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### A Study of the Feasibility of Consolidation of School Districts 113, 115, and 116

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A STUDY OF THE FEASIBILITY OF CONSOLIDATION  
OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS 113, 115, AND 116  
(TITLE)

BY  
RICHARD B. ADAMS

FIELD STUDY  
~~THESIS~~

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR THE DEGREE OF

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IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL, EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY  
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1976

YEAR

I HEREBY RECOMMEND <sup>field study</sup> THIS ~~THESIS~~ BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING  
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter		Page
	LIST OF TABLES .....	iii
I	INTRODUCTION .....	1
II	HISTORY OF THE DISTRICTS .....	5
	Whiteside District 115	
	Wolf Branch District 113	
	High Mount District 116	
III	CURRENT ANALYSIS AND PROJECTIONS .....	9
	Current Enrollment and Projections	
	Curricula	
	Special Services	
	Assessed Valuations	
	Assessed Valuations Per Pupil	
	Financial Status	
	Physical Plant and Class Size	
IV	CONSOLIDATION PROCEDURE .....	21
V	RELATED RESEARCH .....	26
VI	SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS .....	29
	Legal Aspects	
	Enrollment	
	Curricula	
	Special Services	
	Assessed Valuation	
	Location and Facilities	
	Conclusion	
	APPENDIX .....	34
	BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	47

LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
1	Average Daily Attendance 1964-74 .....	9
2	Assessed Valuations 1964-74 .....	13
3	Assessed Valuations Per Pupil 1974-75 .....	15
4	1974 Tax Rates and Projection .....	16
5	Physical Plant and Class Size .....	18

# I

## INTRODUCTION

It is the purpose of this paper to explore the feasibility of combining three of the Belleville dual elementary districts into one larger dual elementary district. Consolidation into a unit district was proposed as recently as 1970. At that time, the proposal of the ten elementary and single secondary district forming a unit district was overwhelmingly rejected. As a result, of this rejection and the realization that the quality of the educational program could be improved with consolidation, the writer has gathered data and material relating to High Mount Elementary District 116, Whiteside Elementary District 115, and Wolf Branch District 113.

The data and material collected are intended to reveal the similarities, differences, and problems, both real and unsubstantiated, of consolidation of the three districts.

The writer became interested in the consolidation of the districts when the High Mount District of which he is Superintendent began to lose enrollment and operate with deficit spending. Also due to the recent financial problems involving Beleville Elementary District 118 and possible closing of schools, area districts were approached with the possibility of consolidating into one large elementary district

or a unit district with Belleville Township High School District 201.

Most of the area elementary districts did not want to become part of a unit, nor did they want to be consolidated with Belleville Elementary District 118. As a result, Wolf Branch, Whiteside, and High Mount exchanged letters between boards asking consideration be given to a consolidation of the three districts. While all were interested, because of the reduction of the possibility of consolidation with district 118 and 201, the matter was not carried to completion.

However, as Superintendent of High Mount, I feel that consolidation of the three districts would be beneficial to all three areas and therefore have collected material and data to develop the hypothesis that until such time as the people of the Belleville area no longer reject the concept of unification into a unit district, the consolidation of the small dual districts into a larger dual district is a step in the right direction of providing greater quality education at a more economical cost for the area students.

The statistical data were obtained from the published records and files of the three districts with the complete cooperation of the three Boards of Education and school superintendents. The information has been validated by the Educational Service Region's Office and the County Clerk's files.

School district reorganization has been a subject of much discussion and has been a major concern to many educators of recent years. Dr. George T. Wilkins, former State Superintendent of Public Instruction relates in the 1969 feasibility study, which led to the reorganization of the Marissa area into a unit district, the five advantages of a unit district. It is practical to apply these same advantages in considering the formation of a larger dual elementary district:

1. Increases state aid
2. One tax rate and one budget
3. Economy in business and legal procedures
4. Improved special services to children including the coordination of the transportation program, lunch program, and health services
5. Central purchasing

While these provide valid reasons for consolidation, the opposition to such an act would develop resistance using reasons cited in a study by the American Association of School Administrators reviewing newly organized districts. Reasons opposing consolidation were given as a fear that:

1. Local control will be destroyed
2. The school plant will be taken out of the neighborhood and the children transported too far away from home
3. Vested interests, personal and financial will be weakened or terminated
4. Parental influence on the children will be weakened seriously
5. School taxes will increase



6. The level of services will decrease
7. The close relationships between the home and the schools will be destroyed
8. The community itself will be seriously weakened or destroyed<sup>1</sup>

Comparing the objections of consolidation with the advantages, it should be noted that the objections involve the human factor. Even though the advantages in consolidation would benefit the area students both economically and academically, the threatened possible loss of individuality and citizen interest through the reduction of the number of school boards tend to overshadow the advantages.

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<sup>1</sup>American Association of School Administrators, School District Organization, American Association of School Administrators Commission on School District Reorganization (Washington, D. C., 1958), p. 10-11.

## II

### HISTORY OF THE DISTRICTS

In gathering the information regarding the history of the three districts, the writer had permission to use the Board of Education Policy Books of each district. Each has some very informative and interesting material.

#### Whiteside District 115

The earliest known school of the three was established for adult education by John Messinger, a pioneer, settler, surveyor, and educator. Upon his arrival in Illinois from Vermont in 1802, he established his home in the American Bottoms near the present community of Waterloo. Later, he moved to Clinton Hills, an area to the Northeast of Belleville. It was here that he established his school in which he taught reading, writing, spelling, arithmetic, and surveying. The latter two subjects were taught carefully because of the relations to his work.

Soon after the death of Messinger, Thomas Whiteside, for whom the present district is named established another small one room school. This first Whiteside log cabin school building was built in 1846 and was eventually replaced by a one room brick building in 1875. In 1907, another room was added, and this two room building served until 1958.

In 1958, the old building and site were discarded for

the present site and a new four room structure was built. An administrative office and five more classrooms were added in 1966 with a gym and two classrooms added in 1973 to form the present school plant and facilities serving approximately 307 students.

#### Wolf Branch District 113

Wolf Branch School was formerly located on highway route 159 in the building now occupied by the Hug Cabinet Shop. The first school house was a one room log structure built on an acre of land deeded to the school in 1863 by Adam and Eva Badgley.

No record is available on how long the original log school house was used, as it was replaced by another one room brick building which served as Wolf Branch School until 1957, when the present school was built on Huntwood Lane which is now being used by approximately 284 students.

#### High Mount District 116

On April 8, 1880, the school district now known as High Mount District 116, came to be as a result of a petition filed with the Belleville Township Board of Trustees. The petition requested detachment from the Elementary District 4 because of the distances from school and unfavorable road conditions during bad weather.

The petition was granted at the regular meeting on April 8, 1880, and on May 8, 1880, an election was held to elect directors. After the election, the three directors

made provisions for a new school house, coal shed, outdoor toilets, and fencing of the property for a total cost of \$420.

The first building on the present site was built in 1902. In 1951, a complete renovation of buildings took place and the first structure of the present facility was completed. Additions in 1957, 1961, and later in 1967 completed the present physical plant serving approximately 360 students.

As can be seen by these brief histories, all three districts had similar beginnings. Likewise, attending school in any of the districts in the late 1800's and early 1900's presented similar problems in that all had to walk to school across open fields or along muddy roads.

