

A SURVEY OF THE
EXTRACURRICULAR DRAMATIC
ACTIVITIES IN MICHIGAN HIGH SCHOOLS 1961-1962

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ABSTRACT

A SURVEY OF THE EXTRACURRICULAR DRAMATIC ACTIVITIES IN MICHIGAN HIGH SCHOOLS 1961-1962

by Donald E. Heady

A questionnaire was mailed to the 778 public and private high schools in the State of Michigan. Five hundred and sixty-nine or 73% of the sample responded indicating that 452 or 77% of the schools had programs each presenting an average of 1.8 plays per year.

Seven hundred and thirty-one full length plays, 72% of which were comedies, were produced. The most popular play was Our Town. Over 70% of the plays produced were presented by junior and senior classes.

The average play was presented twice before an average audience of 337 people per performance. The average adult admission was between 75¢ and \$1.25; the average student price was over 75¢.

The average royalty per play was \$43.16 per play totaling \$27,434 for the state. Average cost per play was \$131.05 per play totaling \$85,788 for the state. The average profit per play was \$197.40, totaling \$89,934 for the state.

The director in the majority of the schools selected the plays. The major problems in play selection were limited stage facilities and difficulty obtaining casts. In 94% of the schools the director cast his own plays. An average of four rehearsals per week were used for an average of 50.3 hours per full length play. The stage was available for rehearsal

about 66% of the time in most schools. The major problem in play production was inadequate staging and lighting facilities.

The plays were presented in an auditorium-gymnasium type of theatre in over 51% of the schools. Proscenium or traditional staging was used in 93% of the high schools. The total overall average stage dimensions were: 33' proscenium opening, 21'5" stage depth, and 45'11" wall to wall stage depth.

The average stage had two banks of stage-width border lights and 6.4 spot lights. An average of 20% of the schools had no border lights and 24% had no spot lights. About 72% of the schools had some type of lighting control, but only 37% of those with lighting control found it adequate.

Only 32% of the schools had use of fly space and 52% of those with fly space found it inadequate. About 12% of the schools with a drama program had a dramatics scene shop and 53% with their own workshop found them inadequate. About 57% of those without their own workshop had use of an industrial arts room. Over 72% of those with use of industrial arts rooms found them adequate. About 86.3% of the costumes used for plays were borrowed, the other 13.7% was split evenly between rented and built costumes.

The majority of profits from 61% of the plays went into junior and senior class funds. Only 28% of the proceeds were used primarily for drama funds and stage equipment.

The average high school play director in the state had 9.8 college or university semester course hours in drama. Only 34.7% of the directors had no formal training. Approximately 134 courses in dramatics were offered in the schools. Courses were offered in less than 25% of the high schools, most of the courses were offered in schools with enrollments of over 1000.

Less than 33% of the directors received technical aid in producing plays. About 20% received financial aid and only 9% received aesthetic aid. Sources for most of this aid came from within the school system. When asked where they might obtain future aid 75% of the directors responded that they did not know. Colleges and universities were mentioned as sources in only 20% of the cases.

Suggested improvements were: closer communication between speech educators and administrators, improved teacher training, greater opportunities for all school participation, redistribution of production profits, a stronger high school theatre organization, a college or university play reading center, and more available summer workshops for teachers and students.

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. By

Donald E. Heady

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CHAPTER I

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The purpose of this study is to survey and analyze the extracurricular dramatic activities in the Michigan High Schools for the 1961-1962 school year.

Definition of Terms

Extracurricular is defined as that which does not pertain to a course of study or is not directly controlled by, or connected with, the curriculum. Although both curricular and extracurricular may be controlled by the same administering body, the programs are different in purpose, approach, and content. In the extracurricular program, participation is on the volunteer basis, while in the curricular program, participation is required.

Dramatic activity is defined as a group theatrical production which is designed to be performed before an audience. Although individual presentations differ, at least one production is given each year. The play is written down, lines memorized, and settings and properties are used. Included are full-length plays, one act plays, and musicals. Minor skits are not included under dramatic activities. In this study, only full length and not one act plays will be fully considered.

Michigan High Schools are all high schools in the state of Michigan which are registered with the state's committee for continuing education. All private, church affiliated, and public high schools are included in this definition.

Limitations and Objectives

This study aims to discover the following information:

1. The number of high schools having an extracurricular dramatics activities program;
2. The title, author, type, kind, and length of each play presented in these high schools;
3. A breakdown of the finances of the extracurricular dramatic activities program as to royalties, price of admission, cost, profit, and use of profit;
4. The groups which sponsor the dramatic productions and the number of students which participate in them;
5. The number of performances of each production and the total attendance;
6. The person(s) responsible for casting and play selection, and the technique used for casting and play selection;
7. The rehearsal pattern for the productions;
8. The major problems in play selection and production;
9. The statistics concerning the stage and physical plant in each high school;
10. The amount of formal training the high school play director has received;
11. An indication of the drama courses taught in the high schools;
12. And the sources of technical, financial, and aesthetic help which are used, or might be used by the high schools in the state of Michigan.

This study is not an attempt to evaluate the high school programs as to their worth, but aims to give a clear picture of the situation as it exists today. The analysis of the data in this survey can be used to predict trends in extracurricular dramatic activities in Michigan High Schools. A comparison with similar studies in four other states can be made to illustrate Michigan's place in the national picture of extracurricular dramatic activities in the high schools.

Significance of the Problem

Recent studies¹ indicate that there are extracurricular dramatic activities in over 50 per cent of the Michigan High Schools. An analysis of the state-wide program may aid college and university teachers in building more effective curricula for the speech and drama teachers. The findings of this study may also aid in the evaluation of individual programs and provide a basis on which speech and drama teachers may compare special problems.²

Since four other studies of this nature have been completed in the states of Wisconsin,³

¹All four studies discussed later in this paper indicated that over 50% of the high schools in each of the four states had an extracurricular dramatics program.

²Over 90% of the schools returning the questionnaire for this study requested the findings of the study be sent to them.

³Ronald Callaway Gee, "A Survey of the Extra Curricular Dramatic Programs in the High Schools of Wisconsin 1947-1948" (unpublished Master's thesis, The University of Wisconsin, 1949).

Iowa,⁴ New York,⁵ and Ohio,⁶ these studies offer basis for comparison. The first study was completed in 1949, the next two in 1955, and the latter in 1959. This thirteen year time span offers an additional opportunity for comparison of the developments in extracurricular dramatic activities over an extended period. This study is the fifth step toward developing a picture of extracurricular dramatic activities in the high schools on a national scale.

⁴Margaret Gump Meyer, "A Survey of the Extra Curricular Dramatic Activities in Iowa High Schools 1953-1954" (unpublished Master's thesis, The University of Wisconsin, 1955).

⁵Sherwood David Lohrey, "A Survey of the Extra Curricular Dramatic Activities in the Public High Schools of New York State 1954-1955" (unpublished Master's thesis, The University of Wisconsin, 1955).

⁶Robert J. Kibler, "A Survey of the Extracurricular Dramatics Activities in Ohio High Schools 1958-1959" (unpublished Master's thesis, Ohio State University, 1959).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

The literature concerning the questionnaire as a survey technique spans only about 50 years. A brief consideration of that literature pertinent to this study is included in this chapter. The bulk of this chapter, however, is concerned with the four important related studies by Gee, Meyer, Lohrey, and Kibler.

Survey Method

The survey is "a structured attempt to obtain data--facts and opinions--about the current conditions or status of things."¹ The data of a survey is not designed to prove anything right or wrong; it is descriptive not predictive. The survey as a descriptive research technique seeks to ascertain the prevailing situation existing at the time of the study. The survey is predicated on the fact, "it is essential to know 'where we are and what we have done' in order to know 'where we desire to go and what we want to accomplish.'"² Writing on the survey method, Don C. Bliss stated:

¹John B. Barnes, The Dynamics of Educational Research (Tempe: Arizona State College Press, 1958), p. 161.

²Ibid., p. 162.

The purpose of measurement is never to impose an arbitrary uniformity. It is, rather, to discover differences and the reason for their existence, and, most of all to give us some adequate means of estimating progress or change.³

Probably the greatest advantage of the survey technique lies in the fact that it deals with practical problems. "The survey also supplies information that would otherwise be difficult to obtain."⁴ The data compiles through an adequately conducted survey may be useful to the handling of practical problems in the future and to subsequent research.

The major criticism leveled at the survey method is that it is merely superficial fact getting. As Mulgrave and Baker point out:

This criticism sometimes appears to be justified, but is the result of a failure to make good use of the survey method rather than a criticism of the survey method as such. The kind of fact getting that an efficient secretary can do should not be regarded as research. The facts must be adequately and accurately interpreted before the survey method may be considered seriously as a method of research.⁵

A very clear definition of the requirements of a survey of higher education is this one by W. C. Eells:

A survey of higher education requires a scientific collection and examination of pertinent data, prevailing if not exclusively objective in character, concerning a specific problem or problems, systematically presented and constructively interpreted

³Don C. Bliss, Methods and Standards for Local School Surveys (New York: D. C. Heath and Company Publishers, 1918), p. xx.

⁴Dorothy I. Mulgrave and Elmer E. Baker, "The Survey Approach," An Introduction to Graduate Study in Speech and Theatre, ed. Clyde W. Dow (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1961), p. 236.

⁵Ibid., p. 237.

with a view to improvement of the institution or institutions or phase of higher education with which it deals.⁶

The Questionnaire

The questionnaire was the survey technique selected for gathering the data for this study. Normally the questionnaire is used to gain information with the investigator absent. Symonds writes that the questionnaire is the instrument best fitted to measure conduct.⁷ Rugg divides the kinds of questionnaire into three major groups:

1. Those asking for facts which the reporter has observed.
2. Those asking for facts to be found in records.
3. Those asking for reactions of the individual.⁸

The following set of criteria is suggested by Symonds for building a questionnaire:

1. The number of questions should be small.
2. The questions should be brief.
3. The questions should cover information desired.
4. The questions should be simple enough to be understood.
5. The questions should not be ambiguous.
6. The questions should be specific, not general.
7. The questions should be stated in acceptable language.
8. The questions should be so arranged that the answers can be made by checking.
9. Avoid leading questions.
10. Ask questions that can be answered.⁹

⁶W. C. Eells, Surveys of American Higher Education (New York: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1937), p. 6.

⁷Percival Symonds, Diagnosing Personality and Conduct (New York: The Century Company, 1931), p. 122.

⁸H. O. Rugg, Statistical Methods Applied to Education (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1917).

⁹Mulgrave and Baker, op. cit., p. 239.

Each question in a survey of this type must be one that the respondent not only can answer, but one that he is willing to answer. "The criterion of ability concerns the extent to which a respondent, by virtue of his professional preparation and experience, can supply a reliable answer to a question."¹⁰ In evaluating a question in terms of willingness to answer, Mulgrave and Baker suggest that the researcher imagine himself in the respondent's situation and try to anticipate reasons for hesitancy on the part of the respondent. Facts of a highly personal nature, those which might be detrimental to professional colleagues and those on highly debatable professional issues should be avoided.¹¹

Studies of extracurricular dramatic activities in the high schools which were conducted before 1949 are limited in number. The reliability of these studies is rather questionable since they were conducted as long as 20 years before the Gee study. However, there are the following conclusions from these studies:

1. Small schools produce almost the same number of full length plays as do larger ones.
2. The prospective teacher of speech will direct plays in eight out of ten schools.
3. Only one-half of the schools have adequate stage facilities.
4. A relatively small amount of the proceeds from dramatic productions are used for purchasing dramatic equipment and supplies.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 240.

