 December 1958, 1.

the eve of its birth as a multi-school district. He had been president of both the IHSA and the IEA in addition to serving on President Eisenhower's Committee on the Physical Fitness of Youth. By this time, he was seen within the district as "a man in a million" and was sometimes referred to as "Mr. Glenbard."¹⁰ An indication of the reverence with which he was viewed was provided by the editorial contained in The Glen Ellyn News the week of the dedication of Biester Gymnasium:

Providence must have had a hand in calling to Glenbard a man who has pulled himself up by his own bootstraps. Born to follow the plow before modern technology eased the farmer's burden, he worked his way through school as a storekeeper, a carpenter and painter who became president of his painter's union, and then on to Glenbard.

But why the title "Mr Glenbard"?

Perhaps it was because he sensed that deep down within his boys and girls there was implanted a fund of science and industry which could be put to use for public weal.

Perhaps it was because he brought his students to pondering these things in their minds as did the little boy in the synagogue so long ago as he was questioning the learned.

And if we paraphrase the collect heard in our churches at this season of the year, perhaps it was because he spent his life in stirring up the wills of his faithful students to plenteously bring forth the fruit of good work. Such is the priceless heritage of Glen Ellyn and

¹⁰"A 'Million Dollar' Gym For A Man in a Million," The Glen Ellyn News, 4 December 1958, 3.

Glenbard today.

"Mr Glenbard" -- a man in a million for whom a grateful public has named a million dollar gym.

As the Babylonians said of old, may we say today, 'O, King, live forever.'¹¹

Such reverence would not be duplicated for future leaders living in different times and facing increasingly complex challenges.

The End of the One-Man Era

With this highest praise began the end of an era for District 87 during which issues had remained simple enough for one man to provide guidance for and keep control of its affairs. Perhaps predicting the increasing demands that would arise even before Glenbard East would open its doors, the District 87 school board decided that Superintendent Biester should have an assistant, a person who could assume the role of principal for the newly renamed Glenbard West High School. Such an appointment would free Mr. Biester to concentrate on managing the burgeoning needs of the district. On 1 July 1958 Mr. David H. Miller was appointed principal. He had taught in Taylorville and Oak Park, Illinois, prior to coming to District 87 in 1952 as a teacher with some administrative duties. In that same summer of 1958, Mr. William E. Rider

¹¹Ibid.

was appointed to the principalship of Glenbard East, which was under construction. Having also come from Taylorville in 1953, he taught American history and coached at Glenbard High School and later serve as Dean of Students. Rider began the demanding job of staffing his school, organizing its programs, and developing student activities that would solidify Lombard's students into a cohesive and proud student body. He continued to provide this leadership for Glenbard East High School until his retirement in 1980.

Work had begun on Glenbard East High School in early 1958 with a target opening date of September 1959. However, by March of that year, only 46 percent of the facility had been completed. The building contractor had fallen behind schedule due to a need to reinforce some sections of the main foundation. In some locations, the construction company had to sink additional pilings through sand and water in order to reach solid ground. Although Rider was on the job, Mr. Biester remained actively involved in adjusting the construction schedule to focus special attention on completion of the academic areas which would have to accommodate an estimated six hundred students in a few months. With only that academic portion of the building finished and without hot meals, a library, gym, indoor track, auditorium, art or industrial technology rooms, Glenbard East did open its doors in September 1959 to 540 freshmen and sophomores and a faculty of thirty-two. Although they began one week after West and

ran on a shortened day until 8 November, East came to life with athletic competition in the Interim Association and an active program of other extracurricular opportunities. Considering earlier delays, Mr. Biester, Mr. Rider, and the school board felt that things were now going well.

But nature did not want to leave well enough alone. The 2 October 1959 edition of The Glen Bard contained the following front-page article:

Small Tornado Strikes Glenbard East's Tower

"Damage to Glenbard East's uncompleted tower and auditorium clearly indicated a small tornado hit the school last Saturday," stated Superintendent Fred L. Biester Monday.

The main damage occurred when winds "sucked out" the east wall of East's tower and dropped some forty tons of white stone, steel, and heating units through the roof of the auditorium onto the stage. The falling material cracked part of the stage floor and crushed some of the overhead stage lights stored there awaiting installation.

Since most of the damage was in parts of the building presently unused, Mr. Biester and Mr. Rider concurred that East's students would remain in school, on task, and on schedule. When Superintendent Biester was asked when repairs of the damaged areas would be completed, his response, "There are too many unknown factors," would prove prophetically descriptive of the new district rapidly developing around

him.²²

In spite of sinking sands and ravaging winds, the new high school was finally completed a full year behind its scheduled opening date. In February of 1960, the architects for Glenbard East responded to Biester's request for an assessment of the final structure by assuring him that "this building will in no way be a shoddy building. It is an excellent building, one that the district will be proud of and one which we will be proud to have built at such a time as it is completed and ready to be delivered to the board."²³ Dedication Day was to be 10 April 1960, but that, too, was delayed. On Saturday, 18 September 1960 at 2:00 p.m. the formal dedication finally took place. Glenbard East High School was finished and official. Glenbard Township High School District 87, with Superintendent Biester at the helm, sailed into the new decade to face the inevitable but not always predictable challenges and changes awaiting it in its new identity as a multi-high school district.

²²"Small Tornado Strikes Glenbard East's Tower," The Glen Bard, 2 October 1959, 1.

²³"Dedicate Glenbard East on Sunday, April 10," The Glen Ellyn News, 11 February 1960, 1.

CHAPTER 4

GLENBARD FROM 1960 TO 1970

Goodbye, Mr. Glenbard

Glenbard High School District 87 experienced systemic shock in the early sixties when its leadership changed. Glenbard moved into the new decade following the lead of Fred L. Biester who had determined its goals and many of its policies for the previous forty-two years. During most of those years, Biester had served not only as principal of Glenbard High School but as business manager and defacto superintendent of District 87. He was also known beyond Milton Township as an educator of some distinction because of his extensive participation in state and national educational and athletic associations.

His leadership continued to gain public recognition in 1960 when Biester was honored by neighboring Wheaton College. They bestowed on him the Wheaton College Centennial Award in recognition of his "distinguished service and achievements which have contributed to the spiritual and cultural welfare

of mankind.'"¹ He himself seemed surprised at the length of that service within the district. Speaking to a high school journalism class at Glenbard High, he once observed,"'I'm the only thing that seems to go on and on!'"²

Upon Biester's formal appointment to the superintendency in July of 1959, Mr. David Miller was named principal of Glenbard West. Discussion with long-term residents of the district suggest that Miller left after only two years because Biester continued to fill both positions, leaving Miller with less responsibility and authority than he had expected. He left after two years to assume a principalship in Palos Verdes Estes, California. His successor, however, came and stayed for ten years. His name was John D. Sheahan. He arrived in the fall of 1961 from nearby Willowbrook High School in Villa Park where he had been assistant principal. Sheahan had also taught science and mathematics and had been a coach and an athletic director during his career. He remained at West until his retirement in 1971.

All seemed well. Glenbard East had opened and stabilized under Mr. Rider's leadership. West had Mr. Sheahan at its helm. In the early 1960s, Glenbard's communities felt that its facilities and finances were adequate. Evidently, Biester agreed with this assessment. According to his friends, he had

¹"Mr. Biester Cited By Wheaton College," The Glenbard, 1 April 1960, 1.

²"Who Is Mr. Glenbard?" The Glen Ellyn News, 21 February 1967, 24.

plans to resign soon from the superintendency, serve as the district's business manager for two years, and then retire.

Then, on the evening of 20 March 1962, Mr. Biester lay down on the floor of his living room and died. There was no evidence that he had fallen. He had apparently suffered some sort of spell, stretched out on the floor, and died almost instantly. He was seventy-five years old. The entire district mourned his loss. On the day of his funeral, 23 March 1962, most local stores closed out of respect for his memory. High school classes were canceled, and East's students were transported to Biester Gymnasium for a memorial service. At the same time, another service in his honor was in progress at the First Congregational Church of Glen Ellyn.