Classes started late in the fall to allow time for students to help with harvest and let out in the early spring to allow time for students to help with the planting.

The curricula offered by these schools were reading, writing, arithmetic, and spelling. All the students were normally in one room with the older students helping the younger students with their studies along with tending to the heating stove, ashes, and water bucket.

The school picnic held on the last day of school was the high light of the year. It was normally an all day affair with games and food provided by the families for a basket dinner. Spelling bees, arithmetic contests, and running games provided entertainment as well as competition.

All three school still observe the old tradition by

holding field days where awards are given for contest winners. In place of the picnic lunches provided by the parents, the students eat in the school cafeteria.

Because of this common background and the present similarities of the districts, consolidation of the three districts would cause no great hardship in continuing to carry on traditions or starting new ones.

### III

#### CURRENT ANALYSIS AND PROJECTIONS

In this chapter, the writer will point out the various similarities of the districts, including current enrollment and projections, curriculum, special services, assessed valuations, financial status, physical plants, and class size.

##### Current Enrollment and Projections

As shown in Table 1, the three districts have received tremendous student enrollment growth during the past ten years.

TABLE 1

##### AVERAGE DAILY ATTENDANCE 1964-74

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>HIGH MOUNT #116</u>	<u>WHITESIDE #115</u>	<u>WOLF BRANCH #113</u>
1964-65	312.22	142.22	101.16
1965-66	310.37	155.31	125.48
1966-67	324.25	166.99	142.43
1967-68	359.00	197.48	154.15
1968-69	366.28	221.69	183.26
1969-70	360.94	247.77	195.97
1970-71	374.25	249.50	256.28
1971-72	387.15	252.85	256.28
1972-73	393.60	246.96	256.24
1973-74	374.49	243.17	236.03
1974-75	359.49	256.11	241.60

In 1964-65, the three districts had a combined average daily attendance of 555.6. For the 1974-75 school year, the A.D.A. was 857.2, for an increase of 301.6 or 54%. This factor alone indicates that the three districts located on the northeastern edge of the City of Belleville are in one of

the rapid growth areas of St. Clair County.

Analyzing each district it is found that Wolf Branch District #113 had an A.D.A. of 101.16 in 1964-65 and an A.D.A. of 241.60 in 1974-75 which is an increase of 138.8% during the ten year period. Whiteside School District #115 had an A.D.A. of 142.22 in 1964-65 and an A.D.A. of 256.11 in 1974-75, representing an increase of 113.89 or 80% during the same time span. Both districts have areas that underwent a rapid expansion of residential building, with areas still available for further growth.

High Mount District #116 had an A.D.A. of 312.22 in 1964-65 and underwent an increase of 47.27 during the ten year span for 15% increase to an A.D.A. of 359.49 during the 1974-75 school year. While the physical plant will be able to house more students, the district has little area available for new building as it is only two square miles in size. Because of the ability to house additional students, it is feasible to consider consolidation as a means of reducing class size in the other two districts and prevent overcrowding in the future as building continues.

Projection for future enrollment is difficult because of the proximity to Scott Air Force Base and the large number of transient families. Currently, the area schools are waiting on the results for a study that would mean as many as six thousand new persons moving into the area, including the school age children of the families. Because of the built up

area of the High Mount District, there is little opportunity for new families moving into the area unless they purchase existing property. Whiteside and Wolf Branch Districts having suitable areas for expansion can expect a sizeable increase in enrollment.

### Curricula

The curricula of the three schools are quite similar as the graduating eighth grade students are sent to the Belleville High School system. Through series of articulation meetings over several years, the curricula of the elementary districts have been brought together so that all curricula are similar. Of the basic areas of Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Studies, and Science, all three schools are using the same Houghton-Mifflin series in Mathematics and Reading. Two of the districts are using Robert's Linguistics Approach to Modern Language and the other is using the Ginn series. In the field of Science, all three districts are using the Holt-Rinehart-Winston series with the ISCS being used in one district's junior high classes. Two districts use the Triggs-Adam Social Studies Program through grade seven and the Houghton-Mifflin History in grade eight. The other district uses the Ginn series for Social Studies. All three districts use a wide variety of supplemental materials and are well-supplied with needed audio-visual materials and equipment to provide a variety of activities and learning experiences.



Wolf Branch District is using a non-graded program for the first six years and then has a departmentalized junior high. High Mount and Whiteside Districts have integrated many of the thoughts and ideas of the non-graded system, but still are primarily grade level oriented. Students in these two districts rather than being grouped in a classroom by ability are grouped heterogeneously with various students moving from class to class and in some cases grade levels according to their individual abilities.

All districts provide additional areas of study under the auspices of mini-courses, ranging from alcoholism to youth involvement in local, state and federal governments. These courses vary in length from two to nine weeks and are offered as an integrated part of the over all curricula. Extracurricular activities such as baseball, basketball, track, girls softball, volleyball, drama, band, chorus, student council, and all levels of scouting activities enable the students in these districts the opportunity of involvement and success.

#### Special Services

All three districts are members of the Belleville Area Co-operative Purchasing Organization which allows them to purchase needed supplies at quantity prices. The districts are also members of the Belleville Special Education District. Through this co-operative arrangement, all have total access to the many and varied services needed in today's schools.

Besides providing T.M.H. and E.M.H. classes, there are Learning Disabilities Classes, Pupil Appraisal Rooms, classes for the autistic, the deaf and provisions for the blind. Also this organization provides speech therapy, visual testing, social workers, psychological testing, and parental counselling.

The three districts are also part of a four district Title I cooperative in which two teachers are employed and spend two and one half days with the students in each district in a remedial reading program. By this extensive use of cooperative sharing, the three districts are providing a well rounded curricula that is meeting the needs of the students.

#### Assessed Valuations

Another factor that is important to consider is the growth of the assessed valuation. As shown in Table 2, all three districts have shown a substantial increase over the last ten years.

TABLE 2

#### ASSESSED VALUATIONS 1964-74

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>HIGH MOUNT #116</u>	<u>WHITESIDE #115</u>	<u>WOLF BRANCH #113</u>
1964-65	8,960,869	3,623,507	3,169,446
1965-66	9,318,317	3,651,994	3,231,494
1966-67	9,884,448	4,794,962	3,365,593
1967-68	9,908,834	5,110,312	3,464,089
1968-69	10,025,588	5,853,202	3,849,005
1969-70	10,724,722	6,670,881	4,445,540
1970-71	11,035,909	7,507,591	4,787,820
1971-72	10,143,024	7,495,593	4,805,451
1972-73	10,744,722	6,679,881	4,445,550
1973-74	10,560,133	8,146,599	5,108,008
1974-75	11,131,382	8,833,334	5,003,501

High Mount District 116 has shown the smallest change because of the small area of the district and the limited building area. In 1964-65, the assessed valuation was \$8,960,869 and increased \$2,170,513 or 24.2% to \$11,131,382 by 1974-75. Wolf Branch District 113 has recorded a 57.8% increase over the same period of time by advancing from \$3,169,446 in 1964-64 to \$5,003,501 in 1974-75 or an increase of \$1,834,055. The Whiteside District 115 shows the greatest increase in assessed valuation. District property was valued at \$3,623,507 in 1964-65 and advanced to \$8,833,334 in 1974-75 for an increase of \$5,209,827 or 143.7% increase in the ten year span. In 1964-65 the three districts had a combined total assessed valuation of \$15,754,822. In 1974-75 the combined total assessed valuation was \$24,968,217 or an increase of \$9,213,395 representing a 58.4% growth.