¹¹Ibid.

5. Teachers directing the play lack adequate training for their job.

Gee Study¹²

The first study of this nature was conducted in 1949 by Ronald Gee and was used as a pattern for those following.

Gee's purpose was to analyze and evaluate the extra-curricular dramatic activities in the Wisconsin High Schools. He was concerned with: (1) selection of dramatic productions; (2) purpose of dramatic productions; (3) financial administration of dramatic productions; and (4) the technical facilities.¹³

Gee divided his questionnaire into two segments, one concerned with information about individual productions and the other with the "circumstances under which dramatic productions were staged in various high schools in the state."¹⁴ These two segments were each divided into two groupings. The first segment was concerned with (1) the title of the productions and (2) the data on these productions. The second segment was divided into (1) the method of casting and selecting plays and the difficulties in selecting scripts, and (2) the available facilities for producing the play.¹⁵

The initial letter and questionnaire were sent on February 16, 1949. The follow up letter was sent March 16,

¹²Gee, op. cit.

¹³Ibid., pp. 1-2.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 37

¹⁵Ibid.

1949. They were sent to the individual drama teacher or the principal of each school. Of the total mailing, Gee obtained 36 per cent of the drama teacher's names. He sent the remaining 64 per cent to the principals. His initial mailing went to 414 public high schools.¹⁶ Responses were obtained from 57 per cent of his sample.

Gee's study indicated that 55 per cent of the Wisconsin High Schools responding had an extracurricular dramatics program in 1949. These schools presented an average of 1.7 productions for 1.4 performances before an average audience of 52.4. The major problems in play selection in order of their difficulty were: (1) limited stage facilities, (2) cast too large or too small, (3) objectionable stript material. The director was responsible for casting in most schools and the comedy the most popular type of play. The junior and senior classes presented the majority of the plays and charged 20-25¢ admission for children and 35-50¢ for adults. Profits went to the junior-senior fund in most schools. Less than 10 per cent of the profit was used for stage equipment. The stage was available for rehearsal less than 50 per cent of the time. The plays were presented on a proscenium stage with an equal chance of being presented in an auditorium or an auditorium-gymnasium combination.

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 36-37.

Meyer Study¹⁷

Margaret Meyer's survey was similar to that of Gee; however, she carried it one step further. Her first objective was to analyze and evaluate the educational qualifications of the teachers directing extracurricular productions.¹⁸

Meyer's questionnaire "was divided into two parts: (1) the first page, which included the name of the director, school, director's training, methods used in play selection, casting, questions related to rehearsals, stage information, financial program, and technical facilities, and (2) page two, which was a listing of the plays produced and significant data pertinent to each production."¹⁹

The questionnaires, marked confidential, were sent on March 29, 1955 to 837 high schools in Iowa. On April 22, 1955, when Meyer assumed the teachers were least busy, she sent a follow up card to the schools which had not responded to the initial mailing. All correspondence was sent to "Director of Drama" at the various schools.²⁰ Responses were obtained from 42.3 per cent of her sample.

Meyer's study indicated that 41 per cent of the Iowa High Schools responding had an extracurricular dramatics program in 1955. These schools presented an average of 2 plays for 1.4 performances before an average audience of 247. The major problems in play selection were not considered in this study. The director was responsible for casting in the

¹⁷Meyer, op. cit.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 1.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 19.

²⁰Ibid., pp. 19-20.

majority of the schools and the comedy was by far the most popular play. The junior and senior classes presented the majority of the plays charging an average price of 25¢ for children and 50-60¢ for adults. The majority of profits went to the junior and senior class funds. The stage was available for about 50 per cent of the time. The average total time spent on rehearsals was 41 hours. Over 90 per cent of the plays were presented on a proscenium stage. The majority of the plays were presented in an auditorium-gymnasium type of theatre. More than 50 per cent of Iowa school teachers had no formal training in dramatics. The quality of over 66 per cent of the plays produced in Iowa were considered of low literary quality.

Lohrey Study²¹

In his study of the high schools in New York, Lohrey also used a two page questionnaire. His aims and objectives were similar to those of Gee and Meyer. He emphasized the importance of dramatic activities through educational leaders and the significance of dramatic activities in determining the cultural level of the students.²²

The first sheet of Lohrey's questionnaire was concerned with these areas: "the type of drama programs offered in each school, the selection and casting of the plays, and the

²¹ Lohrey, op. cit.

²² Ibid.

facilities on hand."²³ The second sheet, like that of Meyer, dealt with the individual plays presented.

The questionnaires were sent on April 19, 1955, to the 747 public high schools in New York state including New York City, and were addressed "Director of Drama." Three weeks later a follow up letter was sent. Responses were received from 45.6 per cent of the sample. Lohrey's study indicated that 41 per cent of the responding high schools in New York state had an extracurricular dramatics program in 1955. These schools presented an average of 1.3 productions for 1.9 performances before an average audience of 379. The major problems in play selection were: (1) limited stage facilities, (2) cast too large or too small, and (3) objectionable script material. The director was responsible for choosing the play in only one-third of the reported cases, but in the majority of the schools he did the casting. Over 77 per cent of the plays were comedies. The junior and senior classes sponsored the majority of the plays charging an average of 50¢ for students and 80¢ for adults. The junior and senior class funds received most of the profits from productions. The majority of the plays were presented proscenium style with an even chance of being presented in an auditorium or an auditorium-gymnasium theatre.

²³Ibid., p. 24.

Kibler Study²⁴

The primary import of Kibler's study was placed on "obtaining information which would describe most accurately the extracurricular dramatic activities"²⁵ in Ohio High Schools. Unlike Lohrey, "neatness and arrangement were of secondary importance to the information which was desired."²⁶

On February 19, 1959, questionnaires were mailed to the "Director of Dramatics" in 1104 public, private, and church affiliated high schools.²⁷ Kibler's questionnaire was divided into three general areas: (1) "material used for identification purposes," (2) specific data for individual productions, and (3) "material relating to the general characteristics of the situation and problems in producing a play."²⁸ The follow up letter was sent on March 9, 1959 to those schools that had not returned the questionnaire. Responses were returned from 57 per cent of the sample.

Kibler's study indicated that 50 per cent of the schools had extracurricular dramatic activities in 1959. These schools presented an average of 1.7 plays for 1.4 performances before an average audience of approximately 324. The major problems in play selection, in order of difficulty, were: (1) difficulty meeting cost requirements, (2) objectional script material, and (3) limited stage facilities. The director usually selected the plays and cast them. Over 61 per cent of the plays produced were comedies. The junior and

²⁴Kibler, op. cit.

²⁵Ibid., p. 10. ²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Ibid., p. 17.

²⁸Ibid., p. 19.

senior classes sponsored the majority of the plays charging approximately 25¢ to 50¢ for students and 50¢ to 80¢ for adults. Class activity funds received almost all of the profits. The stage was available about 50 per cent of the time. Over 90 per cent of the schools in Ohio used proscenium style stages with an even chance of their being in an auditorium or an auditorium-gymnasium type of theatre.

Although there were some differences in emphasis in each of these studies, the basic aims and objectives were similar. This study incorporated those aims and objectives which had proved workable in the related studies. An additional aim in this study was to discover where the director goes, or would go for outside aid in producing the play. Like Kibler, the author emphasized obtaining complete information, with neatness and arrangement taking a secondary role. This study did, however, use arrangement in an attempt to create a formal appearance of the form used.

CHAPTER III

THE SURVEY PROCEDURE

Although this chapter deals primarily with the preparation and content of the questionnaire, the selection of the sample and the distribution of the questionnaire are also considered here.

Selection of the Sample

There were 778 high schools listed in the state of Michigan when this study was begun. This mailing list, obtained from the Continuing Education Services at Michigan State University, contained the names of some high schools which were no longer in existence and some which had combined with other schools. However, this was essentially a complete list. Every public and church affiliated high school listed with the Continuing Education Service, that is, every high school in the state, was included on the mailing list for this study.

Contents of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire used for this survey of the extra-curricular dramatic activities in Michigan high schools was divided into three general sections: (1) that for identification which was placed at the top of the page; (2) that for

specific information in individual plays which was in the middle; and (3) that for relating general information concerning the producing situation which was placed at the bottom of the page.¹ This same general arrangement was used in the studies of Gee, Lohrey, Meyer, and Kibler, although the amount of the material and the order varied. It was felt that the information on the questionnaire would be sufficient to ascertain an adequate picture of Michigan high school's dramatic activities. The individual items within the three major sections of the questionnaire were obtained by consulting the previous studies and through consultation with various members of the Speech Department at Michigan State University. During this planning period, Dr. John E. Dietrich, Head of the Department of Speech, acted as a representative of the Governor's Council for Culture in the State of Michigan.

First section.--The first section, that concerned with identification, consisted of four elements: (1) the name and location of the school; (2) the approximate enrollment; (3) the name and position of the respondee; and (4) the answer to the question, "Do you have an extracurricular dramatic activities program?"

Second.. section.--This section included the following information relative to individual plays: (1) the title of the play or activity; (2) the author; (3) the type; (4) the length; (5) the sponsoring group; (6) the number of

¹See Appendix B.

performances; (7) the approximate total attendance; (8) the royalty fee; (9) the price of admission; (10) the approximate cost of the production; (11) the approximate profit or loss; and (12) the number of student participants. Space was allowed for information concerning six plays.

Third section.--The third section was divided into three smaller segments. The general headings for these segments were: (1) the play; (2) the facilities; and (3) general information. Since this was considered the most important section of the questionnaire, approximately two-thirds of the page was devoted to it.

The first segment of this section entitled "The Play," was concerned with: (1) responsibility for play selection; (2) problems in selecting the plays; (3) responsibility for casting; (4) rehearsal information, including the average length, number per week, total number of hours and the percentage of the time the stage was available for rehearsal; and (5) space for listing three major problems in play production.

The second segment, that dealing with facilities, was concerned with: (1) where plays were presented; (2) type of stage; (3) stage dimensions; (4) use of and adequacy of an industrial arts room, own workshop, fly space, and light controls; (5) the number of border lights and spotlights available; and (6) the percentage of costumes that were rented, borrowed, and built.

The third segment in this third section dealt with general information. Specific data requested were: (1) the use of profit from extracurricular dramatic activities; (2) number of hours of course work the dramatic coach had taken in dramatics; (3) the courses in dramatics offered in the school; (4) where the director obtained technical, financial, or aesthetic help; and (5) where he might obtain help in the future. The respondent was also asked to check whether he wanted the results of this study and to indicate on the back of the questionnaire any special problems or explanations.

Preparation of the Questionnaire

Although the basic organizational design of this questionnaire was similar to that of Gee, Meyer, Lohrey, and Kibler, many items were simplified, or deleted, and others added. The over-all intent in creating the questionnaire was to make the questions worth a complete answer. The suggested qualities or characteristics of the questionnaire which were discussed in Chapter II were followed in the preparation of this questionnaire. Neatness and orderliness of arrangement were strived for. The questionnaire was multi-lithed on 8-1/2 by 14 inch twenty pound paper. An IBM electric typewriter with "elite" type was used to further improve the over-all appearance of the questionnaire.

