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## Educational needs of Northfield, Massachusetts.

Mott P. Guhsé  
*University of Massachusetts Amherst*

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EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF  
NORTHFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS

BY  
MOTT P. GUHSE'

A problem presented in partial fulfilment  
of the requirements for the Master of  
Science Degree

University of Massachusetts

1951

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CHAPTER I  
INTRODUCTION

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Like many communities today, Northfield, Massachusetts, is faced with many of the problems of modern living. Many of these problems are the result of changing world conditions due to technological and social aspects. Others are the result of a lack in what should have been a normally progressive function of any community. Such things as adequate sewerage disposal, town by-laws, zoning laws, development of a central water system, the encouragement of business developments in order to be more self-sufficient, recreational improvements, and the providing of an adequate, modern educational program are some of the outstanding needs of the town. Meeting these problems will take time, planning and concentrated effort on the part of many of the inhabitants of the community. From the long list above, one of the most pressing problems deals with education.

General Description of Town -- The Town of Northfield is a community of 2,230 inhabitants located in Franklin County in the western part of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. It is bounded by the Vermont and New Hampshire State lines on the north, the Town of Warwick on the east, Erving, Millers Falls and Gill on the south and Gill and Bernardston on the west. Northfield lies in a valley with the Connecticut River flowing from north to south and nearly centered to divide the town. Within the town there are two bridges,

Bennett Meadow Bridge and the Schell Bridge, which facilitate travel between West Northfield, Hell's Kitchen, and the Mount Hermon sections to the west of the river with East Northfield, Northfield proper and Northfield Farms to the east of the Connecticut River. The elevation at the river is less than 200 feet above sea level. Along the eastern and western boundaries of the town the hills rise to the 1,319 foot elevation of Notch Mountain. There are paved roads connecting each section of the town. Northfield is easily accessible to all surrounding communities by good roads, as State Highway Routes #10 and #63 pass through the town.

An Early Settlement -- Northfield, Massachusetts, was first settled in 1673 after the land was purchased from the tribe of Indians called the Squakhaegs, a name meaning "a spearing place for salmon." As the town was for nearly seventy years the outpost of the Puritan colonists of western and northern New England, it was exposed to the full brunt of Indian attacks. Twice the settlers of Northfield were forced to abandon their new homes and take refuge lower down the Connecticut Valley. The town was resettled in 1682. The first town meeting was held March 18, 1686.

In 1688, as prosperity seemed within their grasp, the settlers were again subjected to Indian attacks and savage atrocities. This was in part at least because the enmities between France and England were transferred to their colonies; the Indians being incited to this attack by the French.



Hopeless of successful defense, the County Court ordered the settlers on June 25, 1690, "to transport their corn and live stock to Springfield within six to eight days." This ended the second attempt at settlement.

Not until peace came between England and France did the permanent settlement of Northfield occur. In 1714 the General Court for the third time granted permission for the settlement, appointed a new committee to oversee the settlement, and named the town "Northfield."

On March 17, 1717, the settlers first elected town officers, and on June 15, 1723, the Town of Northfield was incorporated.<sup>1</sup>

Further Historical Sketch -- The growth of Northfield during the one hundred and fifty years after incorporation followed the lines taken by other rural towns where agricultural interests predominate. Although Northfield was the most northern outpost for seventy-five years during the French and Indian wars, the real distinction of the town comes from one of its native sons, Dwight L. Moody. The establishment of The Northfield School for Girls and the Mount Hermon School for boys in the adjacent town of Gill were contributions of Mr. Moody about 1880.

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1. ----- 250 Years of Northfield (1673-1923), The Town of Northfield. pp 5-7.

The private schools have had their effect on the course or direction of the further development of the Town of Northfield. Religious conferences<sup>2</sup> held each summer attracted many from all parts of the country; some of those conferences have retired in Northfield. The influence of the Moody Schools has been a factor in preventing industry from developing within the town.

Economic Status -- Although Northfield is located in a rural area of Massachusetts, very few of its inhabitants are dependent solely on agriculture. Economically, there are no industrial plants in the town. A large number of people make their living by daily commuting to the larger industrial towns to the south. Others depend on the tourist trade and allied pursuits. There are three grocery stores, a drug store, a small restaurant, three general stores dealing in hardware, paint, small appliances and novelties, six garages, three of which sell cars, several small gas stations, and one farm machinery distributor located in town. The Northfield Schools, Inc., which includes The Northfield School for Girls, Mount Hermon School, and the Northfield Hotel, provides the greatest number of jobs for residents. With no bank or large retail establishment located in town, Northfield is not self-sufficient as most of the dollar trade gravitates to Greenfield, Massachusetts, and Brattleboro, Vermont.

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2. Parsons, Herbert Collins, A Puritan Outpost, pp 378-379.

Recreational Status -- There is not a motion picture theatre, dance hall, bowling alleys, nor general recreation center located in town. The residents go to the larger towns for such recreational activities throughout the year.

Social Activities -- Many of the social functions are related to church organizations. There is St. Patrick Catholic Church, the Unitarian Congregational Church, the Trinitarian Congregational Church with buildings of their own, and several other Protestant groups meet in the Grange Hall and private homes. Each of the church groups sponsors a number of organizations which provide in a limited way for the social needs of the community. Other organizations to be found in Northfield are The Grange, Masons, Eastern Star, Veterans of Foreign Wars, American Legion, Fortnightly Club, Northfield Fish & Game Association, Historical Society, Parent-Teachers Association, Garden Club, American Legion Auxiliary, V.F.W. Auxiliary, Women's Christian Temperance Union, Community Clubs No. 3 and 4, the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts.

CHAPTER II

BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEM

## CHAPTER II

### BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEM

The Town of Northfield is faced with a problem, which is national in scope. The present school buildings and facilities are not adequate for a modern school program. An increase in population and higher birth rates during the last five years are factors which will produce increased school enrolments. Thus, increased enrolments coupled with the need for more classrooms and other facilities create a problem of pressing, educational needs.

How can a small community provide adequate school housing facilities and an educational program comparable to that which a city can offer its children? The answer to that question is still in the offing for Northfield. During the last few years several committees have studied the problem, made their recommendations and were duly discharged without the voters of Northfield taking any real action to improve the present school conditions.

The author, having served on three of the town-appointed committees, will hereby endeavor to present in this study the findings of his research and analysis in relation to the educational status of Northfield. In doing this, it may be well to first summarize briefly the scope of the work and the recommendations of past committees.

World War Memorial Committee -- In 1939 the first concerted effort was made to bring to the citizens of Northfield

the need of a building for use as a gymnasium and auditorium. The need for such a building became increasingly evident each succeeding year. At the annual town meeting on February 4, 1946, the following article was passed:

Article 36. Voted to appoint a survey committee to investigate the advisability of erecting a World War Memorial in the form of a community school center and to determine the need for additional school facilities consisting of a gymnasium, vocational shop, and kindergarten quarters to occupy this building. The committee is to be composed of the chairman of the Board of Selectmen, the Commander of the American Legion, the President of the P.T.A., the School Committee, and three other members to be appointed by the chairman of the Selectmen, one of whom shall be a veteran.

In the course of a survey by this committee eight hundred eighty-five questionnaires were mailed out, and one hundred fifty-seven or eighteen percent were returned. The tabulation of the results of that questionnaire are to be found on the following page in Table I.

The vote of the committee was six affirmative to three negative for the need of such a War Memorial building, but did not recommend building at that time, as construction costs were too expensive.

World War Memorial Community School Building Plans Committee -- At the annual town meeting on February 3, 1947, the former committee was discharged and replaced with a World War Memorial Community School Building Plans Committee of nine persons to investigate building sites and plans. The committee recommended that the proposed Memorial gymnasium be located on the site north of the high school, that the committee be authorized to continue its work, that the funds

TABLE I

Tabulation of Questionnaire in Determining the Need for a War Memorial school building for the Town of Northfield in 1946.

Questions	Yes	No	Blanks
Would you be interested in a kindergarten class in the present school system?	96	34	27
Would you be interested in the establishment of a general vocational department in the present school system if facilities were made available?	105	19	33
Check type of vocational training:			
Machine shop	44		
Printing shop	32		
Woodworking	64		
Automotive shop	44		
Would you be interested in a gymnasium for school and community use?	123	26	8

requested be granted in order that preliminary plans may be secured, and that actual building should be deferred at that time.

At the annual town meeting held on February 2, 1948, the sum of three hundred dollars was appropriated to secure preliminary plans. However, no action was taken by this committee during the ensuing year.

At the next annual town meeting held on February 7, 1949, the former committee was discharged and a new committee was appointed. The gymnasium survey was continued, and it was ascertained that an increase in the birth rate had created a definite need for more classrooms. The committee suggested two alternatives. The first proposed that the Town of Northfield conduct a building program on its own to provide more classrooms. The expenditure for a gymnasium was not deemed advisable. The second alternative was the possibility of alleviating some of the pressing school building problems on a regional plan. To this end, the following action was taken by the voters at a special town meeting held on November 1, 1949:

Article 12. Voted that the town instruct the Moderator to appoint three persons, one of whom shall be a member of the School Committee, to serve on a special unpaid board to be known as the Regional School District Planning Board for the towns comprising School Union No. 22 all in accordance with sections 14-16 of Chapter 71 of the General Laws as amended by Chapter 638 of the Acts of 1949.

(Counted votes -- Yes, 155; No no votes cast.)

Chapter 638 of the Acts of 1949 was permissive State legislation to encourage several towns to form a regional district for school purposes. Each of the five towns in School Union No. 22 appointed three members, and the first meeting of the Regional School District Planning Board was held on January 6, 1950, at the Center School, Northfield, with Mr. John Marshall, Administrator of the Massachusetts School Building Assistance Commission, also in attendance.



At the annual town meeting held on February 7, 1950, the following action was taken:

Article 48. Voted to accept the report of the World War Memorial School Building Plans Committee appointed in 1949 which includes in its recommendations "that no further action be contemplated re a gymnasium survey and/or additions to our present school buildings, until the Selectmen and the People of Northfield have received a full report of the findings of the Regional School District Planning Board."

Regional School District Planning Board -- A Regional School District Planning Board for School Union No. 22 was created in 1949 by a vote at special town meetings in each of the towns of Bernardston, Gill, Leyden, Northfield, and Warwick. As the purpose of the planning board was to study the advisability of establishing a Regional School District, the fifteen members of the board met at least bi-monthly from January 6, 1950, to November 10, 1950. After a very careful study of the educational needs of all five towns as well as the region as a whole was conducted, an agreement was drawn up in accordance with Chapter 638 of the Acts of 1949 of the Massachusetts General Laws.

The proposed agreement, which carried with it the recommendation that a junior-senior high school for the area be established, was an eight page document. A few of the specifications of the agreement were that:

1. The Regional District School Committee shall consist of ten members, two from each of the five member towns. The representatives from each town shall be elected in accordance with normal election procedures for that town.

2. The proposed school buildings and playing fields shall be located within a two mile radius of the point where the towns of Bernardston, Northfield, and Gill meet.

3. Construction, equipping, and all other capital costs shall be shared on a percentage basis as follows:

Bernardston	--	21.8%
Gill	--	21.4%
Leyden	--	6.7%
Northfield	--	41.8%
Warwick	--	8.3%

The preceding percentages were based on the equalized valuation, Chapter 559 (The Basis of Apportionment of State and County Taxes, as last recorded in 1945).

4. Annual maintenance and operating costs shall be shared by the member towns on a per pupil basis.

5. Transportation of pupils to the school shall be arranged for by the Regional School Committee.

The planning board found that each of the five towns was faced with a continually increasing school population, present facilities were entirely inadequate, and that new construction either in the form of new buildings or additions would have to be undertaken. The establishment of a regional junior-senior high school provides the best solution to many, if not all, of such construction needs and on a much more economical basis to the individual towns than if they were to attempt to meet their own needs by themselves.

In educational circles today it is commonly agreed that the very small high school cannot provide an adequate school program. An enrolment of at least four hundred pupils is necessary for an efficient and well-balanced program. The proposed regional school would have replaced the Northfield High School and Powers Institute in Bernardston, both of which have enrolments under one hundred pupils. On the basis

of the number of students presently enrolled in the schools of the Union, the potential enrolment in a junior-senior high school for the area would be as follows:

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TABLE II

Potential Enrolment in a Regional Junior-Senior High School Proposed for School Union No. 22.

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Town	1951	1953	1956	% Increase
Bernardston	99	101	124	25%
Gill	70	79	93	33%
Leyden	41	42	43	5%
Northfield	164	194	211	29%
Warwick	<u>50</u>	<u>52</u>	<u>59</u>	20%
TOTAL	424	468	530	18%

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In the year of 1950 there were one hundred four pupils enrolled in the first grades of the schools of the Union. As yet, the increase in the birth rates in each of the towns had not been felt in the schools. By projecting the potential enrolments, the planning board determined that a regional school would be called upon to house at least six hundred before 1960 without any further population growth. With an enrolment of at least one hundred pupils in each grade and

with the normal number of pupils selecting the various courses, a varied program could be scheduled in a most efficient manner.

The agreement for the formation of a regional school district for Union No. 22 was approved by the State Department of Education and the Emergency Finance Board of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. In accordance with the law, a full report of the planning board together with the proposed agreement and a request for a special town meeting to hear the report and to ballot was presented to the selectmen in each of the five towns.

