A STUDY OF THE NEED FOR REORGANIZATION OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN SELECTED PORTIONS OF GOVE AND SHERIDAN COUNTIES

by

ROBERT DALE MLYNAR

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Approved by:

O. K. O'Fallon
Major Professor

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THE PROBLEM AND DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

The land area to be considered in this study is a band of territory extending through the lower one-third of Sheridan county and the upper two-thirds of Gove county. For some time there has been interest in and need for a study for reorganization of the school districts in this area. This study came about as a result of discussions with school board members, administrators, teachers, farmers and business men in regard to the Kansas Comprehensive Educational Survey. Educationally, the situation in this area points to the need for improvement in the organization of school systems now in existence.

The population in Gove county is unevenly distributed. Eighty per cent of the population resides in the upper, or northern one-third of the county. These residents own land or businesses in the lower, or southern, one-third of Sheridan county. Five high school districts operate schools in the northern one-third of Gove county. A total of fifteen common school districts are functioning in Gove county.

The task of reorganization of the described Gove and Sheridan county school districts will not be an easy one. These districts are made up almost entirely of rural people who do not wish to see their schools disturbed.

The Problem

Statement of the problem. The problem for study was to examine the adequacy of selected school districts in the Gove and Sheridan county area. The adequacy was examined on the bases of facilities, finances, and organization.

It was the purpose of the study (1) to collect and study available evidence relating to opportunities for education for all children in the existing organized districts, (2) to compare the organized units in relation to the evidence collected, and (3) to compare the study's recommendations to the reorganization plan adopted for district unification.

Methods of procedure. Materials concerning reorganization policies and practices were studied and laws and special requirements pertaining to school districting were reviewed. Data were collected in the following areas:

1) A patron opinion survey was taken to indicate a trend of interest or lack of interest in school district reorganization. Thirty-seven persons were chosen, by chance, as the writer happened upon them on the streets of the five towns in the study area. The persons interviewed were teachers, school administrators, farmers, business men and government employees. Of the thirty-seven, twenty-five were city residents and twelve were rural residents.

2) Tax levies from the office of the County Treasurer were studied and compared with state averages to show the tax burden of the area taxpayers.

3) Valuations of districts in the study area were taken from reports of the County Treasurer, and compared with the average valuation-per-pupil in the state of Kansas.

4) Present enrollments were projected to indicate what problems, as far as school population is concerned, could be expected in the future.

5) Maps of the existing school districts were made to establish boundaries of the study area and to show graphically the mileage problem.

6) All-weather roads were located and drawn on area maps to picture the problems of routing school transportation.

The collected materials were classified and analyzed in relation to other areas of the state of Kansas and to the nation in general.

Definitions of Terms Used

Unified school system. One which provides a complete elementary and secondary school program directed by one administrative and supervisory staff.[1]

Administrative unit. The geographic unit comprising all the area under a single system of school administration.[2]

Attendance unit. The territory from which children legally may attend a given school building or center.[3]

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[1]Kansas Legislative Council, Comp. Ed. Sur., p. 100.

[2]Carter V. Good, Dictionary of Education, p. 15.

[3]Ibid., p. 47.

Average daily attendance. Sum of days attended by each student enrolled, divided by the number of days school is in session.[1]

Reorganized district. A school district whose designation has been legally changed.[2]

Rural high school. One whose district may overlap part or all of several common school districts but is controlled by separate boards of education.[3]

Curriculum. A group of courses and planned experiences which a student has under the guidance of a school.[4]

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[1] Ibid., p. 46.

[2] Ibid., p. 48.

[3] Ibid., p. 81.

[4] Ibid., p. 137.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The literature on school reorganization is limited to professional publications and government bulletins. A brief review of the trends indicated by some of this literature follows.

Literature on Recognition of Need for Reorganization

The National Commission on School District Reorganization, in one of its earliest reports, approximately twenty years ago, called attention to the ineffectiveness and wastefulness of the many small school districts. The following facts were outlined:

1) Most of our people, especially our rural boys and girls, need broader and better education than they are getting.

2) In thousands of school districts the education offered is not good enough, even for yesterday.

3) The states are charged with responsibility for giving suitable education to all within their borders.

4) It is sound American practice to give citizens an opportunity to share responsibility for education through local school districts; but,

5) The state has a duty to see that school districts are satisfactory and to change them when they are not.

6) Districts are satisfactory only when:

   a) They are able to provide education comprehensive enough to meet the needs of all in the area served.

   b) They permit efficient and economical school administration.

c) They give citizens an active share in shaping communities.[1]

Ten years later, in 1957, a Presidential Committee on Education directed attention to a new problem, that of change.

> Revolutionary changes are occurring in American education of which even yet we are only dimly aware. The nation has been propelled into a challenging new educational era since World War II. The explosion of knowledge and population, burst of technological and economic advance, the outbreak of idealogical conflict and the uprooting of old political and cultural patterns on a world wide scale, and an unparalleled demand by America for more and better education . . . The gap between this nation's educational needs and its educational effort is widening ominously.[2]

A higher birth rate has been another factor in school change. Since 1940, birth rates have reached new highs. Urban areas are bearing the brunt of this population increase, but many of the smallest and most remote rural areas are finding present school facilities to be inadequate for expanding enrollments.[3]

Kansans in general are in favor of education. Educationally the adult population of Kansas compares favorably with the adult population of other states. However, differences in education do exist between rural and urban residents of Kansas. Migration of population has turned

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[1]National Commission of School District Reorganization, "A Key to Better Education," Washington, D.C., Dept. of Rural Ed., N.E.A., 1947, pp. 6-7.

[2]President's Committee on Education Beyond the High School, Second Report to the President, Washington, D. C., Supt. of Documents, Gov. Printing Office, July, 1957, p. 1.

[3]American Association of School Administrators, School District Organization, 1958, p. 91.

this condition into a real problem. Unless rural young people are able to get an education very like that of their contemporaries who live in urban areas, they will find themselves handicapped in the competition for employment.[1]

Further review and study of literature on the subject indicates the same general theory, that better education is a necessity and that reorganization is an avenue for the implementation of this concept.

Literature on Unification

Many types of school district organization have been devised and used, but the one which has proved to be the most satisfactory is the unified district; that is, a school administrative unit which operates both elementary and secondary schools under one system with one board of education. In 1957 there were approximately 13,000 of these unified school districts in the United States. Although they represented only a fourth of all school districts, they had 84.3 per cent of the total public school enrollment. The majority of cities are served by unified school districts, which accounts in large measure for their having such a high percentage of the total school enrollment.[2]

Prior to its statewide school survey, Kansas sent questionnaires to the State Departments of Education in states where the unified form of

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[1]American Association of School Administrators, School District Organization, 1958, p. 91.

[2]Ibid., p. 92.

school organization was used. Not a single state replying to the request wanted to return to the small district system of school administration. Actual research in Colorado prompted the Department of Education of that state to say: "Children do learn more in reorganized school districts." West Virginia representatives stated: "No one can justify the old small district system of school administration where reorganized districts have been tried." In West Virginia this reorganization has secured equal opportunities for both rural and urban students; has secured better educational leadership, better teachers, better health services, curriculum, supervision and transportation. For the taxpayers of that state there has been established an even tax rate and money has been saved on the cost of school operation. In Indiana the School Reorganization Law was called "the greatest improvement in educational administration of any single step of the last 100 years." From Iowa came this statement: "School district reorganization has made it possible to make more efficient and wise use of teachers and administrative personnel."[1]

Literature on Kansas Reorganization and Unification Plans

The confused state in which Kansas school districts find themselves did not come about suddenly. It grew slowly over many years from the days of the organization of the Kansas territory to the present time.

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[1] Gove County Republican-Gazette, May 22, 1964.