The large amount of increase in the Whiteside and Wolf Branch Districts was due to the rapid growth and building of sub-division during the ten year span. In future years, as pointed out, the two districts can continue to expect an increase in the assessed valuation as their unoccupied areas develop.

#### Assessed Valuation Per Pupil

Another factor for comparison is the assessed valuation per pupil of these districts as shown in Table 3. Most recently, High Mount District had an assessed valuation per pupil of \$30,964 while Whiteside District had a per pupil

valuation of \$34,490 and Wolf Branch a per pupil valuation of \$20,709. When consideration is given to the above discussed valuations, there is no reason why the consolidated district would not be financially sound.

TABLE 3

## ASSESSSED VALUATIONS PER PUPIL 1974-75

<u>DISTRICT</u>	<u>ADA</u>	<u>ASSESSSED VALUATION</u>	<u>ASSESSSED VALUATION PER PUPIL</u>
High Mount	359.49	11,131,382	30,964.37
Whiteside	256.11	8,833,334	34,490.39
Wolf Branch	241.60	5,003,501	20,709.85
Proposed	857.20	24,968,217	29,127.65

Financial Status

All the funds of the three districts had a positive balance on June 30, 1975 with the exception of the educational fund of High Mount District. This fund recorded a negative balance of \$32,966 due to the issuance of first year anticipation warrants. While there are positive balances recorded, they are not of a sufficient size to meet the continue rise of salaries and cost of supplies.

The tax rates of the districts are comparable, with all in excess of the maximum limit without a referendum in the educational fund. High Mount has attempted two tax increases in the last three years and have had both defeated by a wide margin. There have been recent indications that all three of the districts will be attempting tax referendums during 1976-77.

By using the 1974-75 assessed valuations and the tax rates of each district, it is possible to calculate the tax rate of the proposed district. This is done by using the extension of each fund and combining the totals for the three districts to determine the amount of money yielded by local taxes. Using these totals, it is possible to determine the estimated rate for the proposed district by dividing each combined total by the combined assessed valuation. Listed in Table 4 are the 1974 tax rates with the calculated proposed district rates using the maximum allowable or approved amounts in the building and operation, educational, and working cash funds.

TABLE 4

## 1974 TAX RATES AND PROJECTIONS

FUND	HIGH MOUNT DISTRICT 116	WHITESIDE DISTRICT 115	WOLF BRANCH DISTRICT 113	PROPOSED DISTRICT
Educ.	1.0100	1.0243	1.0100	1.0150
Build.	.2500	.2355	.2500	.2500
Bond & I.	.3252	.3235	.5279	.3652
Trans.	.0374	.1118	.1200	.0803
Work C.	.0493	.0471	.0500	.0500
IMRF	.0533	.0365	.0894	.0546
Tort		.0077	.0242	.0136
Total	1.7252	1.7864	2.0715	1.8287

The total of the proposed district using the calculated rate and the combined assessed valuations would yield a total of \$456,593 as compared with the actual amount collected in 1975 of \$432,713 or an increase of over \$23,000.

Due to the construction in the Whiteside and Wolf Branch districts the assessed valuation of the proposed district would also increase. Also due to the recent re-valuation of property and use of the state multiplier, the assessed valuation of all three districts will increase. Considering this and the ability to establish a tax rate when approving consolidation, the proposed district will be on solid footing.

As can be expected, nearly fifty percent of the funds used in the education fund are received from the state through the resource equalizer formula. Using the average daily attendance of 857.20 students in the proposed district, the combined assessed valuations and the calculated operating rate, it is possible to estimate the amount of state aid that might be expected under the current resource formula.

The proposed consolidation would produce a state aid of \$420,765 as compared to the combined amounts actually received of \$390,979 or an increase of \$29,786. Because of the lack of funding by the state, it is difficult for the districts to determine the actual amount of state aid to be received. As pointed out, because of the increased construction in the proposed district, and the possible influx of

United States Air Force personnel, the enrollment will continue to rise, causing a continued increase in the state aid.

All three districts also receive small amounts of money from the federally funded programs and the impaction allowed for students of federally employed parents or guardians. But again, because the funding varies from year to year, it is difficult to rely on this source of money.

Professional salaries make up the largest single expenditure of all three districts. The 1975-76 salaries of all three districts are quite similar. The base salary offered had a difference between the high and low districts of \$450. All three districts allow for steps to the master's degree and Whiteside's current schedule allows for additional hours beyond the master's degree. Currently, there are four teachers with master degrees beside the administrators of the three districts.

Because of these similarities in schedules, the consolidation of the districts will not cause any unusually large increases in the total spent for professional salaries.

#### Physical Plant and Class Size

The physical plants of all three districts are relatively recent in construction with High Mount having the oldest section which was constructed in 1951. With the extra additions in 1957, 1961, and 1967, High Mount School has eighteen classrooms in addition to an art room, library, and audio-visual room. This allows for two sections per grade level with a room for kindergarten and vocal music. Based

on the current enrollment this is an average class size of 19.31 students per room. At the second grade level, the class size is fourteen per classroom with the largest enrollment found at the fifth grade level with twenty-two in one section and twenty-three in the other room.

TABLE 5

## PHYSICAL PLANT AND CLASS SIZE

<u>DISTRICT</u>	<u>ACADEMIC CLASSROOMS</u>	<u>CURRENT ENROLLMENT</u>	<u>MAXIMUM ENROLLMENT*</u>	<u>TEACHER/PUPIL RATIO</u>
High Mount	18	374	540	17.89 to 1
Whiteside	11	307	330	24.56 to 1
Wolf Branch	11	284	330	26.05 to 1
Proposed District	40	965	1,200	21.78 to 1

\*Maximum enrollment was calculated with 30 students per academic classroom and 50 students per kindergarten

Wolf Branch has a building containing eleven classrooms, art room, and a library, all of which have been constructed since 1957. Currently, they have an average class size of twenty nine with the largest being thirty-five in the seventh grade and smallest being twenty-six in the sixth grade. Because of the limited number of rooms, Wolf Branch is considering the purchase of re-locatable classrooms in the event the enrollment expands further.

Whiteside District has been most affected by their rapid growth over the last five years. When construction was



completed in 1973 on the current building, there were eleven classrooms and a library. Since then to accommodate the enrollment, a re-locatable classroom has been brought in and the district library has been divided into two sections to allow for one more classroom. With this, the average classroom enrollment has been kept at twenty-seven with a high of forty-two in the two sixth grades and a low of twenty-four in the fourth grade. Due to this situation and the projection of additional growth, Whiteside School Board is considering a building expansion program.

Because of the close proximity of all three districts, it would be possible to transport students from one attendance center to the other with a minimum of time spent aboard the bus. Based upon the material presented, it is feasible for the three districts to consider consolidation in order to provide a better educational program for the area students. The largest problem in the act of consolidation would be the acceptance by the voters of each district. The manner in which this would be attempted will be discussed in the next chapter.

#### IV

#### CONSOLIDATION PROCEDURE

There are two main considerations to be given to the consolidation process. The first of these is the legal aspects of the procedure and the other is getting voter approval in the three districts.