The selectmen of Northfield questioned the legality of the proposed ballot to be used at the various town meetings. The selectmen obtained from the town counsel an opinion which substantiated their beliefs. Fortified with that legal interpretation, they refused to call town meeting. The selectmen of the Town of Bernardston followed the same procedure. Petitions were then circulated in both towns for the balloting. In Northfield the petition was signed by over three hundred fifty legal voters. The signed petition was held the full thirty days under the law. In the meantime, the three smaller towns had voted negatively. Thus, there was no further value to be gained by pressing the matter at that time.

The initial attempt to solve the educational needs of Northfield by a regional arrangement had ended. However, the educational situation remains as a problem to be confronted.

Scope of Problem -- This survey is an attempt by the author to appraise the public education of the Town of Northfield and covers the twenty-year period from 1930 to 1950. In trying to ascertain trends in financial expenditures and pupil enrolments, the twenty-year period has been statistically treated in many cases by decades for comparative purposes.

In the following chapters, different aspects of the school system will be dealt with under such general headings as finances, pupils, the school plant, teachers, the curriculum, and school services. Each chapter will in turn contain many details to form a composite picture of one of the general phases of the school situation. Then that will be related in its general importance to the other aspects of the schools, school personnel and the community in developing a picture of the present educational situation in Northfield.

As education reflects the society which it serves, it is also well to consider what the people of the town think about their schools and school programs. To this end an opinionnaire was mailed to four hundred thirty-two homes. In that endeavor, three categories were arbitrarily considered.

- Category I -- Parents with children in school
- Category II -- Parents with pre-school children
- Category III -- Resident taxpayers not included in the other two categories

The number in each of the above categories, the percentage of returns and a tabulation of the results are recorded in a later chapter.

In the course of this survey and through his own experiencing, the author has formulated certain opinions in relation to the educational situation in Northfield. Those concepts will be set down as recommendations or suggestions at the conclusion of the survey for this problem.

CHAPTER III

FINANCIAL ASPECT OF THE SURVEY

### CHAPTER III

#### FINANCIAL ASPECT OF THE SURVEY

At best, education is a costly business. To obtain the greatest return for every dollar spent is the aim of a good school administration. In a survey of the schools of a community, the valuation of all property, real and personal, and the percentage of the tax dollar spent for schools are important factors. The Northfield Public School expenditures in relation to those factors will now be considered.

Expenditures -- Table III includes items of expenditure for general control, salaries of the teaching staff, textbooks, other expenses of instruction, fuel, janitor and miscellaneous operating expenses, repairs, replacement and upkeep of school plants, promotion of health, transportation, miscellaneous, and total for support, exclusive of general control. The yearly expenditures for these items over the twenty-year period of 1930 to 1950 are shown in Table III on the following page.

As the cost figures for each item fluctuate from year to year, the twenty-year period has been divided into decades for statistical treatment. The total expenditures for the first decade of 1930 to 1940 is in each case compared with the total expenditures for the 1940 to 1950 period. From such a comparison by decades trends can more readily be ascertained, regardless of any slight fluctuations in yearly expenditures. In a few cases, however, the breakdown has



TABLE III

The Yearly Expenditures for the Public Schools of Northfield from 1930 to 1950

Year	General Control	Salaries	Textbooks	Other Expenses of Instruction	Fuel	Janitor and other Miscellaneous Expenses	Repairs	Health	Transportation	Miscellaneous	Total for Support
1930-1931	\$1,310	\$20,770	\$ 596	\$ 668	\$2,415	\$2,353	\$ 653	\$550	\$ 5,366	\$364	\$35,348
1931-1932	1,410	19,710	727	548	856	2,379	1,671	595	5,992	195	34,076
1932-1933	1,410	19,445	549	403	1,491	1,937	467	425	5,169	229	31,527
1933-1934	1,360	16,940	355	484	1,362	1,886	423	375	5,599	215	29,003
1934-1935	1,350	17,934	501	387	1,579	1,933	2,774	400	5,534	313	33,708
1935-1936	1,410	18,001	754	549	1,748	2,076	2,060	400	5,510	412	32,773
1936-1937	1,410	18,041	675	586	2,296	2,443	2,996	400	5,422	303	34,427
1937-1938	1,310	18,274	621	452	2,264	2,586	2,057	400	5,673	400	34,040
1938-1939	1,410	17,910	587	518	2,382	2,242	1,782	400	5,908	538	34,105
1939-1940	1,410	17,685	1,000	808	1,870	2,566	1,591	400	6,608	594	34,384
1940-1941	1,410	17,815	569	733	1,886	2,283	447	400	7,279	403	33,225
1941-1942	1,315	16,597	873	893	3,277	2,616	126	400	8,216	478	35,614
1942-1943	1,527	17,441	454	756	1,249	3,666	407	400	8,169	259	34,821
1943-1944	1,687	18,758	479	436	2,640	3,466	2,227	400	6,692	439	37,752
1944-1945	1,777	20,415	510	1,076	2,170	3,625	782	400	6,833	351	38,115
1945-1946	1,885	22,004	483	880	2,423	3,733	1,180	400	8,164	594	42,036

been other than by decades in order to indicate the more pronounced trends in each case within a shorter period than would be apparent by the usual treatment on the basis of the ten-year periods.

General Control -- The first item, general control, covers the expenses of the office of the superintendent. This includes the salary of one clerk. However, the expenses for general control are shared by five towns--Bernardston, Gill, Leyden, Northfield, and Warwick--which comprise School Union No. 22. The school union committee has set the share for Northfield at seven-twentieths of the total cost for general control. Therefore, the following figures in connection with this problem deal only with the share that Northfield has to pay toward general control.

This item shows no marked change for the first twelve years with the cost for general control fluctuating between \$1,300 and \$1,410. Therefore, the average for the 1930 to 1940 period was \$1,379. However, in the last ten years there was a definite increase and a steady upward increase each succeeding year from 1943 to 1950. The cost varied between \$1,315 as a low to a high of \$2,594. The average for the 1940 to 1950 period is \$1,888 as compared with the average of the previous period of \$1,379, as mentioned above. This indicates a definite trend toward an increase in the expenditures for general control.

Salaries of the Teaching Staff -- Salaries of the teaching staff is the largest item in a school budget. In this study there was no appreciable change for sixteen years. The expenditures for the salaries of the teachers varied between \$16,940 to \$22,004 from 1930 to 1946 depending mainly on the sizes of the school enrolments. During the period of 1930 to 1940 the elementary grades were in five different schools, the teacher turnover was exceptionally high and the average expenditure for salaries per year was \$18,471. With a minimum salary set at \$2,000 in 1947 and a new salary schedule going into effect in 1949, a definite increase is noticeable since the expenditure for salaries of teachers rose from \$22,415 in 1946 to \$45,148 in 1950. The average for this item for the 1940 to 1950 period was \$26,034.

Textbooks -- The expenditure for textbooks over the twenty-year period under consideration shows no marked trend toward an increase or a decrease in this cost. The average for the first ten-year period was \$636, and the average for the second ten-year period was \$630.

Other Expenses of Instruction -- The next item in Table III included stationery, supplies and other expenses of instruction. Costs varied from year to year with an upward trend indicated for the 1940 to 1950 period. The yearly average for the first ten-year period was \$540, while the average yearly expenditure for the second ten-year period was \$883.

Fuel -- The average expenditure per year for fuel during the 1930 to 1940 period was \$1,826, whereas \$2,454 was the yearly average for the following ten-year period. This shows a definite upward trend in line with general cost increases of materials.

Janitor Service and Miscellaneous Expenses of Operation -- During the 1930 to 1940 period there are great fluctuations with no definite trend apparent. For that period the average expenditure per year for this item was \$2,240. However, during the 1940 to 1950 period there is a noticeable increase yearly from \$2,283 in 1941 to \$4,641 in 1950. This marked, upward trend showed an average yearly expenditure for this item of \$3,608 for the second ten-year period.

Promotion of Health -- The promotion of health expenditure shows no marked trend during the twenty-year period. The small increase in expenditures in 1949 and 1950 cannot be taken as a definite trend because of the short period of time involved. If these expenditures should continue at higher levels, it will mean that more emphasis is being placed on the school health program.

The average cost per year for this service during the ten-year period 1930 to 1940 was \$434 as compared to \$490 per year for the period 1940 to 1950.

Repairs, Replacement and Upkeep -- Repairs, replacement and upkeep costs for the 1930 to 1940 period averaged \$1,647. This is one of the few items of school expenditure that decreased during the second ten-year period, for the average

for the 1940 to 1950 period was \$946 per year. This decrease may be accounted for by the fact that a new consolidated elementary school building was completed in 1941. As may be expected, there were very few repairs and replacements needed for the new Center School during the remainder of the 1940 to 1950 period under consideration. That new building also alleviated the need for repairs of the four district schools, which were no longer used for school purposes.

Transportation -- The yearly average cost of transportation for the 1930 to 1940 period of \$5,678 is appreciably lower than the \$8,510 average cost for each year of the 1940 to 1950 period. In studying the yearly amounts more closely, a definite upward trend is found. During the 1946 to 1950 period the trend upward is most pronounced. Such increases should be considered in the light of increased labor costs. Such an upward trend was likewise reflected in two previous items dealing with wages; namely, teacher salaries and the expenditure for janitor service.

Miscellaneous -- The expenditure for miscellaneous items shows a fluctuation from year to year. The slight increase during the second ten-year period is not sufficient to be thought of as an upward trend. The 1930 to 1940 period averaged out on a yearly basis at \$356 as compared to \$524 for the average yearly costs for the period of 1940 to 1950.

Total for Support -- The total annual expenditure for support of the Northfield Public School system varied little for the first sixteen years of the survey. However, a definite increase is evident for the last four years. The average yearly expenditure for the sixteen-year period of 1930 to 1946 was \$34,684, while the average expenditure for the four-year period of 1947 to 1950 was \$61,155.

Summary -- Of the ten items of school expenditures included in Table III on page 20 and also repeated graphically in Graph 1 on page 27, six of the items showed a definite trend toward an increase during the twenty-year period. The remaining four items increased or decreased slightly, but in no case could a definite trend be ascertained. The great increases more than overbalanced or outweighed the two items which decreased slightly.

The items which show a definite trend toward increase are:

General control

Salaries of the Teaching staff

Other expenses of instruction

Fuel

Janitor service and miscellaneous operating  
expenses

Transportation

The items which increased slightly are:

Promotion of health

Miscellaneous expenses

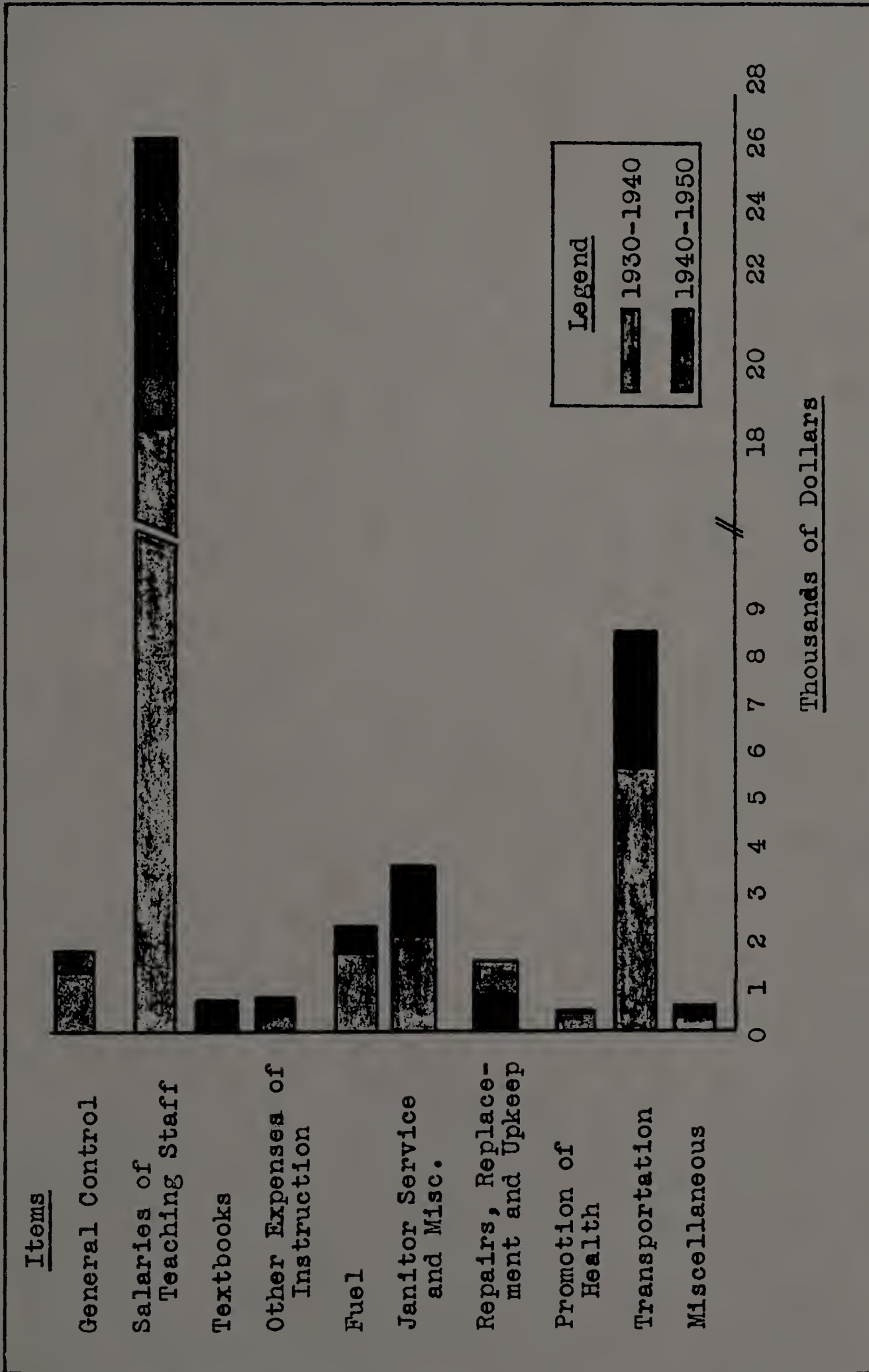
The items which show a slight decrease are:

Textbooks

Repairs, replacement and upkeep

Graph 1 -- Graph 1 on the following page indicates a comparison between the average of these respective items for the ten-year period from 1930 to 1940 and the ten-year period from 1940 to 1950. There are only two slight decreases in the latter ten-year period over the 1930 to 1940 period. However, the amount of increase greatly overshadows the amount of decrease and the trend toward higher costs of maintaining a school system is quite evident. During the period of 1940 to 1950, the population of Northfield increased only 12.9% and the valuation of property stayed relatively the same, as shown in Table IV on page 28. This means that more dollars for the support of education must be furnished by the same group of taxpayers. Furthermore, the school population during the 1940 to 1950 period was less in numbers than that of the previous ten-year period of 1930 to 1940.