The Organic Act of 1854 provided that two sections, numbers sixteen and thirty-six, of each township should be reserved for schools. As a result many, many school districts were brought into existence. All were created for immediate convenience without any consideration of long-range planning. Later, when secondary education was needed, high schools sprouted in nearly every town, many of them within districts which overlapped any number of common school districts. The rural high school law under which most of these schools were created is as follows:

> The legal electors residing in territory containing not less than sixteen square miles shall have authority to form a rural high-school district, whose boundaries shall have been approved by the county superintendent and by the board of county commissioners . . . .
>
> That in the formation of all high-school districts within the state of Kansas, the basis for organizing and operating the same shall be the value of the property as determined by the tax assessment within the boundaries of districts so formed, and no consideration shall be given to or used in estimating the expense of so organizing and operating such high-school district other than the actual assessment and taxation value of all the property therein determined and fixed by the proper assessor.[1]

By 1896 there were 9,284 districts in operation in the state of Kansas. Thereafter a very slow decline began. Since the peak year of 1896, 6,490 districts have disappeared. By 1959 there were 2,794 districts; and each year the number became less as one by one school districts completed programs for reorganization. The unscrambling of this inefficient districting has been largely voluntary; without careful consideration it could result in a new, but equally chaotic, confusion.[2]

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[1]General Statutes of Kansas, 1935: Chapter 72, Article 35.

[2]Kansas Legislative Council, Com. Ed. Sur., p. 79.

Various methods have been used in other states to effect district reorganization. Profiting from its neighbors' experiences, Kansas has not chosen to use state legislation to force reorganization, preferring instead to use less drastic legislation which would encourage voluntary redistricting. A law requiring districts which do not operate a school within a three year period to be disorganized is an example of such legislation. A bill withholding state aid from schools which do not maintain a minimum enrollment was passed by the state legislature in 1955. It read:

> The following districts shall not receive state aid unless the state board of education upon recommendation of the state superintendent shall declare the district "isolated" because of geographical isolation or transportation difficulties; in 1955-56 schools with less than 20 pupils in average daily attendance the preceding year; in 1956-57 schools with less than 23 ADA; in 1957-58, less than 25 ADA; in 1958-59, less than 29; in 1959-60, less than 32 ADA; in 1960-61, less than 35 ADA.[1]

More recent legislation has curtailed the building programs of districts with limited valuations. This law, passed in 1961, stated:

> From and after the effective date of this act, no election shall be called or held to vote on the question of issuing bonds for the construction or enlargement of a school building or for the purchase of a site therefore, in any type school district, except a unified school district as organized or classified under this act, or in districts of cities of the first or second class, or in a rural high-school district which includes a city of the first class, or to a common school district wholly contained in such district, or to a rural high school district or community high school district having a valuation of seven million dollars ($7,000,000) or more.[2]

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[1]State Dept. of Public Instruction, The Kansas Secondary School Handbook. Topeka: 1955, p. 23.

[2]League of Municipalities, 1961 Reorganization Law, p. 2.

Local pressures as well as legislative pressure are slowly but surely squeezing the jumbled, confused state of school districts in Kansas into an orderly, organized one. Many educators feel that the unified school district will best accomplish this.

The 1957 Kansas legislature gave authorization for an educational survey of the state school districts. The report of the survey contained some recommendations which were somewhat modified by the legislators of Kansas when they made specifications in the 1961 Reorganization Law. The survey report suggested that any unified district should have an enrollment of at least 1,200 pupils. But Kansas legislators realized that sparsely populated areas do exist in the state, and reduced that number to 400 pupils.[1]

The 1961 Reorganization Law further stipulated that a unified district shall be "an area of not less than 200 square miles" with an assessed valuation of taxable tangible property of not less than $4,000,000. The state superintendent could modify these requirements slightly if he felt that a certain situation warranted it.[2]

The Kansas Comprehensive Survey recommended that "transportation services should be expanded to include all pupils who live beyond reasonable walking distance from school."[3] On the same subject the

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[1]League of Municipalities, op. cit., p. 2.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Kansas Legislative Council, op. cit., p. 111.

American Association of School Administrators recommended that school centers be located where the smallest number of children need transportation. It further recommended that the walking distance (one way) for an elementary pupil should not be farther than three-quarters of a mile; a junior high student, one and one-half miles; a senior high student, two miles. Travel time (one way) was recommended not to exceed one-half hour for elementary pupils and one hour for secondary pupils. The National Commission on School District Reorganization has suggested similar standards.[1] Obviously, no recommendations could be made concerning costs in specific school districts.

The recommendation for a complete educational program as stated in the Comprehensive Educational Survey is as follows:

> It is recommended that a complete educational program be offered in each school system. This includes kindergarten, elementary school, junior high, and senior high school . . . Well-qualified personnel, teaching in the areas of major and minor preparation, should be employed. An adequate library staffed with a trained librarian is essential. Capable administrative and supervisory personnel must be provided. A complete high school instruction program including a variety of subjects in English language arts, social studies, mathematics, science, health and physical education, modern languages, business education, practical arts and vocational education should be offered. Adequate guidance services are necessary. Provision must be made to serve the handicapped.[2]

The previously quoted 1961 Reorganization Law contained a practical adaptation of this recommendation. It stated "a unified district must

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[1]Am. Assoc. School Adm., School District Organization, 1958, pp. 130-131.

[2]Kansas Legislative Council, op. cit., p. 100.

offer and teach a minimum of thirty separate and distinct units of instruction each year in grades nine through twelve."

It was not until this law was passed that the legal backbone for all current unification procedures became established. Specifically, the statute prescribes the procedure for establishing unified school districts and disorganization of school districts; it provides for the planning and recommending of unified school district boundaries by locally selected persons, and that the state superintendent make certain orders concerning school districts. Elections are provided for in certain cases, along with petitions and other procedures. The duties and obligations and conferring of powers and authority are prescribed along with provision for the minimum standards for unified school districts.[1]

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[1] Session Laws, 1963, Forty-third Biennial Session of the Legislature of the state of Kansas, Topeka: State Printing Office, p. 902.

THE STUDY

Patron Opinion

Opinion survey. "Kansas is now suffering from a district organization which was created by the zeal of previous generations to bring education to all children." Kansas legislators hope to use the zeal of present generations to replace the antiquated but inherited system of school organization with one geared to modern conditions.[1] Kansas legislators have no desire to wrest control of education from the people. For this reason the outcome of any effort towards a school district reorganization must be something acceptable to the patrons of the area involved. Therefore, the present study was begun by making a survey of interest. This was not meant to be a comprehensive survey, but was intended simply to indicate interest or lack of interest. Each person interviewed was asked to answer yes or no to the following ten questions:

1) Do you have any objections to a reorganization of school districts in Gove and Sheridan counties?

2) Do you see any advantages in such reorganization?

3) Do you have suggestions for reorganization?

4) Which of these plans do you favor?
   a) one high school for the area, with all present city grade schools under one superintendent?
   b) two high schools with all present city grade schools under one superintendent?

5) Do you feel that there are disadvantages to the plan you thought to be best?

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[1]Kansas Legislative Council, op. cit., p. 101.

6) If one high school were established, where should it be located:
   a) in an existing town?
   b) in a new location by itself?

7) Do you consider the present curriculum in your school to be adequate?

8) Should a grade school have more than one teacher?

9) If reorganization meant transporting your children to another school building, would you object?

10) If reorganization can be shown to provide better schools for the county, would you work to make it happen?

TABLE I

PATRON OPINION SURVEY FROM INTERVIEWS OF 25 URBAN AND 12 RURAL RESIDENTS IN GOVE AND SHERIDAN COUNTIES

Question	Administrators and teachers		School board members		Others, (farmers, businessmen, government employees, etc.)	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
1	4	5	5	11	4	8
2	5	4	11	5	8	4
3	3	6	5	11	2	10
4						
a)	0	9	0	0	6	0
b)	8	1	13	3	6	0
5	5	4	13	3	4	8
6						
a)	2	7	3	13	4	8
b)	7	2	13	3	8	4
7	2	7	12	4	1	11
8	9	0	8	8	12	2
9	8	1	13	3	8	4
10	5	4	11	5	7	5

Survey analysis. Any survey of this kind can only indicate in a very general way the direction of public opinion.

From Table I certain indications can be seen. Most persons recognized a need for an expanded curriculum; most felt that one-teacher schools were inadequate. However, this recognition was counterbalanced by an obvious reluctance to transport children to another location. A surprising number of teachers, school administrators, and board members were found not to favor reorganization. None of the thirty-seven persons questioned were willing to confine themselves to the yes-and-no answers to the questionnaire. All were eager to explain their viewpoints. Many of the teachers and administrators were fearful of future jobs. Some felt that a sudden decline in business would be inevitable if the local high school was closed. Two grade schools and one high school in this area are staffed by Roman Catholic nuns. Patrons in these districts gave fear the loss of Catholic teachers as a reason for opposition to reorganization.

