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THE STORY OF DANVILLE:

A STUDY IN EDUCATIONAL CRISIS

(TITLE)

BY

SIDNEY M. COOL

**PLAN B PAPER**

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ADVISER

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DATE

DEPARTMENT HEAD

THE STORY OF DANVILLE:  
A STUDY IN EDUCATIONAL CRISIS

By

SIDNEY M. COOL

B.S. in Commerce, University of Illinois, 1941

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the  
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Eastern Illinois University

CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS

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## INTRODUCTION

There probably is no school district in the state of Illinois, or even the entire United States, that has not had problems. Most of them have continuing problems which deal with either one of two things. The first common problem involves money, usually the lack of it. The second problem is lack of communication, either between the administration and the public, the administration and the staff, the teachers and the public, or all of them.

The first problem is obvious and easily recognized by the superintendent, the board, and the public as a whole. It seems as though money solves many of the problems of many schools. Yet a richly endowed district does not necessarily mean a well organized district and certainly not an efficient administration. There can be little doubt that the school board's primary responsibility is to the students of the district. Yet it is also the duty of the board and its appointed administrators to use diligent care in the stewardship of the public monies entrusted to their use. Waste and inefficiency in the use of tax money are soon apparent to the public. As will be shown in this report, it can be a cause for grief for many years to come, whether or not the board was principally responsible for the waste. Getting the most in education for a reasonable amount of money should be uppermost in the minds of educational administrators.

The second main topic to be considered can work insidiously within a school district and may not be fully understood even by the professional people most involved. The lack of communication may be the failure to accept reality by the board or its appointed officers. An inflexible program which makes no allowance for the changes needed in the school's curriculum can result from the educational program which stresses tradition instead of needs. This means waste in money and manpower.

Behind every school program, and the person who is responsible for its progress, is the chief administrative officer appointed by the board, the unit superintendent of schools. While the population of the district looks to the board of education for successful operation of the schools, the board places the responsibility of administering their decisions squarely on one man. Any difficulties and problems in operation are channeled to the superintendent or appointees responsible to him. Teacher welfare should also be a concern of the superintendent.

This approach to many educational problems, places the superintendent in a very delicate position and requires extreme tact. As a representative of the management, i.e. the board, and also of the student-teacher side, his approach to many problems must be a two-sided approach.

Practically all innovations brought into the system are either introduced by, or approved by, the superintendent. His duty should be to get the most effective teaching tools and methods available for the teachers and the students. Yet he must also consider the costs of such in relation

to the money available. He must also consider the long range plans and how expensive the plans will be in the future. In this way both sides of the problem can be considered.

Too often, through lack of proper communication, many policies and decisions made by either the board, or the superintendent seem foolish or unreasonable. Because the writer has not experienced the events stated, it is hoped that his evaluations will be relatively free from emotional bias. This paper is an attempt to report the facts as they actually transpired without taking sides on the controversies. The only bias shown is for the betterment of the educational climate within the district. This should be the ultimate aim of every good administrator anyway, be he superintendent, principal, or supervisor in any capacity.

As a study of any municipality's problem would not be complete without the inclusion of the community's educational problems, a study of the district's educational problem would not be complete without touching upon the difficulties encountered by the municipality. The two are too closely inter-related to be completely separated. What affects the schools most certainly affects the community as a whole, and problems encountered by the city will most certainly affect the schools, if only at the level of their pocketbook. Population trends and blighted areas, zoning and industrial development, labor relations with municipal employees and salary disputes, these are primarily municipal problems and yet they vitally affect the educational system. They affect the long range planning as well as the day to day

operations. Likewise, the introduction of a new curriculum, the need for a new physical plant or the remodeling of the old one, the proposal for a junior college, the change needed in the emphasis of an educational program; all of these things affect the community as a whole, as well as the children.

As stated before, this report will attempt to be objective and present all sides of the various subjects covered. Viewpoints considered will be that of the voter on school referenda, the schools which need additional revenue, and the board and the superintendent who are sometimes caught in the middle.

That some difficulties will be encountered, and that some prejudices may occasionally become apparent are within the realm of possibility. However, it is hoped that any bias will not hinder the relation of all sides to any question. Having been in the system only briefly, the writer will provide very little evidence from first hand experience. Permission has been granted by Superintendent of Danville District #118, Mr. David Radcliffe, to examine any records needed from within the unit itself. Perhaps dealing from records rather than actually having been a party to the events as they transpired, will permit a more detached viewpoint to prevail.

## CHAPTER I

### DANVILLE AS SEEN FROM AN EDUCATIONAL VIEWPOINT

Danville is a small city of about 45,000 located in east central Illinois. It is not greatly different from many other cities of similar size in the Middle West, and its educational problems, to a great extent, are common to many such cities. Like most of them, the increasing cost of education has led to a decreased assessed valuation per pupil ratio in recent years.<sup>1</sup> In some phases of education, it has lagged behind similar cities, while in other areas, such as special education, it has been a leader in the state program.

#### Danville School District #118

The district includes only the city limits of Danville and Tilton. The school districts having the same boundary as the two cities works to one advantage. The people of the district are nearly all employed within the two cities. The property taxes are on either residences or commercial and industrial property. On the other hand, the rich farm land which produces a large tax in proportion to the number of children in the system, is not available to the district. As will be shown, the assessed valuation per pupil for the past ten years has been well below that of comparable districts

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<sup>1</sup>Illinois Education Association, Lessons in Illinois Public School Finance, Springfield, Illinois, 1962.

in Illinois and only a fraction of that of surrounding rural areas. Yet, as a city system, it has a larger enrollment than smaller rural districts and needs a greater variety of subjects in its curriculum because the needs of the people it serves are more varied.

Perhaps one way to understand what has happened and why it happened is to study the physical composition of the town. By this is meant the population broken down by racial and cultural groups, by religious groupings, and by the number of retired people. Some of these categories will be relatively insignificant while others will play a very important part in the success or failure of attainment of goals in the educational system. For instance, the common belief has been that the high percentage of retired people in the city was an important factor contributing to the defeat of several revenue referenda for school improvements. This will be examined and the merits of such statements will be determined.

Besides the population, another important item to be examined is the municipal facilities, both as to their operation and their scope of operation. The last mentioned item is more or less in competition with the school district for the expenditure of the taxes. A separate comparison of where each portion of the tax dollar goes in comparison with other cities in similar circumstances, as well as the state as a whole, could be very helpful in pinpointing one large school problem.

As previously stated, school and municipal problems are interrelated and so affect one another, that a good discussion of school problems should start with a discussion of the district served by the schools.

By race.-- About 12% of the population of Danville is non-white. The majority of this population was born in Danville or its environs with many families being third generation residents. The majority of the families are in the lower income groups although there has been a trend toward improvement of their lot in the last five years.<sup>2</sup> Large families are the rule with one block having in excess of 100 children. However, race relations, on the whole, appear good with very little friction in the schools at least. More will be said concerning the negro and education later on. It is sufficient here to say that race relations do not constitute a major problem in the schools.