Table IV -- In this table the vital statistics for Northfield, dealing with population, valuation, births and deaths, are recorded for the twenty-year period of 1930 to 1950. The population trend shows a gradual but steady increase from 1,888 in 1931 to 2,230 in 1950, or an increase of 12 percent for the twenty-year period. The valuations of property, real and personal, have varied only slightly during this twenty-year period.



Graph 1. Average Yearly Expenditures by Decades for Northfield Public Schools.



TABLE IV

Northfield Statistics Pertaining to Population,  
Valuation, Births, and Deaths

Year	Population	Valuation	Births	Deaths
1930-1931	1,888	\$1,946,037	34	32
1931-1932	1,888	1,946,496	27	29
1932-1933	1,888	1,908,504	32	22
1933-1934	1,888	1,907,240	38	25
1934-1935	1,950	1,897,091	48	28
1935-1936	1,950	1,891,857	30	26
1936-1937	1,950	1,873,810	29	27
1937-1938	1,950	1,868,142	27	39
1938-1939	1,950	1,857,193	25	35
1939-1940	1,975	1,848,008	21	29
1940-1941	1,975	1,849,378	31	39
1941-1942	1,975	1,873,418	28	25
1942-1943	1,975	1,879,458	35	31
1943-1944	1,975	1,894,116	30	28
1944-1945	2,064	1,900,868	28	38
1945-1946	2,064	1,905,683	47	18
1946-1947	2,064	1,984,803	54	42
1947-1948	2,064	1,975,028	40	48
1948-1949	2,064	2,014,118	60	53
1949-1950	2,230	2,030,898	54	35

The statistics on births and deaths show great fluctuation from year to year throughout the twenty-year period. There were three hundred eleven births during the first decade and four hundred seven during the period of 1940 to 1950. This would indicate that the birth rate is increasing in Northfield. During the period of 1930 to 1940 there were two hundred ninety-two deaths, as compared to three hundred forty-seven deaths from 1940 to 1950. For the entire twenty-year period there were seven hundred eighteen births as against six hundred thirty-nine deaths.

State Aid -- The great increase in the total for support of the Northfield Public School system would be staggering if not viewed properly in relation to corresponding increases in State reimbursements. Under the present law, State reimbursements for education are received under Chapter 70 for general educational needs with other specific reimbursements for Vocational Education, Superintendent Salary and Travel, State Wards, and Transportation.

On the following page Table V includes the total expenditures for education, the amount of State Aid and other receipts, the percentage of the amount of State reimbursement as against the total expenditures, and the net cost of education to the Town of Northfield for each year of this twenty-year survey.

TABLE V

State Aid and Net Cost of Education to the Town of Northfield  
1931 - 1950

Year	Total Expenditures	State Aid and Other Receipts	%	Net Cost of Education
1931	\$35,355.74	\$11,550.89	32	\$23,804.86
1932	33,304.29	13,241.09	40	20,063.20
1933	30,075.99	14,120.27	47	15,955.72
1934	31,504.21	11,923.48	38	19,580.73
1935	31,508.17	12,123.46	38	19,374.76
1936	33,635.79	11,563.09	34	22,072.70
1937	33,495.48	10,430.29	31	23,065.19
1938	33,980.89	8,442.85	25	25,538.04
1939	34,371.92	8,503.57	25	25,868.35
1940	34,801.67	8,644.73	25	26,156.94
1941	35,113.93	11,082.52	32	24,031.31
1942	35,100.20	11,737.39	33	23,362.81
1943	35,494.34	11,364.94	32	24,129.40
1944	38,689.09	10,164.53	27	28,524.56
1945	41,091.11	10,545.66	26	30,545.45
1946	44,768.34	10,967.61	25	33,800.73
1947	57,711.99	19,561.29	33.9	38,150.70
1948	60,267.81	20,824.44	34.5	39,443.37
1949	68,938.71	28,504.23	41.3	40,479.48
1950	74,641.75	31,808.52	43.6	42,833.42

CHAPTER IV

PRESENT SCHOOL BUILDINGS

## CHAPTER IV

### PRESENT SCHOOL BUILDINGS

The need for additional school buildings and facilities is a pressing problem in almost every community throughout the nation. Northfield is likewise faced with this problem. Faced with a contemplated increase in school enrolments, the need for additional buildings and facilities has been realized for the past three years. Three official town committees, as has been mentioned in Chapter II on pages 8 to 15, have not brought forth any plans which have been approved of and voted upon by the voters of Northfield. Therefore, it is well to again go over the present school building situation, to determine the utilization of existing school plants and to evaluate certain salient facts in relation to this phase of the problem.

General Aspects of the Building Situation -- Before 1930 there were as many as thirteen district schools in operation. Gradually as roads and transportation facilities improved, more and more pupils were transported. When a district did not have enough pupils to warrant the hiring of a teacher, the pupils in that district were transported to another school. A consolidation process gradually has taken place in the educational system of Northfield.

Northfield at the beginning of this survey in 1930 had six school buildings in operation. These schools were the East School, located on Pine Street in East Northfield; West

School, situated in West Northfield; Number Three School and the Farm School, both located in the southern portion of town known as Northfield Farms; the old Centre School and the High School, both located on Main Street in Northfield proper.

When a fire completely destroyed the old Centre School, the final consolidation of the elementary grades was accomplished. The voters of Northfield decided the question. A sum of \$52,000 was appropriated for the construction of a consolidated elementary school building to be known as Center School. On the opening day of the new school in 1941, every classroom was utilized in housing grades one through eight. However, the short-sightedness in school construction of a non-expandable type building was all too soon realized. No consideration had been given to the possibility of increased school enrolments in the future. Today, the Center School, instead of accommodating eight grades as originally planned, is housing grades one through four and grade six. Grades five, seven, and eight have been housed for the past two years in the high school building.

Present Use of District Schoolhouses -- Although five district school buildings were in operation during the first ten years of this survey from 1930 to 1940, it does not seem advisable to dwell at great length upon the specifications of those buildings. The fire, which destroyed the old Centre School in 1940 cast the die for the new consolidated Center School, which was opened in September, 1941. During the

interim year of actual construction, the remaining four district schools, the Town Hall and the High School were utilized to the full in accommodating the elementary grades. In 1941 the school committee released the district school buildings to the custody of the Board of Selectmen. Those buildings have been kept in fair repair and today are serving community interests as follows:

TABLE VI

Present Use of District School Buildings in Northfield

<u>Old Designation</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>New Designation</u>	<u>Use</u>
East School	Pine Street, East Northfield	Northfield Historical Society	Meeting Place  Historical collections on display
West School	Mount Hermon Road, West Northfield	Headquarters, Veterans of Foreign Wars and V.F.W. Auxiliary	Meeting Place for local chapters
No. 3 School	Millers Falls Road, North- field Farms	Community Club #3	Meeting Place for Upper Farms group
Farms School	Millers Falls Road, North- field Farms	Community Club #4	Meeting Place for Lower Farms group

Location of Present School Plants -- Both the Center

School and the High School are centrally located in Northfield

proper on a three acre plot one block north of the Town Hall. The buildings stand next to each other and are set back approximately one hundred feet west of Main Street. The ground from the street to the buildings is level, and then the terrain slopes down gently for an approximate six foot drop to the west to the large playground area behind the two school buildings. The Center School is a two-story structure with no basement, and the ground floor is on the level of the playground area. The High School is a two-story building with a basement, which is on the level of the lower terrain behind the school buildings. Both the Center School and the High School are similar in exterior appearance with red brick walls, slate roofs, white trim and large window areas. The playing fields cover approximately two acres of land with a small baseball diamond located behind the High School.

Center School -- The Center School is a two-story structure, measuring ninety feet by sixty feet, with its length running parallel with Main Street. The upper story is a little above the street level with a main entrance in the center of the building. The main corridor, which extends centrally through the building and parallel with the street, is connected with the main entrance by a short hall or passageway at right angles. The office of the Superintendent of Schools for School Union No. 22 is located to the right as one enters. A room for the use of teachers with an adjoining lavatory is on the left of the main entrance. This



room is also used as the Health Room and headquarters for the Town Nurse. The remaining area on the street floor is equally divided into five classrooms. Floors in all the rooms are wooden. The drinking fountain in the main corridor is the recessed type.

At both ends of the main passageway are fire doors and stairs leading to the ground floor. The stairwells meet the exits and entrances of the ground level. The above-mentioned exits and entrances are used by the pupils as they are readily accessible to the playground area of the school grounds.

On the ground floor the cafeteria, toilet facilities for the boys and girls, and the boiler room are situated on one side of a broad, central corridor, and three classrooms are located on the other side along the rear of the building. The ground floor has an asphalt tile flooring throughout all of the rooms, with the exception of the boiler room. The walls are tile in the lower corridor, cafeteria and toilet rooms. The walls in the classrooms are of a rough sand plaster finish.

The cafeteria is the largest room in the Center School, measuring fifty-three feet, six inches by twenty-two feet, six inches. A hot lunch program is daily available to all pupils. There are tables and benches to adequately accommodate one hundred twenty pupils at one sitting during the lunch hour. This room is utilized occasionally for showing

educational movies, as none of the classrooms can be sufficiently darkened for certain aspects of an audio-visual aids program. The large cafeteria room is also used several evenings a week for the adult education program.

The equipment of the lunch room consists of a gas stove, a large electric refrigerator, a sink with hot and cold running water, and a large serving counter. For the lunch program, the large Army-type aluminum trays are used instead of dishes.

There is a drinking fountain of the recessed type in the lower corridor. Another drinking fountain is located outside on the south end of the building which is readily available for use when the pupils are on the playground. The toilet facilities for the girls are comprised of nine closets and three sinks. In the toilet room for the boys there are six closets, two five-foot trough-type urinals and two sinks. Cold running water for washing purposes and paper towels are available in each of the toilet rooms.

Each of the eight classrooms in the Center School is of the following dimensions--twenty-nine feet, eight inches by twenty-two feet, six inches--and each is equipped with movable furniture of the desk and chair-type. The walls and ceilings are of the rough sand plaster finish. Each classroom has an entire side of windows extending from a height of four feet above the floor to within one foot of the ceiling. At the front of each room is a green chalkboard, sixteen feet and six inches in length. The third

wall is covered by a large bulletin board, seventeen feet in length. The fourth wall of each room contains two large wardrobes for the outer wraps of the pupils and approximately eight feet of shelves and cupboard space. There is indirect lighting. As the Center School is heated by an oil burner, each classroom is equipped with an univent system of ventilation which is automatically controlled by a separate thermostat in each room.

The Center School after ten years of use is in good condition. The classrooms are cheerful. The wooden floors have been regularly varnished. The outside trim was painted in 1950. The noticeable defects needing repair are the long diagonal plaster cracks in several of the rooms which have resulted from the settling of the building. The most glaring drawback of the general layout of the building is the lack of storage space. There is not a utility closet nor mimeograph room on the street floor and cartons of canned goods, boxes of apples and other produce are always stacked in the lower corridor as there is not a storage room for the use of the cafeteria.

High School -- The Northfield High School is a sixty-foot square building of two floors with two wooden stairwells within the building and an iron fire escape at the rear of the building. All floors are wood and the walls are of smooth plaster finish. There is a drinking fountain on the first floor and a drinking fountain and wash stand in the

hall of the second floor. A drinking fountain is also located outside at the rear of the school.

There are two classrooms and Alexander Hall on the street floor. Each classroom is twenty-five feet by twenty-three feet with windows on two sides and large blackboard surfaces on the other two walls. One of these classrooms has fixed furniture with a seating capacity for twenty-seven pupils. The other is the commercial room equipped with movable furniture, fourteen typewriters, a mimeograph machine, and a duplicating machine.