The local newspaper expressed the difficulty District 87 would have in replacing Biester: "His successor will face an enormous task, for Glenbard, both East and West, is Fred L. Biester's lengthened shadow--and he has stood tall."³ The job of finding a new superintendent proved easier than had been expected. With retirement plans in his mind in mid-March of 1962, Biester had actually offered the job he soon had planned to vacate to an educator from Cedar Rapids, Iowa. His name was Dean Wendell Stoakes.

Hello, Dr. Stoakes

³"Fred L. Biester, Glenbard Head for 44 Years, Dies Unexpectedly," The Glen Ellyn News, 18 April 1962, 1.

In 1962, Dr. Stoakes was the assistant superintendent of schools for Cedar Rapids, a unit district containing thirty-five schools with 19,500 students. He grew up in Iowa and served in the army during World War II, returning to attend the State College of Iowa. There he earned his certificate to teach science and mathematics. Having taught and coached in Dunkerton, Iowa, from 1946 to 1949, Stoakes enrolled at the University of Iowa where he earned his masters degree in school administration in 1950. He then proceeded to earn his doctoral degree in educational administration from the University of Colorado. Stoakes moved up the administrative ladder, serving as an assistant principal, principal, director of secondary education over two high schools and four junior highs in Cedar Rapids, and was eventually appointed to the position of assistant superintendent in 1959.

The challenges he had faced in this role were ideal preparation for the tasks he would soon undertake in District 87. In Cedar Rapids, he had been responsible for planning, building, and opening two new high schools. Soon he would do likewise in Glenbard. He had developed a new budgeting procedure for the Cedar Rapids district. He would be pivotal in helping District 87 put in order its finances previously overseen by Biester. Most significantly, perhaps, he had organized campaigns for two successful bond referenda in Cedar Rapids. This success eventually brought \$8.8 million into his

district's coffers.⁴ Stoakes seemed well equipped to face the financial and physical challenges of District 87 in the 1960s. In March 1962, Biester asked if he were interested in Glenbard's superintendency; he said he was.

On 11 June 1962, "the man who Fred Biester--and just about everyone else--wanted to be superintendent of the Glenbard Township High school district"⁵ became the second superintendent in its history. Dr. Stoakes remained at Glenbard until his retirement in 1979. He found himself faced with many challenges, including that of dealing with the lasting impact of Biester's administrative style. As Dr. Stoakes recalled, "We worked under the approach that Fred L. Biester was God--but God was dead."⁶ According to Dr. Stoakes the increasing complexity of district affairs required some new approaches to district management. He recalled that the district he found in 1962 was near bankruptcy and Glenbard West High School was in danger of being closed because of fire code violations.⁷

Historically, Glenbard had been fiscally conservative. It had not raised its taxing rates equal to levels reached by many other neighboring, comparable school districts.

⁴Dean Stoakes Will Assume Post in June," The Glen Ellyn News, 18 April 1962, 1.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Dean Wendell Stoakes, Response to questionnaire by Susan J. Bridge, August 1990, Fort Myers, Florida.

⁷Ibid.

According to Stoakes, District 87 was in need of a financial transfusion and West sorely needed rehabilitation. As he characterized the challenges in which he was about to engage himself and the district, "Those next seventeen years were fun but hectic!"⁸

The Growth of DuPage County

As District 87 entered the sixties, it began to feel the impact of explosive housing development throughout DuPage County. Glenbard East was fully operational with nine hundred students in the fall of 1960. Those students would otherwise have been jammed into the halls and classrooms of Glenbard West. But East's opening provided only temporary relief for West. As principal David Miller had predicted to the board in January 1960, nearly two thousand students arrived at West's doors that autumn, nearly filling it to capacity.

The 1960 county census provided a foundation for predicting that such growth would continue. DuPage County had experienced nearly a 100 percent growth rate over the last decade. In 1950, DuPage contained 154,000 residents; by 1960, it had grown to 313,664. Indicative of district-wide expansion, Milton Township alone had doubled its population during the previous decade from 25,533 residents to 51,137.⁹

⁸Ibid.

⁹"DuPage Total Now 313,664," The Glen Ellyn News, 26 May 1960, 2.

Mr. William D. Galligan, an administrator from the census district office located in Elgin indicated in his preliminary count of May 1960 that even the more established community of Glen Ellyn had grown 66 percent since 1950 when its population had been 15,914. In 1960, it had 19,524 residents.

Mr. Arthur W. Consoer, a member of the municipal planning and engineering firm of Consoer, Townsend and Associates, was interviewed by John A. Gilbert Jr. in the 8 August 1959 Glen Ellyn News. The interview contained a prediction for DuPage residents which the 1960 census figures supported. "'Watch out for 1960, for we haven't seen anything yet!'"¹⁰ Paraphrasing Consoer's predictions, Mr. Gilbert wrote, "The growth problem of the 1950s has been a mere 'riding along with the punches,' according to Consoer. But growth which is coming will be a virtual uppercut on DuPage County's face. The county can fend the blows, but the punches will have some sting."¹¹

Possible Mandate for District Reorganization

In addition to this unprecedented growth, the residents and administration of District 87 in 1960 were facing a possible restriction of their ability to raise funds for their

¹⁰John A. Gilbert, "Watch Out for 1960 Warns Plan Expert," The Glen Ellyn News, 8 August 1959, 1.

¹¹Ibid.

schools. In late 1960, the actions of the Illinois General Assembly forwarned District 87 and other surrounding districts of an idea which, if realized, would have profound financial ramifications. At issue was the general Assembly's interest in decreasing the number of school districts in Illinois. Some members had once more mounted a campaign which could bring about the consolidation of smaller districts into larger ones and the unification of some dual districts into unit districts. As of 1960, DuPage County had a total of fifty-four districts. This was approximately 30 percent fewer than in 1945, the year used as a benchmark by the state legislation. In 1960, not only DuPage but Lake and outlying Cook County districts were operating entirely on a dual basis, maintaining separate elementary and secondary districts. According to the local press, the main advantage in doing so was financial: "The dual districts provide a 10 percent bonded indebtedness ceiling, in effect, for new construction to accommodate the heavy school population increase of the post World War II period.¹² Dual districts like Glenbard did not want to see that ceiling lowered. According to this same article, however, such a change was imminent: "There are heavy pressures to convince the new [gubernatorial] administration that compulsion should be the order. This could bring a 'great debate.'" Although the debate was held

¹²"Try Again For School District Reorganization," The Glen Ellyn News, 8 December 1960, 1.

primarily in the press and the issue did not come to a head at this time, it did heighten the level of financial concern throughout District 87.

On the Referendum Road--1962-63

The blows which Mr. Gilbert predicted would strike the face of DuPage County were certainly being felt at the two Glenbard high schools. Both were already in need of in early 1962 when the school board started to consider a bond issue to build additions increasing East's capacity from 1,450 to 2,500 and expanding West's capacity from 2,000 to 2,500. Judging that the total amount of the referendum must be trimmed, Dr. Stoakes suggested that enlarging a new facility such as East should be significantly cheaper than expanding an older building like West. The board, therefore, set as their first goal passage of a \$2.9 million referendum doubling East's capacity to 2,900. At the same time, they would request approval to remodel West and add facilities for an additional two hundred students, raising its capacity to 2,200.

Having just arrived, Dr. Stoakes began orchestrating the first of ten referenda he would face during the sixties. He had been around long enough, however, to know that successful passage of each request would depend upon whether convincing evidence was provided by the district. The credibility of a single administrator had become far less of a factor.¹³

¹³Stoakes, August 1990 questionnaire.

Dr. Stoakes began his campaign by underlining the board's fiscally responsible decision of planning for greater expansion at East: "'We have arrived at capacity for more pupils at lower, cost, and this is partly because we decided on more growth at East--where it is less costly.'"¹⁴ He stressed that East had been built with utilities adequate for 2,900 students and that existing sewers, water and electrical lines would serve a school of that capacity. Stoakes explained in frequent community appearances that the proposed building program would also add five classrooms at West, bringing its total to forty-six. Twenty-six would be added to East, where the number would grow to fifty-three.