Legislation in 1951 forbade the creation of new Consolidated and Township High School Districts and provided for the elimination of Non-High School Districts. As a result, three basic types of school districts may now be formed through reorganizational procedures outlined in the School Code of Illinois. They are;

1. Community Consolidated School Districts  
(grades 1-8 or grades 1-12)
2. Community High School Districts  
(grades 9-12)
3. Community Unit School Districts  
(grades 1-12)<sup>2</sup>

The proposed consolidation of High Mount, Whiteside, and Wolf Branch would be into the Community Consolidated School District containing grades K-8.

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<sup>2</sup>George A. Chambers, Types of School Districts and Provisions for Reorganization Illinois Public Schools 1966, Division of Finance and Statistics (Springfield: Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1966), p. 6-7.

The legal problems of consolidation of the three districts will pose no problem as the districts are all in the same county and located in the same general area. The legal process to follow is found in Article 11 of the School Code of Illinois and the applicable sections pertaining to this form of consolidation are contained in the appendix of this study. The writer can foresee no legal problems in the consolidation if approved by the area voters.

In order to gain voter approval, it will be necessary to follow a program to insure a successful vote. The following is a discussion on how the program might be set up in order to inform the area voters in each district.

The first step in the consolidation will have to be unanimous acceptance by all three boards of education. In order to do this, authorization for the superintendents to begin collecting data and formulation of plans must be given. At this time also, the boards may decide to employ an outside consulting firm or retain members of a university staff to conduct the necessary study. After the groundwork is completed, the information must be thoroughly explained to the various boards and a vote taken. If the boards cannot agree that consolidation would be feasible and practical and do not support the study with unanimous vote, then it would not be necessary to bring the question to the general public.

After approval by the boards, the various local school

organizations should be contacted and their support given after careful consideration. Since all three districts have active parent organizations, this would be no problem to get the groups support. At this time support should also be sought from individuals outside the school and educational field. A person such as a banker or local businessman, who would have knowledge of some areas such as finances or purchasing would be very helpful.

To carry the need of consolidation to the general public, committees should be formed to further study the material and serve as a resource for a speaker bureau. Preferably, if the committee is chaired by a person not associated with the school, the public may pay closer attention, as they are accustomed to hearing board members and administrators asking for money or changes.

From the committee organization there would need to be someone to meet with small groups in homes when requested and to speak before larger groups such as church or civic. One problem facing the districts is the lack of civic organizations within their boundaries. Of the three districts, only High Mount is in an incorporated area, with the other two being located partly in the county and City of Belleville. Within the incorporated village of Swansea containing the High Mount district, there is only one large civic organization. Known as the Swansea Improvement Association, the active support of this group would be most important. Voters of all

three districts belong to civic organizations in the City of Belleville, but do not have sufficient numbers to gain their support. As a result, the parent groups of the school will have to be relied upon to form the nucleus of the committees and to carry the information to the general public.

One committee should also work on the registration of the voters. With the shifting population, large numbers of people do not register and as a result would be unable to vote in the consolidation election. By working with the county clerk, deputy registrars could be found in each area and an all out attempt to register all eligible adults would be made.

As previously indicated a speakers bureau should be established and provided with audio-visuals to make their presentations more effective. There should also be basic handouts available at the meetings to take home for further study. Perhaps most important would be to answer all questions honestly and if unable to answer that evening, making sure the person receives a satisfactory response to his question.

During the last week before the vote is taken, time should be acquired on the local radio station to remind voters to vote and inform of time, date, and place. Also during this time there should be increased coverage in the local daily newspapers to make sure all interested persons are made aware of the vote and the specific facts concerning voting sites.

The above is only a basic sketch of what would need to be done in order to insure a positive vote. After approval is given and the campaign started, there should be evaluation of the process and materials used and if needed, delete some materials or methods or provide additional or expanded processes. The main concern would be to make an honest attempt to inform the entire general public.

V

RELATED RESEARCH

Because of the nature of this particular reorganizational study, very little material is available related to the consolidation or annexation of dual districts. As a result, the writer has selected information from several state booklets and reorganizational studies pertaining to forming unit districts in order to show the tremendous changes taking place in the organization of the state school districts.

Since 1940-41 the number of school districts in Illinois has been reduced from 11,996 to 1,039 as of January 1975 which includes the Department of Corrections District. This shows that fewer than 9% of the districts existing in 1940 exist today. To further show the rapid rate of change, the number of districts in 1970 was 1,227 or a reduction of nearly 200 districts in five years.<sup>3</sup>

Standards adopted by the Committee of School Organization as justifiable are K-8 minimum of 1,000 students, 9-12 a minimum of 500, and K-12 a minimum of 1,500 students.

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<sup>3</sup>Joseph M. Cronin, Illinois Education in 1975/Progress and Problems (Springfield: State Superintendent of Education, 1975). appendix F.

Using these figures as standard, the per cent of districts undersized in 1971-72 was 63.2% with the largest percentage undersized districts in the unit level with 69% being below the recommended standards. Elementary districts had 65.3% below the minimum and secondary schools had 37.8% below the standard.<sup>4</sup>

According to this study, the larger districts provide for a more complete comprehensive offering of courses, a more complete system of special services, an improved instructional staff, improved administrative leadership, lower per capita cost, and general improvement in efficiency of total operation. The consolidation of districts into larger units is also being furthered by the state legislature. This is being done by the State Aid formula which treats each group differently by establishing different qualifying rates and also through attempts to pass legislation forcing districts to consolidate.

Student participation is perhaps the greatest asset the smaller districts may offer. Even the marginal performer is given an opportunity to take part in as many or as few activities as they desire both academic and athletic. Many of the other so called advantages of the larger districts are provided for now by the three districts in question through cooperatives among themselves or with other schools.

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<sup>4</sup>Governor's Commission on Schools, Opportunities for Excellence, A Report Prepared by the Committee of School Organization (Springfield: Governor's Commission on Schools, 1973), p.26.



Cooperatives enable these districts to purchase their supplies in quantity lots along with the other elementary, secondary, and junior college districts in the Belleville area. They are also part of cooperatives that make use of all resources available to provide special education of all students as needed, a film library, and use of specialized personnel such as speech, reading, band, and art teachers.

Harold P. Seamon, Executive Director of the Illinois Association of School Boards, points out that no single set of parameters can be applied to all school districts- at least not with the evidence that is currently available. Every school district must be evaluated on its own merits, if one is to decide truthfully whether it is too small or too large.<sup>5</sup>

The main goal of any educational group should be to provide the best education possible for their students. If this goal can best be reached or improved upon by the consolidation of the three districts, let them consolidate into a larger dual district and perhaps into a unit district in order to maintain a quality educational program.

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<sup>5</sup>Illinois Education News, February 1975, p.14.

## VI

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to probe the feasibility of combining three of the Belleville dual elementary school district, High Mount District 116, Whiteside District 115, and Wolf Branch District 113 into one large consolidated dual elementary district.

The following summaries and conclusions are made as a result of this study;

#### Legal Aspects

Legally the process of consolidating the districts would be a simple process. The consolidation would meet all of the legal factors and stipulations as found in Article 11 of the School Code of Illinois. The new district would be made up of an area all within the same county, sharing common boundaries as noted on the map found in the appendix, and currently governed by the same form of local school board.

General public approval could be assured through an active informational program as discussed in Chapter IV.

#### Enrollment

The combined average daily attendance based on last years figures would be 857, with the current enrollment

figures for the combined districts of 965. While this is below the recommended needed 1,000 student population, with the projected growth of the area, the needed population will be assured.