Distribution of the Questionnaire

The United States Mail was decided the easiest, most efficient, and inexpensive method of distributing the questionnaire for this study. Since addressograph plates were already available for the high schools in this state, it was decided to use the facilities of the Continuing Education Services. This method of addressing the correspondence for this survey had one drawback. The plates with the names and addresses of the schools were labeled "Principal." In order to increase the chance of the questionnaire being completed and returned by the play director, a general plate, "Attention: Director of Dramatics," was added, and this statement appeared at the lower left of each envelope. No attempt was made to obtain the specific teachers' names.

The initial correspondence mailed to each school contained:² (1) the questionnaire; (2) the initial cover letter; and (3) the return envelope. The initial cover letter contained the Department of Speech letterhead and Dr. John E. Dietrich's signature and title: Head, Department of Speech. The salutation of the letter read "Dear Director." With the prestige built by the appearance of the letter and the sponsorship of Dr. Dietrich, The Department of Speech, and the Michigan Cultural Council, it was hoped that the teacher would be influenced to complete and return the questionnaire. The letter stressed the importance of the study to the respondent, the Department of Speech, and the Michigan Cultural Council.

²See Appendix A and Appendix C.

The initial letter was mailed February 26, 1962; the first follow-up letter³ was mailed March 9, 1962; and the second follow-up letter was mailed on May 10, 1962.⁴ The initial letter was sent to arrive at the end of the week, the first follow-up during the middle of the week, and the second follow-up at the beginning of the week. The time-gap between the first two letters was based on a study of the time-gap used in the related studies. The data for the third letter was chosen in hopes that by that time most of the productions would have taken place, or at least been chosen. The teachers would be less reluctant to respond since they would probably have complete information about each play.

The form of both follow-up letters was similar to the initial letter. They were designed to remind and motivate the teacher to return the questionnaire. Special emphasis was placed upon the necessity of a complete picture of the dramatic activities in all of Michigan. These letters were signed Donald E. Heady, Project Director. Another copy of the initial questionnaire and a business reply envelope were sent with these letters to every school which had not responded by March 9 and by May 9.

Classification of Schools

Gee, Meyer, Lohrey, and Kibler found the classification by enrollment the most effective way of placing the high

³See Appendix D.

⁴See Appendix E.

schools into a meaningful order. The same classification system was used in this study. After a consideration of the enrollment divisions used in the related studies, it was originally decided to place the schools in six groups. However, after about 50 per cent of the return were in, further division seemed necessary. The number of groups was revised to include eight division. These division are listed in Table 1. Throughout this paper the schools will usually be referred to by letter classification rather than enrollment.

TABLE 1
CLASSIFICATION OF SCHOOLS

Class	Enrollment	Total Number in Each Class
A	Over 1500	53
B	1001 - 1500	50
C	501 - 1000	159
D	401 - 500	120
E	301 - 400	107
F	201 - 300	118
G	100 - 200	111
H	Under 100	50
Total		778

The Michigan Education Directory⁵ for 1961-1962 was used to compile a list of the high schools in the state. A 3" by 5" card file was kept of the schools. As the responses were returned, the cards were refiled and the data recorded on 2' by 3' oak tag sheets. Very little coding was necessary, and, for the most part, the raw data was placed on the tabulation sheets.

⁵The Michigan Education Directory and Buyer's Guide, 1961-1962 (Lansing: Michigan Education Directory, 1961).

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

The analysis is discussed in relation to two aspects. The first section covers the size and reliability of the response, while the major portion of this chapter is concerned with the analysis of the response.

Size and Reliability of Response

Response to the questionnaire was very satisfactory. Of the 778 questionnaires set out, 569 were returned. This number represents over 73% of the entire sample. Most of the response came after the first letter was sent to the schools; 314 or 55% of the total response was returned at this time. The number of questionnaires returned after the first follow-up was 173, representing 30% of the total response. After the second follow-up letter, 82 questionnaires or 15% of the total response was returned.

The reliability of the response is illustrated in Table 2. In each class at least 50% of the schools returned questionnaires. Class A and B schools had an extremely high rate of 100% and 84% return. Class G and H schools had rather low rates of 50% and 51% return. A possible explanation of the low return from G and H schools might be the lack of dramatic program; 50% of the schools in class H had enrollments

TABLE 2

PER CENT OF RETURN AND NUMBER OF SCHOOLS
WITH EXTRACURRICULAR DRAMA ACTIVITIES

Class of School	Schools in Class	Total No. Responding	Per Cent Response	With Activity	Without Activity
A	53	53	100	52	1
B	50	42	84	39	3
C	169	115	62	100	15
D	120	66	55	61	5
E	112	84	75	67	14
F	123	96	77	60	30
G	111	57	51	29	28
H	40	20	50	11	9
Total	778	569	73	452	117

of less than 50. Only three of this 50% responded, and none had a dramatics program. Consequently, the incentive to respond was possibly smallest in these schools.

The returned questionnaires varied in completeness of response. However, the majority of those returned were fully completed. The partially completed questionnaires were used in tabulating the data wherever possible. Some of the schools responding indicated that they presented one or two one act plays in English classes and before assemblies as part of their class work. These responses were not analyzed, but were placed with the group of schools with no extracurricular dramatic activities. The data analyzed in this study is from schools presenting at least 3 one acts or one full length play per year.

Only 72 of the completed questionnaires were filled out by principals, indicating that 90% of those questionnaires answered were completed by the person directing plays.

Analysis of the Response

This portion of the chapter will deal with the items as they appeared on the completed questionnaires.

Extent of the Program

As Table 3 indicates, 77% of the schools in the state of Michigan had programs, each presenting an average of 1.8 plays per year. Over 75% of the schools presented two productions per year. There is no great difference in the number of plays presented; however, there is an indication that as the schools increased in size, the number of productions increased.

TABLE 3
NUMBER OF PLAYS PRESENTED IN MICHIGAN
HIGH SCHOOLS 1961-1962

Number of Plays	Class of School								Total
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	
1	6	8	26	16	26	21	16	6	115
2	26	21	60	41	38	39	12	4	242
3	8	5	7	1	3	4	0	1	28
4	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
5	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total No. Plays Produced	90	65	171	101	103	111	42	17	700
Total No. Responses	41	34	94	58	67	64	29	11	398
Ave. No. Plays Produced	2.1	1.9	1.9	1.7	1.8	1.75	1.49	1.64	1.8

Nature of Dramatic Material Presented

The definitions used in this study for each type of play were taken from John E. Dietrich's study of drama programs in colleges and universities.¹ Dietrich makes the following analysis:

Any play which has a fundamentally serious message handled in a serious manner is considered drama.
Any play which is light in nature and has entertainment as its primary purpose is labeled comedy.

The term "musical" was taken to include musical comedy, operetta, comic opera, and opera. The majority of those produced in the state were Broadway musical comedies, such as The King and I and Annie Get Your Gun. Classification of the plays according to type has depended entirely upon the author's judgment. Using play catalogues and the descriptions on the questionnaires as guides, and reading plays when there was reasonable doubt as to primary intent, the plays were classified according to the specifications submitted in the definitions above.

As Table 4 indicates, comedy is the most popular type of play among schools in every size classification. Many notes on the questionnaires indicated that play directors were giving the public comedies because comedies were the audience favorites. Only schools in classes A, B, C, and D attempted to give a balanced program with serious plays

¹John E. Dietrich, "Survey of Dramatic Activity in American Colleges: 1946-1947," Quarterly Journal of Speech, 34:185-186, April, 1946.

making up as much as 20% of their programs. In most of the classes, the serious plays were more popular than either the mystery or the melodrama.

TABLE 4
TOTAL NUMBER OF PLAYS PRODUCED
CLASSED ACCORDING TO TYPES

Type	Class of School							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Comedy	53	35	125	75	89	93	33	13
Serious	20	14	26	17	5	9	3	1
Musical	9	9	7	7	3	3	4	1
Comedy-Mystery	2	2	5	1	2	6	1	2
Mystery	3	0	6	1	1	0	1	0
Melodrama	3	1	0	0	3	0	0	0
Children's	2	2	2	2	0	0	0	0
Total	90	65	171	101	103	111	42	17

Analysis of Plays

Although the titles of plays produced in our secondary schools are largely unfamiliar to the person not acquainted with high school theatre, many of the most popular plays in Michigan are very well known. Fifteen of the top twenty-five plays have been regularly produced by college and community theatres. Among the plays produced four times or less the percentage of well known plays is smaller.

Table 5 lists the twenty-five most frequently produced plays in the order of their popularity. Each play is followed by a breakdown of its production in each of the eight classifications of high schools and by the total number of times

TABLE 5

PLAYS MOST OFTEN PRODUCED IN MICHIGAN HIGH SCHOOLS 1961-1962

Rank	Title of Play	Type	No. Times Produced in Class of School									Total
			A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H		
1.	Our Town	Serious	2	3	3	8	0	0	0	0	16	
2.	Cheaper By The Dozen	Comedy	1	0	3	6	2	2	0	0	14	
3.	Ask Any Girl	Comedy	2	2	4	2	0	1	0	0	11	
4.	Night of January 16th	Mystery	1	1	3	2	1	2	0	0	10	
5.	Arsenic and Old Lace	Comedy	1	0	4	1	1	2	0	0	9	
6.	Dairy of Anne Frank	Serious	4	3	0	0	1	1	0	0	9	
7.	Our Hearts Were Young and Gay	Comedy	1	0	2	1	3	1	1	0	9	
8.	You Can't Take It With You	Comedy	2	2	2	0	1	2	0	0	9	
9.	The Many Loves of Dobie Gillis	Comedy	2	1	1	0	3	0	1	0	8	
10.	Meet Me in Saint Louis	Comedy	1	0	1	1	3	2	0	0	8	
11.	Lock, Stock, and Lipstick	Comedy	0	0	3	1	0	2	1	0	7	
12.	The Curious Savage	Comedy	1	2	2	0	1	0	0	0	6	
13.	The Egg and I	Comedy	1	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	6	
14.	Dino	Serious	1	0	4	0	1	0	0	0	6	
15.	My Three Angels	Comedy	2	0	3	0	1	0	0	0	6	
16.	Rocket in His Pocket	Comedy	0	0	2	1	0	3	0	0	6	
17.	A Feudin' Over Yonder	Comedy	0	1	0	3	1	0	0	0	5	
18.	Hillbilly Weddin'	Comedy	0	0	2	2	1	0	0	0	5	
19.	The Importance of Being Ernest	Comedy	3	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	5	
20.	Life With Father	Comedy	1	0	2	1	1	0	0	0	5	
21.	The Little Dog Laughed	Comedy	0	1	2	0	1	1	0	0	5	
22.	The Man Who Came to Dinner	Comedy	2	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	5	
23.	Onions in The Stew	Comedy	1	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	5	
24.	The Remarkable Incident at Carson Corners	Serious	0	0	2	0	1	1	0	1	5	
25.	Time Out for Ginger	Comedy	1	0	2	1	1	0	0	0	5	
	Total		30	26	53	33	25	20	3	1	185	

it was produced. Our Town, Diary of Anne Frank, Dino, and The Remarkable Incident at Carson Corners are the only serious plays in the twenty-five most popular. All of the rest, with the exception of one mystery are comedies. The majority of these plays have largely juvenile roles. The better known plays in this list are strong in plot and in characterization.