An unwelcome complication soon disrupted the \$2.9 million referendum campaign. In September 1962, just as district voters were being asked to expand both schools and increase the education fund rate from seventy-six to ninety-seven cents, a bit of history from 1956 repeated itself. In that year, a group of residents from Bloomingdale, a town in the northern section of District 87, had sought to detach itself from District 87 and join the Lake Park High School District 108 in nearby Medinah. This action had resulted in a good deal of rancor, a series of court tests, and a one-year delay in the construction of Glenbard East. Bloomingdale, however, had eventually remained in District 87. As the September 1962

¹⁴"New Plan Will Set Ultimate Size of West High at 2200," The Glen Ellyn News, 25 October 1962, 1.

referendum approached, a small group of Bloomingdale residents proposed the detachment issue once more. This issue was not brought before the electorate because of some invalid signatures on their petitions for a referendum. This issue of separation lived on, nonetheless, through a lawsuit. Six plaintiffs asked for a review of an earlier administrative decision by the DuPage County School Trustees. Until a court decision was reached, Bloomingdale voters promised to deliver 548 "No" votes on the upcoming referendum. Dr. Stoakes urged the school board to postpone a referendum until the courts spoke. They finally did so, moving the Glenbard boundaries and placing all of Bloomingdale Elementary District 13 in the Lake Park High School district. A new date of 18 November 1962 was chosen for the referendum. The delay, however, had already done some damage. West's principal, John Sheahan, reminded Stoakes and the board that even this brief delay meant "that our hopes of having the new additions by September, 1962, are practically impossible. This will affect our educational program for the school year 1963-64."¹⁵

The 18 November ballot contained two propositions. The first requested approval to issue \$2.0 million in bonds for repairs to Glenbard West. The money would also pay for a small addition to West and a large addition to East. The second proposition asked for an increase in the education fund

¹⁵"Bloomingdale Residents Ask Reversal of Boundary Order," The Glen Ellyn News, 7 June 1962.

tax rate from the present seventy-six cents to ninety-seven cents per one hundred dollars of assessed valuation. Passage of the new rate was viewed as critical to a healthy building fund. District 87 business manager, Ronald D. Fraser, estimated that failure to pass this increase would result in the district's need to borrow more than \$.5 million to maintain a balance in the education fund. He explained that such a loan would necessitate large repayments which would diminish further the funds available to educate students and pay teachers.¹⁶

In 1962, Glenbard compared itself in many ways to the other high schools in the West Suburban Conference (WSC), schools located in communities quite similar to those served by Glenbard. By this time, some WSC schools had established the following education fund rates:

Arlington High School	\$1.17
Maine High School.....	\$1.06
Riverside-Brookfield High School.....	\$.97
Lyons Township High School.....	\$.90
Downers Grove HIGH School.....	\$.76

Glenbard joined Downers at the \$.76 rate level. Dr. Stoakes and the school board publicized the comparison, for it emphasized Glenbard's frugality over the past years while it provided support for their requested rate increase. The

¹⁶Board Seeks 21 Cent Raise in Rate for Education Fund," The Glen Ellyn News, 15 November 1962, 1.

informational campaign, however, stopped there. Dr. Stoakes was still adjusting to the nature of his new district , and the board had not yet come to realize that, with Biester gone, hard evidence, not the popularity of a leader, would determine the outcome of a referendum.

The 22 November headlines read: " Glenbard Bonds, Education Tax Get Ax in Saturday Referendum."¹⁷ The defeat had been delivered by a record-setting 7000 voters. The education rate increase had been defeated by 3671 to 3124 while the bond issue had gone down by 3522 to 3284. Mr. Lowell Bennett, the school board president in 1962, expressed the district's shock:

'The outcome was a surprise and a disappointment to the board members. I'm sure the same can be said for our administrators, who have worked hard on this and our teachers. It must be a disappointment, too, to parents, who realize the importance of maintaining a good educational program.'¹⁸

He reminded the community of the unpleasant alternatives facing their students if additional funds were not provided. "'One alternative would have us take the attitude that the people have spoken, let the classrooms jam up, put the schools on double shifts.'¹⁹ Setting that option aside as

¹⁷"Glenbard Bonds, Education Tax Get Ax in Saturday Referendum, The Glen Ellyn News, 22 November 1962, 1.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Ibid.

unacceptable, Mr. Bennett explained that the board felt compelled to fulfill its charge of providing the district's students with a strong education. The board would return to the voters soon but only after more fully educating them to the gravity of the district's needs. The superintendent and school board were realizing that they were facing a more resistant and inquisitive public than that with which Fred L. Biester had done business in the past.

Superintendent Stoakes decided to intensify the community's awareness of the district's financial need by pointing out a relatively new, potentially serious problem. DuPage residents knew that growing numbers of students required growing numbers of teachers. Glenbard had developed a reputation for good education. Good education was a product of good teaching and good teachers were attracted most readily by good pay. Dr. Stoakes found, however, that Biester had not sought to maintain a salary level comparable to other WSC schools. He explained his concern to the residents:

We completed a comparison this week [November 1962] and found that our salary schedule is the lowest of any school in the West Suburban Conference. This places us at marked disadvantage in recruiting good teachers.¹⁰

Board President Lowell Bennett echoed the superintendent's

¹⁰Ibid.

concern about keeping up the Glenbard quality while offering low salaries:

'We might salve our consciences about these low salaries if we had a faculty of average competence or a lazy faculty, but Glenbard's teachers will rank with the best. . . . These are good teachers, hard working teachers, and we ought to pay them in accord with their professional merit.'²¹

Another of the district's more compelling arguments emphasized the escalating numbers of high school aged students in the district. Between 1958 and 1962, the number had risen from 2,418 to 3,536. Taking into consideration the number of children coming up through the feeder elementary schools at the time, Glenbard would need capacity for 5,630 pupils by 1967. Another fact which the district presented to the public was that Glenbard's 1960 cost per pupil of \$656 was well below the average of other WSC schools at the time. These growing concerns confirmed Stoakes' and the board's resolve to return once more to the voters. As the board's spokesman, the superintendent spent the next few months taking the district's case to all segments of the district's communities. His message was becoming more succinct: pass this referendum now, and begin to think about a third high school.

On 17 March 1963, District 87 went to its taxpayers once more. The following week's headline bespoke an aroused

²¹"School Board President Praises Faculty at Glenbard West," The Glen Ellyn News, 21 February 1963, 1.

electorate: "'No' Votes Like November, But 'Yes' Votes Snowball."²¹ The referendum increasing the education fund tax rate passed 6057 to 3708 while the \$2.9 million bond issue was approved 6227 to 3548. Dr. Stoakes and the board savoured their victory for one day. They then began a drive for a third high school at the next Monday night's board meeting as the school board members approved a resolution to acquire a site of approximately forty acres located north of Carol Stream. This site would one day become Glenbard North High school.

Increased Support, Increased Demand

The recent referendum campaign had been a learning experience for the board and for Dr. Stoakes. The superintendent learned how dependent the school board members had been on Biester's reputation and knowledge of district business to assure voters that district needs were real. Biester's mind had been the main repository of many board plans and policies. But Biester was gone, and some of the history and the details of district business had gone with him. The district had arrived at a point of unprecedented growth and monetary need. Moreover, the community wanted to know more before it gave more.

Immediately prior to the March 1963 referendum, Mr.

²¹"'No' Votes Like November, But 'Yes' Votes Snowball," The Glen Ellyn News, 21 March 1963, 1.

George H. Adams of Glen Ellyn wrote a letter to the school board which was published in the 13 March 1962 Glen Ellyn News. He raised several issues which indicated the new level of involvement some citizens expected to have in the plans of the district. In his letter, he wondered if the superintendent and board had developed a philosophy of education. What were the district's long-term plans for curricular development? How did the district justify the higher costs for accelerated or tracked courses for a small segment of the student population?

Printed alongside Mr. Adams' questions were the board's responses. These statements constituted the first public expression of the district's educational philosophy. In the reply, board members defended a comprehensive high school which provides tracking to accommodate all ability levels:

Some of our brightest pupils who are still at the high school level in most subjects are capable of college work in one subject. Many studies have documented that some of these students (the very ones the colleges want) do not go to college because of inadequate challenge to their abilities in high school

This loss of superior and talented students is a tragedy both for the individual and society. The Glenbard program aims to prevent these tragedies. The cost is small in relation to the benefit. . . .