By creed.-- The Roman Catholic population of Danville constitutes about 12% of the population. As is known, such population has a significant effect on public education due to its system of parochial education. However, it is not truly reflected in Danville by the enrollment in parochial schools. In the first place, Danville's Catholic high school, Schlarman, receives a considerable number of students from strongly Catholic towns surrounding Danville, with Westville being the most prominent. Approximately 22% of the enrollment is from outside the city, according to the most recent estimate.<sup>3</sup> Another factor to be considered is that a larger number of Catholic children attend public school in Danville than in many cities in Illinois. It has been said that Catholic people sometimes feel they gain little from an increase in

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<sup>2</sup>Personal interview with Miss Eloise Wymer, Superintendent of Illinois Public Aid, Danville, Illinois, June 14, 1966.

<sup>3</sup>Personal interview with Miss Donna Paseirb, Secretary, Schlarman High School, Danville, Illinois, July, 1966.

public school taxes when they also pay tuition for their own school's maintenance. This has not been the case in Danville where the official position of the church has been one of all out support for schools, both public and parochial. The official attitude of the Catholic people in Danville has had no detrimental effect on the public schools.

Other educational opportunities.-- While Danville Junior College is the only formal academic institution for schooling beyond high school in Danville, a number of trade and training institutions are located there.

Both St. Elizabeth's hospital and Lakeview hospital maintain a school of nurses' training. Lakeview also has a school for medical technicians and St. Elizabeth has a school for medical recording librarians. Enrollment in both of these groups is sizeable.

Two schools of beauty culture are located in Danville. The Brown-Utterback Business College is also located there and is well respected in the community and throughout the surrounding Vermilion County area.

#### Danville's Advantages and Disadvantages

Danville is well located for both industry and agriculture. It has the second largest soybean processing plant in the world, as well as a sizeable number of stable and expanding industries. Both General Electric and General Motors have plants employing in excess of 2,000 people each. An industrial park just east of the city, while a bit ambitious, will eventually be an important item. Danville has progressed from primarily a farm marketing and railroad town to a principally industrial one in the last forty or fifty years.

The business center, while not overly impressive, is adequate for the surrounding area with excellent prospects of growth in the next few years. The three banks are all strong and stable institutions which actively promote civic enterprises.

Employment.-- In Danville, employment is at a very high level at the present time with a labor shortage threatening to become acute. Several factories have had to curtail proposed production because of labor shortages. Industrial production is up considerably over the last year or two.

The local newspaper.-- The Danville Commercial-News does an excellent job on local news, especially with school affairs. Being very civic minded, it gives excellent publicity for local enterprises and often comments editorially on any civic shortcomings.

Transportation.-- This can be judged from fair to good with most of the arterial streets adequate for the present traffic. Even though the highways leading from the city are good, the very heavy traffic, especially southbound, tax them to their utmost at peak periods. City traffic is heavy and soon will be making additional demands for street widening and general improvement.

The Negative Side.-- The fault is that there is inaction where there should be action. Many public spirited people from important positions in industry and commerce have volunteered to serve any civic need. They staff the library board, the junior college board, the school board and many other non-professional and non-salaried boards. A case in point concerns the recent election to the new junior college board in Danville. Seventeen

candidates filed for less than half that number of seats on the board. As the Danville Commercial News<sup>4</sup> commented editorially, the decision was difficult as all were extremely well qualified. All were either in administrative positions with local industry or had long experience with local educational problems, the paper stated.

The same paper pointed out the great need for housing within the city and opportunity for urban renewal. They commented on the fact that the city planner had quit several months ago and no effort was made to secure a replacement. With urban renewal funds available from the federal government, more than ever a city planner was needed to get such needed work started.

In this respect Operation Blight has been started and vigorously pushed by the Junior Chamber of Commerce. However, in the opinion of the writer, the city administration has not carried through with the urban renewal proposals for the city of Danville.

When urban renewal, or something similar which will eliminate the substandard housing, is finally accomplished the schools will be affected. Some schools will gain and some will possibly lose quite a large enrollment.

The schools have an important effect on the city and its population. Even more, the city and its attitude has a profound effect on the schools and how they are operated. This will be discussed in the next chapter.

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<sup>4</sup>Editorial in the Danville Commercial News, May, 1966

firms want persons in these positions capable of being promoted to more exacting and responsible positions.<sup>5</sup>

Enrollment increases.-- Accompanying this trend towards automation has been the trend toward employment by industry and away from farms. This meant a population shift to the cities. However, this trend was seen in Danville to a limited degree. Many workers located in surrounding areas, some of which were taken into the city but many remained outside. Only two schools have come into the district in the last ten years, the period covered by Table 1. The schools totaled approximately 200 students. Table 1 shows the enrollment in Danville for the last ten years.

TABLE 1

ENROLLMENT IN DANVILLE #118 SCHOOLS SEPTEMBER 1, 1955-65<sup>a</sup>

Year	Number	Year	Number
1955.....	7950	1961.....	9579
1956.....	8075	1962.....	9775
1957.....	8525	1963.....	9975
1958.....	8675	1964.....	10,275
1959.....	9150	1965.....	10,375
1960.....	9350		

<sup>a</sup>Danville Community Unit School Dist. #118, Average Daily Attendance, Danville Schools, 1955-65, Danville, Ill.

<sup>5</sup>Interview with R. R. Jackson, Illinois State Employment Office, Danville, Illinois, June, 1966.

The enrollment in 1965 was 30.5% above the enrollment in 1955. The importance of this increase is that it exceeded Danville's rate of growth for a ten year period. No exact figures are available for the ten year span from 1955-65, but the census figures for the ten year period from 1950 to 1960 show an increase of only 11%.<sup>6</sup> As will be noted, the enrollment increase in the last six years of this ten year span is in excess of 17%, well above the ten year population increase.

Public attitude toward school taxes.-- Among the most apparent difficulties with Danville School District's finances in recent years has been the inability to get a tax rate sufficient to meet the expenses of the schools.

According to Mr. Elliot,<sup>7</sup> Vermilion County Superintendent of Schools, Danville has yet to take a favorable attitude toward their schools and their costs. Until this attitude changes, getting a favorable vote on a referendum will be quite difficult, according to Mr. Elliot.

Retired people.-- One segment of the population having a large voice in the future of both the city and the school district is the retired people. As the percentage of our total population reaching 65 is increasing every year, so their vote will continue to grow and be more significant, according

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<sup>6</sup>New York World-Telegram, The World Almanac 1964, p.264, New York, New York.