Many other notable plays were produced during the year. Among those produced three or four times were: A Man Called Peter, George Washington Slept Here, A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court, Teahouse of the August Moon, and Harvey. Well known plays receiving two productions were R. U. R., Mrs. McThing, All My Sons, Inherit the Wind, Madwoman of Chaillot, Rebel Without a Cause, The Loud Red Patrick, and Jane Eyre. Almost all of these plays were produced in high schools with enrollments over 300. Notable plays with single productions, and also primarily in schools over 300, were: A Raisin in The Sun, Arms and the Man, An Enemy of the People, Skin of Our Teeth, Antigone, Scapin, Tartuffe, The Male Animal, The Heiress, and She Stoops to Conquer. Shakespeare was presented in only four schools. Three of these productions, Romeo and Juliet, Alls Well That Ends Well, and Taming of the Shrew, were presented in class A schools; while A Midsummer Night's Dream was presented in a class C school.

One interesting fact which was discovered in this survey concerns the production of notable musicals. The most popular

musical was Annie Get Your Gun. Table 6 illustrates the extent of musical production in Michigan High Schools.

TABLE 6
MUSICAL PRODUCTIONS IN MICHIGAN
HIGH SCHOOLS 1961-1962

Title	Class of School								Total Productions
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	
Annie Get Your Gun	0	1	0	2	0	0	1	0	4
Flower Drum Song	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Girl Crazy	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	3
King and I	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	3
Lil' Abner	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Pirates of Penzance	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
Finian's Rainbow	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
South Pacific	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
Babes in Toyland	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Best Foot Forward	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Carousel	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Fortune Teller	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Hansel And Gretle	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Hit the Deck	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
H.M.S. Pinafore	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
New Moon	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Oklahoma	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Plain and Fancy	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Rose Marie	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Showboat	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Others	0	0	3	0	1	3	2	1	10
Total	9	9	7	7	3	3	4	1	43

Along with the above mentioned 34 productions of notable musicals, were 12 unclassified musicals and one minstrel show. The 12 unclassified productions were labeled musicals, but the author and title were not given. Although the total number of musicals produced in the state appears

small at first glance, it is, nevertheless, surprising when one thinks of the difficulties encountered in producing a musical. They require large cases and frequently many costumes. The dramatic-musical combination requires close cooperation between the music and dramatics teacher in the school or a director trained in both fields. People who can both sing and act are not readily available. Despite all of these problems, it is heartening to note that musicals are not limited only to the largest high schools.

One Act Plays

Approximately 230 one act plays were presented in Michigan high schools during the 1961-1962 school year. In eight schools one acts constituted the entire program. Table 7 gives an over-all view of one act play production in the state. In the schools producing one act plays, the drama clubs were much more active than any other group. In 5 schools a bill of one act plays was substituted for the usual junior or senior class play. Approximately 52% of the one acts produced were comedies, 35% were serious, and 13% were melodramas. When schools presented them, the average number of one acts was 2.8 per school. Many other shorter plays were given, but these fall under the classification of "skits" and were not considered in this study.

The most popular one act plays were as follows: The Valiant, 4 productions; The Storm, 3 productions; and with 2 productions each, Balcony Scene, Egad, What A Cad, Hillbilly

Christmas Carol, Beat It, Beatnick, Elmer, Love Hits Wilbur, Sorry Wrong Number, and Wilbur's Wild Night. Some of the better one act plays produced were: Dark Lady of Sonnets, Second Shephard's Play, Everyman, This Property Condemned, Aria De Capo, Pullman Car Hiawatha, The Boor, and If Men Played Cards As Women Do.

TABLE 7

NUMBER OF ONE ACT PLAYS PRODUCED IN
MICHIGAN HIGH SCHOOLS 1961-1962

Producing Group	Class of School								Total
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	
Drama Club	53	6	13	16	14	7	6	0	118
Drama Department	8	2	11	9	8	0	0	0	38
Senior Class	3	0	0	4	4	9	6	0	29
Thespians	1	7	10	1	5	0	0	0	24
Junior Class	0	0	0	2	0	9	6	0	17
English Department	1	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	5
Sophomore Class	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2
Student Council	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Freshman Class	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Total Number Plays Produced	68	15	36	34	32	27	18	0	230
Number of Schools Producing One Act Plays	24	8	15	14	16	8	6	0	101
Average Number Per School	2.8	1.9	2.4	2.4	2.0	3.4	3.0	0	
						Total Average...			2.6

Indications

The over-all picture of the types of plays produced in Michigan High Schools indicated that, while comedy was still prevalent, many very worthy plays were presented. Plays of

great dramatists were not frequently produced by any group.

A few of the comments written on the back of the questionnaires threw some light upon the reasons for the many plays of dubious quality presented in the high schools. One teacher from a class E school wrote, "My biggest problem is my lack of background in actual production of plays." A teacher in a class D school wrote,

I took the play this year with no training in this field, only to help create some sort of interest in the area. . . . But, I do this with no technical background in the drama area--so I would appreciate any aid or instruction I could receive from anyone.

A teacher in a class G school wrote,

In finding plays, I have gotten very little help from the play catalogues. . . . The Samuel French catalogue reads something like this: "Spring Fever-- 3 act comedy in which cousin John meets his fate in a small town. How Nelly helps him and the complications that ensue will afford an evening of mirth and gaiety. 12 men 3 women." ----??????? If Michigan State could afford us a good reading service, it would be a big help.

These, and other comments, plus the figures on teacher training, which are discussed later, indicated that many high school play directors were not well grounded in theatre nor did they have time to do a great deal of reading of plays. Consequently, many of the directors had to rely on published circulars from the various publishing companies to choose their plays. Other comments on the questionnaires indicated that the teacher with little or no drama training looked for a play which was easy to produce with primarily juvenile casts and a minimum of character parts.

Sponsoring Groups

Dramatic clubs play a secondary role in sponsoring full length plays in Michigan high schools. Seventy-four per cent of the plays were presented by class groups. Drama groups sponsored only 17%. The drama department or all school play was represented in only 8% of the total productions.

TABLE 8

GROUPS SPONSORING EXTRACURRICULAR DRAMATIC
ACTIVITIES IN MICHIGAN HIGH SCHOOLS
1961-1962

Sponsoring Group	Number of Full Length Productions Class of School								Total
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	
Senior Class	26	23	71	45	45	52	23	11	296
Junior Class	12	12	58	35	41	49	16	8	231
Junior and Senior Classes	0	0	4	1	0	4	2	3	14
Sophomore Class	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	2	4
Drama Club	32	14	25	9	5	3	0	2	90
Thespians	10	7	9	2	5	0	0	1	34
Drama Department and All School	16	15	9	6	8	6	0	1	61
Music Department	4	1	0	3	0	0	1	0	9
Music and Drama Departments	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	1	14

The dominance of the typical class play was commented on by many of the directors. Only one person liked the idea. Most of the directors pointed out that the limitations placed upon them by using actors from only one class were at times insurmountable. In some schools the plays are sponsored by classes, but actors come from the whole school. This policy permits wider participation in the productions.

Attendance

The totals from the performance and attendance items of the questionnaire indicate that 1,288 performances were presented before audiences totaling over 430,649. The figures in Table 9 show that the average audience for each class of schools increased with the size of the school. The size of the auditorium seems to have no relationship to the number of performances given since each group averaged about two performances per play.

TABLE 9
ATTENDANCE FIGURES FOR PERFORMANCES IN
MICHIGAN HIGH SCHOOLS 1961-1962

Class of School	No. of Responses	Performances		Total Attend- ance	Average Attendance Per Play	Range of Audience Size
		Total	Average			
A	88	208	2.2	144,956	1647.2	290-4500
B	54	131	2.1	57,785	1070.0	100-3600
C	140	308	2.0	94,018	621.6	60-6000
D	80	182	2.0	46,810	585.1	25-2000
E	78	188	1.96	35,745	458.3	25-1400
F	90	185	1.99	35,050	389.4	75-1200
G	34	60	2.0	12,135	357.9	25-700
H	15	26	2.0	4,150	270.0	50-600
Total	579	1288		430,649		

In each group response to the questionnaires indicates that these two performances were played to capacity or near capacity houses. If two plays were listed on a questionnaire, both usually played to audiences of approximately the same size. This suggests that seats were usually sold out. On

questionnaires where a great difference in attendance was indicated, the plays were usually given in two different auditoriums. For example, one class C school presented two plays before audiences averaging 200 per performance for three nights. For their production of Oklahoma the audience average was 620 each night for three performances. The plays were presented in the school auditorium, while the musical was produced in the school gymnasium. This production trend is typical of musical presentations in schools of all classes. Audience size is tripled when a musical is presented.

Price of Admission

There was a great variety of admission prices charged for the performance in Michigan high schools. Table 10 is a composite recording of the ticket sales for all schools. Some interpretation was necessary when reading the questionnaires since no space was left to separate adult admission from student admission. When two prices were listed, it was assumed that the larger one was for adults. When three prices were given, these were assumed to be the price for elementary grades or for reserved seats and were separated into the two categories of student and adult.

Although there was a wide range of admission prices, certain similarities in policy were noted. Adult prices of \$1.00 and over were found in all classes of schools; student prices of \$1.00 and over were found in every class except G. The range of student tickets, elementary and high school, was

from 25¢ to \$1.50. The range of adult tickets was from 25¢ to \$1.50. In six of the schools charging only 25¢ for adults, the price was for a children's theatre production where a blanket price was charged. The other school charging 25¢ for adults had a matinee of their production charging a blanket fee. In 71% of the cases, adult tickets cost between 75¢ and \$1.25, 48% of adult prices were 75¢, and less than 2% of adult prices were under 50¢. In all cases, 36% of the student prices were 50¢ and over 68% of the total student prices were 50¢ and over.

TABLE 10

ADMISSION PRICES FOR MICHIGAN HIGH SCHOOL
PRODUCTIONS 1961-1962

Admission Price	Number of Productions	
	Adults	Children
10¢-20¢	0	6
25¢-30¢	7	84
35¢-40¢	5	118
45¢-50¢	96	241
55¢-75¢	404	167
80¢-95¢	12	1
\$1.00	134	42
\$1.25	10	3
\$1.50	3	2

Student activity tickets were used infrequently. In almost all cases this policy was found in schools of over 500 enrollment. In only one case was a free will offering used to pay for production cost. Sufficient money was collected, in this case, to cover costs.

Cost of Productions

Schools with enrollments of five hundred or more students spent the most money on their productions. The average cost in class B (1000-1500) was the largest. This group also has the largest average cost for royalties, which may account for their having a higher average total cost than the larger class A schools. With this exception royalties, cost, and profit decrease as the enrollment of schools decreases.

TABLE 11
COST FOR PROFIT AND FROM HIGH SCHOOL
PLAYS IN MICHIGAN 1961-1962

Class of School	No. of Responses	Royalties		Cost		Profit	
		Total	Average	Total	Average	Total	Average
A	16	\$5,405	\$66.74	\$21,236	\$275.74	\$21,544	\$312.23
B	33	5,528	110.56	19,370	352.18	10,422	258.17
C	88	6,738	44.38	19,982	154.12	19,463	194.53
D	91	3,362	38.20	9,634	128.45	10,445	163.20
E	88	3,217	35.35	8,515	96.34	12,435	170.34
F	152	2,259	26.94	5,388	68.08	11,171	150.96
G	50	735	22.97	1,364	50.50	3,399	132.08
H	81	190	12.00	299	23.00	1,075	97.73
Total	599	\$27,434		\$ 85,788		\$89,954	

Over \$85,788 was spent in producing high school plays in the State of Michigan during the year. Of this total, \$27,434 was spent for royalties alone; the average school

paid \$43.16 per play. Despite this rather high average royalty cost, the average school made approximately \$197.40 profit per play. Since the production of musicals not only raises the cost and royalties, but also the profits, no attempt was made to separate them from regular plays.