Alexander Hall is a suite of three rooms which were provided for the use of women of the town through a will. The rooms, although located in the high school building, are under the jurisdiction of the Alexander Hall Committee rather than the school committee. Due to the overcrowded housing conditions in the schools, permission has been granted for the rooms to be used as classrooms. The dimensions of the two large rooms are thirty-four feet, ten inches by twenty-five feet and twenty-one feet, ten inches by nineteen feet, and are separated by sliding doors. There is a small kitchenette adjoining the smaller room which is ten feet, five inches by fourteen feet in size.

On the second floor of the high school building, there are two classrooms each twenty-five feet by thirty-three feet and similar to the two located directly below on the first floor. Both classrooms have movable furniture, and one is

the laboratory room with four stations to accommodate eight pupils. Also located on the top floor are a small office for the principal, a rest room for the teachers, and a large study hall which is thirty-one feet, six inches by fifty-three feet, six inches. Three sides of this room have windows and the fourth side contains blackboards, two doors, and six feet of bookshelves which is the extent of the library facilities. This room, which serves simultaneously as a classroom, study hall and library, has fixed furniture comprised of seventy-eight chairs and desks.

In the basement is located one classroom, the home economics room, toilet facilities for girls and boys, and the furnace room. The one classroom is used for the fifth grade and has movable furniture, windows on one wall, a green chalkboard on another wall, and a bulletin board on a third wall. The floor is cement, as is the rule throughout the basement, with the exception of the home economics room, which contains an asphalt tile flooring. The walls of this latter room are painted brick. There is the following equipment--three electric stoves, seven sewing machines, and four sinks with eight pupil stations--and the dimensions of the home economics room are thirty-two feet, three inches by nineteen feet, seven inches.

The toilet for the girls has five closets and two wash stands. The toilet room of the boys is also used as a shower room and contains four closets, four urinals, two sinks, and

two showers. There are no lockers for protecting equipment and personal belongings.

Summary -- During the school session there is complete utilization of all available classroom space in both the Center School and the High School. In the light of increased potential enrolments, as found in Table XIII on page 57, it will become necessary to have two classrooms for each of the first grades entering the Center School in 1952, 1953, 1954, 1955 and 1956. The need for at least four additional classrooms within that short span of five years presents an immediately pressing problem at the elementary school level. Then, even if the four required classrooms are provided for the lower grades, the high school building will not be able to take those same increased enrolments a few years later, when the children have moved up to the junior and senior high school levels.

The above analysis of the school housing situation deals only with the one factor of classroom space. What about the other facilities? There is not a special room for activity programs or for the use of audio-visual aids, both of which are now part and parcel of a modern school program. There is not an auditorium in either of the present school buildings. There is not a gymnasium. With a potential increase in school enrolments soon to tax the present inadequate facilities, the Town of Northfield is definitely faced with a school housing problem.

CHAPTER V

TEACHERS

## CHAPTER V

### TEACHERS

One of the problems of greatest magnitude for a small community school system is its ability to obtain and hold good teachers in its schools. Such a community has less holding power than cities and large towns in regard to the salaries that it can pay its teachers. The higher salary scales in larger communities tend to draw the most proficient teachers away from rural areas.

Teacher Turnover -- In Northfield the teacher turnover has been exceedingly high until very recently. Before the turn of the century when the town had thirteen district schools, it was not uncommon to have as many as three different teachers in one or two of the schools during the course of a single school year. Teachers could not become well acquainted with the needs of their pupils. A pupil, in turn, had to change methods and procedures so often that such changes became detrimental to the learning of the child.

During the twenty-year period covered by this survey, the teacher turnover was not quite as drastic as in earlier days. However, a perusal of Table VII on the following page under the heading of "Teachers Left" clearly indicates that even during this late period teacher-holding power was very poor until 1947. The high peaks in 1942 and 1944 may be attributed to World War II conditions, but even those two



TABLE VII

Northfield Teaching Personnel

School Year	Number of Teachers			Teacher Qualifications and Training						
	Male	Female	Total - Male and Female	Teachers Left	Secondary School with some Teacher Training	2 years ) Normal School	3-4 years ) Training	Normal ) Graduates	College ) Bachelor's Degree	No. Holding Master's Degree
1930-1931		19	19	6	3		10	1	5	1
1931-1932		18	18	5	3		10		5	1
1932-1933		18	18	8	3	2	8		5	1
1933-1934	1	16	17	5	3	2	6		6	1
1934-1935	2	15	17	4	2	2	5	1	7	1
1935-1936	2	15	17	6	2		7	2	6	1
1936-1937	2	15	17	4	2	3	3	2	7	1
1937-1938	2	15	17	5	2		4	6	5	1
1938-1939	2	14	16	4	2	2	3	4	5	1
1939-1940	2	14	16	4	2	3		6	5	1
1940-1941	2	14	16	5	2	3	4	2	5	1
1941-1942	2	12	14	7	2	2	1	3	6	1
1942-1943	2	12	14	4	2	2	1	3	6	1
1943-1944	2	12	14	7	2	3		3	6	2
1944-1945	2	12	14	6	2	5		1	6	1
1945-1946	2	12	14	6	2	5		1	6	2
1946-1947	4	10	14	4	2	6		1	5	2
1947-1948	3	12	15	2	2	5		2	6	3
1948-1949	3	13	16	2	2	5		3	6	3
1949-1950	3	14	17	1	2	6		2	7	4

years are not too far out of line in comparison to prior and following years in the number of teachers who left the Northfield schools.

For the year of 1945-46 the salary median for the elementary teachers of Northfield ranked lowest in the State.<sup>1</sup> New teachers hired during the summer could only be obtained by paying higher salaries than those paid to teachers who signed contracts in April. To remedy these maladjustments the School Committee awarded blanket increases of \$500 to all teachers in the system retroactive to September, 1946.

The voters of Northfield at the February 1947 election voted 233 to 77 to adopt the "Equal pay for equal work" referendum for Northfield teachers. A single salary scale for teachers was thus established. A minimum of \$2,000 was set with \$100 increments for each year of experience to a maximum of \$2,500. In order to hold good teachers increments had to be paid.

Salary Schedule -- The present salary schedule went into effect in January, 1949. During the last few years the effect of this new salary schedule has already been evidenced. There have been fewer teachers leaving the system and six teachers in 1949 took summer school courses to improve themselves professionally.

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1. 1946 Annual Town Report, p. 54.

TABLE VIII

Salary Schedule for Northfield Teachers Effective  
January 1, 1949

Years of Experience or Increment Steps	Column #1 Less than Four Years' Training	Column #2 Bachelor's Degree or Four Years' Training	Column #3 Master's Degree
0	\$2,000	\$2,200	\$2,400
1	2,100	2,300	2,500
2	2,200	2,400	2,600
3	2,300	2,500	2,700
4	2,375	2,575	2,775
5	2,450	2,650	2,850
-----			
6	2,500	2,700	2,900
7	2,550	2,750	2,950
8	2,600	2,800	3,000
9	2,650	2,850	3,050
10	2,700	2,900	3,100

All teachers are automatically advanced annually step by step to increment step number 5. No teacher can advance to step number 6 until he has completed ten or more credits in educational or allied courses, which must be approved in advance by the School Committee. As a further incentive for

good teachers to remain in Northfield and improve professionally, a teacher is given a permanent increase of \$40 for each six credits of educational courses taken through summer school work. A \$200 maximum is set for such courses taken for professional improvement.

Professional Improvement -- During the twenty-year period of this survey the general level of the educational preparedness for the teachers in the Northfield schools has improved. This is clearly seen in the section of Qualifications of Teachers as listed in Table VII on page 44. The higher degree of training is best reflected in the column headed, "Number of Teachers Holding a Master's Degree." Whereas only one teacher had obtained a Master's Degree during the period of 1930 to 1943, the number has steadily increased during the last four years. In 1950 there were four teachers who held Master's Degrees. Northfield ranks high in this matter in relation to the State average as is shown in the following table.

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TABLE IX

Teachers Holding Degrees for the Year of 1950

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	Bachelor's	Master's	% Bachelor's	% Master's
Northfield	9	4	53.0	23.5
State Average	-	-	34.1	7.9

Sick Leave -- The following provisions were made for teacher sick leave at the time the new salary schedule became effective:

1. Each teacher shall be granted five days' sick leave for personal illness without loss of pay; such unused days each year shall accumulate to thirty days.

2. Each teacher shall be granted three days without loss of pay for death in his immediate family.

Length of Service -- In the Northfield school system teacher turnover has varied as was indicated in Table VII on page 44. However, four of the teachers have had over twenty years of continual service, four teachers have had five to nine years of service, and nine teachers have been affiliated with the schools of Northfield for less than five years. The following table shows the length of service of the teachers employed in the Northfield school system during the year of 1950:

TABLE X

Length of Teacher Service in Northfield

Number of Years in System	Number of Teachers
38	1
30	1
27	1
20	1
9	1
7	1
6	1
5	1
4	3
3	2
2	1
1	2
New	1

CHAPTER VI

PUPILS

## CHAPTER VI

### PUPILS

The main function of a school is to provide the best possible educational program for its pupils. All school administration, supervision and teaching are directed toward the benefit of the pupil. The type of education that a community offers its youngsters depends on many aspects of the educational system already mentioned--the finances to support the schools, the buildings to be the settings for learning activities, and the teachers to guide the pupils in their educational experiencing.

The areas of the survey so far discussed have dealt with the pupils indirectly. This chapter will deal with certain aspects pertaining to the pupils, who have been in the Northfield Public Schools during the past twenty years.

Enrolments -- Table XI on the following page deals with data pertaining to pupils enrolled in the elementary and high school grades, average daily attendance, average number of days in school session, net average membership, and the size of the first grade for each year of the 1930 to 1950 period.

Pupils Enrolled -- In examining Table XI on the following page it is quite evident that the number of pupils enrolled over the past twenty years has varied from year to year. The period of highest enrolments was 1930 to 1934.



TABLE XI  
Enrolments

Year	Size of First Grade	Pupils Enrolled			Attendance Statistics		
		Grades 1-8	High School	Total	Average Daily Attendance	Average No. of Days in School Session	Net Average Membership
1930-1931	35	348	97	446	403	174	421
1931-1932	33	335	106	441	381	172	406
1932-1933	35	340	108	448	400	174	418
1933-1934	36	326	123	449	377	176	407
1934-1935	28	293	105	398	344	179	366
1935-1936	34	273	97	370	334	177	343
1936-1937	41	284	103	387	332	171	348
1937-1938	25	271	93	364	320	180	336
1938-1939	35	278	97	375	315	178	336
1939-1940	38	270	90	360	320	174	336
1940-1941	34	279	93	372	304	178	316
1941-1942	38	282	91	373	322	178	341
1942-1943	40	290	87	377	313	170	342
1943-1944	35	292	75	367	312	172	334
1944-1945	29	271	80	351	300	176	325
1945-1946	21	248	80	328	296	176	320
1946-1947	41	274	73	347	302	170	318
1947-1948	46	282	67	349	307	177	335
1948-1949	34	289	64	353	310	177	328
1949-1950	37	269	77	346	312	176	326

The average enrolment for that four-year period was 446. The year of 1946 showed the lowest enrolment figure of 328 pupils. As these variations are quite extreme, the picture can be seen more clearly by considering the yearly average enrolments for each of two ten-year periods of this survey, as was the treatment in dealing with the financial aspects of the school system.

In the period of 1930 to 1940 the average yearly enrolment was four hundred and four as compared with three hundred and fifty-six for the 1940 to 1950 period. In view of a slow, but steady increase in population during this twenty-year period, the decrease in average enrolments for the second ten-year period can partly be accounted for by the type of people who moved to Northfield during the nineteen-thirties. The Town of Northfield attracted many elderly people. These people, in turn, had no children, who attended the local schools.

This population trend became altered after World War II. During the period of 1945 to 1947 many young couples, who were not native to Northfield, settled in town. There has been a sharp rise in the birth rate during the years of 1946 to 1950. This increase in births, however, has not affected as yet the school enrolments.

The separate breakdowns for pupil enrolments of the eight elementary grades and the high school show that the decreases during the second ten-year period were comparably

the same for each as the decreases for the total enrolments. In the elementary grades there was a yearly average of three hundred and two pupils for the 1930 to 1940 period as against a yearly average of two hundred seventy-eight pupils for the 1940 to 1950 period. The average yearly high school enrolments were one hundred two for the first period as compared to the yearly average of seventy-nine pupils for the second period of 1940 to 1950.

Average Number of Days in Session -- The average number of days that a school is in session varies from year to year. This variance is due to a large degree to the nature of our calendar and the holidays involved during the school year. In the 1930 to 1940 period the schools were in session an average of one hundred seventy-six days as compared to one hundred and seventy-five days for the average school session of the 1940 to 1950 period. Thus, there has not been a great variance in the length of the school session in the general overall picture of this twenty-year period. However, a further breakdown to show the relative lengths of the school sessions held for the elementary grades and the high school seems to indicate marked trends.