<sup>7</sup>Personal interview with Mr. R. S. Elliott, County Superintendent of Schools, Vermilion County, Illinois, June, 1966.

while both of the others have had an increase. However, East Park, serving the eastern section, has had the most rapid growth with as many as 970 at times. The present plan calls for the increase of the northern boundary of Southview, the southern school, to include at least one elementary school and some fringe areas now being sent to East Park. The shifting of students is quite a ticklish problem for the administration. For one thing, families become accustomed to one particular school, having sent several children there. They plan to send all their children to the same school and the same teachers. Then, too, the pupils already in attendance at one school will have to complete their junior high at another school. This usually leaves them dissatisfied even though the curriculum is identical in all three schools. Then , in this instance, the enrollment at Southview comes mostly from the poorer neighborhoods, especially the poorer non-white areas. They have had a tendency to drag down the cultural and educational levels of the classes, according to what some people have told the superintendent, Mr. Radcliffe. According to Mr. Radcliffe, some complaints have been registered because of the greater distance students have to travel in busses although this amounts to only a few minutes longer a day.

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According to Mr. Conan Edwards, superintendent at the time of their construction, the philosophy of the junior high school is good and appears to

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Personal interview with Mr. David C. Radcliffe, Superintendent of Danville Unit #118, Danville, Illinois , May, 1966.

14

Personal interview with Mr. Conan Edwards, Superintendent of Danville Unit #118 Schools from 1962-4, March , 1964.

be working out well in Danville. Instead of having twenty elementary schools with grades one through eight and each having a more or less well equipped science department, there are three junior high schools, and each has a separate science department. Each department has a modern, completely equipped laboratory with at least two full-time science teachers in each school. The grouping of these facilities has made it possible to avoid duplication of much of the supplies and equipment and to offer a more complete science program in the Danville schools. This has also helped the elementary schools as it has provided them with convenient resources and advisory facilities as well as a good source of little used science supplies.

The junior high schools have also added another item that was new to their curriculum; namely, foreign language. Both French and Spanish are offered at all three schools, even though the courses are not so intensive as those at the high school level.

Home economics and shop training are also offered at the junior high level on a very limited degree. Both of these subjects, as well as the languages, were a bit controversial at first, but they seem to be what the public wants, according to Mr. Edwards.<sup>15</sup> He said it was practical only because there were several hundred at the same grade level.

The building program under which these schools were built did not bring favorable reaction from the public. To the best of the writer's knowledge, no complaints have appeared in print as to the design of the schools. However,

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

corners were cut on building costs. No performance bond was required of the contractors. As a result, when the roof leaked quite badly on one of the buildings, the school had to bear the expense of repair. This flaw was brought out quite vividly, according to Mr. R. K. Waltz,<sup>16</sup> an assistant principal, during a spring PTA banquet at this school in 1963. The roof leaked so badly that numerous buckets and tubs had to be placed all about the gymnasium where the banquet was being held. It rained all during the program. This was just a few days prior to a school referendum which was to be voted on.

Such adverse publicity was expressed in a tangible way at the ballot box as will be shown in Table 12. This defeat at the polls was in spite of the fact that school costs had risen. This was especially true of teachers' salaries as will be seen on Table 10. The results of these two events, the refusal by the public to give the schools more money, and the continuing increase in operating costs lead to retrenchment by the administration. Subsequent elections did not encourage any other course.

#### Comparing Danville to Other Cities

By background.-- Danville must be compared with other cities with similar units; namely, the community unit districts including both elementary and secondary schools. Also, the units must be compared with those of similar economic and geographical areas. The cities of Decatur, Champaign,

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<sup>16</sup>Personal interview with Mr. R. K. Waltz, Assistant Principal, Douglas School, May 12, 1965.

Peoria, Urbana, Bloomington, and Danville are all comparable in size with somewhat similar salary ranges for teachers.

In all these cities, the teaching personnel is large enough to organize for their own betterment. They can often get better salary schedules and working conditions than smaller units are able to do. According to Mr. David C. Radcliffe,<sup>17</sup> Superintendent of the Danville school district, all of the aforementioned schools maintain similar salary schedules and vary but little in teacher benefits. As a general rule, Danville's teachers' associations enjoy harmonious relations with the school board, according to Mr. Radcliffe.

With but few exceptions, no non-degree teachers are employed on a permanent basis by these cities. While this policy has not been examined personally in all schools by the writer, they have been adjudged to be comparable by Mr. Radcliffe.<sup>18</sup>

The cities selected to be compared with Danville are all from thirty to one hundred thousand population, with one, Peoria, exceeding one hundred thousand. They all have about the same proportion of industry and residential areas. None of the cities are suburban areas with a high percentage of residential property and little industry. On the other hand, none of the cities are strictly factory towns with the employees living elsewhere. All of the cities are located in central Illinois, which means that the surrounding farm lands are of similar value.

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<sup>17</sup> Interview with Mr. David C. Radcliffe, Danville, Illinois, May, 1966, Superintendent of Danville Unit #118, Danville, Illinois.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

Where the money comes from.-- The first comparison will be that of where the money for the schools comes from. The money is derived from three different taxing bodies; namely the local government, the state and the federal government. In recent years, the state has had to assume an increasing share of the burden because the local property taxes, in many instances, have reached close to the saturation point.<sup>19</sup> The state has done this by increasing the foundation levels and by giving state aid to projects such as special education and training in vocational education. The state assumes the local districts do not have sufficient funds to successfully maintain these programs.

Danville has used such state aid in the best possible way, as will be seen from the comparisons on Table 5. In recent years, Danville has always had 40% or more of her school costs paid by other than local funds. Table 8 will show that none of the other cities compared in this report did nearly as well in this respect, according to the most recent figures. In the opinion of the writer, few citizens of Danville fully realize how much of the school expenses are being paid for by funds other than local taxes.

In most instances, the most reliable barometer of a school district's ability to pay for educating her children is the assessed valuation per pupil.<sup>20</sup> This simply means how much property is available for taxation to pay for one pupil for one school year. All figures quoted are quoted after the state

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<sup>19</sup> Illinois Education Association, Lessons in Illinois Public School Finance, Springfield, Illinois, 1962.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

equalization factor has been applied, thus satisfying the state that a realistic appraisal of the real estate valuation has been made. The state-wide average for the state of Illinois (downstate) is \$27,016 for the latest year available, 1963-64. Danville's claim was \$13,575, approximately half the state average for the same year. Of the six cities compared, Danville ranks the lowest, approximately \$3,000 less than the next lowest. Table 2, below, is a comparison of the six cities on an assessed valuation per pupil basis.

TABLE 2  
EQUALIZED ASSESSED VALUATION PER PUPIL SIX CITIES, 1963-64<sup>b</sup>

City	Average Valuation Per Pupil
Peoria.....	\$23,288
Bloomington.....	23,239
Champaign.....	19,896
Urbana.....	18,010
Decatur.....	16,268
Danville.....	13,575

<sup>b</sup>Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, Basic State Aid Claim Statistics, Illinois Public Schools, 1965-66, Springfield, Illinois, 1966.