It can be concluded from those questioned that, while the need for school improvement was recognized, few wished to do anything about it. If reorganization were forced, most preferred two high schools in new locations. Slightly more than one-third of the persons interviewed indicated that they would not assist reorganization in any way. Assuming that this sampling of opinions is indicative of the opinion of the population, then it can be said that patrons of the study area, while perhaps not violently opposed, are at least not enthusiastic for the idea of school district reorganization.

The Financial Condition of the Districts

Valuation, levies, and expenditures. Whenever education is being discussed, there is always agreement that it is expensive. According to the Kansas Comprehensive Survey, the poorer the quality of education the more costly it is. To compare the cost of education in the study area with cost of education in other areas, records of valuations, levies, and expenditures by district were studied and compiled in the following tables:

TABLE II

ASSESSED VALUATION OF SELECTED SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN GOVE AND SHERIDAN COUNTIES, 1960-61*

Districts	District assessed valuations	No. of pupils	Per pupil valuation
R.H.S. 1 Gove High School	$ 1,991,796	39	$ 53,636
R.H.S. 2 Grinnell High School	2,166,920	65	33,337
R.H.S. 3 Quinter High School	4,005,266	106	37,785
R.H.S. 4 Grainfield High School	1,406,302	57	24,672
R.H.S. 5 Park High School	1,601,799	43	37,251
Total	$11,171,083	310	$ 36,035 (mean)
1 Park Grade School	$ 1,521,758	120	$ 12,681
2 Grainfield Grade School	1,509,106	171	8,825
3 Grinnell Grade School	2,166,920	100	21,669
6 Quinter Grade School	3,166,006	239	13,246
8 Gove Grade School	1,204,033	92	13,087
13 Jerome (rural)	288,266	8	36,033
14 Hackberry (rural)	517,551	14	36,968
16 Harmony (rural)	249,822	17	14,695
19 Lone Star (rural)	287,266	14	20,590
47 Sunnyside (rural)	892,871	13	68,682
63 Missouri Flats (two-teacher)	900,000	27	33,333
64 Coin (rural)	494,378	6	82,396
Total	$13,145,237	820	$ 16,030 (mean)

*Source: Records in office of County Superintendent of Gove county.

TABLE III

DISTRICT LEVIES, 1960*

District	General fund	Bond	Transportation fund	Building fund	S.S. tax	Total levy
R.H.S. 1	9.55	--	--	--	--	9.55
R.H.S. 2	9.78	--	1.93	1.63	--	13.34
R.H.S. 3	9.65	--	--	--	--	9.65
R.H.S. 4	9.56	--	--	1.32	--	12.38
R.H.S. 5	8.16	6.00	1.50	--	--	14.16
Dist. 1	12.14	4.90	--	--	--	17.04
Dist. 2	11.97	16.74	--	1.86	--	32.49
Dist. 3	11.75	6.81	1.92	--	--	19.70
Dist. 6	11.90	1.73	1.14	.60	.60	16.49
Dist. 8	11.46	12.40	1.66	.63	--	26.32
Dist. 13	11.94	--	1.83	--	--	11.94
Dist. 14	9.56	--	--	--	--	9.56
Dist. 16	6.38	--	--	--	--	6.38
Dist. 19	9.48	--	--	--	--	9.48
Dist. 47	3.69	--	--	--	--	3.69
Dist. 63	9.58	--	.22	--	--	9.80
Dist. 64	11.94	6.81	--	--	--	18.75
Jt. 1	8.47	--	--	--	--	8.47
AVERAGE	9.83				AVERAGE	13.95

*Source: Records in the office of the County Clerk of Gove county.

TABLE IV

COST PER PUPIL, (HIGH SCHOOL), 1960-61*

District	Total expenditure	Pupils	Cost per pupil
R.H.S. 1 (Gove)	$ 32,196.76	39	$ 825.56
R.H.S. 2 (Grinnell)	56,735.07	65	872.85
R.H.S. 3 (Quinter)	84,726.98	106	799.32
R.H.S. 4 (Grainfield)	43,577.55	57	764.52
R.H.S. 5 (Park)	27,699.68	43	646.51
TOTAL	$245.036.04	310 (Av.)	$ 781.75

*Source: Records in office of Gove County Superintendent.

TABLE V

COST PER PUPIL, (ELEMENTARY), 1960-61*

District	Total expenditure	Pupils	Cost per pupil
1 (city) Park	$ 32,886.27	120	$ 274.06
2 (city) Grainfield	49,311.69	205	240.55
3 (city) Grinnell	36,099.44	100	361.00
6 (city) Quinter	84,432.25	239	353.14
8 (city) Gove	36,245.90	92	393.98
13 (rural) Jerome	6,812.58	8	857.87
14 (rural) Hackberry	9,079.49	14	648.54
19 (rural) Lone Star	4,835.40	14	345.39
47 (rural) Sunnyside	11,916.13	13	916.62
63 (rural) Missouri Flats	13,033.63	27	482.73
64 (rural) Coin	6,404.70	6	1,067.45
16 (rural) Harmony	6,378.42	17	376.26
TOTAL	$297,435.90	855 (Av.)	$ 526.59

*Source: Records in office of Gove County Superintendent.

TABLE VI

COST PER TEACHER (HIGH SCHOOL), 1960-61*

District	Expenditures	Number of teachers	Cost per teacher
R.H.S. 1 Gove	$ 32,196.76	4.5	$ 7,154.84
R.H.S. 2 Grinnell	56,735.07	7	8,105.01
R.H.S. 3 Quinter	84,726.98	10	8,472.70
R.H.S. 4 Grainfield	43,577.55	5.5	7,923.20
R.H.S. 5 Park	27,799.68	4.5	6,177.78

*Source: Records in office of Gove County Superintendent.

TABLE VII

COST PER TEACHER (ELEMENTARY SCHOOL), 1960-61*

District	Expenditures	Number of teachers	Cost per teacher
Dist. 1 Park	$ 32,886.27	4.5	$ 7,308.06
Dist. 2 Grainfield	49,311.69	7.5	6,575.03
Dist. 3 Grinnell	36,099.44	5.5	6,567.54
Dist. 6 Quinter	84,432.25	11	7,675.66
Dist. 8 Gove	36,245.25	4.5	8,054.61
Dist. 13 Jerome	6,812.58	1	6,812.58
Dist. 14 Hackberry	9,079.49	1	9,079.49
Dist. 16 Harmony	6,378.42	1	6,378.42
Dist. 19 Lone Star	4,835.40	1	4,835.40
Dist. 47 Sunnyside	11,916.13	1	11,916.13
Dist. 63 Missouri Flats	13,033.63	2	6,516.82
Dist. 64 Coin	6,404.70	1	6,404.70

*Source: Records in the office of the Gove County Superintendent.

Financial analysis. From Table II it can be observed that there is little equality in property valuation in proportion to students, R.H.S. number 3 had the greatest valuation as well as the greatest number of students. Other inequalities are apparent. For example, R.H.S. number 1 had approximately one-half the valuation of R.H.S. number 3, but also had one-third as many students. The variations from high to low in per pupil valuation are conspicuous. For the secondary districts the per pupil valuation ranged from $24,672 to $53,636. In the elementary districts the contrast is greater; it varied from $8,825 to $82,396.

The total valuation of the rural high school territory in the study area was $11,171,803, which provided a valuation of $36,036 per student. The valuation total for the common school area was $13,145,237,

for a valuation of $16,030 per student. This identifies the average valuation per student grades 1-12 at $26,033. For the state of Kansas in 1958, the average per pupil valuation was $10,611. For the western section of Kansas the average per pupil valuation was $15,792. It can be seen then that the school districts in the study area provide a per pupil valuation of $15,000 above the state average and $10,000 above the average for the section of the state of which it is a part.

Most obvious from the table is the fact that, by the provisions of the 1961 school reorganization law[1] no school in the area may enter a building or expansion program, or consolidate with any other district, since not one has the minimum valuation of $7,000,000.