To ignore the special needs of both the slower learner and the mentally advanced student would be to reduce our entire educational program to one of mediocrity and to be guilty of the indictment that many have made against Secondary School education today. These special classes also make it possible for the Glenbard High Schools to

provide a much better educational program for the great group of students who do not fall into the category of mentally advanced or slow learners.²³

As he finished his first year with District 87, Dr. Stoakes was aware that the public needed more than a statement of philosophy. It also needed to know the policies and administrative regulations which supported it. The board and Stoakes felt the need to record such information beyond that summarized in newspaper articles. By May of 1963, board president Kenneth Rowe stated that the organization of the school board itself was undergoing major restructuring. Emphasizing the need to keep in touch more closely with the residents' interests and needs, members would now become members of a committee-of-the-whole. The committee frequently would break into smaller task forces to research issues, meet with consultants and committee representatives, and determine future action. This restructuring was the first step toward keeping in closer touch with the community.

Meanwhile, Dr. Stoakes was trying to run two good-sized high schools with some consistency. What applied to students at West should apply to those at East as well. The communities expected consistent, reasoned decisions based on rules and regulations known by all. In early 1963, however, even Dr. Stoakes did not always know those rules. President Rowe sensed as well the need to commit to writing those

²³"Defend Policy of Classes For Superior, Slow Learners," The Glen Ellyn News, 13 March 1963, 1.

policies which regulated the activities of the district. He stated, "We must have this in black and white because we don't have Fred L. with us any more. He carried most of this around in his head. That was all right as long as he was superintendent, but not now."²⁴ The board began the laborious but vital task of formalizing many of the by-laws and policies which in turn laid the groundwork for more consistent program development and problem solving in the future.

Dr. Stoakes felt that the district and its communities would benefit as well from a clear delineation of administrative responsibilities. Biester had seemed to do it all, but the now two-high-school district required clearer articulation of administrative responsibilities. President Rowe and board members concurred. Rowe observed, "We have to find out what are these administrative jobs, and at what level can they best be performed to run our two schools--and soon three--so the young people will get the best education."²⁵

A More Responsive Curriculum

Once board members understood that they needed to communicate their needs, positions, and plans in detail to district residents, they seemed to become more sensitive as well to the individual needs of students. By the early

²⁴"Glenbard Board To Tackle Problems With Taxk Force," The Glen Ellyn News, 9 May 1963, 1.

²⁵Ibid.

sixties, Glenbard had developed a conservative program of courses geared somewhat toward those considering college. The Cold War and Sputnik had brought to Glenbard a renewed seriousness about the curriculum. New emphasis was placed on mathematics, science, and foreign language. Affective development took the back seat to strengthening mental discipline; testing and tracking received additional attention as well. But not all Glenbard graduates were going to college. Aware, perhaps, that the district soon would need to ask voters to approve a third high school, the board began to consider whether its programs indeed provided something for everyone.

In the summer of 1962, West's dropout rate made the headlines when fifty students, 3 percent of its enrollment, left school. Why had these students failed? Or had the school failed them? West's principal, John Sheahan, responded to the statistics with a list of danger signals for parents of potential drop-outs which was printed in The Glen Ellyn News. He stated that "most of our dropouts were not leaving school to do something in particular, but rather were running away from a failing situation."¹⁶ His words expressed what seemed to be a growing administrative belief that these students should be receiving more attention. The district's organization had been tightened; increased taxes had improved

¹⁶"50 Drop Outs at Glenbard West," The Glen Ellyn News, 12 July 1962, 1.

facilities and provided funds for new programs. The time for programs targeting the more needy and less able had arrived. Glenbard East initiated the district's first true special education program the next school year. By 1964, the district had added developmental reading programs to both schools, providing skill remediation for some and enhancement for others. The board alerted the public to the significance of the new program:

National studies show that an estimated 35 percent of all American youth are seriously lacking in reading skills and that adults have almost as high an average. The need to build this fundamental skill has advanced the creation of more comprehensive training devices installed to help students and adults alike improve their reading ability. Development of greater reading skills is invaluable in today's world which seems to move over highways of paper.¹⁷

By 1963, District 87 also decided to make it easier for students to take additional courses or make up lost credit. Dr. Stoakes directed the schools to develop a greatly expanded 1964 summer school program to be offered at both schools. Enrollment exceeded the district's expectations as 1,200 students took advantage of the program. The administration emphasized the benefits of this program for all students, those making up failed courses, those fitting in additional electives not possible during the school year, and those

¹⁷"Glenbard West Will Offer Summer Reading Program," The Glen Ellyn News, 21 May 1964, 1.

hastening their graduation date:

It will now be possible for a student to earn a full credit by attending class four hours a day, five days a week, during the six-week session. With this change and a greater number of courses being available, District 87 is now better able to meet all the needs of the student community. The trend in recent years for students to use summer school as a means of enriching or supplementing their regular course selection has been evident at the Glenbard campuses.²¹

Since the 1963 referendum, Stoakes and the board seemed to have come to a new understanding. Their actions began to reflect the fact that as the cost education was rising, continued community support would be based increasingly on their clear communication with residents and programs designed to meet individual needs. An increase in that support would be needed soon, for one of Dr. Stoakes' earlier predictions had come true. By June 1965, he was reminding residents that "in 1962, we promised the people we would be back in 1965. I'm sorry to say that we're right on schedule."²² The communities would soon be facing another referendum.

On the Referendum Road--1965

Several factors made the referendum necessary. In 1960, Glenbard had enrolled 2830 students. By 1964, the number had

²¹"District 87 Summer School Session Set," The Glen Ellyn News, 1 April 1965, 12.

²²"School Board Will Ask Increase in Education Rate," The Glen Ellyn News, 24 June 1965, 1.

grown to 4309. (See Appendix 2 for enrollment chart.) Capacity at East was 3,000; West's limit was 2,200. The long-term prediction brought well over 7,000 students to District 87 by 1970, exceeding the district's present ceiling by nearly two thousand students. Facilities were getting crowded. The rapid increase in student numbers resulted in a reduced assessed valuation per student. Homes, not factories, were being added to the neighborhoods. In 1961, each student had been supported by an assessed valuation of \$63,000 per student. By 1963-64, that amount had dropped to \$51,000 per student. Pressure on the district and its communities to find new sources of revenue for their schools was increasing.

District 87 had already purchased a site for Glenbard North High school at Kuhn and Lies Roads in Carol Stream. The district now needed approval of a \$5,750,000 bond issue to cover its construction costs. Financial circumstances had forced the district not to follow its usual incremental increase in the tax levy but instead to levy at its 97 cent maximum tax rate. The board now felt compelled to ask that the education fund rate be raised to \$1.18. Stoakes and the board set the referendum vote for 25 September 1965 and began selling the proposals to the community.

The superintendent first presented to the voters the short-term consequences of defeat:

If we do not build the north high school, West will open to 2,700 people in 1968, and East

High to 3,900. This means that West would be overcrowded by 500 and East by 900 pupils.³⁰

To strengthen his argument, Stoakes brought in long-range planning and long-term enrollment projections. His language suggested that he was pulling no punches with the residents: "Here's another prediction: If we pass this referendum, we'll need the fourth school by 1971, and probably will need a rate increase then, too."³¹ To support the validity of his prediction, Stoakes included in the district's informational package a chart indicating enrollment figures from 1958 and predicting them through 1972:

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>ENROLLMENT</u>
1958-59	2418
1959-60	2580
1960-61	2830
1961-62	3218
1962-3	3536
1963-4	3993
1964-5	4305

PROJECTED ENROLLMENT

³⁰"Would Use Most of Sum for North School Construction," The Glen Ellyn News, 26 August 1965, 1.

³¹"School Board Also Will Ask Increase in Education Rate," The Glen Ellyn News, 24 June 1965, 1.