This comparison is made between cities and does not include rural areas. The trend in recent years has been for the population to move to the

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urban areas away from the rural areas. The taxable property of the rural areas have had to support a dwindling population, thus increasing property assessments per pupil in rural areas. Somewhat different trends have been apparent in cities. For instance, while the enrollment was rising 30% in Danville, the assessed valuation was rising only 5% during the same period. This tended to leave the cities with less money to spend on education, at least on a per pupil basis. To partly make up the difference, the city taxes often were higher.

To make matters worse, Danville has a comparatively low tax rate among similar cities. Of the six selected cities only Peoria has a lower total tax rate for education, and it will be noted from Table 2 that Peoria has the largest assessed valuation per pupil of any of the cities. Table 3, below, compares the school taxes of six Illinois cities.

Including the college tax, the school tax rate is still the second lowest. Danville is the only one of the six cities supporting a junior college at the present time. The operation of it will not be used in further comparisons. The Danville Junior College is now separated and is governed by a separate Junior College Board.

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21

Personal Interview with Mr. Wm. Lewis, Assistant Treasurer of Vermilion County, Danville, Illinois, June, 1966.

22

Ibid.

23

Ibid.

TABLE 3  
SCHOOL TAX RATE PER \$100 ASSESSED VALUATION  
SIX ILLINOIS CITIES 1965<sup>C</sup>

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City	Rate
Champaign.....	\$2.91
Urbana.....	2.76
Decatur.....	2.57
Bloomington.....	2.15
Danville.....	2.06
Peoria.....	1.81

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<sup>C</sup>Office of State Superintendent of Public Instruction  
Illinois Public Schools, 1964 Assessed Valuations  
and 1965 Tax Rates, Springfield, Illinois, 1966.

The last item concerning school income is how much of the tax dollar goes to schools. Of course, the maintaining of the public schools is by far the largest single item of the tax budget of the six schools compared in Table 4. The public schools employ more people, maintain more real estate and equipment, and use more materials than all the other departments of the local government.

As has been noted editorially,<sup>24</sup> there has been an increasing tendency for all local government services to increase in cost over the years. For instance, the cost of police and fire protection has risen, but only in about

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<sup>24</sup>Editorial in the Danville Commercial-News, March 3, 1966.

the same proportion that the cost of living and size of the municipality has grown. The rise in the cost of living is reflected in the increased salaries in the police and fire departments. The increase in the population is reflected in the increased number of people employed and the amount of equipment needed. Yet the increase in the latter item does not reflect as great an increase as the population rise of the municipality. Certain economies can be found by eliminating duplication and utilizing equipment to a greater degree. Doubling the size of a town does not double the cost of some services.

While the trend has been toward increasing cost of municipal services, there has also been a widening in the services offered by some municipalities. Danville is one of the cities that has increased the number of municipal services. As a result, a larger than average share of the tax dollar goes to the places other than schools in Danville. While the trend throughout the state is for an ever increasing share of the tax dollar to go for the schools, Danville has not participated in this increase. The following two tables are used to illustrate this fact. Table 4 compares Danville to the other cities studied and Table 5 compares the trend in Danville with the average state trend. As in most computations, the revenue from Cook County schools is excluded as having a different base than the remainder of Illinois. However, with the exception of Peoria, all the other schools listed show a larger share of taxes for schools than does the city of Danville.

A few words of explanation are necessary for an understanding of Table 4. First, as none of the other cities support a junior college, the additional tax for the maintenance of the college is omitted from the Danville rate. This makes all the cities compared on the same basis and gives an accurate picture. Also, all of the comparisons are for the year 1964, the most recent year available for comparison. Table 4 shows how much of the total tax dollar goes to schools in six Illinois cities.

TABLE 4  
PERCENT OF TOTAL TAX GOING TO SCHOOLS IN SIX  
SELECTED ILLINOIS CITIES FOR THE YEAR 1964<sup>d</sup>

City	Total Tax	Educational Tax	Percent of Total Tax
Champaign	\$4.079	\$2.917	71.50
Urbana	4.22	2.764	68.70
Decatur	3.869	2.573	66.50
Bloomington	3.524	2.153	60.92
Danville	4.076	2.063	50.61
Peoria	3.610	1.81	50.14
Downstate Illinois Average			67.20

<sup>d</sup>Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction  
1964 Assessed Valuations and 1965 Tax Rates  
Illinois Public Schools, Springfield, Illinois, 1965

The table shows that Danville is nearly 17% below the downstate average. Danville is also nearly 11% below the average of the six cities studied. The average is 61.16% for these cities.

Where the money goes.-- The figures in Table 5 show how much of the tax dollar goes to the schools. Both for the state of Illinois and Danville it shows how much of the local property tax dollar goes to the schools. Both figures on Table 5, below, are shown as percentages rather than as dollars and cents.

TABLE 5  
PERCENTAGE OF TAX DOLLAR GOING TO SCHOOLS IN DANVILLE  
AND AVERAGE OF SCHOOLS IN DOWNSTATE ILLINOIS 1955-64

Year	Illinois Average <sup>e</sup>	Danville Average <sup>f</sup>
1955	63.6%	53.0%
1956	64.0	48.0
1957	65.5	52.0
1958	70.0	45.0
1959	66.6	54.0
1960	66.5	52.0
1961	66.0	52.0
1962	66.7	52.0
1963	67.0	52.0
1964	67.0	53.7

<sup>e</sup>Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, Illinois Property Tax Statistics, 1964 Illinois Public Schools, Springfield, Illinois, 1965.

<sup>f</sup>Personal interview with Harlan Hosch, Vermilion County Treasurer, Danville, Illinois, June, 1966.

Not only is Danville much below the state average but is falling increasingly behind this average as will be seen by Table 5. In any year of the ones shown, the closest Danville came to the state average was in 1959 when it was 12.6% below the state average.

One last comment on the school's share of the tax dollar is the comparison of the 1965 tax rates of Danville. For this purpose, the junior college is computed separately from the school district and will be included in neither the school nor total tax rates. Table 6 shows an itemized list of the various taxing units sharing in the local property taxes of Danville.

TABLE 6

BREAKDOWN OF TAX RATE FOR DANVILLE BY TAXING BODIES AS CENTS PER \$100 ASSESSED VALUATION 1965<sup>g</sup>

Allocation	Amount
County Tax.....	\$0.22
Township Tax.....	0.12166
Road and Bridge.....	0.11591
Equipment.....	0.2843
Vermilion County Airport.....	0.0699
Danville Sanitary District.....	0.268
Danville City.....	1.15
Danville Unit School District #118.....	<u>2.3806</u>
Total	<u>4.35450</u>

<sup>g</sup>Personal interview with Mr. Harlan Hosch, Treasurer of Vermilion County, Danville, Illinois, June, 1966.