Table III points out further differences. Only eight of eighteen districts have levies lower than the average general fund levy. Seven districts have total levies greater than the average total levy. Only five of the eighteen have building funds. Seven of the eighteen have transportation funds. The tax levies in the rural high school districts range from 9.55 to 14.16. For the common school districts the range is from 3.69 to 32.49. The assessment ratio for rural property in Gove county was 9; the assessment ratio for urban property was 12. This is much less than the assessment ratio for the state of Kansas which is 24 for rural real estate and 19 for urban.

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[1]League of Municipalities, 1961 Reorganization Law, p. 2.

[2]Kansas Legislative Council, Comp. Ed. Sur., p. 71.

Each type of organized district has different rates which make up its total levy. Since rates which make up the levy for any one district may include general county elementary school fund, general county high school fund, individual district fund, and perhaps the tax rate of high school districts and non-high territory, it is practically impossible to get an accurate comparison of the school tax load on property in various sections of Kansas.[1]

Tables IV and V describe the total cost of schools in each district, the number of pupils, and the cost per pupil. It should be noted that the average cost per pupil was much higher for Gove county than the average cost per pupil for the state of Kansas. In 1958-59 the state average cost per high school pupil was $451; in Gove county it was $782. This represents a cost of $331 per pupil above the state average. For Kansas the average in 1958-59 for elementary school pupils was $274. For Gove county the 1960-61 average cost for elementary pupils was $527, which is $253 above the state average.[2]

Considering individually the districts and their costs as described in Tables IV and V, no high school and only two grade schools are operating with costs near the state average. It should be noted that those schools whose costs are extremely high are rural one or two-teacher schools.

Tables VI and VII establish further the pattern shown in the previous tables, that is, small enrollments with few teachers in a school system cause the cost of education to become high.

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[1]Kansas Legislative Council, Comp. Ed. Sur., p. 70.

[2]Ibid., p. 64.

Enrollments

Present and projected enrollments. To study each district's present condition and to plan for the years to come, it was necessary to consider present enrollments and to project each enrollment for future years. Tables VIII and IX show the present enrollments for grade and high schools in the study area. Tables X and XI show a ten year projection.

TABLE VIII

ENROLLMENT BY GRADE IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS OF THE STUDY AREA, 1960-61*

District		Grades 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1 (city)	Park	14	18	14	18	14	13	16	13
2 " "	Grainfield	24	18	18	21	26	24	24	14
3 " "	Grinnell	20	10	13	13	18	9	10	8
6 " "	Quinter	40	31	28	28	28	27	21	33
8 " "	Gove	13	13	8	8	13	13	12	9
13 (rural)	Jerome	2	3	1	1	0	2	0	0
14 " "	Hackberry	0	0	1	1	2	1	5	1
16 " "	Lone Star	4	3	3	3	2	1	0	1
47 " "	Sunnyside	2	3	3	3	0	2	2	1
63 " "	Missouri Flats	2	5	5	5	2	3	3	5
64 " "	Coin	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0
	TOTAL	123	106	99	104	105	101	92	86

*Source: Records in office of Gove County Superintendent.

TABLE IX

ENROLLMENTS BY GRADE IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOLS OF THE STUDY AREA, 1960-61*

District (rural high school)	Grades 9	10	11	12	Totals
1 Gove	14	10	6	9	39
2 Grinnell	17	11	17	20	65
3 Quinter	29	29	26	24	106
4 Grainfield	18	15	15	9	57
5 Park	10	11	12	8	43
TOTALS	88	76	76	70	310

*Source: Records in office of Gove County Superintendent.

TABLE X

PROJECTED ENROLLMENT FOR THE STUDY AREA FOR GRADES 1-8

Year	Grades 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
1. 1960-61	123	106	99	104	105	101	92	86	820
2. 1961-62	129	123	106	99	104	105	101	92	860
3. 1962-63	120	129	123	106	99	104	105	101	867
4. 1963-64	116	120	129	123	106	99	104	105	902
5. 1964-65	122	116	120	129	123	106	99	104	919
6. 1965-66	135	122	116	120	129	123	106	99	950
7. 1966-67	130	135	122	116	120	129	123	106	981
8. 1967-68	137	130	135	122	116	120	129	123	1012
9. 1968-69	142	137	130	135	122	116	120	129	1031
10. 1969-70	137	142	137	130	135	122	116	120	1039

TABLE XI

PROJECTED ENROLLMENT FOR THE STUDY AREA
FOR GRADES 9-12

Year	Grades 9	10	11	12	Total
1. 1960-61	88	76	76	70	310
2. 1961-62	86	88	76	76	326
3. 1962-63	92	86	88	76	342
4. 1963-64	101	92	86	88	367
5. 1964-65	105	101	92	86	384
6. 1965-66	104	105	101	92	402
7. 1966-67	99	104	105	101	409
8. 1967-68	106	99	104	105	414
9. 1968-69	123	106	99	104	432
10. 1970-71	125	123	106	99	453

Analysis. From Table VIII it can be observed that the enrollment by grade from 1-8 varies from 86 in the eighth grade to 123 in the first grade, with an average of 102 in each grade.

Table IX shows enrollment by grade from 9-12. The number varies from 70 in grade 12 to 88 in grade 9, the average was found to be 77 per grade.

Tables X and XI, the projection tables, give a reasonably accurate basis for planning future facilities and finances. The secondary school projection was made from present known enrollments in grades 1 through 12 with no allowance for drop-out. The elementary projection was made by studying the enrollment change for each grade level. From this, estimated numbers were combined with known enrollments to form the tabulation.

From Tables X and XI it can be assumed that the high school and grade school enrollment will increase in the next ten years. The high school enrollment can be expected to increase from 310 to about 453. Even with the drop-out of twenty per cent, which is normal to this area, the enrollment will increase to fifteen per cent greater than at present. At the end of a ten year period, the common school enrollment can be expected to increase from 820 to about 1039, an increase of approximately twenty-five per cent.

While these changes are not large, they point out that present facilities and finances will not be adequate in the near future.

School Facilities

A major expenditure in any school district is that for buildings, whether it is initial cost, or the cost of upkeep and remodeling. Table XII shows the present condition of each school plant in the study area.

In general most of the buildings in the area are in satisfactory condition because they have been well kept in years past. However, most of the buildings are approaching an age when deterioration will be rapid and three of the buildings are hazardous and inadequate. The most obvious lack is that of size. By comparing the number of classrooms to the size of enrollments, both present and projected, it can be seen that school housing conditions are or will be extremely overcrowded. Building projects will need to be undertaken if district boundaries remain as they are. Should reorganization take place, not one of the

TABLE XII

SCHOOL PLANTS*

District	No. of plants	City or rural	Age of structure in years	Type construction	Age of addition in years	No. class-rooms	Gen. condition
Secondary schools:							
Gove	1	C	32	brick	10	5	S
Grinnell	1	C	32	brick	none	6	S
Quinter	1	C	27	brick	none	10	S
Grainfield	1	C	35	brick	none	7	U
Park	1	C	15	brick	none	6	VG
Elementary schools:							
Gove	1	C	3	brick	none	4	VG
Grinnell	1	C		brick	none	6	VG
Quinter	1	C	32	brick	7	11	S
Grainfield	1	C	32	brick	6	8	S
Park	1	C	25	brick	none	4	S
Hackberry	1	R	35	frame	6	2	S
Sunnyside	1	R	20	block	none	1	S
Missouri Flats	1	R	12	brick	none	4	VG
Coin	1	R	?	frame	none	1	U
Harmony	1	R	?	frame	none	1	U

*Source: Records in office of Gove County Superintendent.
VG - very good; S - satisfactory; U - unsatisfactory;
C - city; R - rural

present buildings would accommodate the added students. None of the buildings are of a type that could be relocated at another site; nor is it likely that much could be salvaged from any building.

Teachers in the Study Area

The description of the districts in the study area would be incomplete without data concerning the seventy-three teachers which staff the schools. Tables XIII and XIV give these data.