#### Curricula

As indicated in Chapter III, the three districts in question have large areas of curricula in common. Any change of textbooks would require a minimum amount of change in the combined curricula. The similarities of the extra-curricular activities would also enable the transition to occur in an orderly fashion.

#### Special Services

While all three districts are current members of the Belleville Area Co-Operative Purchasing Organization, and the Belleville Area Special Education District, consolidation would enable greater savings.

Supplies could be consolidated and the inventory reduced because of the current duplication of purchasing in most areas. Materials used in the office and classrooms would be standardized to allow for greater savings.

Special Education classes could be offered within the consolidated district rather than paying tuition costs to other surrounding districts. It would be quite possible to have such classes as the other districts would be paying tuition to send the student from their areas. Extra costs involved with the paying of tuition and transportation of

the special education could be reduced.

#### Assessed Valuations

As indicated in Table 2, the assessed valuations of the districts have grown in the past ten years and are projected to continue to increase in value as the building in the Whiteside and Wolf Branch districts is completed. Because of the nature of the property and land being assessed, there is little chance of the valuations changing without affecting the state as a whole.

The assessed valuation per pupil will also continue to grow in relation to the assessed valuations of the property. The consolidation of the districts will provide a larger district with an assessed valuation adequate to meet the needs of the students.

#### Financial Status

Financially, the proposed district will be sound. Currently only one of the three districts is experiencing any difficulty. The deficit amount could be absorbed without creating any further hardship on the consolidation.

The newly consolidated district would also receive a larger state aid grant based on the operating rate established and the larger student population.

An adequate tax rate for the education fund must be determined at the time of voter acceptance. While the rate could be set as high as \$1.60, it would probably stay at the same approximate amount used by the districts of \$1.01.

The amount will be governed by the current assessed valuations at the time of consolidation. The bonding limitations of the districts would allow for further bonding if needed.

#### Location and Facilities

Appendix I shows the elementary districts making up Belleville High School District 201 with the three districts marked to show their location. The three districts are served by major highways and a system of hard surfaced secondary roads. Wolf Branch and Whiteside are using contracted bus service while High Mount is served by the Bi-State Transit System. Transportation will be no problem.

Floor plans of the three schools are found in the appendix. It would be recommended because of the physical education facilities that Whiteside be used to house the junior high level. Middle grades would be housed at High Mount, with the primary grades at Wolf Branch. Kindergarten classes could remain in each attendance center to reduce transportation of the kindergarten students.

#### Conclusion

Because of the human factor, probably more complex than all others, this re-organizational proposal, and all others, will take considerable explanation, education, and time to become a reality. Public involvement in decision making on the local level has become an important part of the lives of many people. They feel that the local school is the last true stronghold that remains in today's highly

complex and sophisticated society that allows them a direct voice in government.

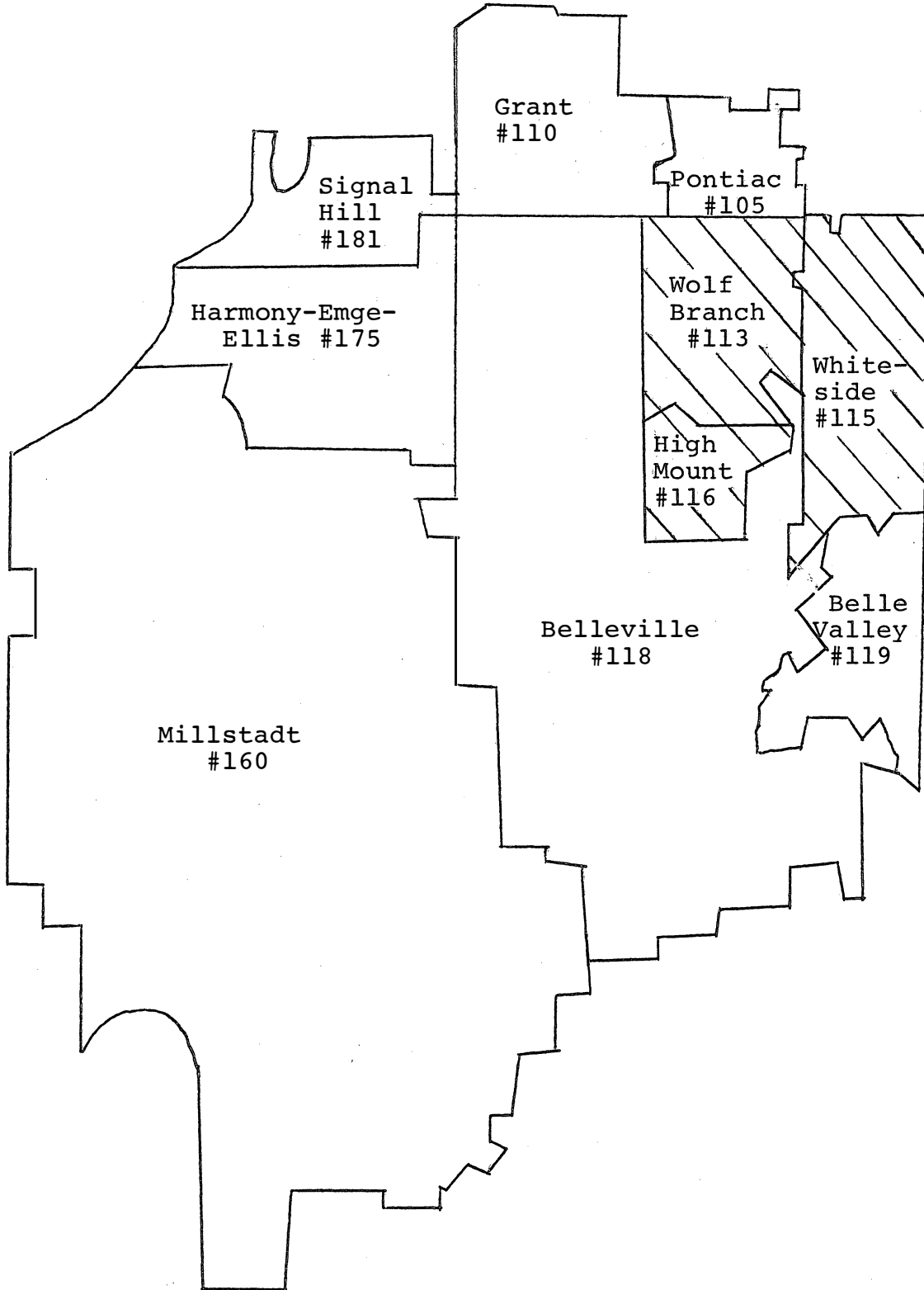
As has been pointed out in this limited survey and study, it would be a logical move to consolidate these three districts into one larger dual district and let this serve as a possible beginning for reorganization in the Belleville area. However, it is the opinion of this writer, that until the State of Illinois provides a definite and firm leadership role in school reorganization or provides definite and irrefutable evidence that a unit district does indeed provide better educational programs than do dual districts, the three districts with consolidation, will be able to improve on the educational process provided to the area students.