The school tax in the table reflects the increase granted by the state legislature in the past year. Even though the school district's share of 54.6675% shows very little increase over the previous years, it is a start. Since Danville is not getting what the other comparable cities get from the local tax dollar as was shown in Table 4, it must turn elsewhere for help. The only places left to turn are the state and federal governments.

State aid.-- State aid can come from a number of sources and in many ways. Taking advantage of anything that the state had to offer has been one way Danville eased the financial crisis according to Mr. Radcliffe.<sup>25</sup> The most important single item of state aid is the special equalization fund which is designed to help the school district with a low assessed valuation per pupil. It takes into account the district's average daily attendance and the assessed valuation. It can be seen how important the equalization fund has been to Danville by comparing Danville with the other cities in the control group. Table 7 shows the aid given by the fund to six Illinois cities.

As will be noted, there is almost a perfect correlation between the low assessed valuation and the larger amount granted by the equalization fund. Danville is being given the same amount as the poor hill country in southern Illinois.

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<sup>25</sup>Interview with Mr. David C. Radcliffe, May, 1966, Superintendent of Danville Unit #118, Danville, Illinois.

TABLE 7

SPECIAL EQUALIZATION FUND GRANT PER PUPIL  
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SIX ILLINOIS CITIES 1964

City	Pupils in ADA	Amount for Fund	Amount Per Pupil
Danville	10,037	\$ 1,614,263.28	\$ 169.82
Decatur	19,441	2,665,474.10	136.59
Urbana	5,333	644,807.42	120.99
Champaign	10,614	1,103,327.65	103.95
Bloomington	6,228	459,891.16	73.64
Peoria	22,860	1,678,052.52	73.41

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Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, Illinois Public Schools Basic State Aid Claims 1966, Springfield, Illinois.

Another way of emphasizing who is paying Danville's school costs is by comparing both the dollar amount and the percentage that the school district received from the local, state, and federal governments. While state aid tends to be given to the units displaying the greatest need, the federal government does not make such a distinction. It tends to give financial aid for a specific purpose or for a specific fund, regardless of the relative wealth of a district.

Table 8 illustrates the relative insignificance of the amount supplied by the federal government in the overall cost of education because the largest

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Illinois Education Association Lessons in Illinois Public School Finance.  
Springfield, Illinois 1962.

TABLE 8

SOURCES OF SCHOOL INCOME FOR SIX SELECTED ILLINOIS CITIES IN 1964<sup>i</sup>

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City	Local Taxes	Percentage of Total Income	State Taxes	Percentage of Total Income
Bloomington	\$3,178,302.03	78.4%	\$ 616,604.17	15.3%
Peoria	7,911,905.85	82.2	1,148,152.42	11.9
Champaign	4,685,754.21	66.6	1,680,264.88	23.8
Urbana	2,017,248.86	64.6	837,994.57	26.8
Decatur	6,028,897.72	60.9	2,721,193.83	27.5
Danville	2,351,644.44	51.42	1,722,793.65	37.67

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<sup>i</sup>Office of State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Illinois Public School Financial Statistics, 1963-64, Springfield, Illinois.

TABLE 8  
(Continued)

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Federal Tax in Dollars	Percentage of Total Income	Other Income in Dollars	Total in Dollars	Total Percentage
23,993.69	.7%	229,516.14	4,053,417.03	100
45,403.95	.5	523,257.60	9,628,719.82	100
154,609.87	2.2	511,136.07	7,031,775.03	100
39,541.94	1.3	327,818.34	3,122,597.71	100
107,369.07	1.8	125,331.91	9,899,555.55	100
139,826.09	3.0	368,313.21	4,572,577.39	100

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amount any school district in the study received was only 3% of the total income for schools. The greatest variance among the cities comes under the percentage of local tax support for the schools. The figures in this column vary from 82.2% down to 51.42% with Danville having the lowest figure.

Two factors influence the ranking of Danville on the list on Table 8. One is the low assessed valuation per pupil with the state making up the deficit thus created. The other is somewhat similar, the relatively small percentage of the tax dollar going to schools in Danville as shown on Table 6.

Table 8 shows what percent of the school costs are paid by the local, state, and federal governments for the six selected schools in the state of Illinois.

#### Danville's Low Tax Base

So far the writing has concerned taxes and their relation to the schools. The assumption has been that the city of Danville has consistently had an expanding tax base. This is not true. While most cities gained additional tax revenue in the last ten years by simple inflationary trends throughout the country as a whole, Danville gained but very little in this manner. In fact, this gain was so modest that it was outweighed by another factor which is now mentioned. Of the six cities studied, only Danville has so far been affected by this happening.

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<sup>27</sup> Personal interview with Mr. Wm. Lewis, Assistant Treasurer of Vermilion County, Illinois, June, 1966.

In the early 1960's, Danville was chosen to be on an important east-west federal highway, to be called Interstate 74. The city property of most of the cities along this route, such as Champaign and Urbana, was not affected by the right of way acquisitions. The highway ran beyond the city limits of most of these cities. However, in Danville the highway cut through the south side of the city from east to west, a distance of about five and one-half miles. It required an area of approximately two city blocks in width along the entire length. This area was made up of modest residences and small businesses. According to Mr. William Lewis,<sup>28</sup> much of the business property did not relocate within the city but moved south along Illinois State Route 1. Thus it was lost to the city as far as tax purposes were concerned.

Reduction in assessed valuation.-- As a result of the previously mentioned event, the city of Danville lost a considerable area of taxable property. The area taken over by the federal highway program was, of course, government property and tax exempt. Danville will be helped by the proximity of Interstate 74, but the loss of revenue from taxes caused by its construction was felt rather severely. According to Mr. Lewis,<sup>29</sup> the period from 1958 through 1962 was a period of generally rising prices and prosperous expansion when most central Illinois cities increased the assessed valuation from which they received their revenue. However, in the city of Danville, the

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<sup>28</sup>Ibid.

<sup>29</sup>Personal interview with Mr. Wm. Lewis, Assistant Treasurer of Vermilion County, Danville, Illinois, June, 1966.

opposite was true. The assessed valuation of property within the school district dropped from \$126,000,000 to \$123,051,298. As Mr. Lewis pointed out, the decrease is rather insignificant in amount, but the fact that the trend was in the wrong direction is significant.

Great Needs -- The period just mentioned, from 1958 through 1962, was also the period when the school reorganization happened in Danville. The three junior high schools were built. Not only did the expense of the buildings come into the picture but these buildings had to be equipped, supplied, and staffed. Although some teachers went from the elementary schools, many new teachers were also needed. While the cost of the construction was bonded indebtedness, the operating expenses came mostly from the education fund, and there was the difficulty, according to Mr. Edwards.<sup>30</sup> A crisis was developing Danville.