1965-66	4776
1966-67	5279
1967-68	5790
1968-69	6571
1969-70	7153
1970-71	7902
1971-72	8748 ³²

Since the completion of a third high school would only increase district capacity to 8300 students, these projections forewarned a need for Glenbard IV by the 1970-71 school year. Although a site at Butterfield Road and Park Boulevard in south Glen Ellyn had already been purchased by the board, they first needed to obtain funds to construct North. A fourth Glenbard would have to wait.

The superintendent reminded voters that District 87 had always maintained a lean education fund, especially when compared to other WSC schools. But with increasingly specialized and more costly programs being offered to a rapidly expanding population, new income must be found. Otherwise, such programs could not continue. Board president Kenneth Rowe summed up the need as the 23 September 1965 polling date neared:

³²"Would Use Most of Sum for North School Construction," The Glen Ellyn News, 26 August 1965, 1.

We cannot continue the educational program we have offered up to now with our present income. We have come to this kind of crossroads several times in recent years as our district has grown. In each instance, the people have responded.³³

Published by District 87 in the local paper two days before citizens went to the polls, the following chart compared Glenbard's assessed valuation per pupil with other area high school districts. It contained some powerful ammunition:

High School Districts	Assessed Value Per Student	E-Fund Rate Limit	1963-64 Per Student Cost
Leyden	\$80,198	\$0.82	\$691.43
LaGrange	63,529	1.10	754.53
Hinsdale	61,793	0.90	565.52
Proviso	61,570	0.93	646.29
York-Willowbrook	60,912	1.03	653.35
Glenbrook	58,262	1.28	791.87
Wheaton	56,788	0.91	555.46
Downers Grove	55,142	0.97	536.49
Arlington	54,142	1.38	576.04
Glenbard	53,258	0.97	562.22
Lake Park	49,611	1.03	548.09 ³⁴

³³"Can't Handle Pupils with Present Buildings, Income," The Glen Ellyn News, 16 September 1965, 1.

³⁴"Valuation Per Pupil Compared," The Glen Ellyn News, 23 September 1965, 1.

These figures clearly supported the district's claim that a declining assessed valuation per pupil required an increase in the education fund tax rate. As an editorial in The Glen Ellyn News had emphasized a few months earlier, the kind of growth DuPage was experiencing was not industrial but residential. At the same time, the assistance provided to district schools through state aid was negligible:

This didn't hurt much in the early fifties, when high school enrollment was static; but it hurts a lot in the middle sixties when we're having difficulty in building high schools fast enough.

In more industrialized counties, this is a smaller factor because a larger proportion of taxes comes from property which sends no children to school; but as DuPage county is finding out, the movement of industry into new locations is slow.³⁵

Voters were reminded of one final necessity: hiring and keeping good teachers. In 1955, District 87 had employed seventy-seven teachers. By 1972, its predicted need was 450 teachers. The 1963 education fund tax rate increase had allowed for some improvement in the salary schedule. Relative to surrounding suburban districts, however, Glenbard's pay scale was still low. Competition for good teachers was getting stiffer, and the board's ability to lure them to Glenbard's classrooms would be improved through another increase in the education fund tax rate.

³⁵"You're a DuPage Old Timer If You can recall \$100 Tax Bills," The Glen Ellyn News, 27 August 1964, 15.

On 23 September 1965, President Rowe predicted a victory for education at the polls. He must have felt that the district's clarification of its philosophy, policies, and organizational structure, its increased responsiveness to needs of individual students, and a more thorough informational campaign than had been held in November 1962 would assure such success. He was correct. The residents responded once more, passing the \$5,750,000 bond issue for the construction of Glenbard North by 4094 to 1926. The 21 cent education fund increase passed as well by 3754 to 2237.

On the Referendum Road--1967

By April 1966, the school board had accepted architectural plans for Glenbard North. Contractors' bids were opened that summer, and ground was broken in August. In the year between passage of the referendum and the beginning of construction, building costs had risen significantly. In March of 1967, voters were asked to approve the issuance of another \$2,450,000 in general obligation bonds. This money would equip North. It would also allow the district to prepare for what Stoakes and the board felt was inevitable--the opening of a fifth high school. These monies would allow District 87 to purchase a site for that facility.

The generous mood of the Glenbard taxpayer was undergoing a change at this time. Home owners were becoming increasingly concerned about their escalating property taxes. They

understood the need to raise additional funds to cover increased construction costs, passing the bond issue by a narrow margin of 2766 to 2492 on 21 March 1967. But Stoakes and the board had placed another request before the residents. In order to meet the mounting operating costs of three schools, they also asked for a building fund tax rate increase. Approval would raise the present 18.5 cent rate to 37.5 cents. On this issue, the vote was nearly reversed with 2449 favoring the increase and 2798 in opposition.

Stoakes was facing what even local newspaper columnists were calling an "extremely critical problem."³⁶ Without such an increase, North, which was scheduled to open in the fall of 1968, would lack funds for utility bills, custodial services and preventive maintenance. Stoakes stressed the bottom line: "'This means our new building will be ready for use and [there will be] no way to open it.'"³⁷ By 1967, the physically crowded conditions existing at West and East had forced the district to adopt split-shift scheduling for the 1967-68 school year.

The district administration went to work to determine why the tax rate increase had failed. They were entering an era which would require them to do repeated analysis. Between 1967 and 1970, they would go to the voters seven times and

³⁶"Building Fund Rate Proposition to be Placed on Ballot Again for Glenbard High School District 87," The Glen Ellyn News, 11 May 1967, 5.

³⁷Ibid.

face rejection on each issue the first time around. The cause was simple: homeowners were concerned about escalating property taxes. In April and May of 1967, Stoakes scheduled three area meetings at which he fielded questions and heard voters' concerns. One frequent misconception was that an increased building fund rate would somehow double homeowners' tax bills. Stoakes clarified the situation, explaining that if the highest rate of 37.5 cents were levied in the building fund, an owner of a home with a thirty thousand dollar market value would pay a maximum high school tax increase of \$1.80 per month. He pointed out that the present rate had remained unchanged for seven years. Appealing to residents' interest in staying competitive with other WSC schools, Stoakes stressed the growing gap between Glenbard's per-pupil expenditure and those of surrounding schools. He provided the following figures:

District	Per-Pupil Expenditure
Hinsdale District 86	\$351.29
York-Willowbrook District 88	\$193.37
Downers Grove District 99	\$146.05
Glenbard District 87	\$87.89 ¹¹

Stoakes expressed concern as well over what he felt was growing voter apathy. He wondered if the district was

¹¹Ibid.

foreseeing the end of what had made it thrive since 1916: strong community support. Urging all who believed in the value of a Glenbard education to vote, he admitted that passing "a referendum is never easy. It takes a dedicated effort on the part of forward thinking individuals within the community to make them successful."³⁹ His observation was correct. Passing the next four referenda would be far from easy. For the moment, however, his efforts were successful. On 21 May 1967, a small voter turn-out approved the building fund rate increase by a narrow margin of 1813 to 1585.⁴⁰

A New Face and an Increased Concern

As construction on Glenbard North proceeded, Dr. Stoakes sought a leader for the new school. That leader was found within the district in the person of Raymond W. Livingston. Mr. Livingston had come to the district in 1959, having taught previously in Plainfield and Orland Park, Illinois. He began as a history teacher and coach at West, later becoming its dean of students. Dr. Stoakes recognized Livingston's administrative potential and appointed him administrative assistant to the superintendent. With nine years of varied district experience as a teacher, coach, dean, and district-level administrator, Livingston had the broad perspective

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰"Voters Approve Rate Ceiling Of \$.375 by Slight Margin In School District 87 Election," The Glen Ellyn News, 25 May 1976, 1.

Stoakes believed necessary for the person who could open a new school and guide it to success.