Table XII on the following page indicates that the school session for the elementary grades is becoming longer, whereas the high school session is tending to remain constant at one hundred eighty days after having been longer during the early part of this twenty-year survey. It is interesting

TABLE XII

Average Number of Days in Elementary and High School Sessions

Year	Grades 1-8	High School	Year	Grades 1-8	High School
1930-1931	170	187	1940-1941	177	180
1931-1932	168	182	1941-1942	177	181
1932-1933	170	183	1942-1943	164	176
1933-1934	169	182	1943-1944	168	175
1934-1935	170	188	1944-1945	175	176
1935-1936	170	184	1945-1946	175	180
1936-1937	162	180	1946-1947	169	176
1937-1938	179	181	1947-1948	174	180
1938-1939	172	183	1948-1949	174	180
1939-1940	168	181	1949-1950	175	180

to note that the variance between the length of the school sessions between the elementary grades and the high school for the period of 1930 to 1940 was a yearly average of thirteen days as compared to five days for the following ten-year period.

Length of the School Day -- The length of the school day has not varied greatly during the past twenty years. As sixty-six percent (66%) of the pupils are transported daily

to and from school, transportation arrangements have been one of the main factors in keeping the length of the school day somewhat uniform. Many of the buses and station wagons make two trips twice daily, and ample time must be allotted in order to bring both groups to the schools with the greatest saving of time and with the least interference in relation to the programs of the schools. As a general rule the high school pupils are transported first.

At present the length of the school day is 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. for the high school. There are nine forty-minute periods with one of those periods utilized for the lunch period.

In the elementary school the length of the school day is divided into two sessions--9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon and 1:00 p.m. to 3:15 p.m. The hour between the two sessions is the lunch hour. There is a fifteen minute recess period during each session for outdoor games. Teachers are present on the playground during all recesses and the lunch hour.

Daily Attendance -- The average daily attendance for the first ten-year period 1930 to 1940 was three hundred fifty-three, while the average enrolment was four hundred and four. This gives an eighty-seven percent attendance for that ten-year period.

The average daily attendance for the second ten-year period of 1940 to 1950 was three hundred and eight, while the average enrolment was three hundred fifty-six. This

also gives an eighty-seven percent attendance for the second ten-year period.

Net Average Membership -- The net average membership is equal to the average membership plus the pupils for whom the town paid tuition for not less than half a school year. The net average membership during the ten-year period of 1930 to 1940 was a yearly average of three hundred and seventy-two. The net average membership for the period of 1940 to 1950 averaged three hundred and twenty-eight for that ten-year period.

TABLE XIII

Comparison of Births and the Size of the First Grade Six Years Later.

Year	Births	1st Grade Six Years Later	Year	Births	1st Grade Six Years Later
1931	34	41	1941	31	41
1932	27	25	1942	28	46
1933	32	35	1943	35	34
1934	38	38	1944	30	37
1935	48	34	1945	28	28 *
1936	30	38	1946	47	49 *
1937	29	40	1947	54	42 *
1938	27	35	1948	40	38 *
1939	25	29	1949	60	55 *
1940	<u>21</u>	<u>21</u>	1950	<u>54</u>	<u>52</u> * #
Totals	311	336		407	422

\* -- Denotes anticipated enrolments based on a Pre-School Census taken as of October 1, 1950.

# -- Denotes 41 by the Census plus 11 births from October 1, 1950, to December 31, 1950, inclusive.

Comparison of Births and Size of First Grades -- In Table XIII on the preceding page the number of births for each year of this survey are compared with the first grade enrolments six years later. In Northfield children may enter school at the age of five years and eight months. As the children born in January and the first few days of February in any given year are the only ones who may enter the first grade under the age of six, the great majority of entering first graders are six years of age. Thus, the six year figure was used for projecting first grade enrolments from the birth statistics.

For the years of 1931 to 1944 the number of births were four hundred thirty-five. In projecting the number of births of that fourteen-year period ahead by six years, we may obtain comparative figures of the children who entered school from 1937 to 1950. However, by actual count there were four hundred ninety-four enrolments in the first grade during those years. This was an increase of fourteen percent of first graders over births for the fourteen-year period. This increase may be accounted for by the following two factors:

1. Population factor--new families moved into the community, and

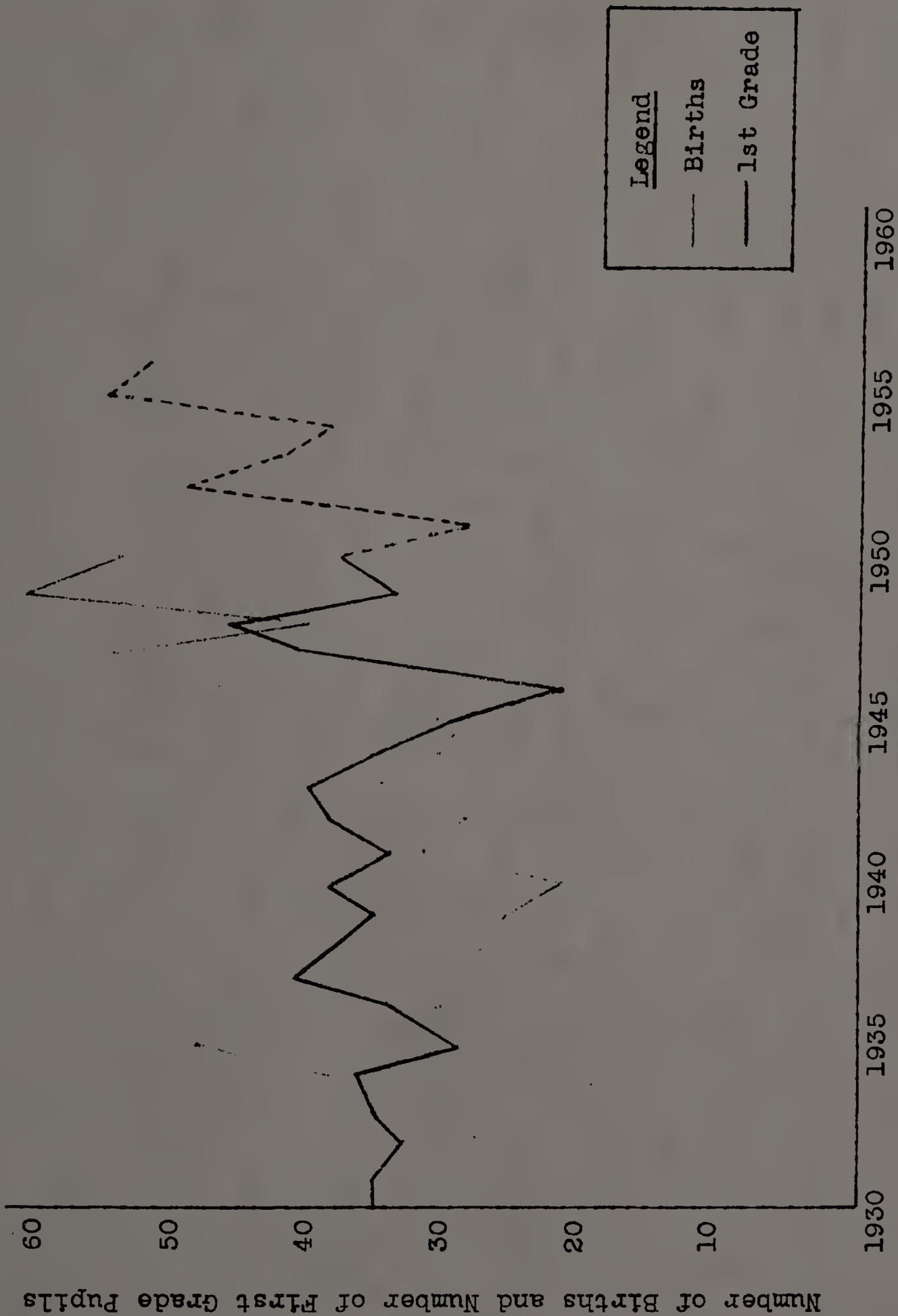
2. Non-first grade promotion factor--the educational policy in practice is to retain a pupil for a second year in the first grade if he is not sufficiently matured for the social and learning experiences of the second grade level.

The second factor mentioned above could be practically eliminated if the Town of Northfield had a kindergarten. Today it is an accepted and educationally sound principle that in a rural community, such as the Town of Northfield, there is a greater need for a kindergarten in its beneficial socializing effect upon the pre-school child than is felt in larger communities, where children are not so isolated and are able to play to a greater degree and much more freely with youngsters of their own age levels.

At present the anticipated first grade enrolments for the six years following this survey do not indicate an increase over the births during 1945 to 1950. From the figures obtained by the pre-school census of October 1, 1950, the anticipated first grade enrolments for the six-year period of 1951 to 1956 will be two hundred sixty-four. That indicates a seven percent decrease when compared with the two hundred eighty-three births for the 1945 to 1950 period. However, the factor of a slow but steady population increase may very easily erase the seven percent decrease. From past experience as shown in Table XIII on page 57, the trend has definitely indicated there are usually more in the first grade of any given year than the number of births recorded six years earlier.

Graph 2 -- Graph 2 on the following page gives a picture of the fluctuation from year to year in the number of births and the size of each first grade for the twenty-year period





Graph 2. Yearly Number of Births and Size of First Grade in Northfield

of 1930 to 1950. The broken line indicates the potential first grade enrolments for the period of 1951 to 1956 based on the pre-school census as of October 1, 1950. One glance will give sufficient evidence to the fact that the increased births in recent years are definitely going to produce increased school enrolments.

CHAPTER VII

CURRICULUM

## CHAPTER VII

### CURRICULUM

Curriculum is a broad term denoting all the activities in which the children engage while under the jurisdiction of the school. In addition to the program of studies with the various course offerings, this term includes the so-called "extra-curricular" activities, which have their main emphasis on the social and physical development of the pupils. The curriculum may be considered as an expression of the underlying philosophy of a school or school system as it is put into practice with the facilities that are available.

Although this survey covered the twenty-year period of 1930 to 1950 in its previous statistical treatment, this chapter dealing with the curriculum will span only the last four years of that twenty-year period. Curriculum revision should be a continual process. Therefore, the present educational status of the public schools of Northfield is the important consideration in this problem.

School Reorganization in 1947 -- Prior to September 1947 the school system in Northfield was administered on an eight-four basis as an eight grade elementary unit and a high school of grades nine through twelve. The school committee in keeping with a recommendation from the State Department of Education reorganized the administrative set-up on a six-six basis. The plan established a six-year school

to be called the Northfield Junior-Senior High School. That reorganization more evenly distributed the pupil load between the Center and the High School buildings.

Center School Curriculum -- The curriculum of the Center School is providing a well-rounded program of studies in the fundamental subjects. The pupils in each of the six grades are under the guidance of their own teacher for the entire school day for reading, grammar, literature, spelling, arithmetic, geography, and general science. The introduction of these subjects on the primary levels is done slowly in relation to the maturation of the pupils. Supervisors in art and music visit each class bi-weekly. The same procedure is followed in the intermediate grades for penmanship. Between the scheduled visits of the supervisors, the work is directed by the classroom teacher.

There has not been developed a definite, defined curriculum for the Center School. Each teacher shapes the program of studies for her class independently. Some of the criteria used by the teachers in this process are:

1. State Curriculum Guide as an outline
2. Own teaching experience with same grade level
3. Based on available textbooks to be used
4. Needs and interests of the particular class

The use of cumulative records and close liaison between the teachers tend to prevent overlapping of subject matter in the different grades. With no additional facilities available,

such as a special activity room, all programs are necessarily carried on within the classrooms.

Workbooks are utilized in conjunction with the textbooks for reading and arithmetic. As reading is the most important subject at the elementary level, one means of evaluating the teaching methods of a school is revealed by the methods used for teaching of reading. In the Center School a child progresses on his own in reading as soon as he is able to do so. It was gratifying to see that three or four different readers were used in the same classroom. That is a good provision for individual differences.

The cafeteria is utilized occasionally as an assembly hall for showing educational films to several classes at one time. As the classrooms cannot be sufficiently darkened, many audio-visual aids find no place in the actual classroom teaching situations. The school is in possession of an opaque projector as well as a film-strip projector, but neither of those pieces of equipment are used to any great extent.

As has been previously mentioned, there is a fifteen minute recess in the morning as well as in the afternoon session. Most of the children play for a half hour after lunch out of doors when the weather permits. On the playground there is a jungle gym, teeter boards and swings.

The author, having had close contact with the Center School on numerous occasions as a substitute teacher, is of the opinion that the school is carrying on a well-rounded

program and is strong in the teaching of the fundamental subjects in the light of the best type of traditional teaching.

Junior-Senior High School as an Administrative Unit --

When the school system in Northfield was reorganized in 1947, grades seven and eight were placed in the High School. For administrative purposes only it is a junior-senior high school in that the six grades from seven to twelve are housed in one building. The nine periods of forty minutes each are so planned to have all the pupils engage in extra-curricular activities at the same time during the last period of the school day.

For instructional purposes, however, grades seven and eight are treated separately and apart from the high school grades. Thus, the curriculum is not arranged in accordance with the usual junior and senior high school classifications. Consequently, in dealing with the courses of instruction, each division will be treated separately.

Curriculum of Grades Seven and Eight -- Unlike the six grades in the Center School, the work of the seventh and eighth grades is departmentalized. The subjects, which are taught by different teachers to these grades, are English, arithmetic, history, geography, general science, spelling, music, art and home economics for the girls. In order to cover the above-mentioned subjects, it is usually necessary to alternate history and geography on a half-year basis.