#### What Happened in Danville

Growth and enrollment -- As far as population growth and school enrollment is concerned, Danville was not very different from most cities about its size in the Middle West. As enrollment increased, so also did the teaching staff. As the cost of living increased, so also did the average salary paid the certified personnel. But then, the educational requirements for teachers were being raised, and more of them were working on advanced degrees. By the fall of 1965, 217 of the personnel in the district had a

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master's degree. Of course, this is certain to be reflected in the average cost per pupil, as the educational fund, from which the teachers are paid, comprises by far the largest amount of the operating budget of the school district. In the case of Danville, in excess of 69% of the operating expenses went for teachers' salaries and benefits. The figures on Table 9 do not reflect a true picture when compared with the enrollment in the Danville public schools because the total number of certified personnel includes those employed by Danville Junior College. The number was not divided in the records until recently because the junior college, as a part of Unit #118, had some of the personnel employed by both the high school and the college. Then too, the supervisory and administrative personnel served both the college and the public schools. However, as the figures are used to show a trend, the percentage of increase from one year to the next will be fairly accurate. The pupil-teacher ratio will not be attempted from the figures in Table 9.

Although the increase in personnel may seem large, much of it reflects the rise in special education about ten years ago and the staffing of the new junior high schools in 1961 and 1962. The elementary schools did not add many teachers during this period, yet the pupil enrollment increased to a large extent. As a result, the teaching load at the elementary level increased greatly and classes of 44 and 46 pupils became quite commonplace.

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<sup>31</sup>  
Danville Unit #118 Certified Personnel Register - 1966, Danville, Illinois.

TABLE 9

CERTIFIED PERSONNEL OF DANVILLE UNIT DISTRICT #118  
NUMBER EMPLOYED FOR THE YEARS 1954-65 INCLUSIVE<sup>j</sup>

Year	Number	Percent Increase	Year	Number	Percent Increase
1954	313	--	1960	373	4
1955	326	4	1961	402	8-1/2
1956	343	5	1962	431	7
1957	344	0-1/4	1963	438	2
1958	351	2	1964	467	6-1/2
1959	361	3	1965	487	4

<sup>j</sup>Office of Danville School District #118 Payroll and Salary Records, Danville, Illinois, 1965.

Because of the public attitude, as evidenced by the school referenda shown on Table 12, there was not sufficient money to adequately staff the elementary schools. Classes were often larger than normal. This led to widespread teacher dissatisfaction and a greater number of resignations than usual. To help keep the teachers, a salary schedule was set up. Although the lack of money did not permit keeping the teachers on schedule for a few years, enough money was raised so that during the last two years the schedule has been put into effect again with all salaries on schedule. The results are shown in Table 10, which shows how the teachers' salaries increased.

TABLE 10

AVERAGE SALARIES OF TEACHERS, DANVILLE DISTRICT #118, 1954-65<sup>k</sup>

Year	Salary	Percentage Increase	Year	Salary	Percentage Increase
1954	\$4259.00	--	1960	\$5828.00	1 %
1955	4530.34	7 %	1961	5906.00	1
1956	4893.00	8	1962	6231.00	5-1/2
1957	5203.00	6	1963	6184.62	-1-1/2
1958	5511.38	6	1964	6273.20	1-1/2
1959	5773.47	5	1965	6575.06	3

<sup>k</sup> Office of Danville School District #118, Danville, Illinois, Payroll and Salary Records, 1954-65.

The percentage of increase from 1954 to 1965 was 54.1%. This covers a 12 year period and is just about on the index of the present schedule. If a teacher with a bachelor's degree were to remain in the system for twelve years and take no further schooling, his salary increase as called for by the present schedule would be 48%. This is based on the 4% increment now in effect. In other words, the increase was only 6% more than the regular schedule which was not much more than the cost of living increases. Two variables are reflected in the salary average. The policy of more advanced schooling and a larger than average percentage of long-service teachers inflated the average.

The trimming of the school budget brought the per pupil costs down to a very low figure, much lower than that of any of the other six schools. Table 11 is computed on an every pupil basis and takes into account the special education pupils which are sometimes not included in cost per pupil tables. As a result, there may be some variance between these figures which come from state sources and other figures coming from local sources. Table 11, below, is for the six cities for the year 1964-65, the most recent available.

TABLE 11  
COST PER PUPIL FOR SIX ILLINOIS CITIES 1964-65<sup>1</sup>

City	Average Cost Per Pupil
Champaign.....	\$695.14
Urbana.....	595.15
Bloomington.....	547.54
Decatur.....	547.54
Peoria.....	501.70
Danville.....	475.86

<sup>1</sup> Personal interview with Sybil Copeland, Office of State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Springfield, Illinois, July, 1966.

Election results.-- Many factors can be given for the defeats of the school referenda, yet only a few need to be explored here. The reason for

this is that a favorable reaction from any one of the factors would have given the education fund the money needed, in the opinion of Mr. Edwards. 32  
After studying the records and editorial comment available in school records, the writer is inclined to concur with Mr. Edwards' opinion .

The first factor was that the timing was, quite obviously, very bad. The first school referendum was scheduled for March 16, 1963, scarcely a year after the bad publicity concerning the junior high school had been the subject of open discussion.

The second factor ties in with the first; too many items to be voted upon. Three items were voted upon, which was a large order for a public still feeling unhappy over the building program. The first, and largest, item was the addition to the building fund. This was a request for 40¢ additional authorization to bring the education fund allowance up to \$1.80. The other propositions were to give 7-1/2¢ each to the building fund and the junior college. While a strong case could be made for the education fund, the other two propositions were harder to defend and as a result the whole referendum went down to defeat. The fact that the last two propositions were omitted on all subsequent ballots made little difference. The die was cast, and all subsequent elections were mere repetitions of the first.

The third reason was, as has been mentioned before, the fixed income of the retired people. This was brought out quite strongly by the numerous

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<sup>32</sup> Personal interview with Mr. Conan Edwards, Superintendent of Danville Unit #118 Schools from 1962-4, March, 1964.

letters to the editor and paid advertisements that were in circulation. The retired people were not convinced that they could afford the tax increase.

Before mentioning the fourth item, it should be noted what actually happened in the elections. There were four different attempts over a two year period and the voting as tabulated in Table 12 will provide some comparisons. They will show a big reason why it happened. The first vote was held on March 16, 1963, and the other three within an eighteen month period of the first. Thus, the four votes in a year and a half could be a cause of the defeat of all of them.

TABLE 12

TABULATION OF RESULTS OF FOUR SCHOOL REFERENDA HELD IN DANVILLE, ILLINOIS 1963-64<sup>m</sup>

Proposition	March 16, 1963		August 6, 1963		May 9, 1964		July 11, 1964	
	For	Against	For	Against	For	Against	For	Against
#1 - Increase in Education Fund	2855	7033	4828	7833	2999	4228	3397	4944
#2 - Increase in Building Fund	2697	7093						
#3 - Levy for Junior College	2762	7033						

<sup>m</sup>Compiled from Danville Unit District #118 records, 1963-64,  
Danville, Illinois, 1966.