Early in 1967, Dr. Stoakes named Livingston principal of Glenbard North High School. The new principal immediately began selecting seventy staff members for the school and overseeing its construction. As Bill Rider had done a decade before at Glenbard East, Livingston sought to solidify those students assigned to North into a student body. Loyalty songs, school colors, mascots, clubs, athletic teams all received his attention. Although by 1974 he would find himself in the position of assistant superintendent of District 87 and would eventually succeed Stoakes as superintendent, Livingston felt that the responsibilities he assumed in opening Glenbard North and inspiring some "Panther" traditions were some of his most significant contributions to the district.⁴¹ Spared the sinking sands and tornadoes that had plagued the fledgling Glenbard East, North opened on time and in good shape in September 1968.

As Livingston had sought new staff members for North, his experiences supported one of Stoakes' earlier predictions. Teachers were in demand throughout DuPage County. Since few candidates were available to fill a large number of positions, salaries became increasingly important. Stoakes and the board had taken some early steps to meet this need when they began,

⁴¹Raymond W. Livingston, Response to questionnaire by Susan J. Bridge, 23 October 1990, Fort Myers, Florida.

mid-decade, to accept for training a much larger number of student teachers. In 1965 alone, thirty-five young people were doing their practice teaching in District 87 classrooms. Stoakes also began sending recruitment teams to college campuses throughout the Midwest and mailing vacancy lists to hundreds of placement offices. Salaries, however, remained the key factor in attracting good candidates. While Stoakes had been able to improve the district's salary schedule somewhat, it still lagged behind other local districts with which it was competing for new teachers. The superintendent knew that the time had come to ask residents to increase the tax rate for the education fund, that part of the budget used for salaries.

On the Referendum Road--1968

Dr. Stoakes began an intense effort to educate residents about Glenbard's current financial plight. He had a series of press releases prepared emphasizing as the main justification for a rate increase the pressing need to hire and retain strong teachers. The articles explained that the referendum set for 30 March 1968 would increase the education fund tax levy from \$1.18 to \$1.39 per \$100 assessed valuation and would help the district meet an immediate need:

The extra income is urgently needed, according to Dean Stoakes, the district superintendent, to

help pay increased teacher salaries and to employ at once the 42 additional teachers needed to staff the new Glenbard North school when it opens in September.⁴²

Stoakes stressed that enrollment predictions indicated a need for forty new teachers every year through at least 1973. He warned voters of the results of a defeat:

'Our teacher recruitment would suffer, and we would undoubtedly lose experienced teachers. If this happened, we would also have to sacrifice many educational programs and services.'⁴³

Another personnel issue was intensifying pressure on the district to improve its salary schedule. In 1967-68, teachers were becoming more assertive. Baltimore teachers went on strike to obtain bargaining rights. Thirty thousand New York teachers struck over salaries and other benefits, delaying the opening of school. Locally, Proviso East High School barely avoided a teachers' strike over a change in working conditions. Although such tension did not exist in District 87 at this time, its teachers were realizing that they were now in a "seller's market." The time was ripe for Glenbard teachers to unite to bring their salary and benefit package into line with other WSC schools. Before 1968, teachers had

⁴²"District 87 Seeks Boost In Tax Rate," The Glen Ellyn News, 21 March 1968, 1.

⁴³Ibid., 3.

belonged to rather loosely organized building associations. They had not formed an umbrella organization which could help address staff concerns shared throughout the district. Once Glenbard North High School opened, District 87 became one of the larger employers of teachers in the state. It also became an attractive candidate for affiliation with a larger, nationwide teachers' union. Dr. Stoakes saw this coming and knew that improving salaries before such affiliation occurred might mitigate the immediate influence of the presence of the National Education Association or the American Federation of Teachers in District 87.

To assure that voters understood these circumstances prior to the referendum, Stoakes and board members prepared a ninety-page report on the district's enrollment projections, curricular plans, and financial picture. Entitled Focus on the Future, it was made available to all district residents.⁴⁴ Its enrollment projections set the district's ultimate enrollment at 15,000 in 1978 when the communities would reach saturation. Such numbers would place Glenbard among the largest districts in Illinois. The report reminded voters that, should such growth occur, a tax rate increase would provide only a temporary respite from financial problems. In fact, if the rate were raised to \$1.39, District 87 would still accumulate a debt of \$189,000 by June 1969. Operating costs had increased at a faster pace than had the district's

⁴⁴Ibid.

assessed valuation. The result was decreased revenue per student. The school board included in their report the following chart showing that, since 1962, Glenbard's per pupil revenue had decreased 11 percent while enrollment had increased 63 percent:

YEAR	ENROLLMENT	VALUE PER STUDENT
1962-63	3536	\$58,300
1963-64	3993	\$57,400
1964-65	4305	\$56,700
1965-66	4756	\$53,800
1966-67	5138	\$52,200
1967-68	5619	\$51,700
1968-69	6115	\$49,900
1969-70	6671	\$48,000
1970-71	7436	\$45,100
1971-72	8258	\$43,600
1972-73	9,160	\$41,000

(NEAREST HUNDRED)⁴⁵

In spite of such evidence, current board president John A. Swett shared with the public Dr. Stoakes' conviction that this referendum would be difficult to pass. He joined Stoakes in making numerous community appearances to deliver a

⁴⁵Ibid.

consistent message. Three major factors had combined to cause the present need to increase the education fund rate. First, enrollment had grown from 3500 in 1962 to 5600 in 1967 and was projected to increase to 9200 by the fall of 1972. Next, the cost of classroom materials and teaching supplies had escalated. Finally, the district was under increased pressure to set a competitive salary schedule attracting new teachers and retaining present staff.⁴⁶

In spite of what the district felt were clear and compelling arguments in its favor, the referendum was defeated 3789 to 3106. District 87, however, was not alone in its defeat that day. On 30 March 1968, voters in neighboring Districts 16 and 88 rejected bond issues and education fund rate increases. District 87 decided to resubmit their request to the residents on the soonest permissible date, 8 June 1968. With North opening in a few months, they could afford no delay. Stoakes struck this note of urgency once more:

Since the failure of the March 30 Glenbard Referendum, classes [sizes] have been increased and courses with low enrollment eliminated, which has resulted in reducing the number of additional staff members needed for the coming September school year. If the 21 cent increase does not receive voter approval on Saturday, a drastic curtailment for the entire educational program must be made for the following year.⁴⁷

⁴⁶"District Seeks 21 Cent Tax Rate Hike in Vote Saturday," The Glen Ellyn News, 28 March 1968, 1.

⁴⁷"School Tax Referendjm Set For Saturday, The Glen Ellyn News, 6 June 1968, 3.

On 8 June 1968, the residents spoke again, 3036 in support of the 21-cent rate increase and 2649 in opposition. After a thorough informational campaign based on urgent needs, such a narrow margin of victory told Dr. Stoakes and the school board that future increased financial support through increased taxes would be hard won.

Redefined Relationships

In the late 1960s, a few basic relationships underwent some changes affecting the schools as well. The first was between the generations. Between 1965 and 1969, the Viet Nam conflict had intensified, causing frequent friction between those supporting the war and those opposed. The debate often seemed to polarize the older and younger generations. Commentaries in the local newspapers and school papers during these years recognized this increased sense of alienation between the generations. Adults and kids were sensing a generation gap. To many older residents, teenage jargon became nearly unintelligible, their clothing and hair objectionable, and their seeming lack of respect for authority deplorable. Burke Mead, a Lombard newspaper editor and columnist, dedicated an entire series of articles in late 1968 to examining the problems with the day's adolescents. He concluded with his New Year's Day column, entitled "We Gladly

Bury 1968. . .1969 Can't Be Any Worse."⁴⁰

The Glenbard communities seemed to look to their high schools to help them regain some control of their teens by clearly defining the limits of acceptable adolescent behavior, even if those limits applied only in school. Stoakes and the school board seem to have heard the need and understood its implications for the district. Continued financial support was vital as DuPage County continued to grow as a residential, non-industrial center. The administration must respond to its constituents' needs. Therefore, the late sixties found District 87 administrative staff and board members holding preliminary discussions which would lead in the early seventies to board policies addressing those same community concerns. Eventually, policies would be developed defining appropriate speech, dress, behavior, practice of religion in the school, abuse of controlled substances. . .on the same aspects of students' lives that were causing local adults the greatest concern. The district was redefining its partnership with the communities. The homeowners were accepting increasingly burdensome taxes to support their schools. In turn, schools were taking on more responsibilities previously assumed by adult residents.