Tables XIII and XIV present data which are compared with the state averages as stated in the Kansas Comprehensive Survey. The average salary paid to elementary teachers in city schools in the study area is $3455. However, one of the city schools is partially staffed by Catholic nuns who receive only minimum salaries. All rural schools in the study area pay above the average salary for rural teachers, which is $3,170. Four of the high schools in the area pay salaries above the state average of $4,485 for teachers in rural and community high schools. The only high school which pays less than the state average is staffed by Catholic nuns.

Twenty-six per cent of the high school teachers in Kansas hold degrees above the bachelor's degree. No school has less than twenty per cent of its faculty with less preparation than a bachelor's degree in the study area; several have thirty per cent with more preparation than the bachelor's degrees. Eighty-one per cent of the rural teachers in Kansas are without degrees. In the study area, seventy-five per cent of the teachers were without degrees.[1]

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[1]Kansas Legislative Council, Comp. Ed. Sur., pp. 56-58.

TABLE XIII

TEACHER'S SALARIES, TRAINING, AND EXPERIENCE IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS, 1960-61*

District	Position	Salary	Training	Years experience
1	principal	$3,500	A.B.	23
	teacher	4,300	90 hrs.	3
	teacher	4,000	B.M.E.	4
	teacher	3,000	90 hrs.	4
	teacher (1/2)	1,500	B.S.	10
2	principal	5,000	M.S.	6
	teacher	4,300	A.B.	1
	teacher	3,300	90 hrs.	2
	teacher	(no information)		--
	teacher	3,300	90 hrs.	2
	teacher	3,700	B.S.	0
	teacher	3,800	B.S.	6
	teacher	3,800	B.S.	17
	teacher (1/2)	2,200	B.S.	--
3	principal	5,900	M.A.	5
	teacher (1/2)	1,800	B.S.	4
	teacher	3,750	90 hrs.	8
	teacher	3,700	90 hrs.	3
	teacher	3,700	90 hrs.	5.5
	teacher (1/2)	1,670	B.M.E.	3
	teacher (1/2)	1,600	B.S.	--
6	principal	5,600	B.S.	4
	teacher	4,100	B.A.	3
	teacher	4,600	B.S.	4
	teacher	3,900	A.B.	0
	teacher	4,000	B.S.	24
	teacher	4,000	B.S.	28.5
	teacher	4,000	A.B.	14
	teacher	4,000	B.S.	12
	teacher	4,000	B.S.	26
	teacher	3,800	90 hrs.	4.5
8	principal	4,200	B.S.	36
	teacher	3,800	B.A.	0
	teacher	3,500	90 hrs.	22
	teacher	3,700	B.S.	0
	teacher	2,350	B.A.	27
13	teacher	4,000	90 hrs.	7
14	teacher	3,700	B.A.	5.5

TABLE XIII (continued)

District	Position	Salary	Training	Years experience
16	teacher	$3,600	90 hrs.	38
19	teacher	3,200	90 hrs.	14
47	teacher	3,800	B.S.	18
63	teacher	4,200	90 hrs.	3
	teacher	4,300	90 hrs.	6.5
64	teacher	3,400	90 hrs.	30

*Source: Records in office of Gove County Superintendent.

TABLE XIV

TEACHER'S SALARIES, TRAINING, AND EXPERIENCE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS, 1960-61*

District	Position	Salary	Training	Years experience
R.H.S. 1	principal	$5,300	M.S.	8
	teacher	4,300	B.S.	4
	teacher	4,200	B.S.	0
	teacher	4,400	B.S.	1
	teacher (1/2)	2,400	B.A.	27
R.H.S. 2	principal	6,000	M.S.	19
	teacher	4,600	B.S.	33
	teacher	4,500	B.S.	0
	teacher	4,400	B.S.	13
	teacher	4,500	M.S.	16
	teacher	4,300	B.S.	0
	teacher (1/2)	3,333	B.M.E.	6
R.H.S. 3	principal	6,000	M.S.	33
	teacher	4,100	A.B.	0
	teacher	5,000	M.A.	28
	teacher	4,800	B.A.	16
	teacher	4,500	B.S.	3
	teacher	5,300	B.S.	15.5
	teacher	5,000	M.S.	19.5
	teacher	5,100	B.S.	8
	teacher	4,700	B.S.	4
	teacher	4,800	M.M.E.	9
R.H.S. 4	principal	6,000	M.A.	8
	teacher	4,400	M.A.	10
	teacher	4,000	B.S.	0
	teacher	4,000	B.S.	13
	teacher	4,400	B.S.	7
	teacher (1/2)	2,200	B.S.	3
R.H.S. 5	principal	3,700	M.S.	28
	teacher	4,200	B.S.	0
	teacher	3,100	B.S.	38
	teacher	3,100	B.S.	43
	teacher (1/2)	1,600	B.S.	10

*Source: Records in office of Gove County Superintendent.

In general the facilities of schools of the study area compare favorably with the facilities of other schools of their type as far as teacher training is concerned. All of the high schools and all the city grade schools have some type of music instruction. None of the schools have special teachers. Three of the high schools have teachers of foreign language. One grade school has a kindergarten class, though it is not a part of the public school.

School Administration in the Study Area

> To bring all the components of an education program into harmonious and fruitful relationships is the purpose of administration.[1]

The definition given above explains the purpose of school administration and serves to identify school administration in the study area. However, many administrators find themselves with duties other than administrative. Table XV contains data concerning the number of hours per day the administrators in the study area either teach, supervise, or maintain office hours.

In the seven rural grade schools in the area, the school board acts in an administrative capacity. In the rural high school and the city grade schools of the area qualified administrators direct the schools.

From Table XV it can be observed that there is very little, if any, supervision carried on in any of the schools in the area. Many of the principals and superintendants in the area either are teaching too many classes or have too much routine office work (without secretarial

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[1]Calvin Grieder, Public School Administration, p. 81.

TABLE XV

ADMINISTRATORS AND THEIR DUTIES

District	Position	Hours teaching	Hours supervision	Hours office	Hours free
Secondary schools:					
1 Gove	Principal	4	0	2	1
2 Grinnell	Superintendent	2	0	3	1
3 Quinter	Superintendent	0	4	2	1
	Principal	4	2	0	1
4 Grainfield	Principal	4	0	2	1
5 Park	Principal	5	0	1	1
Elementary schools:					
1 Park	Principal	6	0	1	1
2 Grainfield	Principal	0	6	1	1
3 Grinnell	Principal	6	0	1	1
6 Quinter	Principal	0	6	1	1
8 Gove	Principal	6	0	1	1

*Source: Records in office of Gove County Superintendent.

help) to be able to carry out administrative duties as they should. Only in district number three, high school, and in district number six, grade school, is adequate time allotted for proper administration. This is the only district in the area where the superintendent does not do double duty as principal or teacher. It can be presumed that where the school administrator is overloaded with routine office work and teaching duties, administrative duties remain undone or fall to the members of the board of education, who are rarely professionally trained for such tasks.

Transportation

Kansas law requires that a school district must either provide transportation or pay mileage to parents for any elementary school child who lives two and one-half miles or more from the school by the usually traveled route. There is no legal requirement to furnish transportation to high school students.[1]

Of the five high school districts and twelve common school districts operating schools in the study area, only seven provide transportation. Ten districts have no transportation fund and no transportation levy. Table XVI shows the transportation expenditure, transportation levy, number of students requiring transportation, and cost per pupil.

TABLE XVI

LEVIES, EXPENDITURES, AND COST PER PUPIL, 1960-61

District	Transportation expenditures	Transportation levy	Pupils riding	Cost per pupil
64 Missouri Flats	$ 1,240.09	.22	24	$ 45.92
2 Grainfield Grade	3,403.84	1.92	120	28.36
3 Grinnell Grade	2,152.88	1.14	36	59.80
6 Quinter Grade	6,697.18	1.66	84	79.73
8 Gove Grade	2,285.16	1.83	65	35.15
2 Grinnell High	3,803.74	1.93	34	114.81
4 Grainfield High	1,264.83	1.50	25	50.73
TOTAL	$20,847.72		388	$ 53.73(Av.)

*Source: Records in office of Gove County Superintendent.

[1]Kansas Leg. Council, Comp. Ed. Sur., p. 96.