## CHAPTER III

### DANVILLE'S EDUCATIONAL FUTURE

Plans for the future of Danville's schools fall into two categories. The first one is the long range plan that involves radical changes in the unit's boundaries. As this plan also involves other units and their possible consolidation, it will take considerable time and effort by several of the parties concerned. The second category is the more urgent one that requires immediate attention, in the opinion of the writer.

#### The Long Range Plan

Redistricting.-- One of the goals of the Illinois Task Force on Education is the reduction of the number of school districts in Illinois by consolidation.<sup>33</sup> Vermilion County, of which Danville is the county seat and principal city, is one of the prime examples of what the Task Force has in mind. It will affect school districts other than Danville though, so it is not entirely Danville's problem.

The main reason why Danville and Vermilion County are concerned with consolidation is the large number of school districts in the county. Vermilion County has 37 school districts, fourth largest number of any down-

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<sup>33</sup> Article in the Champaign News-Gazette, June 14, 1966.

state county.<sup>34</sup> Only Woodford is a smaller county in population with a larger number of school districts. Both Peoria and LaSalle counties have more school districts but they are more populous counties.

Even though the number of districts in the county is large, some consolidation is being accomplished. In 1963 Vermilion County had 44 districts, so some progress is being made. Even greater progress has been made in the last 20 years. Mr. R. S. Elliot, Vermilion County Superintendent of Schools,<sup>35</sup> stated that when he first took office in 1947 there were 185 districts in Vermilion County, a county of less than 100,000 people.

Only five of the county's districts have less assessed valuation per pupil than Danville, yet most have a higher tax rate.<sup>36</sup> The majority are separate elementary and high school units which make for a double tax, usually totaling a greater amount than a unit district with but a single tax for educational purposes. For this reason, nearly all school districts in the county would gain by consolidation.

A typical example in Vermilion County is the four communities of Sidell, Fairmont, Indianola, and Jamaica. They all have small elementary schools with enrollments varying from 182 down to 44. Grades one through eight are included. All of the high school students of these four villages

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<sup>34</sup>Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, Illinois School District List, Springfield, Illinois, 1966.

<sup>35</sup>Personal interview with Mr. R. S. Elliot, Vermilion County Superintendent of Schools, Danville, Illinois, June, 1966.

<sup>36</sup>Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1964 Assessed Valuation and 1965 Tax Rates, Illinois Public Schools, Springfield, Illinois.

attend a central rural high school called Jamaica Consolidated High School. This would work out well except that each school has its own district and school board, making five in all for a total of 661 students.<sup>37</sup> In the opinion of the writer, a consolidation is in order so as to eliminate some duplication.

There is hesitancy on the part of the rural schools to consolidate with Danville's system for fear of increasing the tax load. Yet this is not always true. For instance, the town of Bismark is quite close to Danville and has a higher assessed valuation per pupil than Danville, but also has a higher tax rate.<sup>38</sup> If they were to consolidate with Danville, their school tax would be less. The tax rate in 1964 for Danville schools was \$2.13 per \$100 assessed valuation while Bismark's rate for the same year was \$2.36.<sup>39</sup> The state aid drawn by Bismark was about \$100 per pupil from the state equalization fund while Danville drew \$160 per pupil from the same fund.

As one of the largest counties in area in the state of Illinois, Vermilion County could reasonably have several districts. There are five high schools in the county with more than 375 students and these could be centers of consolidated districts, in the writer's opinion. Then the other smaller units and elementary districts could incorporate into these schools.

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Illinois Education Association, Assessed Valuation per ADA Pupil, Springfield, Illinois, 1966.

<sup>39</sup> Illinois Education Association, School District Tax Rates, Springfield, Illinois, 1965.

According to the Illinois Task Force on Education, the ultimate goal of consolidation is an enlarged and improved curriculum. Such a curriculum would help to give Illinois' children a better education. In light of this reasoning, the following statements seem very appropriate. They were contained in an article on the Illinois Task Force on Education. Although the article contained more material than just the interview, the main part consisted of an interview with Dr. William F. McLure of the Task Force. Only the sections applicable to the matter at hand are quoted but the quotation is complete. In a recent newspaper article he said:

We felt that every individual child should have an opportunity for the broadest possible education, no matter where he lives. We shouldn't educate children to live in the little communities where they are now residing. We should educate them to live in the larger society.

Only about 1 in 5 of the children now living in Tolono will reside there as an adult. The others will live in towns the size of Champaign-Urbana or in places larger than Champaign. This is a fact of population movement.

The question arises then whether we should keep the kind of local control which denies the children opportunity rather than providing it. For example, a disproportionate amount of their education may be based on agriculture when very few students will actually go into agriculture.

We are losing local control now because the small districts must rely so heavily on state and federal people for guidance in curriculum and planning. In order to maintain realistic and effective local control we need people at the local level who are professionally competent enough to handle these problems themselves.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>40</sup>Quoted in the Champaign News-Gazette, Champaign, Illinois, June 14, 1966, Page 13.

These words could easily be directed to the parents and taxpayers of Vermilion County. Actually they were directed to the citizens of Champaign County.

Benefits to Danville -- In the first place, it would give District #118 a larger tax base by including some rich farm land. For what it is worth, it would also include some strip mining property which might help some on assessed valuation. It would also make it possible to have Danville residents build and move outside the city limits and still have the benefits of the city's schools. At the present time, only the town of Tilton beyond the corporate limits of the city of Danville is included in School District #118. New building is a great need in the city of Danville, primarily rental property. In the opinion of Mr. Paul Brumaghim, a leading realtor in Danville, mortgage money is in tight supply, especially in Danville. As a result very little new building is being done and what is available is sub-standard. Many people employed in education or as supervisory personnel are looking for good quality rental units, but very few are available.

Time will aid the assessed property situation in Danville. Several important additions to Danville's industrial facilities have been completed within the last year. Plant expansion is in process in three major industries within the city. When the added property gets on the tax books, some additional revenue should be realized.

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Personal interview with Mr. Paul Brumaghim, Danville, Illinois, Realtor, 1966.

### Immediate Plans

In the opinion of the writer, the short range plans require more immediate attention. As has been stated before, the need for additional money is acute, and this must be the number one problem facing Danville's schools at the present time. A closer look at the reasons for this will show where the trouble is.

Education Fund.-- To begin with, it must be noted that most of the various funds constituting the educational tax rate are fairly adequate except one, according to Mr. Radcliffe.<sup>42</sup> This is the largest one, the education fund. Until last year the tax rate authorized has been \$1.40 per \$100 assessed valuation. This rate has not changed since 1954.