Relationships within the district itself were also changing. The paternal relationship Biester had once nurtured

⁴⁰Burke Mead, "We Gladly Bury 1968...1969 Can't Be Any Worse," The Lombardian, 1 January 1969, 2.

between his teachers and the school board was rapidly disappearing. During the 1968-69 school year, Glenbard's teachers saw the wisdom of pooling teachers' resources and energies of staff from all three campuses into one teachers' union, the Glenbard Education Association (GEA). Affiliating with the Illinois Education Association and the National Education Association, the GEA grew rapidly. By 1970, it had become the sole bargaining unit for the teachers. Stoakes, however, had predicted its development and was ready for it.

Relationships between students and teachers were changing as well. Students insisted on more control over course goals and content and on their applicability to students' interests and needs. "Relevance" became a course's most academically desirable trait. As a student from Glenbard East explained in early 1969:

Education, then, is only effective when it is relevant to the student's life The answer is for educators and students to keep striving for relevant courses and tolerance of each other's views.⁴⁹

District 87 responded by using some of its refurbished education fund to pay for course revisions and additions. Glenbard joined many other WSC schools in 1969 when it added its first computer course to the district's curriculum. In the same year, teachers added to the district's required

⁴⁹Bruce Elger, "Glenbardians Investigate Relevance of Instruction, The Glenbard East ECHO, 28 March 1969, 2.

health course a three-week unit on sex and responsible, healthy attitudes toward it. The addition caused a minor upheaval among a few parents, but the unit remained. A few departments, notably social studies and English, began developing "mini-courses" to appeal to students' special interests. In response to student need, parent demand, and state mandate, the district's special education program grew from one small self-contained classroom at East to two classrooms, a craftshop, and a kitchen. Mainstreaming programs were developed in auto mechanics, personal typing, driver's education, and physical education. The development of courses more tailored to individual requirements and interests continued into the seventies.

By the end of the decade, many basic relationships had been redefined. Dr. Stoakes had begun the adjustments when he arrived in 1962. He recognized then that an increasing financial dependency upon local taxpayers had put an end forever to the likelihood of one administrator's unilaterally determining the direction of the district. The people expected more participation in the district and more response from it. Under Stoakes, the district began to improve communications with its residents and to provide additional student support programs and specialized classes. Teachers were exercising a newly found strength in numbers as they pulled their individual associations into a functional teachers' union and found leadership from within their own

ranks. At the same time, they were becoming increasingly responsive to student interests and were redesigning classes to relate more directly to students' lives.

Glenbard High School District 87 had changed a great deal from the single school district in 1958, whose superintendent/principal frequently determined the politics and policies of the district, to the three-high-school district of the late sixties. Under the leadership of Dean Stoakes, District 87 had come of age as it recognized that its strength would be maintained only by transferring some of its power and influence from the hands of few to the hands of many.

On the Referendum Road--Three's the Charm

1969-70

Those same hands were asked to build one more major facility, bringing the district up to its four-campus status. Glenbard North's doors opened in September 1968, providing classrooms for 2000 more students. But the district's enrollment projections were troubling. Its 1969 capacity was 7200. Projections indicated the following enrollment figures:

YEAR	STUDENT ENROLLMENT
1970-71	7300
1971-72	7900
1972-73	8500
1973-74	9300

1974-75

10,000

1975-76

11,900⁵⁰

A fourth campus seemed necessary. Gaining approval for this facility proved more difficult than any previous referenda. But the realities of several large housing developments under construction in the area, a 30 percent inflation rate in local construction costs over the previous three years, and some serious renovation and maintenance needs at East and West left the superintendent and the school board little choice.⁵¹ They decided to take their needs to the voters on 22 November 1969. They would request approval to issue \$11,405,000 in general obligation bonds in order to build and equip a fourth campus. This school, Glenbard South, would be constructed on a previously purchased forty-four acre site at Park Boulevard and Butterfield Road in south Glen Ellyn. The bond issue would also construct and equip a twenty-nine-room addition to Glenbard North, blacktop the graveled parking lots at Glenbard East, and renovate the auditorium and washrooms at Glenbard West.

Aware that working closely with citizens' groups was more important than ever in gaining voters' approval, Dr. Stoakes educated Glen Ellyn resident Duane D. Olsen to the details of

⁵⁰"Plan Referendum In District 87 As Enrollments Soar," The Lombardian, 7 May 1969, 1.

⁵¹"High School Board Reviewing Building Needs of Districtg 87," The Glen Ellyn News, 15 May 1969, 1.

the district's plight and asked him to chair a Glenbard Citizens' Referendum Committee. This committee became a key communicator of district needs and rationale during the 1969 campaign. Chairman Olsen urged fellow residents to understand the urgency of the situation:

The need is now. It takes two years to build a high school. If we are not ready in 1971, then we must be prepared to see the quality of Glenbard education deteriorate. I do not believe this is the wish of any parent who realizes the importance of a good education.⁵²

In spite of the active support of this Citizens' Committee and the district's most ambitious informational campaign, many residents sounded unsympathetic the week before the vote. They wondered why North needed an addition so soon after its opening. They questioned the accuracy of the district's enrollment projections. Why should they pave parking lots which are already graveled? How soon would the fifth school be needed? Why hadn't the district adopted a twelve-month school year? Why was the state paying so little of the construction costs? What would happen if the voters rejected the referendum?

The district administration answered each question, using the local press as its final forum before the election. They placed special emphasis on the last question, explaining the

⁵²"Emphasis Placed on Classroom Space for Glenbard Referendum, The Glen Ellyn News, 12 November 1969, 2.

results of another defeat. The district's response was simple and direct. District 87 still would be responsible for educating the communities' students. The proposal would be resubmitted to the voters within sixty days. If it failed again, district boundaries would undergo continual realignment to share equally the burden of overcrowding among the three schools. Beginning in 1971, students would also begin attending school on a parttime basis due to a shortage of classrooms.⁵³

Many students were watching this referendum carefully and some were predicting defeat. They, too, heard the voters challenging the scope and immediacy of the need. They might have heard their own parents bemoaning escalating taxes. Two weeks before the 22 November polling date, Glenbard East's student paper, The ECHO, printed a headline story, "Taxpayer Revolt Threatens Glenbard District."⁵⁴ The headline's predictions became reality. The front page of the 27 November 1969 Glen Ellyn News proclaimed, "Glenbard Proposals Go Down To Defeat in Saturday Voting." While 3533 voters felt the district's requests must be met, 4369 rejected the referendum.

Dr. Staokes and board president Harold W. Osborn announced their intentions immediately. They would return to the voters on 24 January 1970 with a request for a \$10,135,000

⁵³"District 87 Election Saturday, \$11,405,000 Bonds Sought," The Glen Ellyn News, 20 November 1969, 1.

⁵⁴"Taxpayer Revolt Threatens Glenbard District," The Glenbard East ECHO, 11 November 1969, 1.

bond issue. This was one million dollars less than the previous request. The addition for Glenbard North would be postponed. If construction began immediately, a September 1971 completion date could still be met. President Osborn reminded residents that any further delay would be costly. He stated that building costs were presently rising 8 to 10 percent a year. A six-month delay would mean a \$.5 million cost increase in the project. Osborn restated the likelihood of the three schools' going on double shifts: "The board is firmly convinced, however, that double shifts mean inferior education. I am sure that no parent wants this for his children."⁵⁵

Still in operation, the Citizens' Committee took on the task of answering all letters concerning the referendum which were sent to the local papers. A few lines from some of these provides insight into the voters' moods:

Many big businesses have cut expenses by having two or more shifts of workers using the same buildings, machines and other facilities. Stockholders would rather see profits than buildings.

Geraldine Diebold

To the silent majority--the long suffering homeowner. . . the bulk of increased taxes are traceable to the construction of new school facilities. These taxes can and should be

⁵⁵"Revised Bond Issue Offered For New District 87 Referendum," The Glen Ellyn News, 15 January 1970, 4.

drastically reduced.