The percentages in favor of making profit in the production of high school plays is very good in this state. Only \$335 in 9 productions was reported as having been lost. Only 15 schools reported they broke even, that is, they neither made nor lost money. All of these "losers" were presented in schools with over 300 enrollment. Over one-half of these productions were done by schools using a rented auditorium for producing their plays. Some of these rented theatres were Union, and the producing group had to hire a skeleton crew to comply with the law. This added expense was often more than the school's play budget could take.

Student Participation

The extracurricular dramatics programs in the high schools of the state involved participation of 23,800 students. The activities of these students can be divided into two groups: acting and crew work. Table 12 shows that slightly over 50% or 11,905 of the students were actors. There was no great difference in the ratio of actors to crew members in any of the schools. Larger high schools tended to have larger casts and crews, although the averages were inconsistent.

TABLE 12

STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN FULL LENGTH PLAYS
IN MICHIGAN HIGH SCHOOLS 1961-1962

Class of School	Number Responding	Actors		Crews	
		Group Total	Average Per Play	Group Total	Average Per Play
A	95	2,121	11.1	2,368	12.4
B	60	1,489	12.4	1,610	14.1
C	149	2,529	8.2	3,160	10.6
D	96	1,870	9.7	1,664	9.2
E	98	1,587	8.1	1,432	7.8
F	99	1,513	7.6	1,192	6.2
G	36	583	8.1	346	5.1
H	16	213	6.5	123	4.0
Total		11,905		11,895	

Methods of Play Selection

In about 52% of the schools, the director is given sole responsibility for selecting the play. Some of these directors are aware they are producing plays of dubious quality. Their comments on the back of the questionnaires indicated the lack of time to read scripts and little or no training in drama were two problems in script selection.

In 40% of the schools a student-faculty or student-director committee selected the plays. This method was most common in the selection of junior and senior class produced plays.

In 6% of the schools, a student committee picked the plays. Many of the directors pointed out that this was only a formality. In most cases the director picked the play,

and the committee approved it. In a very small percentage of the cases, the director and a faculty committee selected the plays.

TABLE 13
RESPONSIBILITY FOR PLAY SELECTION IN
MICHIGAN HIGH SCHOOLS 1961-1962

Responsibility of	Class of School								Total
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	
Director	42	27	60	30	32	21	12	1	225
Student and Director	1	1	9	3	6	7	0	0	27
Faculty-Student	11	8	37	27	28	38	17	10	176
Faculty and Director	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	3
Faculty	0	2	0	0	1	0	1	0	4

Problems in Play Selection

One of the questions on the questionnaire asked teachers to check their major problems in play selection. The director was given five choices and a blank to specify problems not listed. The director was asked to rank the items in order of their difficulty. Only a few directors misinterpreted this question and merely checked off which ones were problems. These "tic" marks were considered when the numbers were tabulated. Each of the problems listed in this question will be considered separately.

1. Limited State Facilities.--Three hundred and thirty-four schools numbered this statement as being one of their

chief difficulties. Of these 334 schools, 158 placed it as their number one problem. In addition to being indicated the greatest problem, this was the statement indicated as "no problem" by the least number of respondees. The greatest number of schools in each enrollment class placed this at the top of their list of problems. Seventy-one per cent of the high school play directors found this a major problem in choosing a play.

2. Difficulty Obtaining Cast.--Two hundred thirty-three schools numbered this among their major problems. Over 50 per cent listed it among their top three difficulties in selecting a play. Very few respondees indicated that this was "no problem." The major comment written concerning this question was that very few males were available for casting. One director wrote that the basketball coach had forbidden, for no apparent reason, any junior boy to try out for the class play. Although this is an isolated case, it does indicate the extremity of the problem in finding a play for weird cast limitations, especially in the smaller schools. Many of the directors who checked this as a major problem listed conflict with other activities as one of their chief production problems.

3. High Production Cost.--A little less than 47 per cent of our high school directors find this a major problem in play selection. About 70 per cent of those finding this

a problem listed it as one of the top three on their list. Surprisingly, this was the statement which received the least number of responses from directors in schools of the class G and H schools.

4. Objectionable Script Material.--Two hundred seventeen directors listed this as a major problem. However, less than 50 per cent listed it as one of their top three problems. About 30 per cent find this no problem at all. Objectionable script material appears to be of average importance in selecting plays.

5. Lack of Student or Audience Interest. This was the problem checked the least number of times. Only 100 schools checked this as a problem. Many of the respondees crossed out either "student" or "audience" from this statement before answering. About 50 per cent of those checking this item listed it as one of their first three problems. One teacher even crossed out "lack" and filled in "too much." Apparently this problem is of only average significance due to the small number of responses and to the large number of respondees who checked this as "no problem."

6. Other Difficulties. Many specific comments enlarging upon statements already made were included under this statement. Many more of the specific comments are considered by the author as production problems and will be discussed later. One problem mentioned by twelve teachers was finding scripts

suitable for racially integrated casts. Time for reading scripts and lack of community interest in anything but comedies were two other problems listed by a few directors.

Methods of Casting

Approximately 94 per cent of the schools in the state permit the director to cast his own plays. Most schools follow this method even when a student or faculty committee is utilized in selecting plays. It appears that, in every case, the director has a voice in the final decision.

TABLE 14
RESPONSIBILITY FOR CASTING HIGH SCHOOL PLAYS
IN MICHIGAN 1961-1962

Responsibility of	Class of School								Total
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	
Director	45	25	71	42	39	50	15	7	294
Student and Director	3	5	14	4	7	5	7	3	58
Director and Faculty	4	6	10	11	16	8	4	1	60
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Responses									412

Rehearsals

Table 15 shows a general picture of the rehearsal situation in Michigan high schools. The total average of number of rehearsals was 4.1 per week making an average 50.3 total rehearsal hours per production. The stage was available

approximately two-thirds of the time. Generally, the larger schools spent more total rehearsal time per production. The stage was available for an average of more time in class A and H schools. This part of the table might appear confusing unless we take into consideration the places where plays were presented in each class of schools. Most of class A's productions were presented in the school auditorium. This theatre was available both during the evening and during the day, no matter what time of year. In class H schools the plays are usually presented in an auditorium-gymnasium combination. During most of the year, as many of the directors

TABLE 15
REHEARSAL PRACTICES IN MICHIGAN
HIGH SCHOOLS 1961-1962

Class of School	Average Rehearsal Length	Average Number of Rehearsals Per Week	Average Rehearsal Hours Per Play	Average Per Cent of Time Stage is Available for Rehearsal
A	2.2 hrs.	4.4	71.5 hrs.	72.3
B	2.1 hrs.	4.6	64.5 hrs.	63.9
C	2.2 hrs.	4.2	56.5 hrs.	61.0
D	2.0 hrs.	4.0	45.4 hrs.	65.1
E	1.9 hrs.	4.0	48.1 hrs.	65.2
F	1.5 hrs.	3.9	39.9 hrs.	66.5
G	2.5 hrs.	3.6	42.8 hrs.	65.1
H	1.7 hrs.	4.0	33.8 hrs.	73.0
Average	2.0 hrs.	4.1	50.3 hrs.	66.6

wrote on their questionnaires, the stage is only available at night since the gym was in use for physical education classes and band practice. During basketball season, the

stage in these smaller schools was almost constantly in use day and night for games and practice. Consequently, at night during the non-basketball seasons the stage was readily available for rehearsal.

Major Problems in Play Production

Space was made available on the questionnaire for directors to list their three major problems in play production. Even on the partially completed questionnaires this section was filled out. A fairly complete picture of the production situation can be gained from their response. Table 16 lists the ten major problems existing the high schools. Each of these problems will be considered separately below.

TABLE 16
TEN MAJOR PROBLEMS IN PLAY PRODUCTION
IN MICHIGAN HIGH SCHOOLS 1961-1962

Problem	Number of Schools Reponding
1. Poor Lighting and State Facilities	213
2. Conflict With Other Activities	174
3. Availability of Stage	124
4. Lack of Props and Scenery	110
5. Lack of Teacher Time	75
6. Lack of Student Training	67.
7. Student Interest and Cooperation	34
8. Getting Male Actors	32
9. Small Budget	30
10. Lack of Faculty Aid	26

1. Poor Lighting and Stage Facilities.--By far the most frequently mentioned problem was that of limited production facilities. Two hundred and thirteen schools found this a problem. Many stages double as classrooms and one was even used as a hallway during the day. Three teachers who were working in new auditoriums complained that the building design was such that the stage was practically impossible to use. One teacher asked this question: "When are architects going to listen to suggestions for designing high school stages?"

Lighting facilities in many schools consisted of overhead border lights and footlights. Spotlights, when they were working, were permanently mounted in odd places with no possibility of flexible uses. Lighting controls, other than the on-off switch were found in very few of the smaller schools. When these schools did have any type of light control, few of them found them adequate. A more complete consideration of stage and lighting facilities will be given later in this thesis.

2. Conflicts With Other Activities.--Approximately 175 schools found this a major problem in play production. One teacher stated: "All of the people with acting talent are in everything else." This statement is indicative of the problem facing the high school dramatics teacher in schools with enrollments under 300, although it is not limited to

these groups. The more mature student is also in athletics, band, choir, student council, and other activities. The same qualities which are demanded for an adequate actor are those of the school leader. Many of the students in all classes of schools have after school or evening jobs. Working an adequate rehearsal schedule around all of these conflicting activities is sometimes impossible. The director must be content to work with the busy and capable students for short times or with the less capable students under more normal rehearsal conditions.

3. Availability of the Stage.--One hundred and twenty-four schools listed this as a major problem in production. Over 55 per cent of the schools in the state present their plays in the gymnasium. To add to this production situation, some of the directors noted that they had to vie with community organizations for the use of their own stages. Another reason behind the frequency of this problem exists in the schools which must either rent an auditorium or use that of another school. Three directors reported that they had only two rehearsals in the auditorium before they presented their plays. Although such extreme conditions are not prevelant, they do indicate the seriousness of this problem to some schools.

4. Lack of Props and Scenery.--Many of the 110 directors who listed this as a major production problem commented that they had indadequate facilities for building and storing

properties and scenery. The stage often doubled as a workshop for building scenery. Even when a school had facilities for building scenery, budget limitations and technical know-how held scenery construction to a minimum. Some directors said they had to be content with plays using only one set, usually an interior.

5. Lack of Teacher Time.--Most of the seventy-five directors listing this as a major problem felt that they could not adequately teach their present class load and direct worthwhile plays. Two directors noted that they would not direct plays again because too much time was taken from preparing their classes. Since some high school directors often had to be their own set designer and technical director, very little time was left for teaching a full load of classes. Some schools, especially the larger ones, recognized this problem and compensated for it by lightening teaching loads. The director in the smaller schools, however, seldom found this compensation.

6. Lack of Student Training.--Almost all of the 67 directors listing this as a major problem were in schools where no courses in dramatics were taught. In 95 per cent of these schools, directors were forced to cast plays from the junior or senior classes producing them. This did not appear to be a problem in schools with dramatics classes or where all-school plays are presented.

7. Student Interest and Cooperation.--Only 34 directors found this a problem. In over 50 per cent of the schools listing this difficulty, the director had less than five semester hours in drama. It appears that directors with less training in conducting rehearsals are those who suffered most with this problem. In schools with well-balanced programs, teachers sometimes suffered from too much student interest.