APPENDIX

Number		Page
I	MAP OF BELLEVILLE HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT 201 ..	35
II	HIGH MOUNT GROUND LEVEL FLOOR PLAN .....	36
III	WHITESIDE FLOOR PLAN .....	38
IV	WOLF BRANCH FLOOR PLAN .....	39
V	STATEMENT OF FUND BALANCES AS OF JUNE 30, 1975	40
VI	LEGAL ASPECTS OF CONSOLIDATION .....	41

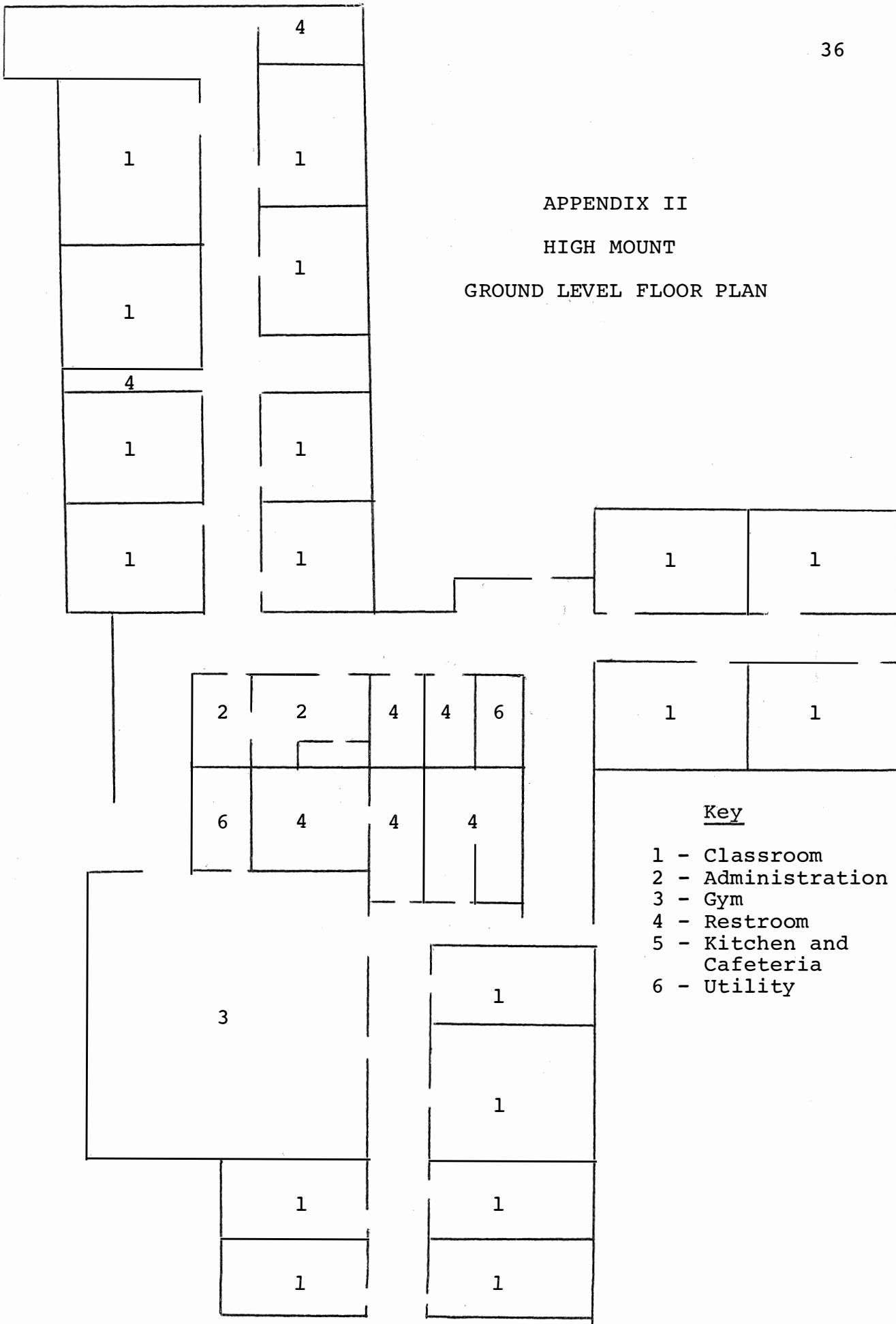
APPENDIX I

MAP OF BELLEVILLE HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT 201





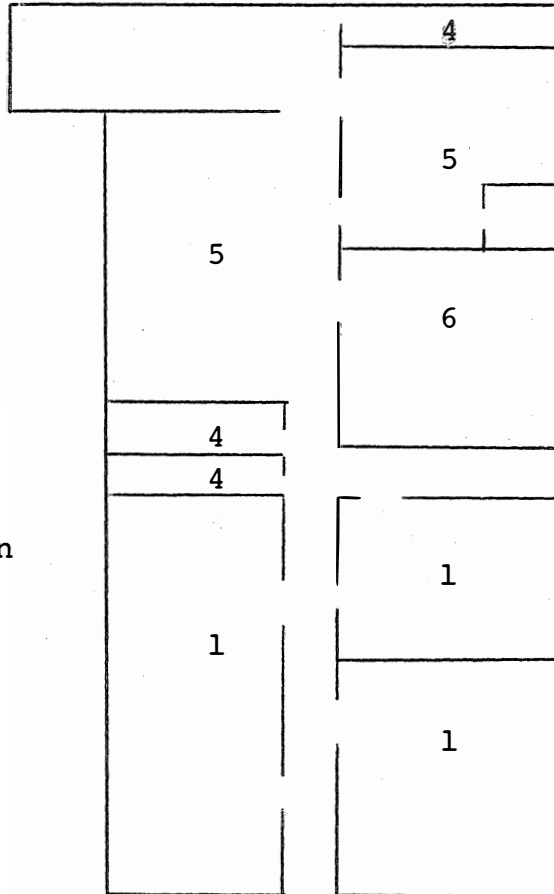
APPENDIX II  
 HIGH MOUNT  
 GROUND LEVEL FLOOR PLAN



Key

- 1 - Classroom
- 2 - Administration
- 3 - Gym
- 4 - Restroom
- 5 - Kitchen and Cafeteria
- 6 - Utility