From study of Table XVI it can be seen that transportation and transportation costs are unequal within the study area. Costs vary widely from $28 per pupil to $115 per pupil. The average transportation cost $54 per pupil. Costs would be even higher were it not for the use of shared routes and buses by high schools and grade schools operating in the same general area. However, this practice is sometimes abused. For example, Quinter High School pays no transportation costs but high school students who live on the Quinter Grade bus route may be transported.

The average transportation cost per pupil in the United States is $37; in Kansas the average cost is $75. In the study area the average transportation cost per pupil of $54 is below the state average. The $20,848 spent for pupil transportation in the study area was not evenly distributed and did not benefit all students who needed it.

That the present districting is inefficient is evident when one observes that buses from five schools meet daily at an intersection in the northwestern corner of the study area.

Location of Students; Condition of Roads

Location of students. Figures 1 and 2 show the boundaries of grade and high school districts and the extent of overlapping. They also show the location of students in the study area. Study of the maps reveals that most of the students live nearer the northern and eastern boundaries of the county. However, several students do live in the more isolated southwestern corner of the county and must be provided schooling.

Location and condition of roads. Figure 3 shows location of hard-surfaced and graveled roads within the study area. Roads in the northern portion of the area are adequate, and "all-weather" roads are fairly adequate in the eastern portion. However, many students living in these areas live a mile or more off the better roads so that bus service in bad weather is not dependable. Students living in the southern part of the county are even less fortunate. In some parts of the area, the distance between graveled roads is as much as thirteen miles. Students living in the interiors of districts 8, 64, 47, 63, and 14 must be collected via dirt roads which are not always passable in bad weather.

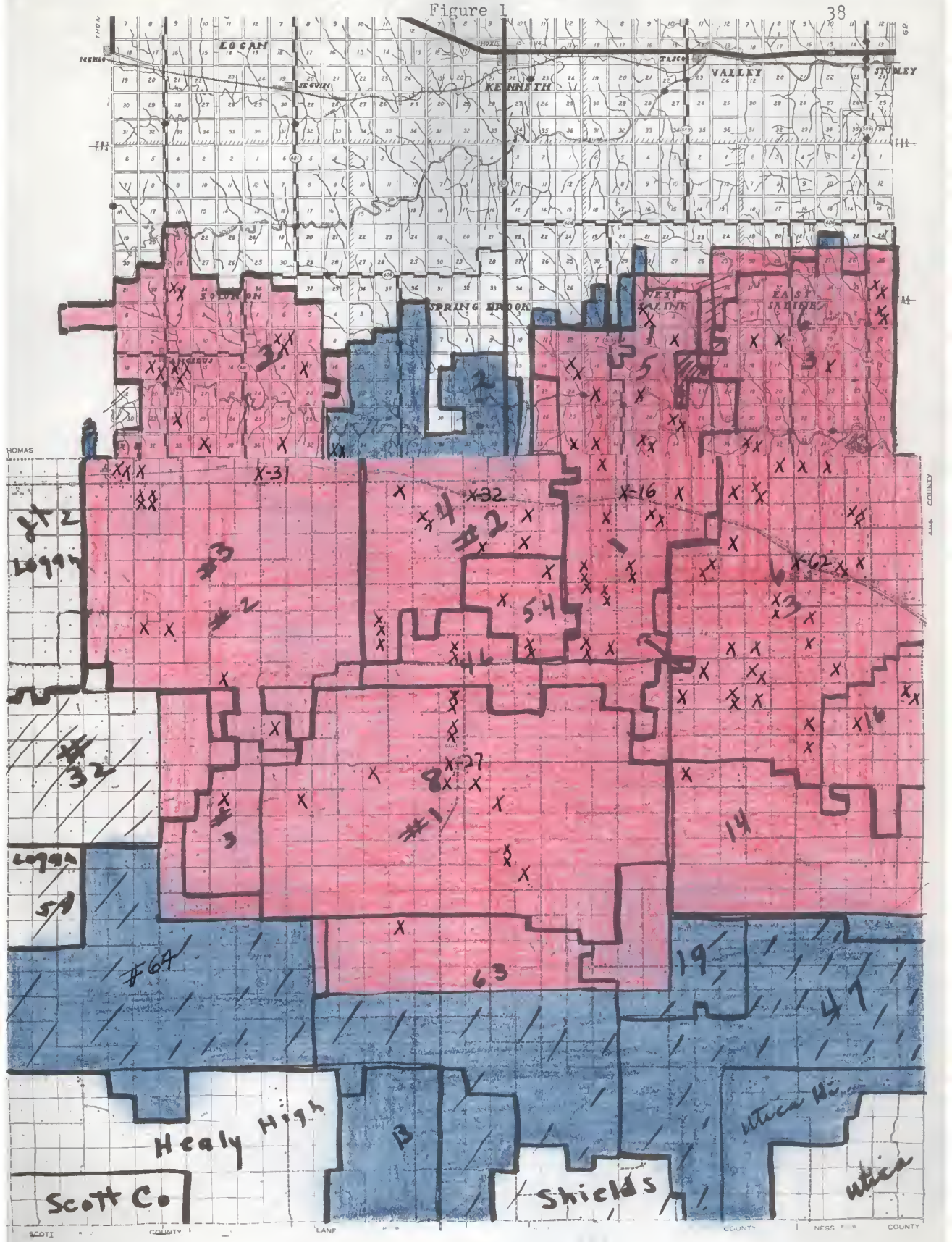
EXPLANATION OF FIGURE 1

Figure 1 shows the high school districts in the study area, as well as the location of students within those districts. Also included are the extended boundaries of grade school districts.

high school districts

extended grade school districts

X location of high school students


LOGAN
KENNETH
VALLEY
SPRING BROOK
WEST SALINE
EAST SALINE
HOMAS
COUNTY
Healy High
Scott Co
Shields
Utica
SCOTT COUNTY
LANE COUNTY
NESS COUNTY