The required two periods a week for physical training are accomplished when the weather is not inclement. Lacking the facilities of a gymnasium, this program is not carried on during the winter months.

High School Program of Studies -- The main divisions or the three programs of study offered in the Northfield High School are the college preparatory course, the commercial course, and the general course. Vocational training is available for the boys at Greenfield High School. The Town of Northfield pays the tuition costs and provides daily transportation for those who take the vocational training in Greenfield.

The program of studies in the Northfield High School is very limited. This is always the case in a small high school. The size of the enrolment is a limiting factor as to the number of teachers employed in a given school. The size of the faculty, in turn, limits the number of courses that the school can offer. A perusal of Table XIV on the following page gives a telling picture of the educational status of the Northfield High School. Table XIV gives the courses of study that were offered during the three-year period of 1948 to 1950 as well as the sizes of the classes.

During the three-year period of 1948 to 1950 there were seventy-six classes held for the thirty-two course offerings, and all subjects were not scheduled each year. Latin I is yearly alternated with Latin II. Physics and



TABLE XIV

Courses of Study and Size of Classes in the Northfield High School for a Three Year Period

Subjects	Size of Classes		
	1947-1948	1948-1949	1949-1950
English 9	18	16	27
English 10	23	18	14
English 11	12	22	18
English 12	14	11	20
Spanish I	20	5	4
Spanish II	5	9	6
Latin I	*	7	*
Latin II	7	*	6
United States History	13	20	20
World History	*	5	*
Problems of Democracy	*	7	19
Civics	9	5	27
Biology	19	15	14
Physics	6	*	4
Chemistry	*	8	*
General Science	29	16	14
Algebra I	6	8	10
Algebra II	*	9	*
Geometry	10	*	10
General Mathematics	13	9	16
Typewriting I	15	27	21
Typewriting II	10	11	23
Shorthand I	6	11	13
Shorthand II	4	4	8
Bookkeeping	12	16	11
Office Practices	*	*	7
Consumer Education	13	*	12
Art	*	24	21
Home Economics I	7	7	15
Home Economics II	9	3	8
Home Economics III	*	1	*
Commercial Geography	6	*	*

\* -- Course not offered that year.

Chemistry are given in alternate years; as is the case with Algebra II and Geometry. Two subjects, World History offered in 1949 and Office Practices in 1950, were especially scheduled to fill a certain need of a representative number of students, who had requested those subjects.

The total picture of only thirty-two course offerings is a very limited curriculum for a modern high school of today. Many subjects normally given on the secondary level are not available in the course offerings of the Northfield High School. French, German and Economics are just three of the subjects which may be mentioned in this connection and which cannot be found listed in Table XIV on the preceding page. Whereas Home Economics is available for the girls, there are no shop courses for the boys. Due to the lack of numbers in enrolments and the lack of modern facilities, the programs of study with the resultant course offerings at the Northfield High School are necessarily limited.

Size of Classes and Teacher-Load -- For administrative purposes there is an economy and efficiency obtained when the size of the classes produces a teacher-load of approximately twenty-five pupils per class. In computing the teacher-load from the class sizes as listed in Table XIV on the preceding page, one can readily see that it portrays a picture of public education on the secondary level in Northfield at an exorbitant cost. It becomes almost a tutorial system with five, three or seven pupils comprising some of

the classes. Of the seventy-six classes under consideration, thirty-six of those classes had ten or less pupils, thirty-one classes contained eleven to twenty pupils, and only ten or thirteen percent of the classes approximated the ideal size for public school classes in ranging from twenty-one to twenty-nine in numbers. The average teacher-load for the seventy-six classes, statistically speaking, was twelve point five pupils per class. Because of the small enrolment, the cost of educating a high school student in Northfield approximates four hundred dollars per year. This is an unpleasant reality which exists in spite of the best efforts on the part of the school administration and the teachers. In all fairness to the above-mentioned personnel, they are doing a good job with the facilities on hand, but there are not enough pupils in the school to effect a broader program of studies or to operate more economically. On the basis of grades ten to twelve for the year of 1949 to 1950, the actual per capita cost was four hundred and six dollars with the meager program of studies that was offered.

Summary -- The Center School and grades seven and eight do not present the problems that are encountered in the High School in relation to the curriculum. The programs of study below the high school level are very satisfactory. The crux of the problem revolves about the fact of numbers on the secondary level in Northfield. As has been previously stated, there is a need for approximately four hundred pupils in a

high school in order for efficiency in practices to become apparent. With a large number of pupils to work with, classes of the proper size can be formed to produce a teacher-load of approximately twenty-five pupils per class, and the educational dollar is thereby spent more efficiently.

It would be well for the people of Northfield to become fully informed about this problem. The children deserve a better educational program on the secondary level than is now provided for them in the Northfield High School. The taxpayer, in turn, should get a larger return on each tax dollar that is now being spent for secondary education within the town.

CHAPTER VIII  
SCHOOL SERVICES

## CHAPTER VIII

### SCHOOL SERVICES

School buildings, which are public property, should be the focal point for as many community activities as possible. Greater is the return to the people of a community for the moneys expended for educational purposes when their school buildings are utilized for adult education programs and other local affairs.

In Northfield the community projects and activities not directly connected with the education of the children, such as the adult education classes and the regular meetings of the Parent-Teachers Association, the Fortnightly Club, and the Garden Club are held in the school buildings. However, due to the lack of facilities the present school plant is not utilized sufficiently to consider it in the sense of being a real, modern community school.

The activities as mentioned above and also the concomitant phases of the school program, which are directed toward helping the whole child in his educational journeyings, are commonly referred to as school services. Some of the services, which have become an integral part of every good school program, are the health program, the lunches served in the school, and the library facilities. This chapter deals with these important school services in the Town of Northfield.

Health -- An examination of Table III on page 20 shows that during the last three years of this twenty-year survey the school expenditure for health amounted to \$2,040. During that same three-year period of 1948 to 1950 the total enrolment was 1,048 pupils, as shown in Table XI on page 52. Therefore, the average yearly expenditure directly attributed to the health program on a per pupil basis was \$1.95 for the three-year period of 1948 to 1950.

It is universally admitted that good health is the most valuable asset which any person can possess. Without good health the child is not likely to realize his potentialities in school, nor is he likely to realize them when he leaves school and takes his place in the workaday world. Therefore, the health program is an important endeavor of the school system. Much of the value of a good sound health program is often overlooked by the average citizen who does not pay very close attention to school activities.

The author was very favorably impressed by the scope and methods of the health program in the schools of Northfield. A health program of the school may be thought of as evolving in three stages--health protection, remedial work or correction of defects and health conservation, and the final stage of health promotion. Table XV on the following page is an outline of a complete health school program from the book by Clair Elsmere Turner, entitled "Principles of Health Education."<sup>1</sup>

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1. Turner, C. E., Principles of Health Education, pp 274-276.

TABLE XV

An Outline Depicting the Many Aspects of a School  
Health Program.

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I. HEALTH PROTECTION

- A. Sanitation of the School Plant -- equipment for fire protection, water supply, toilet facilities, health-service room, teachers' rest-room, lighting, heating, ventilation, seating, upkeep of buildings
- B. Examinations -- physical, dental, and psychological for completeness, thoroughness, technique, frequency
- C. Communicable Disease Control
  - 1. Routine procedure -- inspections, exclusions, re-admissions, educational measures, immunization
  - 2. Procedure in epidemics -- recognition of epidemic, treatment of contacts, measures to prevent infection

II. REMEDIAL WORK

- A. Clinics -- nutrition; dental; eye, ear, nose and throat; diabetic; cardiac; lung; posture; habit
- B. Follow-up Service -- methods of securing correction, adequacy of nursing service, records

III. HEALTH PROMOTION

- A. Hygienic Administration of the School Program
  - 1. For pupils - satisfactory provision for school lunches, proper arrangement of school program for recesses, the number of pupils per room, alteration of different types of work, discipline and punishment, and proper teacher-pupil attitudes
  - 2. For the teacher - opportunity for relaxation, satisfactory opportunity for obtaining lunch, limitation of extra-curricular requirements, sick leave
- B. Physical Activities
  - 1. Playgrounds -- space, equipment and supervision
  - 2. Gymnasium
  - 3. Physical training program and correlation with health program
- C. Health Instruction and Motivation
  - 1. Aims and objectives of health education program
  - 2. Health education procedures
  - 3. Results of health training



In respect to the preceding outline Northfield has an excellent school health program. The main emphasis of this program is in the third stage--health promotion. There is just one item of health protection in which the local schools do not undertake. That is the psychological examination.

A routine yearly examination is given each pupil by the school physician. During such examinations the teeth are also checked. It is hoped that a dental clinic will be held this year in order to have a more thorough examination in that phase of health promotion. All pre-school children also receive physical examinations before entering the first grade.

For remedial work the parents are contacted in cases where children have defects. Through the conscientious and thorough performance of duty by the local Public Health Nurse, who is also the school nurse, by follow-up visits with parents and utilization of clinics, many of the health services offered by the State are made available to the community.

In health promotion the schools are doing an excellent work in the elementary grades. The school nurse visits each classroom every two weeks to impress upon the children the benefits of cleanliness, proper habits, nutrition, regular hours for sleep and correct posture. The parents are pleased with the results of the school health program. The author was impressed by the way in which health charts are maintained

in each classroom and the manner in which the children themselves have responded to all aspects of the program.

Health promotion is not adequate in the high school. There is no gymnasium. Consequently, during the greater part of the school session there is no proper provision for a physical training program.

School Lunch Program -- The hot lunch program is another excellent service of the consolidated school system of the Town of Northfield. During the year of 1950 there were 38,501 lunches served in the cafeteria. In considering the average daily attendance and the number of days in the school session, that would indicate that on a daily average basis seventy percent of the pupils took advantage of the school lunch program.

The cost of a hot lunch to the pupil per day is fifteen cents, which includes an half-pint bottle of milk. The low cost of these meals is made possible through the surplus agricultural commodities and the eight-cent per lunch reimbursement by the federal government for this purpose. However, the personnel for such a service will in effect have a great influence on the efficiency and worth of this school service. Credit must certainly be given to those women in Northfield who plan and deliciously prepare the wholesome and well-balanced school lunches.

Adult Education -- In 1946 the adult education program began in Northfield when the School Committee granted the

use of the high school commercial equipment and room for an evening school in typewriting and shorthand at the request of a group of citizens. The classes met twice weekly for two hours and were well attended. The fee of the instructor was paid by the participants.

At a special town meeting on November 1, 1949 it was voted to authorize the School Committee to establish State-aided vocational training. On February 14, 1950 the evening practical arts program was initiated in Northfield to further enlarge the adult education program. During the year two classes each in rug hooking, decorative art and dressmaking were regularly held. Under the University Extension Service two typewriting classes were also held during the year.

An adult education program in Northfield has not been too successful in scope because there has not been enough need for nor interest shown to warrant fostering an extensive program. Several other course offerings attempted during 1950 never got underway due to insufficient enrolments.

Library Facilities -- Library facilities for the pupils of Northfield are extremely limited in the school buildings. As Dickinson Memorial Library is readily accessible to both the High School and the Center School, it has been the procedure of annually raising a sum of money for the support of the public town library. There is a full-time paid librarian and several part-time assistants. The Dickinson Memorial Library in the center of Northfield acts as the

central library source for the school department. A small public library is also maintained at Northfield Farms.

Dickinson Memorial Library -- Dickinson Memorial Library operates in conjunction with the Division of Public Libraries which is under the State Department of Education. This affiliation allows the library to present to the elementary pupils the chance to participate for certificate awards of the Division of Public Libraries. These awards are in the form of certificates which the children may earn by reading and reporting on a specified number of books. There are two awards, the five-book certificate and the twenty-book or honor certificate. Any child reading five books listed for his own grade, the grade below, or the grade above, is eligible for a five-book certificate. The twenty-book certificate is given in place of the fourth five-book certificate, where at least five of the twenty books read were non-fiction. The librarian informed the author that only one teacher is utilizing this reading incentive.

Affiliation with the Division of Public Libraries also has other advantages. It offers an added source of reading material to supplement the books which the library owns. Upon request the Division will send a supply of books and visual aids materials to be used by the library or school department.

A bookmobile unit operating from Greenfield, Massachusetts, is used in conjunction with the two local libraries.

This, a comparatively new feature of library facilities, is proving quite beneficial. During the last year 1,042 book-mobile books were utilized.

In addition to these outside sources for reading materials, the Dickinson Memorial Library adds regularly to its collection through its own purchases, gifts and sample copies. During 1950 a total of 447 books were added to the library from the above sources. It maintains subscription to twelve periodicals.

CHAPTER IX

TABULATION OF QUESTIONNAIRE

## CHAPTER IX

### TABULATION OF QUESTIONNAIRE

Public Relations -- Public relations is a two-way process between the school and the publics it serves. The school ever tries to keep the community well-informed on its program and policies. This is vital, as it is a public institution of the community. At the same time the people should be articulate in letting the school know what they think in order that the school in all its endeavors may better suit the needs and interests of the community.