During this same period the teachers' salaries have risen with no increase in the tax rate and a very little rise in the assessed valuation of property. Besides the rise in salaries, the city schools were almost required to give the same salary incentives as other cities in the area in order to attract teachers. Danville was certainly not in competition with other schools in the county because most of the others, being smaller, did not require bachelor's degrees for employment. Yet Danville had to maintain its standards as best it could, attempt to keep on the prescribed salary schedule, and still encourage advanced degrees. In fact, at the present time, of the approximately 487 certified personnel in the system, there are 217 people

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<sup>42</sup>Personal interview with Mr. David Radcliffe, May, 1966, Superintendent of Danville Unit #118, Danville, Illinois.

with a master's degree.<sup>43</sup> All of this added to the payroll and created sizeable deficits in the education fund. Another considerable factor was the rapid rise in enrollment. Much of this rise was taken care of by simply increasing the size of the classes. This was not a good solution but most of the teachers accepted it as an emergency measure.

Working with the Danville Education Association and the representative council, the Danville Board of Education made available what funds they would get for teacher welfare. The representative council consists of one teacher from each building and deals with the advancement of educational programs and teacher welfare within the district. For two years Danville was unable to maintain the schedule, but the raising of the foundation level by the state enabled them to resume the schedule. This was done even though the education fund continued to show a deficit. For this year, the state has permitted the levying of an additional 20¢ per \$100 for the education fund. However, it also put a minimum of \$5,000 starting salary for degree teachers. As the minimum was \$4,900 in Danville, an across the board increase was required.

In an unusual move, the school board in 1966 let both the representative council and the Danville Educational Association determine how the additional funds from the 20¢ grant would be spent. The board said \$300,000 was available in the education fund for teacher welfare. The teachers voted

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<sup>43</sup> Danville Unit District #118, Certified Personnel Register, Danville, Illinois, 1966.

to put the base pay at \$5,200, which made all the teachers receive a \$300 across the board increase besides the increment accruing by the regular schedule. To help reduce the pupil load, ten new teachers were employed and non-certified personnel were hired to relieve the teachers of lunch duty. The accumulation of one hundred days of sick leave was approved although only sixty days were allowed in any one school year. In the opinion of the writer, this left the teachers in a fairly good situation with most demands satisfied. However, the 20¢ increase was only about breaking even and not reducing the deficit.

For this reason, a favorable vote on a tax increase for the education fund would help very much. In this way the school district would be paying its way without additional borrowing. What the board of education wishes to avoid is the constant use of anticipation warrants for operating funds toward the end of the school year. In the opinion of the writer, the use of anticipation warrants is not only poor management but also an expensive way to borrow.

Curriculum.-- Being a city school system, Danville does not have the problem of a limited curriculum as have many adjacent smaller districts.<sup>44</sup> If any additions to the curriculum are needed, the high school, with an enrollment of around 2,100 students, is large enough to handle the needed courses. With a broad technical curriculum being offered by the junior college, the urgent need for such courses that will terminate in high school has been

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<sup>44</sup> Personal interview with David C. Radcliffe, May, 1966, Superintendent of Danville Unit #118, Danville, Illinois.

curtailed. More strictly preparatory courses can be offered and that will probably be the trend in the high school. This will also save money for the high school, as much of the expensive technical equipment will be left to the junior college. Then too, the high school will learn to depend more and more upon the junior college for technical advice and assistance.

Teacher loads.--Reduction of the teacher load to a more manageable figure has, for the most part, been attained, according to Mr. Radcliffe.<sup>45</sup>

The large class loads were necessitated by the financial crisis of a few years ago. The year 1964-65 marked the last year of the pupil load in excess of forty per classroom. Another sign of pupil-teacher imbalance, the split room with two grades per room, is gradually being eliminated. One of the things the extra 20¢ brought to Danville was additional teachers. The average load will be about 26 students per teacher, with the elementary schools averaging somewhat higher. In the opinion of the writer, teaching and the climate for teachers is improving.

Schools had to abandon many teaching positions considered expendable in the interest of the economy move a few years ago. Music supervisors and all elementary music teachers were either assigned to be classroom teachers or dismissed. Art supervisors were in the same situation. Their return is one of the problems to be considered in the near future. For the past few years, the classroom teachers have either been handling their own music, or trading with a teacher qualified to teach music. With certain exceptions,

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<sup>45</sup>Ibid.

This was due to the fact that the college had purchased several fringe buildings for temporary use. While these buildings are generally unsuitable for permanent high school buildings, the land is there for future building. Superintendent of Schools for Danville District #118, Mr. David Radcliffe,<sup>46</sup> has said that the entire area surrounding the high school would lend itself admirably to a campus type high school if the pressure of enrollment would force an expansion of the high school. The location of the school at the present time is readily accessible from all parts of the city and is on two through streets for easy approach. Parking facilities, while not large, are adequate for a high school alone.

The ninth grade being included in the junior high instead of the high school has also eased their load.

New programs.-- Because Danville has a much larger than average number of deprived or underprivileged families,<sup>47</sup> the federally sponsored anti-poverty program has had an important effect on Danville. "Operation Headstart" has been extensively developed and has worked to good advantage. While this is almost entirely financed by other than the local school board, plans for its future use locally are pretty well advanced. Even before this program came into being, there was a program being planned to compensate for the individual differences that were becoming more and more apparent with a closer look at the culturally deprived.

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<sup>47</sup> Personal interview with Mr. Glen Lecount, Director of Special Education, Danville Unit #118 Schools, Danville, Illinois, June, 1966.

Summation

State goal.-- Except for the reduction of the many school districts in Vermilion County, which is primarily a state goal, Danville's plans are not clearly defined for the distant future. The present trends in education, as Dr. McLure<sup>48</sup> has pointed out, should give the child an education for a city oriented life, but nobody can tell if that is what will be needed in the future for certain. Also, what is applicable today for urban living may be entirely inappropriate fifteen years from now.

The vote.-- According to Mr. Radcliffe,<sup>49</sup> a favorable vote on a school tax referendum is a definite necessity. He says it should be seen, within two years if possible. The increase in the education fund permitted by the state will soon be absorbed by recent cost increases due to teachers' salary increases.

It is hoped that the 1968 reappraisal will give the city a larger tax base; the addition of several new industries will help.

So, in the writer's opinion, it is time for the citizens of Danville who are interested in education to start a concerted campaign to change the community's thinking toward schools and school finance. This will not be easy. It will require much effective publicity through the local news media, explanation meetings before groups generally opposed to any tax increase, and even a great amount of personal contact, cajolery and persuasion.

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<sup>48</sup>Quoted from article in Champaign News-Gazette, June, 1966.

<sup>49</sup>Personal interview with Mr. David Radcliffe, May, 1966, Superintendent of Danville Unit #118 Schools, Danville, Illinois.

Facts and figures are available which can present a convincing story. This then, is the first problem to be solved. After the citizens accept their financial responsibility, all other immediate problems should fall into place.

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