Lee C. Mielke

There is no real educational reason detrimental to the children to restricting the school day, or to say it another way, there is nothing educationally wrong with the double shift.

Philip J. Kasik

We should use existing buildings or erect quonset huts like they did years ago.

"Fed-Up Taxpayer"

A new system [schedule] is in order, or national financial insolvency will drive us all mad. Amen.

R. Edward Wiesbrok⁵⁶

Mr. Wiesbrok's prayer was answered. The 24 January referendum went down to more resounding defeat than had its larger November predecessor. While 3914 voters showed their support for the \$10,135,000 request, 5,423 opposed it. District 87 began the New Year, and a new decade, with quite a facilities headache.

Dr. Stoakes and the board heard clearly the voters' frustration with increased taxes. They knew, however, that double shifts would only serve as a temporary solution to the district's problem. The only permanent solution to district overcrowding would be the addition of a fourth campus. Nonetheless, Stoakes sought a way to convince taxpayers that he and the board were sensitive to their concerns and would welcome their continued participation. He must have felt that enhancing such a partnership now would enhance passage of a

⁵⁶"Our Readers' Views," The Glen Ellyn News, 22 January 1970, 4, 5, 14.

referendum later.

The superintendent invited community participation on a newly formed Citizens' Advisory Committee (CAC). Its charge was to study and pose solutions to current and impending district problems. After two failed referenda, Stoakes and the board understood better than ever their need to take their constituency seriously. In fact, they asked the CAC to make improved communication between the school district and the community the first issue the committee explored. The CAC was given three other foci: the problem of increased federal, state, and local taxes; the increased costs in all aspects of education; and the ongoing shortage of district facilities. Meeting throughout the year, the CAC was scheduled to make its recommendations for action to the school board on 31 December 1970.

The district publicized widely the CAC's deliberations, perhaps in hopes that more voters would come to view the district not as an oppressor but as a partner in solving problems. The board also held public hearings to allow open discussion on two four-year plans for double shifts presently under consideration by the district. Those hearings seem to have made clearer to voters the potentially detrimental effect which long-term shifts could have on educational programs. After the hearings, a petition with mass signatures from Glen Ellyn, Lombard, and Carol Stream asked the school board to adopt only a two-year shift plan. These residents also

requested that the board resubmit the South referendum to the voters. The district agreed with the first request and set 19 December 1970 as the date on which voters could once more make clear their feelings about a fourth high school.

Perhaps the third try was the charm. Perhaps it was the Christmas spririt in the air. Perhaps it was the carefully orchestrated actions by Stoakes and the board demonstrating their sensitivity to public opinion. Perhaps it was the fact that the \$10,260,000 requested ten months after the last vote would now only cover the expenses for the new campus. East and West would remain unimproved. Whatever the cause, the effect on votes was positive. By a vote of 4740 to 4415, the construction of Glenbard South High School was finally approved.⁵⁷ Although the margin was slim, it was finally a margin of victory.

In the months that followed, facilities remained crowded and students attended classes on double shifts. However, these discomforts became much more tolerable with the knowledge that relief would come in September 1972 when Glenbard South High School opened its doors at last.

⁵⁷"Glenbard South Wins Approval By 325 Votes," The Glen Ellyn News, 24 December 1970, 2.

SUMMARY

From 1915 to 1970, Glenbard Township High School District 87 faced the continuing financial challenge of educating a steadily growing number of students. As events demonstrated, the district went through two distinct eras of leadership. The men providing that leadership were Fred. L. Biester and Dean W. Stoakes. Mr. Biester helped the single-school district meet its challenges and adjust to its changes in a manner appropriate to his time. That was a time in which the business of a small district could be controlled by a few and overseen by one rather charismatic leader whose image had been a source of pride for and support from the community.

But Biester himself must have seen the different type of leadership a multi-school district would require when he hand-picked Dr. Stoakes as his successor. Stoakes understood that this district's ever-increasing dependency upon local taxpayers would require an increasing sensitivity to their needs and responsiveness to their opinions. His role would not be that of a solitary leader but of a facilitator for communication between the school and community. As residents gave more money to maintain the quality of their schools, they came to expect a higher degree of participation and more specialized attention to student needs. Stoakes anticipated and met those expectations.

The Glenbard district seems to have had the right leader at the right time, leaders whose approaches enabled it to meet its fiscal and physical challenges as Glenbard evolved, over fifty-five years, from two rooms over a bank building to a four-high-school district.

APPENDIX

Appendix: Key District 87 Administrative Personnel
1915 to 1990

DISTRICT LEVEL--SUPERINTENDENTS

Fred L. Biester--1958-1962
Dean Stoakes--1962-1979
Raymond Livingston--1979-1984
Robert Stevens--1984 to present

BUILDING LEVEL--PRINCIPALS

Glenbard West High School

Arthur Holtzman--1915-1918
Fred L. Biester--1918-1958
David Miller--1958-1961
John Sheahan--1961-1971
Robert Elliott--1971-1989
Susan Bridge--1989 to present

Glenbard East High School

William Rider--1958-1980
Paul Hadley--1980 to present

Glenbard North High School

Raymond Livingston--1968-1971
Albert Weber--1971-1989
Margaret Atchison--1989 to present

Glenbard South High School

James Rudolph--1971-1974
Charles Oxley--1974-1979
Peter Abruzzo--1979 to present

SOURCES CONSULTED

PUBLISHED MATERIALS

- Barzun, Jacques and Henry F. Graff. The Modern Researcher. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1962.
- Cremin, Lawrence Arthur. The American Common School, an Historic Conception. New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1951.
- The Transformation of the School; Progressivism in American Education, 1876-1957. New York: Knopf, 1961.
- Public Education. New York: Basic Books, 1976.
- Glen Bard (Glenbard and Glenbard West High School newspaper). 1923-1971.
- Glen Ellyn News (Glen Ellyn, Illinois). 1940-1971.
- Glenbard East ECHO (Glenbard East High School newspaper). 1964-1971.
- Harmon, Ada Douglas. The Story of An Old Town--Glen Ellyn. Glen Ellyn: Glen News Printing Company, 1928.
- Hockett, Homer. The Critical Method in Historical Research and Writing. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1955.
- Kneller, George F. Foundations of Education. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1967.
- Krug, Edward August. The Shaping of the American High School. New York: Harper and Row, 1972.
- Spradley, James P. The Ethnographic Interview. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1979.
- Weiser, Frederick S. Village in a Glen. Glen Ellyn: National Society of Daughters of the American Revolution, 1957.

UNPUBLISHED MATERIALS

Biester, Fred L. and Glenbard Township High School District 87 School Board. "The Critical Condition Faced by the Glenbard High School District #87." (District 87 Administrative Archives), 1940.

Firley, Henry J. "History of Glenbard's Growth." (Elliott Library, Glenbard West High School), 1963.

Glenbard Township High School District 87 School Board. "Before You Vote." (District 87 Administrative Archives), 1956.

McConachie, Jean, Lois Schlacks, and Fred Weiser. "Glenbard: 1915-1923." (Elliott Library, Glenbard West High School), 1953.

INTERVIEWS

PERSONAL

Peter Abruzzo
Susan Barr
James Bourke
Charles Ellenbaum
Robert Elliott
Glenn Flansburg
Ronald Fraser
Randall Harris
Lee Hesterman
James Mullaney
Jan Rajack
Merrill Rajack
Jane Rio
Marilyn Sanders
Les Sommers
Robert Stevens
Robert Storm
Perry Woodward

WRITTEN

Raymond Livingston
Charles Oxley
Dean Stoakes
Albert Weber

APPROVAL SHEET

The dissertation submitted by Susan J. Bridge has been read and approved by the following committee:

Dr. Max A. Bailey, Director
Associate Professor
Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, Loyola

Dr. Joan K. Smith, Co-Director
Professor and Acting Dean, Graduate School
Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, Loyola

Dr. Larry Wyllie
Lecturer
Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, Loyola

The final copies have been examined by the director of the dissertation and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the dissertation is now given final approval by the Committee with reference to content and form.

The dissertation is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education (Ed.D.).

April 19, 1991
Date

Max Bailey Joan K. Smith
Director's Signature