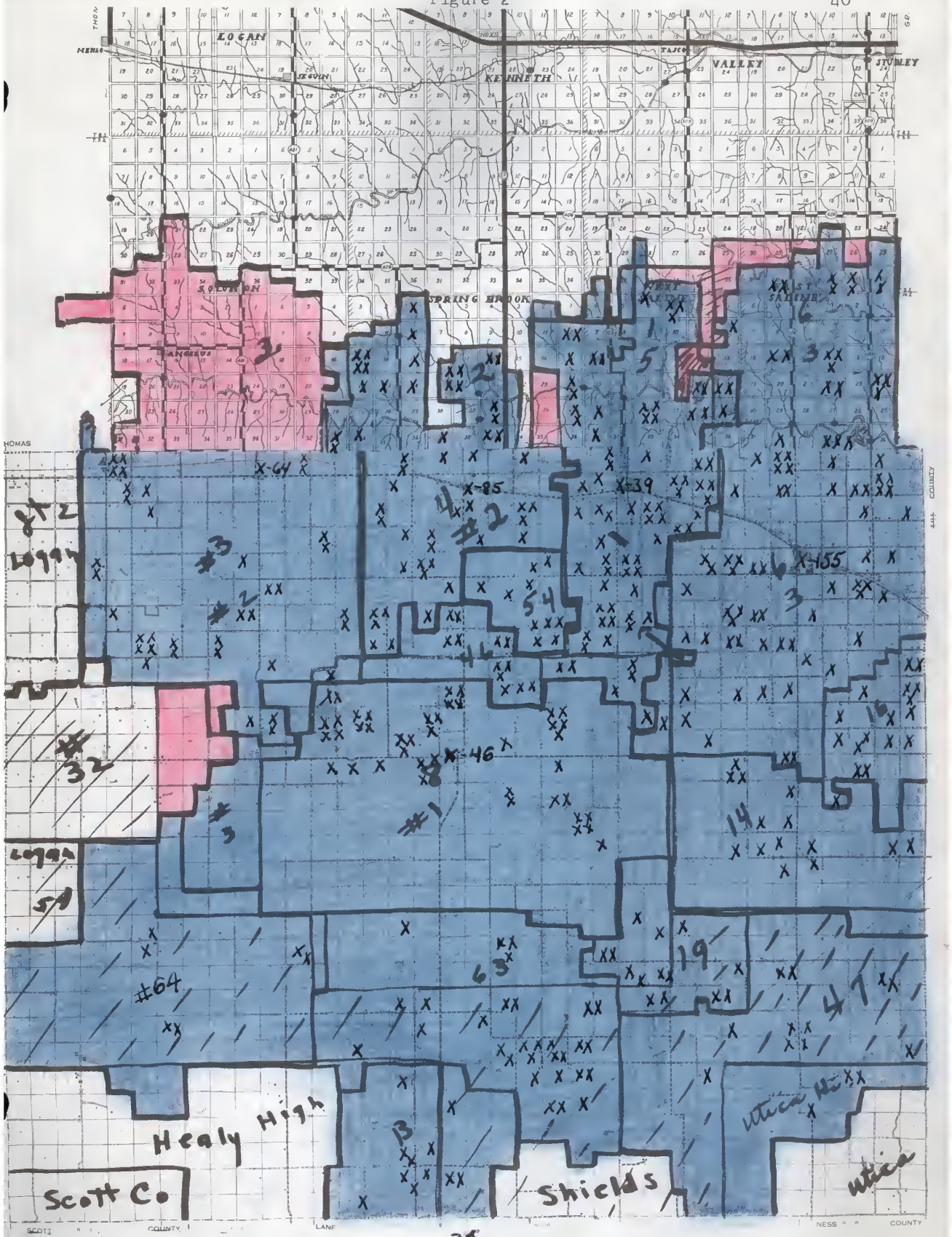
EXPLANATION OF FIGURE 2

Figure 2 shows the grade school districts in the study area, as well as the location of students within those districts. Also included are the extended boundaries of high school districts.

grade school districts

extended high school districts

X location of grade school students


LOGAN
KENNETH
TAJO
VALLEY
JUDLEY
SPRING BROOK
ANGELUS
SALINE
Healy High
Scott Co
Shields
Utica
COUNTY
SCOTT
LANE
NESS

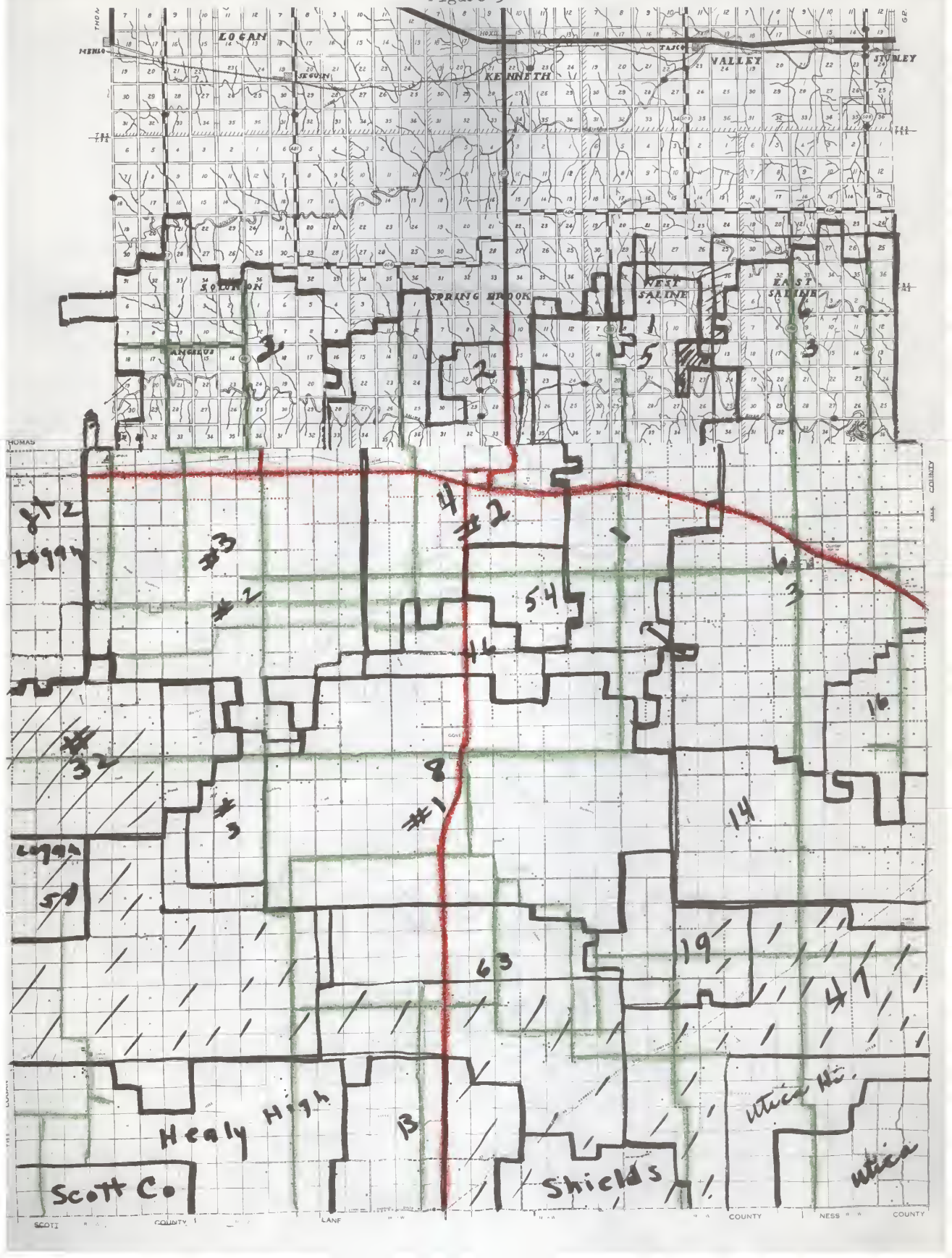
EXPLANATION OF FIGURE 3

Figure 3 is a map of the study area showing all-weather roads.

hard-surfaced roads

graveled roads

Figure 3


LOGAN
KENNETH
VALLEY
SOLOMON
SPRING BROOK
WEST SALINE
EAST SALINE
ANGELUS
Healy High
Scott Co
Shields
Utica
COUNTY
SCOTT COUNTY
LANE COUNTY
NESS COUNTY

RECOMMENDATIONS OF GOVE COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

In January of 1964 Gove county did do something to improve the school situation. The Gove County Planning Board proposed that the area be divided into three unified districts. The plan met with the approval of the patrons by a vote of 810 to 453. Later, the plan was approved by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction. By area the three districts are as follows:

West District. This district is made up of the old Grinnell Grade, Grinnell High and Coin districts. To this area was added sections along the Logan-Gove county line, previously in Logan county districts. Also added was the territory in Sheridan, Thomas, and Logan counties which was being served by the Angelus Grade school. This district now has a valuation of $3,997,731; it covers approximately 258 square miles and it will serve a pupil population of 350 in grades one through twelve.

Central District. This district is made up of the old Grainfield High, Grainfield Grade, Park High, Park Grade, Gove High and Gove Grade districts. This district has a valuation of $5,346,417 and an area of 436 square miles. The school system will enroll approximately 520 students in grades one through twelve.

East District. This district is comprised of the old Quinter High, Quinter Grade, Missouri Flats, Jerome, Hackberry, Lone Star, Harmony and Sunnyside districts. This district has a valuation of $5,977,717 and covers an area of 340 square miles. Grades one through twelve will enroll approximately 465 students.

Improvements are already developing in two of the newly organized districts. The west district now operates one high school and two city-type grade schools. One rural school has been closed. Building and expansion plans are in progress. The high school has enriched its curriculum and now qualifies as a standard school. Transportation costs have not been considerably reduced but routing and service are more efficient. No longer do buses from five schools enter the same area to pick up students. Costs are still high; valuation is limited; teachers and administrators are still overburdened.

The east district has made plans for building and expansion. Curricula have been enriched. One comprehensive high school, two city-type grade schools and two rural schools are in operation. Three rural schools have been closed. This district faces the same difficulties as the west district, but with greater valuation, larger land area and greater enrollments.