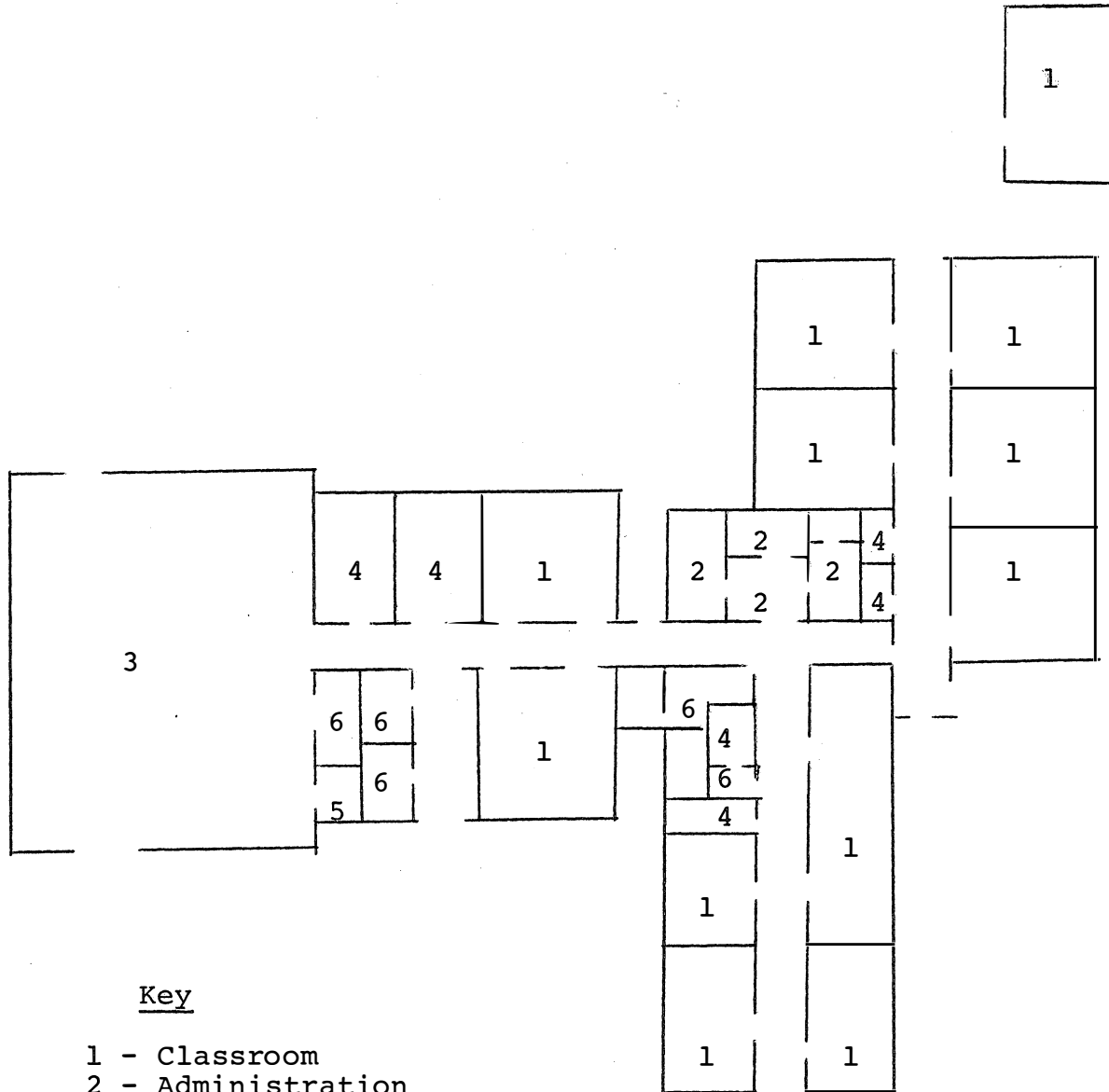
APPENDIX II-A  
HIGH MOUNT  
BASEMENT FLOOR PLAN



Key

- 1 - Classroom
- 2 - Administration
- 3 - Gym
- 4 - Restroom
- 5 - Kitchen and Cafeteria
- 6 - Utility

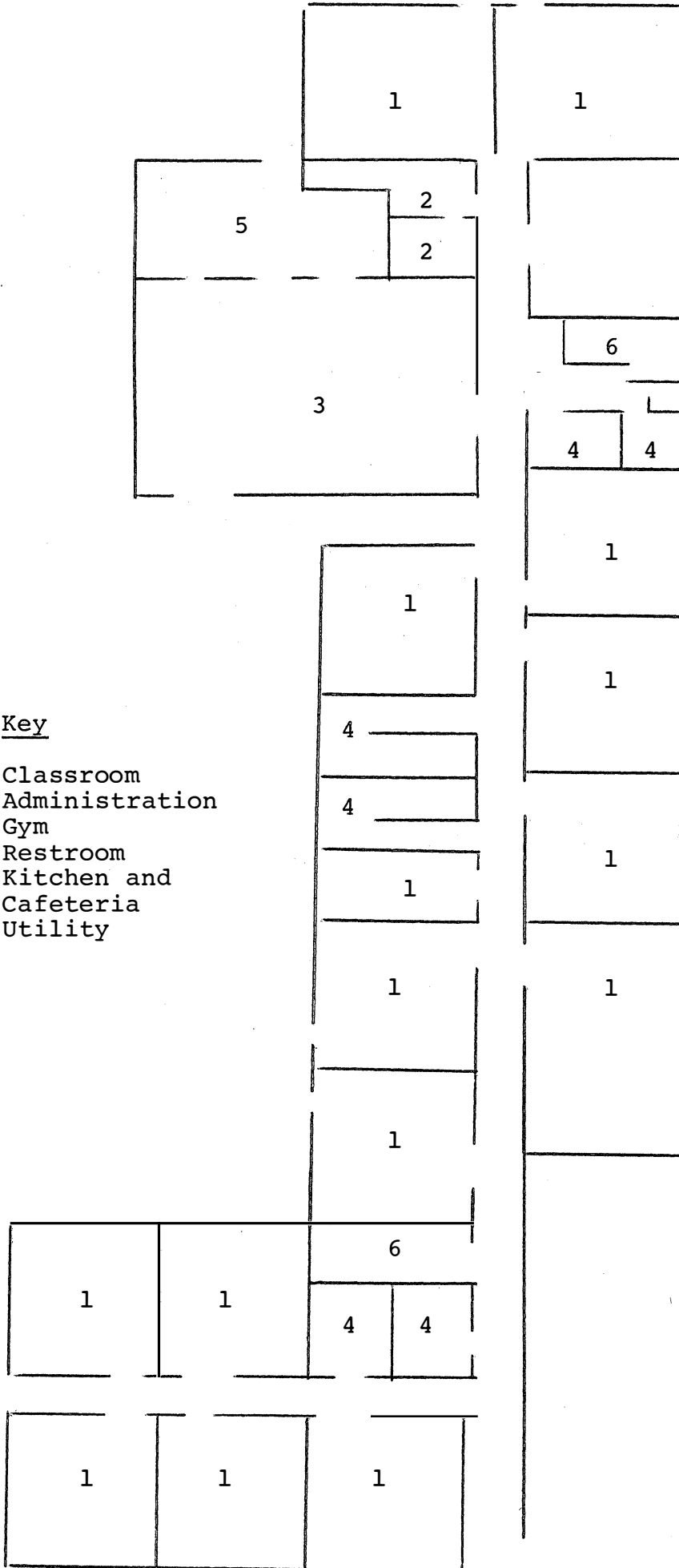
APPENDIX III  
WHITESIDE  
FLOOR PLAN



Key

- 1 - Classroom
- 2 - Administration
- 3 - Gym
- 4 - Restroom
- 5 - Kitchen and Cafeteria
- 6 - Utility

APPENDIX IV  
WOLF BRANCH  
FLOOR PLAN



Key

- 1 - Classroom
- 2 - Administration
- 3 - Gym
- 4 - Restroom
- 5 - Kitchen and Cafeteria
- 6 - Utility

## APPENDIX V

## STATEMENT OF FUND BALANCES AS OF JUNE 30, 1975

<u>DISTRICT</u>	<u>ED.</u>	<u>BLDG</u>	<u>B&amp;I</u>	<u>TRANS.</u>
116	(32,966.07)	734.54	4,013.57	3,712.74
115	10,265.84	2,080.31	17,566.82	4,906.34
113	<u>23,209.21</u>	<u>4,832.13</u>	<u>17,977.16</u>	<u>5,321.91</u>
PROPOSED DISTRICT TOTALS	508.00	7,646.98	39,557.45	13,940.90

<u>DISTRICT</u>	<u>IMRF</u>	<u>SITE</u>	<u>WORKING CASH</u>
116	(167.66)		
115	184.54		
113	<u>246.74</u>	<u>1,762.50</u>	<u>2,578.33</u>
PROPOSED DISTRICT TOTALS	263.62	1,762.50	2,578.33

## APPENDIX VI

## LEGAL ASPECTS

## OF CONSOLIDATION

11-1. Organization authorized - Petition -  
Notice of Election.