8. Getting Male Actors.--Thirty-two directors in all classes of schools, but primarily smaller ones, found this a major problem in production. As one director pointed out, "The more desirable males are in so many things, I can't get them to try out." The busy schedule and the attitude that plays were for girls were rated as major factors behind this problem.

9. Small Budget.--Surprisingly only 30 directors noted this as a major problem. However, this is one of the difficulties implicit in some of the problems listed above.

10. Lack of Faculty Aid.--Twenty-six directors felt that they were not receiving enough aid from their colleagues. In some schools, teachers were assigned to take and sell tickets, but few directors received help with scenic and costume construction or with makeup and lighting.

High School Theatre Facilities

The physical plant, which has been discussed to some extent already, is considered in detail here. This section

is divided into three sub-sections: auditorium, stage, and other facilities.

Auditorium.--School plays were presented in an auditorium-gymnasium combination in over 51% of the schools in the state. Only in schools of over 1,000 was the auditorium the most common theatre used for production. In class H schools 90% of the plays were presented in the auditorium-gymnasium combination. Table 17 illustrates that, as the enrollments of the schools increased, the ratio of auditoriums to auditorium-gymnasiums also increased. A few schools presented their plays on the gym floor or on a temporary platform in the gymnasium. Only about 25% of those presenting plays in the gymnasium used arena or central staging (see Table 18). Sixteen schools

TABLE 17
TYPES OF THEATRES USED FOR PLAY PRODUCTION
IN MICHIGAN HIGH SCHOOLS 1961-1962

Where Presented	No. of Plays by Class of Schools								Total
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	
School Auditorium	44	22	36	15	18	11	3	1	150
School Gymnasium	1	1	3	2	7	6	0	0	20
Auditorium-Gymnasium	3	15	49	41	35	45	23	10	221
Cafetorium	1	1	6	1	6	1	0	0	16
Civic Auditorium	0	1	4	2	0	2	2	0	11
Multipurpose Room	0	0	1	2	0	2	0	0	5
Community Theatre	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	3
Classroom	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
Local Movie House	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1

reported that they used a cafeteria-auditorium or cafetorium for producing their plays. Although this situation presented

many problems, the stage was available for rehearsals much more often than in the gymnasium or auditorium-gymnasium situation. Little theatres, civic theatres, classrooms, and even one local movie theatre were used to present high school plays in Michigan during the 1961-1962 school year.

Stage.--The proscenium or traditional type of stage was used in over 93% of our high schools. Four hundred schools indicated that they used theatres with permanent prosceniums.

TABLE 18
TYPES OF STAGES USED IN MICHIGAN
HIGH SCHOOLS 1961-1962

Type of Stage	Class of School								Total
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	
Proscenium	52	37	91	57	61	62	29	11	400
Temporary Platform	0	0	5	3	3	4	0	0	15
Arena	1	1	5	1	2	1	0	0	11
Two Theatres	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	3
Total									430

Added to this figure is the majority of the 15 schools who, although they used a temporary platform set up, used some type of temporary proscenium as well. Only 11 schools reported using arena or central staging techniques; and three of these schools had two theatres. One school presented their play on the gym floor using the proscenium technique of staging.

According to the response received, the average stage in Michigan high schools was 45' 11" wide (wall to wall), had a depth of 21' 5", and had a proscenium opening of 33' 11". As Table 19 illustrates, the larger schools had the larger stages.

TABLE 19
AVERAGE STAGE DIMENSIONS FOR PROSCENIUM THEATRES IN
MICHIGAN HIGH SCHOOLS 1961-1962

Class of School	Average Proscenium Opening	Average Stage Depth	Average Stage Width
A	38' 0"	29' 3"	56' 2"
B	36' 2"	26' 3"	63' 0"
C	32' 7"	22' 4"	44' 10"
D	34' 11"	21' 3"	50' 6"
E	32' 10"	20' 2"	42' 1"
F	31' 8"	20' 11"	40' 8"
G	29' 6"	17' 8"	40' 6"
H	25' 2"	13' 6"	29' 0"
Overall Average	33' 11"	21' 5"	45' 11"

The amount of equipment found in high schools was usually dependent upon the school size. As Table 20 points out, the average number of number of spot lights available for presenting the school play was directly dependent upon school size. The average number of border lights is also indicative of the facilities in the different classes of schools. In reading the figures in Table 20, both columns concerning border lights must be taken into consideration. The number of schools with adequate or near adequate border

lights decreased as the size of the schools decreased.

TABLE 20
LIGHTING FACILITIES IN MICHIGAN
HIGH SCHOOLS 1961-1962

Class of School	Average Number of Border Lights (stage wide banks)	% of Schools With No Borders	Average Number of Spotlights	% of Schools With No Spots
A	3.3	10.8	16.7	2.5
B	3.6	10.0	12.3	6.6
C	2.4	19.4	6.2	18.8
D	2.3	31.6	5.3	18.4
E	1.9	38.0	4.4	24.0
F	2.6	28.0	3.0	38.0
G	2.2	10.5	1.6	50.5
H	2.0	12.5	1.4	36.3
Overall Average	2.5	20.1	6.4	24.4

Lighting control was expected to be one of the major problems in high school theatres. Seventy-two per cent of the high schools in the state had some type of lighting control or dimmer board. However, only 37 of those with lighting controls found them adequate. As Table 21 illustrates, the average number of adequate lighting controls decreased as the size of the schools decreased. As was expected, adequate lighting control was a major difficulty in high school play production in Michigan.

Fly space is usually important for flexible and elaborate play production. Due to the enormous installation expense involved, few schools were expected to have any type

TABLE 21
RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION "DO YOU HAVE
USE OF LIGHTING CONTROL?"

Response	Class of School								Total
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	
Yes	48	32	75	33	46	45	18	4	301
No	4	9	25	25	18	20	10	5	115
Adequate	27	12	30	12	12	3	8	0	104
Not Adequate	19	15	40	20	30	39	10	4	177

of fly space. As Table 22 indicates, only 32 per cent of the high schools answering this question had any fly space. Over 52 per cent of the schools with fly space found it inadequate.

TABLE 22
RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION "DO YOU HAVE
USE OF FLY SPACE?"

Response	Class of School								Total
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	
Yes	25	16	33	19	11	10	7	0	121
No	23	23	64	38	54	53	20	9	263
Adequate	17	8	18	7	4	3	3	0	52
Not Adequate	10	7	13	11	6	6	4	0	57

Other facilities.--In order to present a play, many facilities other than those on the stage are important. The producing group must have room to build its scenery. If a

period play is presented, the group must have costumes or the funds to rent costumes. In the ideal production situation a group presenting a play has its own scene shop and wardrobe room. As Table 23 illustrates, only 12 per cent of the 412 directors answering this question had their own workshops. Over 53 per cent of those with a workshop found it inadequate. The usual place for building scenery in Michigan high schools appeared to be either the industrial arts room or on the stage. About 57 per cent of those directors with no workshops had use of industrial arts rooms. Over 72 per cent of those using industrial arts rooms found them adequate.

TABLE 23

RESPONSES TO THE QUESTIONS "DO YOU HAVE USE OF AN INDUSTRIAL ARTS ROOM?" AND "DO YOU HAVE USE OF YOUR OWN WORKSHOP?"

Response	Class of School								Total
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	
Industrial Arts Room									
Yes	14	13	53	25	32	43	13	8	201
No	39	26	45	33	33	22	14	3	215
Adequate	10	10	33	15	23	28	10	7	136
Not Adequate	1	3	15	9	9	12	2	1	52
Workshop									
Yes	21	9	19	5	3	3	2	0	62
No	31	30	80	51	62	62	25	9	350
Adequate	12	4	6	2	1	1	0	0	26
Not Adequate	7	3	9	3	2	2	3	0	29

In tabulating the data on the sources of costumes, many of the responses had to be interpreted from other data given on the questionnaire. Many directors presenting only modern dress plays such as Time Out For Ginger and Lock, Stock and Lipstick indicated that they built 100 per cent of their costumes. In such cases, it was assumed that the respondee either accidentally filled in the wrong blank or misinterpreted their term "built." In cases where there was doubt about the response, the answer was dropped from the tabulation. Fortunately, many of the respondees wrote short notes explaining their answers. The response indicated that the total average of costumes borrowed was 86.3 per cent. About 6.7 per cent of the costumes were rented, and 7.0 of them built. Generally, the amount of costumes borrowed increased as the size of the school decreased.

TABLE 24
SOURCES OF COSTUMES IN MICHIGAN
HIGH SCHOOLS 1961-1962

Source	Average Percentage by Class of School								Average
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	
Rented	17.4	14.3	6.7	10.6	6.5	4.2	5.5	0	6.7
Borrowed	61.8	77.1	88.3	84.7	83.1	91.0	93.7	100	86.3
Built	20.8	9.5	5.0	14.7	9.4	4.8	1.8	0	7.0

General Information

Use of Profits

Table 25 illustrates that 61 per cent of the proceeds from plays presented in Michigan high schools in 1961-1962 went to pay for class activities. The classes sponsoring plays used this money to pay for trips to Washington, D. C., graduation expenses, yearbooks, parties, proms, and similar other projects. Occasionally, some of the profits were used to buy a gift for the school. It is conceivable that such money might have found its way into stage improvements, but more often it went for "anything but stage equipment," as one director put it.

Twenty-eight per cent of the profits were used for drama funds and stage equipment. In a few schools some of the proceeds were used to send students to university drama workshops in the summer or to see professional or university production.

TABLE 25

USE MADE OF PROFITS FROM DRAMATIC PRODUCTIONS
IN MICHIGAN HIGH SCHOOLS 1961-1962

Use of Profit	Class of School								Total
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	
Class									
Activities	15	18	69	44	46	57	22	11	282
Drama Fund	21	13	20	16	14	2	2	0	88
Stage Equip- ment	13	6	12	5	4	3	1	0	44
School Fund	8	3	4	0	6	4	2	0	27
Drama Club	5	2	4	2	0	0	0	0	13
Gifts to School	2	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	4
Parish	0	0	0	0	3	1	0	0	4
Student Council	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
Publications	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

Formal Training of Directors

Response to the question concerning formal training in drama indicated that the average director had 9.8 semester hours of college or university course work. An average of about 34.7 per cent of the directors had no training at all.

TABLE 26

AVERAGE TRAINING OF PLAY DIRECTORS IN MICHIGAN HIGH SCHOOLS 1961-1962

Extent of Training	Class of School								Average
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	
College and University Semester Hours	26.4	14.2	11.5	8.0	7.0	5.5	4.9	1.4	9.8
% With No Training	5.8	12.5	23.9	39.0	40.0	56.0	51.5	54.6	34.7

The average number of semester hours for directors in schools with less than 500 enrollment was 5.6. Slightly under 50% of the directors in schools with less than 500 enrollment had no formal training in drama. As Table 26 illustrates, the amount of formal training of the director increases as the size of the school increased.

Courses Offered in High Schools

One hundred thirty-four courses in dramatics were offered in Michigan high schools during the 1961-1962 school year. These courses were offered in less than 25% of our

high schools. Over 55% of the schools with courses in drama had enrollments of over 1,000. Every class of schools, except class H, had at least two schools offering a dramatics course. The most frequently listed course was labeled "Dramatics I." As Table 27 indicates, many of the courses such as "Play Production," were listed separately when they probably belong under "Dramatics I" or some other classification. Since not enough information was given to classify these courses in a more definite grouping, they were kept separate.