It is in the larger central district that little improvement has been accomplished. Three high schools and three grade schools are in operation. The grade schools are reasonably adequate but the high schools are not. In each of the high schools the curriculum barely meets the approved qualification. In two of the high schools enrollments are too small to provide adequate challenge. Although it is doubtful that sufficient funds will be available in the future to maintain all these units, none of them can be closed without a majority vote of the patrons in each of the districts. It is not likely that the patrons will vote to close the district.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Summary. In spite of the reluctance of patrons to change anything, the districts cannot continue to operate under existing conditions. Existing buildings were found not to be adequate for increased enrollments. Building projects cannot be undertaken because of legal restrictions placed on districts with low valuations. Many schools were found to be too small to be operated economically; cost of education has been unnecessarily high and levies were found to be at or near maximum. Educational opportunities were identified to be unequal over the county, especially in the one-teacher schools.

Cost of school transportation was found to be unevenly distributed throughout the area. Transportation was found to be not equally available to all students in the area. The problems of distance, isolation, and poor roads made transportation costly at best.

Teachers and administrators in the area were found to be reasonably well qualified, but these persons were not being employed efficiently in terms of time and money. Curricula in most of the high schools were found to be limited.

Conclusion and recommendations. The findings from this study indicate that a reasonable solution to the problem of improved education in the study area would be one unified district following county lines. This would create a district of approximately 1,000 square miles with a valuation of $14,000,000. Total school enrollment would be nearly 1250, grades one through twelve.

Since all of the five high school plants in the area were found to be too small for present and for future enrollments, the most feasible plan should be to build one high school building on a new, centrally-located site. This would establish a school which could enroll approximately 400 pupils in grades nine through twelve.

To avoid transporting small children many miles, and to make use of existing adequate plants, six elementary schools, on present sites, should be maintained. The locations of such attendance centers should be in the cities of Grinnell, Grainfield, Park, Quinter, and Gove and in the Missouri Flats school. These schools would enroll nearly 20 pupils in each grade, except at Missouri Flats which would enroll less. All rural one-teacher schools should be closed. The two-teacher Missouri Flats school should be expanded to accommodate elementary school children in the southern part of the county. Expansion might prove necessary at some of the other elementary schools, but in some cases the space in the abandoned high school building could be utilized.

A system of small feeder buses (probably of a four-wheel drive station wagon type for use on poor roads) could bring students to several collection points, where they could be transferred to their schools by larger buses.

This unified school system would employ at least seven principals and one superintendent. The number of elementary and high school teachers needed would remain nearly the same. Many teachers currently employed could be re-established in the new high school system.

The plans recommended from this study and those of the Gove County Planning Board are similar for elementary schools. Both would maintain at least six grade schools. The Gove County Planning Board's recommendations left location of sites to be decided by patrons and made no immediate recommendation concerning closing of one-teacher rural schools.

The two plans for secondary schools vary widely. In recommending the three districts, the Gove County Planning Board created a situation under which each of the three high schools is barely able to meet the requirements set by the 1961 Reorganization Law. The west district, as formed by the Planning Board, has slightly less than $4,000,000 in valuation, slightly more than 200 square miles and less than 400 students. The other two districts must operate schools which are near the minimum standards recommended.

The plan recommended as a result of this study meets the requirements of the Comprehensive Survey Committee standards that relate to enrollment, valuation, and area. These standards are higher than the minimums established under the unification law and could have made possible the provision for improved education for the children and youth in the area studied.

Findings from this study verify that the action taken to define unified districts in the study area has provided districts which will not have the resources to adequately provide the extended educational opportunity needed to all students.

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APPENDIX

Patron Opinion Survey

Answer "yes" or "no" to the following questions:

1) Do you have any objections to a reorganization of school districts in Gove and Sheridan counties?

2) Do you see any advantages in such reorganization?

3) Do you have suggestions for reorganization?

4) Which of these plans do you favor?
   a) one high school for the area, with all present city grade schools under one superintendent?
   b) two high schools with all present city grade schools under one superintendent?

5) Do you feel that there are disadvantages to the plan you thought to be best?

6) If one high school were established, where should it be located?
   a) in an existing town?
   b) in a new location by itself?

7) Do you consider the present curriculum in your school to be adequate?

8) Should a grade school have more than one teacher?

9) If reorganization meant transporting your children to another school building, would you object?

10) If reorganization can be shown to provide better schools for the county, would you work to make it happen?

The results of the Patron Opinion Survey may be found on page 15.

A STUDY OF THE NEED FOR REORGANIZATION OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN SELECTED PORTIONS OF GOVE AND SHERIDAN COUNTIES

by

ROBERT DALE MLYNAR

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The problem for study was to examine the adequacy of selected school districts in Gove and Sheridan counties. The adequacy was examined on the bases of programs of study, facilities, finances and organization.

It was the purpose of the study to collect and study available evidence relating to opportunities for education for all children in the existing districts, to compare the organized units in relation to the evidence collected, and to compare the study's recommendations to the reorganization plan adopted for district unification.

The methods of procedure were as follows: laws and other materials concerning the policies and practices of school districting were studied; a survey of opinion of the area patrons was taken; tax levies and district valuations of the study area were compared with state averages; present and future enrollments were analyzed; maps showing location of students and conditions of roads were developed.

Special terms used throughout the study include: (1) unified school system--one which provides a complete elementary and secondary school program directed by one administrative and supervisory staff; (2) administrative unit--the geographic unit comprising all the area under a single system of school administration; (3) attendance unit--the territory from which children legally may attend a given school building or center; and (4) reorganized district--a school district whose designation has been legally changed.

A review of literature indicated that reorganization of school districts was the point at which to begin improvement of education. Such states as Colorado, Iowa, Indiana, and West Virginia experimented with

the unified district type of organization and found that it provided improved opportunity for education, even tax rates, lower school costs, and better leadership and curriculum. In Kansas, a law passed in 1955 limited state aid to the districts which met required standards of enrollment and limited building programs to districts with adequate valuation. These requirements were slowly forcing some districts to cease to operate or to reorganize. The Reorganization Law passed in 1961 set up a uniform procedure for establishing unified school districts.

It was found that a reasonable solution to the problem of improved education in the study area would be one unified district following county lines. This would create a district of approximately 1,000 square miles with a valuation of $14,000,000. Total school enrollment would be nearly 1250, grades one through twelve.

Since all of the five high school plants in the area were found to be too small for present and for future enrollments, the most feasible plan should be to build one high school building on a new, centrally-located site. This would establish a school which could enroll approximately 400 pupils in grades nine through twelve.

To avoid transporting small children many miles, and to make use of existing adequate plants, six elementary schools, on present sites, should be maintained. The locations of such attendance centers should be in the cities of Grinnell, Grainfield, Park, Quinter, and Gove and in the Missouri Flats school. These schools would enroll nearly 20 pupils in each grade, except at Missouri Flats which would enroll less. All rural one-teacher schools should be closed. The two-teacher Missouri

Flats school should be expanded to accommodate elementary school children in the southern part of the county. Expansion might prove necessary at some of the other elementary schools, but in some cases the space in the abandoned high school building could be utilized.

A system of small feeder buses (probably of a four-wheel drive station wagon type for use on poor roads) could bring students to several collection points, where they could be transferred to their schools by larger buses.

This unified school system would employ at least seven principals and one superintendent. The number of elementary and high school teachers needed would remain nearly the same. Many teachers currently employed could be re-established in the new high school system.

The plans recommended from this study and those of the Gove County Planning Board are similar for elementary schools. Both would maintain at least six grade schools. The Gove County Planning Board's recommendations left location of sites to be decided by patrons and made no immediate recommendation concerning closing of one-teacher rural schools.

The two plans for secondary schools vary widely. In recommending the three districts, the Gove County Planning Board created a situation under which each of the three high schools is barely able to meet the requirements set by the 1961 Reorganization Law. The west district, as formed by the Planning Board, has slightly less than $4,000,000 in valuation, slightly more than 200 square miles and less than 400 students. The other two districts must operate schools which are near the minimum standards recommended.

The plan recommended as a result of this study meets the requirements of the Comprehensive Survey Committee standards that relate to enrollment, valuation, and area. These standards are higher than the minimums established under the unification law and could have made possible the provision for improved education for the children and youth in the area studied.

Findings from this study verify that the action taken to define unified districts in the study area has provided districts which will not have the resources to adequately provide the extended educational opportunity needed to all students.