Any contiguous territory having a population of not less than 1500 and not more than 500,000 persons and an equalized assessed valuation of not less than \$5,000,000 and bounded by school district lines may be organized into a community consolidated school district as provided in this article; however, on approval of the Superintendent of Public Instruction and the county superintendent of schools having supervision and control over the proposed district such district may be formed with a population of less than 1500 persons and an equalized assessed valuation of less than \$5,000,000 based upon the last value as equalized or assessed by the Department of Local Government Affairs as of the date of the filing of the petition.

A petition shall be filed with county board of school trustees of the county in which the territory described in the petition or the greater part thereof is situated, signed by at least 20% or 200 of the voters, whichever is fewer, residing within the territory. The petition shall: (1) request the calling of an election for the purpose for voting for or against the establishment of a community consolidated school district in the territory; (2) describe the territory comprising the proposed district by districts and (3) set forth the maximum tax rates for educational and operations, building, and maintenance purposes the proposed district shall be authorized to levy, which rates shall not exceed 1.60% of value, upon all the taxable property of the district as equalized or assessed by the Department of Local Government Affairs, for educational purposes and .25% for

operations, building and maintenance purposes and the purchase of school grounds.

Upon receipt of such petition, the county board of school trustees shall cause notice of the presentation of such petition to be given by publishing a notice thereof at least once each week for 3 successive weeks in at least one newspaper having general circulation within the area of the territory of the proposed district. The notice shall state when and to whom the petition was presented, the description of the territory of the proposed district, and the day on which the hearing upon the petition will be held. On such day or on a day to which the county board of school trustees shall continue said hearing, the county board of school trustees shall hear the petition and determine the sufficiency thereof as prescribed in this Section and may adjourn the hearing from time to time or continue the matter for want of sufficient notice or for other good cause. The county board of school trustees shall hear evidence as to the school needs and conditions of the territory and in the area within and adjacent thereto and take into consideration the division of funds and assets which will result from the organization of the district, and shall determine whether it is for the best interests of the schools of the area and the educational welfare of the pupils therein that such district be organized, and shall determine whether the territory described in the petition is compact and contiguous for school purposes.

At the hearing, any resident in the proposed district affected thereby may appear in support of the petition or to object thereto. At the conclusion of the hearing the county board of school trustees shall make a decision either granting or denying the petition. If the county board of school trustees denies the petition no election shall be held or further proceedings had unless its decision is reversed upon review. If the county board of school trustees approves the petition the superintendent of the educational service region in which the territory described in the petition or the greater part thereof is situated shall order an election to be held for the purpose of voting for or against the proposition to establish a community consolidated school district with authority to levy taxes at the rates set out in the petition to the county

board of school trustees. He shall publish notice of the election at least 10 days before the date of the election at least once in one or more newspapers published in the district or, if no newspaper is published therein, then in one or more newspapers with a general circulation within the district, which may be in substantially the following form:

#### NOTICE OF ELECTION

NOTICE is hereby given that on the ..... day of ....., 19...., an election will be held at ..... for the purpose of voting for or against the proposition to establish a community consolidated school district for the benefit of the following described contiguous territory: (Here describe territory by districts, numbering them.)

The election is called and will be held pursuant to an order of the county board of school trustees dated on the ..... day of ....., 19...., which order states that the tax rates for educational and operations, building and maintenance purposes respectively, for said proposed community consolidated school district shall be ..... for educational purposes, and ..... for operations, building and maintenance purposes and the purchase and improvements of school grounds, and which rates shall constitute the tax rates for the community consolidated school district, if a majority of the voters voting on the proposition at the election vote in favor thereof.

The polls will be opened at 12:00 o'clock .... M. and closed at 7:00 p.m. of said day.

Dated this .... day of ....., 19....  
 Superintendent of Educational Service  
 Region .....,  
 Amended by P.A. 77-2744, eff. Oct. 1  
 1972.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Illinois, The School Code of Illinois (1974), p.89.



11-2. Precincts and polling places -  
Ballots.

The superintendent of the educational service region shall establish one or more voting precincts within the territory described in the petition and fix the boundaries thereof, and if any city, village or incorporated town is located within such territory he shall establish one or more voting precincts wholly within the corporate limits of the city, village or incorporated town and also shall establish one or more voting precincts wholly within that part of the territory described in the petition lying outside the corporate limits of the city, village, or incorporated town. He shall designate one polling place for each precinct and shall appoint 3 judges therefor. No person shall vote in any precinct other than that in which he resides. The ballot shall be in substantially the following form:

OFFICIAL BALLOT

(Instruction to Voters: Place a cross (x) in the square to the right of the proposition indicating the way you desire to vote.)

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FOR the establishment of a community consolidated school district with authority to levy taxes at the rate of ....% for educational purposes, and ....% for operational, building, and maintenance purposes and the purchase of school grounds, each upon all the taxable property of the district at the value thereof, as equalized by the Department of Local Government Affairs.

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AGAINST the establishment of a community consolidated school district with authority to levy taxes at the rate of ....% for educational purposes, and .....%

for operations, building and maintenance purposes and the purchase of school grounds, each upon all the taxable property of the district at the value thereof, as equalized or assessed by the Department of Local Governmen Affairs.<sup>7</sup>

11-3. Holding of election.

The election shall be held, the returns made, and supplies furnished in the manner provided in Article 9 of this Act.<sup>8</sup>

11-4. Passage requirements.

If a majority of the electors voting at such election held within the territory of the proposed community consolidated school district vote in favor of the establishment of such community consolidated school district, the propositon shall be deemed to have passed and the county superintendent of schools shall forthwith order an election to be held in the manner provided in Article 9 of this Act for the purpose of electing a board of education to consist of 7 members, which shall have the powers and duties of school boards as defined in Article 10 of this Act. However, if the territory of such district is greater than 2 congressional townships or 72 square miles, then not more than 3 bozrd members may be selected from any one congressional township, but townships of less than 100 inhabitants shall not be considered for the purpose of such mandatory board representation, and in any such community consolidated school district where 75% or more of the population is in one township 4 board members shall be selected therefrom and 3 board members shall be selected from the rest of the

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid., pp. 89-90.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p.90.

district; and whenever the territory of any community consolidated school district shall consist of now more than 2 congressional townships or 72 square miles, but shall consist of more than one congressional township, or 36 square miles, outside of the corporate limits of city, village or incorporated town within the school district, not more than 5 board members shall be selected from any city, village or incorporated town in such school district. (P.A. 77-148; 77-1738).<sup>9</sup>

11-5. Tax levy.

The board of education of a community consolidated district may levy taxes for educational and operations, building and maintenance purposes, respectively, at not exceeding the rates specified in the petition, notice of election and ballot for the organization of such district, which rates may thereafter be increased or decreased in the same manner and within the limits provided by sections 17-2 through 17-7 as they now exist or may be amended. (P.A. 77-2744).<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 90.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 90.

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