TABLE 27
 DRAMA COURSES OFFERED IN MICHIGAN
 HIGH SCHOOLS 1961-1962

Course	Class of School								Total
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	
Dramatics I	30	21	13	5	2	2	2	0	75
Dramatics II	28	4	2	1	0	1	0	0	36
Dramatics III	6	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	7
Play Product.	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	6
Stagecraft	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Dramatics IV	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	3
Stagecraft II	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Acting	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Verse Choir	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Course Total									134
Schools with No Courses	11	13	63	39	49	53	21	10	279

Technical, Financial, and Aesthetic Help

Four hundred thirteen directors responded to the question "In producing a play do you receive any help?" Only 33

per cent of those responding indicated that they received technical assistance. Approximately 20 per cent indicated that they received financial assistance. Less than 9 per cent of those responding received aesthetic aid in their production situation. The sources for technical and aesthetic aid mentioned most frequently were:

1. Other teacher (51 cases)
2. Shop teacher (39 cases)
3. Art teacher (32 cases)
4. Music teacher (15 cases)
5. Administration (13 cases)
6. Janitor (13 cases)

Colleges and universities were mentioned in only seven cases. Civic theatres were named as sources in only six cases. Financial aid was listed as coming primarily from the funds of the class producing the play or from the school budget. In one school a local funeral director, and in another, a beautician helped with makeup.

In answer to the question, "If you need help in the future where might you get it?" 75 per cent of the 408 respondees either placed a question mark on the blank or wrote such comments as, "God," "Zen," "myself," "none available," or more frequently, "I wish I knew." Colleges and universities were mentioned by 20 per cent of the respondees. The other 5 per cent listed books, National Thespians, the Mott Foundation, and civic theatres as possible sources for aid.

Only 4 per cent of those returning questionnaires indicated that they did not want the results of this study. Approximately half of those stating they did not want the

results were principals. Some of the principals asked that the results be sent to one of their teachers instead. One of these negative replies was from a teacher who took most of the reverse side of the questionnaire to list why she would never direct another play.

CHAPTER V

COMPARISON OF THE STUDIES

One of the primary purposes of this study was to obtain information which could be used to compare Michigan's high school extracurricular dramatic program with that of four other states. In this chapter, that comparison is discussed. The studies in Wisconsin, Iowa, New York, and Ohio provided data which was used to compare these states chronologically. Only frequently appearing aspects of the extracurricular dramatics programs have been included in this discussion.

Extracurricular Dramatic Programs

Before the 1961-1962 school year, the number of extracurricular dramatic programs had not increased noticeably through the years in the four states studied. In 1947-1948, about 55% of all high schools in Wisconsin reported the presence of an extracurricular dramatics program. Iowa schools in 1953-1954 reported 41% of the high schools with such a program. Over 41% of the total schools in New York in 1954-1955 had an extracurricular drama program. In Ohio, 50.5% of the schools had an extracurricular dramatics program in 1958-1959. However, 59.4% of the total high schools in Michigan reported an extracurricular program. The Michigan

percentage would have been even higher, had the schools presenting only one-act plays been included in the tabulation of the data.

Several factors might explain the apparent rise in drama activities in high schools. Increased school enrollment is one factor which has been consistent. Forty-seven of the schools responding to the survey in Wisconsin, about 36 in Iowa and 154 in Ohio had an enrollment of over 500. In Michigan, 214 of the schools responding to the survey had enrollments of over 500. Since the larger high schools have consistently had a greater percentage with a drama program, it can be assumed that as the number of larger high schools increased, the drama program increased.

In summary, there is little evidence indicating a significant increase in the per cent of extracurricular drama programs in each state.

Number of Programs

The average number of full length productions has remained constant over the thirteen years in the five different geographical areas. The over-all average of productions per year for each school in five states were as follows: Wisconsin, 1.7; Iowa, 2.0; New York, 1.3; Ohio, 1.7; and Michigan, 1.8.

Performances

The average number of performances for full length productions remained essentially the same. The over-all

average number of performances per production was 1.6. The breakdown for each state is as follows: Wisconsin, 1.4; Iowa, 1.4; New York, 1.9; Ohio, 1.4; and Michigan, 2.0.

Attendance

The attendance per performance of full length productions was relatively consistent with the exception of Iowa. Wisconsin had an average audience of 424; Iowa, 247; New York, 379; Ohio, 324; and Michigan, 337. The over-all average audience per play was 340.

Cost Per Production

Although not consistent each year in each state, the average cost per production has gone up over the 13 year period. The average cost per production in each state was as follows: Wisconsin, \$93; Iowa, \$49; New York, \$146; Ohio, \$103; Michigan, \$131. The higher cost in the New York area was probably due to the higher cost of living in that geographical area. There was no great difference in the amount of money spent on productions in the five states.

New Profit from Productions

The total net profit from productions, for the most part, corresponded directly with the price of admission charged. In Wisconsin the average net profit was \$132 and the price of admission was 20¢ to 25¢ for children, 35¢ to 50¢ for adults. Price of admission in Iowa was 25¢ for children and 50¢ to 60¢ for adults, while the average net

profit was \$110. New York had the highest net profit, \$306, and the highest admission prices, 40¢ to 60¢ for children and 70¢ to \$1.00 for adults. Ohio's average net profit was \$158 and admission prices were .25¢ to 50¢ for children and 50¢ to 80¢ for adults. Michigan's average net profit per production was \$197, and average admission prices were 35¢ to 75¢ for children and 55¢ to \$1.00 for adults. Geographical location and rising cost of living were probably the two factors accounting for differences in profit and admission prices.

Methods and Problems of Play Selection.

In all five states the director had the primary responsibility of play selection. In two states, New York and Michigan, the student-faculty combination was used to a significantly higher degree than in the other three states.

The major problems in play selection have remained about the same for the last 13 years. In the Wisconsin, New York, and Michigan high schools, the major problems, in order of their difficulty, were: (1) limited stage facilities; (2) difficulty obtaining a cast; and (3) objectionable scripts. Ohio schools ranked as their major problems: (1) difficulty meeting cast requirements; (2) objectionable scripts; and (3) limited stage facilities. In Michigan, high production cost was ranked almost equal with the script problem. Although the Iowa study did not cover this aspect of play production, it can be assumed that similar problems were found there.

Responsibility for Casting

There was very little difference found in the four studies considering this item. The director was responsible for casting in more than 95% of the cases. However, he sometimes was aided by other faculty or student members.

Types of Dramatic Activity

Comedies have consistently been the most popular type of dramatic production in high schools for over 13 years. Serious drama did tend to increase, if only slightly, each year. Our Town was, by far, the most popular drama in all studies. However, a new play, Diary of Anne Frank showed indications of becoming almost as popular. Although Anne Frank was produced only during the time studied in Michigan, it was produced in nine high schools, while Our Town was produced in 16. The Night of January 16th was the most popular mystery play. The comedies varied in popularity; however, the better plays were usually the top ranking comedies in each state. Some of the comedies produced frequently in all states were: Curious Savage, Cheaper by the Dozen, Arsenic and Old Lace, You Can't Take It With You, and January Thaw. The less worthy plays such as Hillbilly Wedding, Finders Creepers, and Lock, Stock, and Lipstick were also among the most frequently produced plays. From 40 to 50 per cent of the plays produced in the high schools were considered to be of little or no literary value.

Sponsoring Group

The junior and senior classes were consistently the sponsors of the majority of the extracurricular dramatic activities in all five states. The drama club, though sponsoring a great deal fewer plays, was the sponsor of secondary import in all states.

Use of Profit

The junior and senior class funds received the vast majority of the profits in all five states. The only other funds which received profits with any consistency were: the general fund, the stage equipment fund, and many different drama funds.

Availability of Stage for Rehearsal

The stage was available in the majority of the schools studied for about 50 per cent of the time.

Physical Plant

The plays in all five states were produced primarily in the school auditorium or in an auditorium-gymnasium combination, with about an even chance of using either. The total average stage dimensions for the four states using this question was a 22' by 38' stage with a 32' proscenium opening. There was a consistent increase in stage width over the 13 years studied. The plays were presented using proscenium staging in about 90% of all schools in all five states studied.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This study, based on a survey by mail and using a one page questionnaire, involved the 761 high schools in Michigan. The high schools were divided into eight classifications by enrollment and analyzed accordingly. An initial letter and two follow-up letters were used in conducting the survey. Five hundred sixty-nine or 75% of the high schools in the state responded to the survey. The returns indicated that 452 or 80% of those schools responding, have an extra-curricular dramatics program and produce full length plays.

Summary

Seven hundred and thirty-one full length plays were presented by our high schools. Of the total plays produced, over 72% were comedies and 14% were serious plays. The most popular play was Thornton Wilder's Our Town. Over 70% of the plays were presented by the junior and senior classes; drama groups sponsored only 17%.

The average play was presented twice before an average audience of 337 people each performance. The price of admission in 71% of the schools was between 75¢ and \$1.25 for adults, and in 68% of the schools, students paid over 75¢ for tickets.

The total amount spent for royalties in Michigan high schools was \$27,434 with an average of \$43.16 per play. The total cost for producing plays was \$85,788 with an average of \$131.05 per play. Profits amounted to \$89,934 with an average of \$197.40 per play.

An average of 17.3 students were used in each play as actors and the same number as crew members. A total of 11,905 actors and 11,895 crew members were involved in play productions.

These plays had been selected by the director alone in over one-half of the schools, while in the other schools he was aided by students or faculty members. The major problems in play selection were limited stage facilities and difficulty obtaining casts. In 94% of the schools the director cast his own plays. The average number of rehearsals per week were four for an average of 50.3 hours per full length play. The stage was available for rehearsal about 66% of the time in most schools.

The major problem in play production was inadequate staging and lighting facilities. Other major problems were: conflicts with other activities, availability of the stage, lack of props and scenery, lack of teacher time, and lack of student training.

The plays were presented in an auditorium-gymnasium type of theatre in over 51% of the schools. Proscenium or traditional staging was used in 93% of the high schools responding on a stage with an average of 33' proscenium

opening and an average of 21'5" depth and 45'11" wall to wall width.

The average stage had two banks of stage-width border lights and 6.4 spotlights. An average of 20% of the schools had no border lights and 24% had no spotlights. Seventy-two per cent of the schools had some type of lighting control or dimmer board; however, only 37% of the schools with lighting controls found them adequate.

Only 32% of the schools with a drama program had use of fly space, and over 52% of those with fly space found it inadequate. Only 12% of the schools with a drama program had a dramatics scene shop and 53% of those with these workshops found them inadequate. However, 57% of those schools with a drama program and no workshop of their own, had use of an industrial arts room. Over 72% of those working in industrial arts rooms found them adequate. Most of the costumes for plays (86.3%) were borrowed; the remaining 13.7% was split evenly between rented and built costumes.

The majority of the profits from 61% of the plays presented went into junior and senior class funds. Only 28% of the profits were used primarily for drama funds and stage equipment.

The average director in the state had 9.8 semester hours of course work. One hundred and fifty or 33% of those producing plays had no formal training in drama.

Approximately 134 courses in dramatics were offered in Michigan high schools. Less than 25% of the high schools

responding had some type of drama courses; most of these were in high schools with enrollments over 1,000.