The plural is used in dealing with the publics, because there are many different groups of people which have contact with the schools--directly or indirectly. The parents with children in school comprise one public, which is probably in closest contact with the school program. The large majority of the members of the Parents and Teachers Association are such parents. Parents of pre-school children are another public which should become well-acquainted with the schools. It is important that this group be urged to join the Parents and Teachers Association so that they may better help mold the destiny of the school. This will help insure the best possible education for their children that the community can provide. Another public may be considered comprised of the resident taxpayers, who have no children of pre-school or school age. This group should know about the schools, for

their tax dollars are helping to defray the educational expenditures.

The opinions of each of these groups or publics in school matters is important. The use of questionnaires has become one means of finding out just how people think on certain questions, when they are otherwise inarticulate about them.

Questionnaire Used for Survey -- For this problem the questionnaire used in determining public opinion was "Just A Second," published by the National School Service Institute in Chicago.<sup>1</sup> Although this opinionnaire was not ideally suited for local use, it was deemed under the circumstances that a printed, impersonal, illustrated type of questionnaire, which had been used on a national scale, would be more applicable than another that the author had devised.

History of Survey -- On April 24, 1951, four hundred thirty-two questionnaires were mailed to the three publics referred to above. In addition, a cover letter<sup>2</sup> accompanied the questionnaire, "Just A Second," explaining the reason for the survey. On May 10, 1951, one hundred thirty-one questionnaires had been returned. This was a thirty percent return. However, among the returns there were seven blanks. In some cases the people wrote notes to the effect that they

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1. Attached as Appendix II

2. Attached as Appendix I



did not have enough knowledge of the school situation or did not wish to express any opinions.

For tabulation purposes, the publics will be considered as categories.

- Category I -- Parents with children in school
- Category II -- Parents with pre-school children
- Category III -- Resident taxpayers not included in the other two categories

Since the one hundred twenty-four responses did not answer all questions on the questionnaire, there will be some variances noticed in the tabulations. A breakdown by categories of these returns is given in the following table.

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TABLE XVI

Tabulation of Returns for the 432 Questionnaires mailed to the People of Northfield on April 24, 1951.

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Category	Number Mailed	Returns Answered	Blanks	% of Returns
I	164	45	2	29%
II	100	26	0	26%
III	168	53	5	34%

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Answers Given to Questionnaire -- For page three dealing with the "good old days" there was only one check mark to have the hickory stick and another for the dunce cap to be used in the schools today. That brings up the question of just how good were the "good old days?"

Of the many items listed on page four which some people might consider the "fads and frills" of education, very few items were checked. The greatest number were against sex education being taught in the elementary grades and military training for the high school.

As there are one hundred seven items which may be checked in the questionnaire, the complete tabulation of the answers has been included in the copy of "Just A Second" in the Appendix. Most items were checked pretty much as one would expect the questions to be answered. Some people stated that the items were leading questions. The author concurs with that observation. Therefore, the tabulation for some of the items might not reveal the exact graduation of public opinion. However, most of the items certainly are significant in obtaining a sampling of what the people of Northfield do think about these school issues.

On page five of "Just A Second" the two questions dealing with reading were answered as follows:

"Do children today read as well as you did when you were a child?"      YES 58      NO 31      DON'T KNOW 28

"How much reading do children do on their own nowadays as compared with your reading as a youngster?"

MORE 35      AS MUCH 33      LESS 45

From the above it would seem that people thought that the children today read as well, but those same children do not read as much as their elders would like to have them read. Several people stated that movies and television were causing

this latter condition. The second question above was the only one in the survey in which the responses from all three categories were not similar. This is shown in Table XVII as follows:

TABLE XVII

A Breakdown of the Tabulation of the Section on Reading

Questions and Ways of Answering	Category I	Category II	Category III
Do children read as well?			
Yes	26	14	18
No	13	4	14
Don't know	6	6	16
Do children read as much?			
More	16	6	13
As much	13	7	13
Less	16	10	19

From Table XVII above one can readily see that the first question was answered relatively the same in each of the categories. However, the total tabulation for the second question dealing with the amount of reading that children do was greatly weighted by the responses from Categories II and III, which represent the people who do not have children of reading ages in their homes. The parents of Category I were about evenly divided in their opinions on that same question.

The section of the questionnaire starting with "What about a job?" was planned to determine the major function of

the schools today. This was answered overwhelmingly in favor of the children learning general skills for adjusting to future, available jobs rather than preparation for a specific type of work. That was a most gratifying reaction and very much in keeping with modern educational philosophy.

The responses to the question at the bottom of page six dealing with newspaper coverage of school news revealed that seventy-two people thought that the newspapers were telling or pretty well telling the people what they wanted to know about their schools, whereas forty-four people were of the opposite opinion.

The fifteen items on page seven were checked by very few people. Apparently most of the services and equipment and present methods of instruction that are part of a modern school program are being generally accepted by the different publics.

"Do you think that teachers could do a better job of teaching if schools had more and better equipment and supplies?"

YES 103 NO 7 UNCERTAIN 10

The results of the above question are quite conclusive.

Under the section for comments, several people stated that the problem still rested in the fitness of the teacher. Nevertheless, the consensus of opinion seemed to indicate that they want well-trained teachers to make full use of better equipment and supplies.

Seventy-eight people said that the schools should spend more on their programs for health education. As opposed to .

that stand there were nineteen who thought that enough was being expended for health, and three individuals took no definite stand one way or the other. The importance of good health and a desire for the schools to provide an even better health program are important factors that have a community-wide significance.

The preponderance of positive responses to the question,

"Do you think that good schools, attractive school buildings, and well-kept equipment and grounds help increase the value of property in your community?"

showed that all three publics place a correlation between the relative value of real estate and the schools of the community. One of the factors to seriously consider in a community when buying a house is the value of the surrounding real estate. That in turn is definitely influenced by the type of schools in the vicinity. Thus, it is a well-established fact today that better schools do make better communities. Likewise, real estate values are enhanced where new schools are built.

The responses to the last two questions on page nine of the questionnaire indicated that the people of Northfield seemed to think that the schools were successful in teaching some of the fundamentals of good citizenship.

The answers to the two questions on page ten are worthy of consideration. The first of these, dealing with the development of self-discipline might be considered as directed to channel or form public opinion. That question could not

have been answered much differently. However, the author views the following as the "sixty-four dollar questions."

"Do you think that if your town had even better schools it would sooner or later mean a better life for you and your family? In other words, does more learning usually mean more earning? YES 90 NO 2 CAN'T DECIDE 9

The above overwhelming positive response showed that the people of Northfield feel that education is not only a social necessity, but that the investment in education does pay real dividends.

Comments by the people will be considered in a separate section.

Comments from Questionnaire -- On page eleven of the questionnaire, "Just A Second," there was space provided for comments. Of the one hundred twenty-four answered returns, seventy-two or fifty-eight percent contained written comments. Of the three categories, Category I was the most articulate. This would be the natural outcome, for the parents with children in school are closer to the present school situation. There were many varied comments, covering many different subjects, such as discipline, provision for slower learners and the need for definite facilities and more enriched courses of study.

Of the thirty-nine comments from Category I, ten expressed a need for a regional school. Of the seven comments from Category II, there was a single expression for a regional school. In Category III, four of the twenty-six comments also strongly advocated a regional school. Therefore, the

one item that was most frequently spoken of in the comments was related to a regional school in line with the educational policies that were discussed last year in the Town of Northfield in relation to the findings of the Regional School District Planning Board as referred to in Chapter II above on pages 12 to 15. As those comments were broad in scope and directly went to the roots of the problem of the educational needs of Northfield, the following comments are presented:

"We are generally dissatisfied with the schools. However, art, music, and writing are well taught. At the high school level we need a larger, better staffed, better equipped school--such a one as we could have if we joined with several other towns to build a regional school. That school could offer adequate vocational and college preparatory courses."

"Lack of funds, facilities and student body prohibits the teaching of more than the minimum of a very limited course of study. Only by pooling the several student bodies of this and nearby communities can we hope to place our educational program on a par with the larger centers of population; thus enabling our students to meet competition in life with adequate manual skills and mental faculties."

"The schools can be made to do an even better job by consolidating with neighboring towns and going into a regional school."

"Consolidate! Consolidate! That would give the improved facilities, more adequate space, wider range of extracurricular activities, better teaching, etc., that we need."

"By combining the small, inadequate schools of various towns situated nearby, I feel we can pool our resources financially and give our children all the advantages that modern education could offer."

"The schools should be regionally consolidated at the high school level in order to provide for broader and less expensive terminal (for many) education."

"Our High School would benefit by larger classes and a wider range of subjects. Such would be obtained in a regional school."

"I think a Regional School would answer a great many problems of our schools. It would mean better teachers, better equipment, better chance for wider variety of subjects and better athletic programs."

"Need a gymnasium above all. For the boys in high school especially more vocational training including agriculture. There isn't enough emphasis on 'interest' or 'motivation' coming from the students. A course in teen-age driving and car repair could be arranged through local garage perhaps. Still need a regional high school."



CHAPTER X

SCHOOL COMMITTEE RATING OF NORTFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## CHAPTER X

### SCHOOL COMMITTEE RATING OF NORTHFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The Northfield School Committee rated the school system in 1950 by using the "Life" Test, entitled, "How Good is Your School?", which appeared in the October 16, 1950, issue of Life Magazine.<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this test, both the Center School and the High School were considered together as a 12-grade school system. Sixty-one of the sixty-three questions were applicable and answered as follows:

- |     |           |   |
|-----|-----------|---|
| Yes | <u>No</u> | At least 60% of the parents are members of the PTA or other educationally active organizations.                   |
| Yes | <u>No</u> | At least 50% of the members of the PTA or other educationally active organizations attend the general meetings.   |
| Yes | <u>No</u> | Teacher-parent conferences are arranged for a majority of the pupils.   |
| Yes | <u>No</u> | There are at least two teacher-parent conferences per year for every child.                                       |
| Yes | <u>No</u> | There are citizens present at all open school-board meetings.   |
| Yes | <u>No</u> | Public participation in local education has caused a significant change in the school within the last five years. |
| Yes | <u>No</u> | There has been a bond issue or tax levy extension voted within the last three years.                              |
| Yes | <u>No</u> | At least 50% of the classroom teachers have masters' degrees.   |
| Yes | <u>No</u> | Teachers in the secondary school have at least one free period to every four teaching periods.                    |

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1. Life Magazine, pp 54-55.

- Yes No Teachers in the elementary school have at least 40 minutes of rest period during the day.
- Yes No The same wage scale exists for both elementary and secondary school teachers.
- Yes No The minimum starting salary for teachers is at least \$2,700 a year.
- Yes No The possible top salary for classroom teachers is at least \$4,000 a year.
- Yes No The teachers and school staff are allowed sick leave with pay for at least 10 days annually.
- Yes No The school board contributes financial aid for in-service training of teachers.
- Yes No Teachers are paid and on duty at least a week before school opens.
- Yes No At least one written report per semester on each student is submitted by the teachers to the principal or parent supplementary to or replacing routine report cards.
- Yes No Courses comprising not less than 10% of the total curriculum have been added within the last five years.
- Yes No Laymen are used systematically to supplement classroom instruction both through consultation and actual participation.
- Yes No High school has vocational or industrial arts course.
- Yes No Science courses include at least one hour of laboratory work for every four hours of classroom instruction.
- Yes No There is a kindergarten in the elementary school.
- Yes No In the elementary school pupils in the same grade are grouped according to reading levels and use different readers.
- Yes No The school makes use of a remedial reading specialist.
- Yes No All students study community, including techniques of local government, through visits and participation.

- Yes No The high school has an adult education program.
- Yes No There is a person specifically employed to work at least half time as a director of an adult education program.
- Yes No The chief administrative officer in the particular school is employed on a 12-month basis.
- Yes No The chief administrative officer in the particular school is free from teaching duties.
- Yes No The chief administrative officer in the particular school has engaged in professional study at a higher institution in the last five years.
- Yes No The chief administrative officer in the particular school is provided with full-time clerical help.
- Yes No The chief administrative officer in the particular school has a master's degree.
- Yes No The chief administrative officer in the particular school has secured advice from education specialists other than state supervisors on his own initiative.
- Yes No In the elementary school there is an organized guidance program with a person at its head specifically responsible for its administration.
- Yes No In the high school, for every 250 students, there is at least one guidance councilor who is engaged in at least part-time counseling activities with at least partial relief from teaching duties.
- Yes No There is a psychologist or psychiatrist available for consultation.
- Yes No At least \$1.25 a year is spent on the school library for each pupil in the school's average daily attendance.
- Yes No A person trained in library techniques gives scheduled instruction in the use of a school library.
- Yes No At least \$200 is spent per pupil. (Computed by dividing the total school budget for current operating expenditure by the total average daily attendance.)

- Yes No At least \$3 was spent per pupil last year for text-books and supplementary classroom reading material, excluding library books.
- Yes No At least 35% was spent last year per student in average daily attendance for audio-visual material, excluding purchase of basic projection and sound equipment.
- Yes No There is at least 30 square feet of floor area per classroom per pupil in average daily attendance.
- Yes No At least 80% of the classrooms have movable desks.
- Yes No The building is inspected yearly by an official fire or building authority.
- Yes No All the buildings are at least fire resistive.
- Yes No Fire drills are held at frequent intervals.
- Yes No The school custodian is a full-time member of the staff.
- Yes No The washing facilities have hot running water.
- Yes No There are flush toilets.
- Yes No The school supplies soap in the school lavatories.
- Yes No Students can obtain hot food at the school.
- Yes No There is a yearly medical examination of every student requiring at least 30 minutes per pupil to perform.
- Yes No The school provides inspection and cleaning of teeth by a dental hygienist at least once a year.
- Yes No There is a high school football field.
- Yes No There is a school gymnasium.
- Yes No There is an organized intramural athletic program in the high school.
- Yes No There is a club or hobby program.
- Yes No At least 65% of the pupils participate in voluntary club or hobby programs.