Less than 33% of the directors with drama programs received technical aid in producing plays. Approximately 20% indicated that they received financial assistance. Less than 9% of the directors responding received any aesthetic aid. Sources for most of the aid was within the school system. About 75% of the 408 directors responding to a question on sources of future aid, were in doubt as to where to go for technical, aesthetic, or financial aid. College and universities were mentioned as sources for future aid in only 20% of the cases.

Only 4% of all 569 schools returning questionnaires stated that they did not want the results of this survey.

General Conclusions

The data compiled for this study indicates that Michigan has a very active extracurricular program. Comedies are the only plays produced in about one-half of our schools. Serious plays are produced only a small number of times. High royalties of better plays seem to be one of the major problems in play selection. At the same time, the non-royalty plays by great dramatists are almost entirely ignored, probably as one teacher put it, because "classics are too hard for high school students."

Many of the directors found the responsibility of directing the class play delegated to them. With little or no training in the field and a limited knowledge of dramatic

literature, they were thrown into situations which were often chaotic. Valuable time was taken from class preparation and other duties to search through a stack of descriptions from play publishing companies. The information given in these brief descriptions seems to be inadequate.

The director is often given a group of students to work with who know little about play production. In many schools, the majority of the plays presented are sponsored by the junior or senior class, and the director must choose his cast from the limited number of students within the class. Very few of the students will have been on a stage before and even fewer will have had a course in play production. In some schools, the director can cast from all the students in the school, even though the play is sponsored by a particular class. This appears a much more satisfactory method. The freshman and sophomore with talent and interest in drama receive valuable training in smaller parts or as crew members; when they become junior and seniors, they have the background which enables them to handle more difficult roles.

Teachers in all size schools often work under very primitive production conditions with inadequate equipment. Due to the wide demand for the stage and auditorium among other school and community organizations, the director often does not have the stage for a great many rehearsals.

One situation which might cause concern for our high schools is the use of profits from plays. The extensive use of the class plays and the numerous productions sponsored by

non-dramatic organizations would indicate that the primary purpose of the play in many schools is to make money which can be poured back into other school activities. While producing plays to make money is not to be condemned, it is surprising that only a very small amount of the proceeds go back into stage equipment.

In spite of the often primitive production conditions, the sometimes untrained directors and students, and the numerous unfamiliar scripts, high school plays are still very popular. Most of the plays presented in Michigan play to capacity houses and make average profits of almost \$200 per production.

High school play directors receive very little help outside their own schools, and apparently not enough within them. In many schools one person has to be director, scenic designer, chief carpenter, makeup artist, publicity manager, house manager, costumer, lighting technician, property master, and sound engineer in addition to teaching a full load of classes. The majority of the directors do not know where to go for technical, financial, or aesthetic aid. Unless this help is forthcoming, few improvements will be made in the quality of plays and play productions in Michigan high schools.

Practical Implications

While the total picture of extracurricular dramatic activities in Michigan high schools may not be considered an ideal one, it is also not a hopeless one. The following

suggestions are offered to indicate a few of the possible ways in which the high school drama program might be made even better. One need indicated by this study is that of public relations. Speech educators might make administrators aware of the important part drama plays in developing the personalities, minds, and bodies of their young people. If the drama program is thought of as a valuable experience for improving the student as a citizen, for providing him with a well-rounded personality, and for broadening his sphere of interests, much can be done to improve this program. With re-education perhaps play proceeds will cease to be used for the senior trip to Washington, D. C., but will be used to purchase better stage equipment and pay royalties for more notable plays.

Even greater progress can be made toward better dramatics programs through the education of those teachers who are already in the field. A stronger state high school section of the American Educational Theatre Association is one means to this end. A state meeting for teachers and smaller meetings at the sectional level would make it possible for teachers to discuss and solve mutual problems. One act play festivals with demonstrations by professional, college, and university experts would prove valuable to all directors in the field, but especially to those who are untrained in drama.

While much of the responsibility for the improvement of our high school drama programs lies with the play directors

and administrators of the high schools, an equal share of the burden must be placed upon the shoulders of the colleges and universities. Since most of the play directors in our high schools are English or speech instructors, practical courses in play production should probably be required of all who plan to teach in these two fields. Responses to the questionnaires used in this study indicated that many of those directing plays were not aware, as college students, that this would be expected of them. Consequently, all, even those with little or no interest in drama, who might possibly work in this field, should be required to take at least one course in play production and one in dramatic literature.

A play reading center at one or all of the major universities would greatly aid practicing directors with one of their major problems--selection of scripts. Such a center could be established in which full descriptions of plays producible in high schools and their cast requirements were made available. These descriptions might also include suggestions for solving any technical problems which might be encountered.

Summer workshops for both teachers and students might be made available to more people at more colleges and universities in the state. A group of "field workers" in high school play productions might be used to reach areas with no institution of higher learning.

Many of these suggestions may not be feasible at the present time, but any or all of them would be steps toward an even more challenging and worthwhile dramatics program in our high schools.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY EAST LANSING

COLLEGE OF COMMUNICATION ARTS • DEPARTMENT OF SPEECH

February 26, 1962

Dear Director:

The Michigan Cultural Commission appointed by Governor Swainson and the Department of Speech at Michigan State University are conducting a research project to survey extracurricular dramatic activities in Michigan High Schools. The period being surveyed is from September 1961 to June 1962. All events which are planned but not completed should be included.

We are asking you to cooperate with Donald E. Heady, project chairman, so that we may complete the survey. Please take just ten minutes from your busy schedule to fill out and return the questionnaire. You will find a stamped, return envelope for your convenience.

If you are not personally responsible for the extracurricular dramatic activities in your school please give this letter and the enclosed material to the associate who can provide the information. If you have no extracurricular dramatic program, simply check the space at the top of the questionnaire and return it.

The Michigan Cultural Commission and the Department of Speech at Michigan State University want to know how they can best serve you. This survey is one means of acquiring the necessary information. You can help us by providing frank and complete answers to the questionnaire. All individual responses will be held in confidence. It is hoped that this survey will provide an accurate picture of extracurricular dramatic activities in Michigan High Schools.

Please indicate on the questionnaire if you wish to receive the results of the project.

Thank you for your cooperation and time.

Cordially,



John E. Dietrich, Head
Department of Speech

JED/Epz

APPENDIX B

Name and location of school _____ Approx. enrollment _____ Your name and position _____

Do you have an extracurricular dramatic activities program? Yes _____ No _____

Titles of all Extra-curricular Dramatic Activities from Sept. 1961 to June 1962	Author (Note if Original)	Type (i.e., Comedy, Farce, Serious)	Length of Play (i.e., One-Act, etc.)	Sponsoring Group (i.e., Club, Class)	No. of Perf.	Approx. Total Attend.	Royalty	Price of Admission	Approx. Cost of Prod.	Approx. Profit or Loss (+ or -)	Number of Student Participants	
											Act	Crew

I. PLAY

A. Responsibility for play selection?

1. Director _____

2. Student Committee _____

3. Faculty-Student Combination _____

4. Other _____

Specify _____

B. What are the problems in selecting plays?

Number items (1, 2, etc.) in order of importance.

Limited stage facilities _____

Difficulty obtaining cast _____

High production cost _____

Objectional script material _____

Lack of student or audience interest _____

Other _____

Specify _____

C. Responsibility for casting?

1. Director _____

2. Students and director _____

3. Director and faculty _____

4. Other _____

Specify _____

D. Average rehearsal for full length play?

Length (each) _____ No. per week _____

Total hours _____ Percentage of time stage is available _____

E. List your three major problems in play production.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

II. FACILITIES

A. Where are the plays presented?

1. In school auditorium _____

2. In school gymnasium _____

3. In auditorium-gym combined _____

4. In civic auditorium _____

5. Other _____

Specify _____

B. Type of stage?

1. Proscenium or traditional _____

2. Temporary platform _____

3. Arena or central _____

4. Other _____

Specify _____

C. Stage dimensions in feet?

1. Proscenium opening _____

2. Stage depth _____

3. Stage width _____

D. Do you have use of: (yes or no)

1. Industrial arts room _____ Adequate _____

2. Your own workshop _____ Adequate _____

3. Fly space _____ Adequate _____

4. Light controls _____ Adequate _____

E. Please list the approximate number of the following that you have:

Border lights _____ Spotlights _____

F. What percentage of your costumes are:

1. Rented _____

2. Borrowed _____

3. Built _____

III. GENERAL INFORMATION

A. How is the profit from extracurricular dramatic activities used?

B. How many hours of course work have you had in drama?

Semester hours _____

Quarter _____

C. What courses in drama are offered in your high school?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

D. In producing a play do you receive any help?

Technical _____ Who _____

Financial _____ Who _____

Aesthetic _____ Who _____

E. If you need help in the future where might you get it?

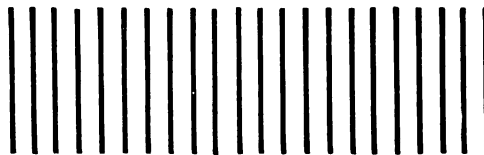
F. Please indicate on the back of this questionnaire any special problems or explanations.

G. Would you like the results of this questionnaire?

Yes _____ No _____

APPENDIX C

FIRST CLASS
PERMIT NO. 941
East Lansing, Mich.



BUSINESS REPLY MAIL

No Postage Stamp Necessary if Mailed in The United States

— POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY —

Mr. Donald E. Heady
Department of Speech
Room 149 Auditorium
Michigan State University
East Lansing, Michigan

APPENDIX D

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY EAST LANSING

COLLEGE OF COMMUNICATION ARTS • DEPARTMENT OF SPEECH

March 9, 1962

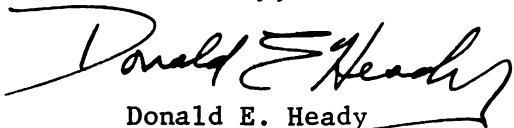
Dear Director:

The questionnaire entitled "A Survey of Extracurricular Dramatic Activities in Michigan High Schools", sponsored by the Michigan Cultural Commission and the Department of Speech at Michigan State University, was sent to you last month. We have not yet received your completed questionnaire. Possibly it was misplaced, misdirected, or you have not found time to fill it out.

We need your return in order to gain a clear picture of our State's high school drama program. Enclosed is a duplicate questionnaire and a return envelope. Please help us to complete our survey.

Thank you for your cooperation and time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Donald E. Heady", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Donald E. Heady
Project Director
Michigan State University

DEH/fpz

APPENDIX E

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY EAST LANSING

COLLEGE OF COMMUNICATION ARTS • DEPARTMENT OF SPEECH

May 10, 1962

Dear Principal:

In February your school received a questionnaire concerning your extracurricular dramatic activities. The answers to this questionnaire will be used in a study being conducted by the Speech Department of Michigan State University in cooperation with the Michigan Cultural Council.

To get a complete picture of high school dramatic activities in Michigan, we need a reply from your school. Will you please give the enclosed questionnaire to your play director? If your school does not present plays of any type, will you fill in the top part of the questionnaire and return it to me immediately?

Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours very truly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Donald Heady". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Donald Heady
Project Director

DH/fpz

~~AUG 6 1967~~

~~AUG 2 1967~~

~~DEC 18 1964~~

~~APR 1 1967~~

~~APR 3 1967~~

~~FORM 100-1~~

~~APR 1 1967~~

~~APR 1 1967~~

~~AUG 11 1967~~

~~APR 1 1967~~

~~APR 1 1967~~

~~DEC 14 1967~~

~~SEP 15 1967~~

~~NOV 29 1967~~

~~JUL 7 1969~~