- Yes No Less than 10% of the students in either the eighth, ninth, 10th or 11th grades dropped out last year.
- Yes No A cumulative record is maintained on each student and it goes with him on transferring to a different school.
- Yes No The school board, through determining its own budget without restrictions, is independent of financial control by nonschool agencies of the municipal government.

TOTAL YES 22 NO 39

In computing a school's score, the number answered no are subtracted from the number answered yes; the difference is then added to 100. The following chart based on more than 500 good, average and poor schools in 48 states was set up as a measuring stick:

Scores for 12-grade schools

---

Best Schools Got	120 - 153
Average Schools Got	93 - 120
Worst Schools Got	57 - 93

---

Northfield had a score of eighty-three (83). Therefore, the Northfield school system fell into the category of the "Worst Schools."

CHAPTER XI

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## CHAPTER XI

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Restatement of Problem -- The problem attempted was to study the educational needs of the Town of Northfield. This was attacked on the premise that there is an urgent need for more classrooms and other facilities to accommodate increasing enrolments in the public school system of Northfield. That proposition was substantiated by the findings of former town-appointed committees, as set forth in Chapter II above, and by the material presented by the author in this problem.

Conclusions from This Study -- From this survey of the twenty-year period from 1930 to 1950 many conclusions have been reached concerning the educational needs of the Town of Northfield. These are as follows:

1. The population of the town has increased.
2. The birth rate has increased.
3. There will be substantial increases in the school enrolments.
4. The existing school plants cannot accommodate efficiently the number of pupils presently enrolled.
5. Four more classrooms and other facilities are needed immediately for potential increases in elementary grade enrolments.
6. The Center School is not efficient in that room



is needed for storage space for the cafeteria, an auditorium and special class space.

7. The Northfield High School is not efficient in that the enrolment is too small to offer a modern, efficient and broad program of studies.

8. The Northfield High School is educationally inefficient in that the following facilities are lacking:

- a. A gymnasium
- b. An auditorium
- c. Adequate laboratories and equipment
- d. School library
- e. Metal and woodworking shops
- f. Space for special classes

9. Additional facilities must be provided in order to make the educational system of the town efficient and more effective.

Summary and Recommendations -- Throughout this present survey the evidence has pointed to the definite need for more classrooms and other facilities. School enrolments will definitely increase. Provision for those potential increases in relation to the present, already over-taxed school facilities is indeed an educational problem of real magnitude. However, the author believes that the housing problem is not the true crux of the situation.

It has been noted that the weakest link in the school system of Northfield is the small high school with its limited program of studies. It is possible that the housing

problem can be eradicated if the scope of the high school program of studies is first broadened through the best in modern educational planning.

A small high school quite adequately served the educational needs of a generation or two ago, but today its purposive endeavors do not stand up comparably to the larger school units in the light of the best in modern educational philosophy. Throughout the nation the small high schools are gradually being replaced by larger regional school systems in order to provide better educational offerings to the pupils in rural areas. In this atomic age such educational progress is vital and necessary. No thinking individual would seriously advocate a return to horses, carriages and gas lamps. And yet, many people will relegate the educational strivings of a community to a type characteristic of the "horse and buggy" era.

As the Town of Bernardston is faced with a similar situation in its small high school, known as Powers Institute, the author recommends that the people of Northfield and Bernardston earnestly consider pooling their respective resources. This can be accomplished by the establishment of a regional school district. Such a cooperative move would provide a much better solution to the like educational problems of the two towns on the secondary level.

If a regional school for the junior-senior high school grades were erected for the pupils of Northfield and Bernardston, the school housing problem for the elementary grades in Northfield would simultaneously be solved. The first six grades could then very adequately be housed in the present two school buildings. There would also be ample space for a much-needed kindergarten, a special activity room and an auditorium. The present, large study hall in the High School could be converted for such an auditorium.

APPENDICES

COVER LETTER

TABULATION OF QUESTIONNAIRE

APPENDIX I

COVER LETTER

84 Main Street  
Northfield, Mass.  
April 25, 1951

TO THE RESIDENTS OF NORTHFIELD:

As part of my work toward a Master's Degree at the University of Massachusetts, I have been directed to make a survey of the educational needs of the Town of Northfield. This survey is to include a tabulation of the returns from the enclosed questionnaire. The expenses of this problem for materials, paper and postage are being borne entirely by me.

This opinionnaire was designed for nation-wide use and has been answered by four million individuals interested in public school education. Being intended for general use, there may be a few questions that do not apply to our community. Therefore, would you be kind enough to give me your opinion of the items which you feel are meaningful to our situation here in Northfield?

I thank you for your cooperation. A stamped, addressed envelope is enclosed for your convenience.

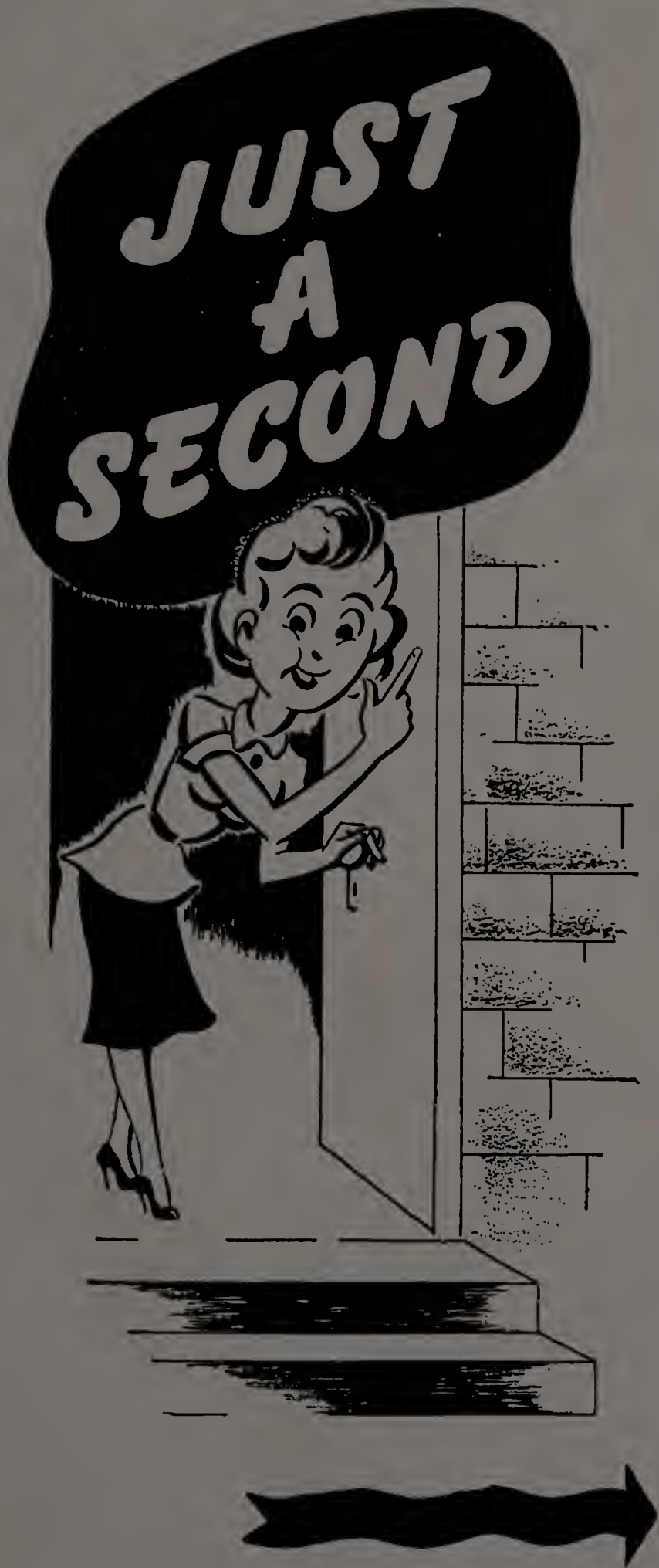
Very truly yours,

*Mott P. Guhse*

Mott P. Guhse'

APPENDIX II

TABULATION OF QUESTIONNAIRE



APPENDIX II

TABULATION OF QUESTIONNAIRE

remember the

Good Old Days?

Here are a number of things common to the schools you went to in "the good old days."

How would you do . . .

if you had the job of planning the very best schooling for your boys and girls?\*

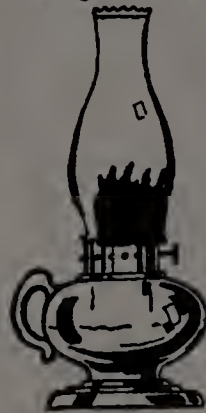
You can help greatly by putting down your thinking right here in black and white. (We are asking you personally because you know how you want your children educated in order that they can do the important jobs of tomorrow.) It'll take only three minutes time with a pencil. Your opinions will do a lot in helping us tackle the biggest job in America today—planning for a peaceful, prosperous tomorrow. For all this help kindly accept the thanks of

The Public Schools

\*The public schools are your schools. Tell us how you would like to have them teach your children.



Slate



Kerosene lamp



Water bucket and tin cup



Dunce cap



Outdoor toilet



Wood stove



Hickory stick



Lunch pail

✓ Just check those which you would like to see used in today's schools.

APPENDIX II

TABULATION OF QUESTIONNAIRE

*What would you do away with?*

Perhaps there are some things you don't exactly want taught in your schools. Check the ones you'd do away with.

	✓ Leave it out of Grade School	Leave it out of High School
Respect for rights of others	-----	-----
How to spend intelligently	1	-----
Good manners	-----	-----
Sex education	43	15
Learn a trade	12	2
Military training	-----	38
The three "R's"	-----	-----
American history	-----	1
Art experiences	5	1
Education for home and family living	2	1
An understanding of religion	12	10
Ability to speak well	-----	-----
Health habits	-----	-----
Learn a foreign language	-----	2
Drive an automobile	-----	7
How to be a good citizen	-----	-----
Personality development	3	1

Do children write as well as you did at their age?

Yes . . . 77 No . . . 32

Would you like to see more writing taught to children today?

Yes . . . 80 No . . . 23

*They can't read, or can they?*



Reading is a subject of great importance.

Do you think children today read as well as you did when you were a child?

Yes . . . 58

No . . . 31

Don't know . . . 28

❖ ❖ ❖

How much reading do children do on their own nowadays as compared with your reading as a youngster?

More . . . 35

As much . . . 33

Less 45



APPENDIX II

TABULATION OF QUESTIONNAIRE



What about a job?

These rapidly changing times . . .

Should schools prepare students for a definite job,

or

Should today's schools teach, in addition to the "R's," such subjects as will help boys and girls fit into whatever job appeals and offers employment at the time they are ready for work?

Prepare for a specific job 19

Learn general skills for adjusting to the job that's available 104

❖ ❖ ❖

News

In your opinion, are today's newspapers telling you what you want to know about your schools?

Yes 16 No 44 Pretty well 56

Some people object . . .

What do you think? A few complain that much of today's school work is a waste of time. Here are some of the things today's schools teach. Check the things that you wouldn't like to have your child know about.

	Leave it out Grade School	Don't teach it in High School
Safety education	1	1
Music	1	
Cooking and sewing	6	1
Education for home and family living	2	2
School libraries	1	1
Football & basketball		1
Instructional moving pictures		
Science experiments	4	1
Machine shop	8	2
How to buy intelligently	2	
Business arithmetic	4	2
Discussion of controversial subjects	7	1
Gym and swimming	4	2
Dramatics	1	
Algebra		2

❖ ❖ ❖

Help, Please

Do you think that teachers could do a better job of teaching if schools had more and better equipment and supplies?

Yes . . . 103

No . . . 7

Uncertain . . . 10

APPENDIX II

TABULATION OF QUESTIONNAIRE

*We grow strong,  
we live long . . .*

Your public schools are interested in teaching good health habits—correct exercise, adequate sleep, proper food, and good work habits. Schools aim to make sure that every child has a chance to develop good health and keep reasonably free from physical defects. \*

Would you say that the schools your children attend should spend more on their program of health education?

Yes . . .  78

No . . .  19

Don't care . . .  3



\* The Army and Navy have found that rejections were highest in states where educational opportunities were poorest.

*Question . . .*

Now here is an especially important point on which we need your best judgment:



Do you believe that good schools, attractive school buildings, and well-kept equipment and grounds help increase the value of property in your community?

Yes 115, No 2, Not sure 3

-----  
-----  
-----

♦ ♦ ♦

*Good Americans . . .*

Do you think from what you see of your children's education today that they will probably take a more active interest in voting and possibly running for office than you have?

Yes 60, No 26, Can't decide 29

Do your children appear to be better informed in governmental affairs than the kids who were your playmates?

Yes  73 No  16 Doubtful  24



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Approved by:

Edna J. Kline

Albert W. Purvis

Date May 18, 1951

