

A HISTORY OF SCHOOL DISTRICT
REORGANIZATION IN THE
STATE OF MICHIGAN

Thesis for the Degree of Ph. D.
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

David Wood

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This is to certify that the

thesis entitled

A HISTORY OF SCHOOL
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David Wood

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ABSTRACT

A HISTORY OF SCHOOL DISTRICT REORGANIZATION IN THE STATE OF MICHIGAN

by David Wood

The problem of school district reorganization is affected by rapidly increasing enrollments, lack of funds, and a shortage of well-qualified school people. The problem is further complicated by changing educational needs, by the demands of the public for a more adequate educational program, and by America's long established tradition of local control over education. There is general agreement that all children should have equal and adequate educational opportunities. The basic problem is to discover a means of reorganizing school districts in such a way that adequate educational programs will be offered to all children without loss of basic, long established, democratic principles.

The purposes of this study have been to describe the history and trends of school district reorganization in the State of Michigan and the events that have led to current reorganization legislation; to present an

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David Wood

evaluation and comparison of Michigan's reorganization progress to that of the nation, and to selected states. Particular emphasis has been focused on a description of Public Act 289 of 1964 and the effects it has had on school districts in the state. On the basis of an analysis of Michigan's school district reorganization history and results of the current legislation, predictions and recommendations have been made.

Information has been gathered from a review of the literature, a study of data from State Department of Education offices in response to a letter requesting reorganization information, a study of all annual reports of the Superintendent of Public Instruction published since 1840, a review of all plans submitted by intermediate reorganization committees in compliance with Public Act 289 of 1964, and an analysis of school district reorganization data collected by the Michigan Department of Education.

The major findings of the study are as follows:

*School district reorganization is continuing at a rapid pace throughout the nation. The primary factor stimulating reorganization has been the desire to obtain

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adequate school districts, although there is a lack of agreement concerning criteria to measure school district adequacy.

*There are great variations in the type of reorganization legislation adopted by the states. However, most states have common features in their reorganization legislation. The goal in every state that has conducted reorganization activities has been to reduce the number of school districts in an effort to improve educational opportunities. Several states have had to use mandatory legislation to adequately reorganize their school districts. Organization along county lines has been found to be the most expedient method of reorganizing school districts.

*Michigan has not been a leader in reorganization, but Public Act 289 of 1964 will cause Michigan to move up among the leaders in school district reorganization.

*Public Act 289 of 1964 was the most extensive school district reorganization legislation ever approved in the State of Michigan; it evolved naturally from the history of school district reorganization in Michigan and followed the philosophy that was established in the state as far back as 1900. The act was mandatory in that it required a reorganization study in each intermediate school

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district. However, reorganization became effective only upon approval of local electors.

*Public Act 289 of 1964 helped eliminate many non-high school districts and caused improvement of some K-12 districts. Although the act was extremely effective in improving Michigan school districts both directly and indirectly, there were weaknesses in it and difficulties in the application of it, thus several inadequate school districts were not affected by the legislation. A strengthening of legislation is needed to complete reorganization of school districts into adequate administrative units for all children in the state.

A HISTORY OF SCHOOL DISTRICT REORGANIZATION
IN THE STATE OF MICHIGAN

by

David Wood

A THESIS

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

College of Education

1967

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to Charmaine who sacrificed and suffered with the writer through the many trying stages of the doctoral program, and who provided the sympathy and encouragement needed to overcome each obstacle. It is further dedicated to Lisa, David and Todd, who have known their daddy primarily as a college student throughout their entire lives.

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The writer is deeply indebted to all those who helped make possible the completion of this study. Particular appreciation is expressed to George Schutt and Roger Boline of the State Department of Education for providing an opportunity to use department facilities while preparing the dissertation, and for the personal assistance they gave in the preparation of it.

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INDICATION

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Problem

The person who ignores the recent history of school district reorganization in the United States is missing a movement that has already had, and will continue to have a profound effect on American Public Education. This study grows out of the fact that there has been and is continuing to be a general movement in Michigan and throughout the country to consolidate and expand school districts. The problem of school district reorganization is very complex. It is affected by rapidly increasing enrollments, lack of funds, and a shortage of well-qualified school people. The problem is further complicated by changing educational needs, by the demands of the public for a more adequate educational program and by America's long established tradition of local control over education.

Many people feel that school district reorganization has been carried out too slowly, and they suggest that much more consolidation of school districts will be

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necessary before adequate programs can be offered in all schools and equal education can be provided for all children. Others maintain that reorganization has occurred at a far too rapid rate. They fear central control, increased taxes, loss of individual attention for pupils, and a loss of local control.

There is general agreement that all children should have equal and adequate educational opportunities; yet it is obvious that many school districts still do not offer adequate educational services. The problem is to discover a means of reorganizing school districts in such a way that adequate educational programs will be offered to all children without loss of basic, long established, democratic principles.

Need for the Study

There is a concern over the lack of fundamental research into the procedures and effects of school district reorganization. Institutions other than the school want to know how it will influence their programs. The church, for example, due to its interest in youth programs, can quite justifiably raise questions concerning the impact of school district reorganization on its efforts. On the other hand, business enterprises are

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concerned over the possibility of important trade and service shifts. The goal is to determine how to bring about adequate reorganization in a way which will minimize negativism and person disorganization on the part of those affected by reorganization.¹

In many cases, proponents of school district reorganization overlook the real facts of redistricting and claim erroneously that district consolidation will necessarily result in reduced costs to the taxpayers involved, rather than improved educational programs in ratio to the additional dollars expended; guarantee academically superior and socially better-adjusted products than those of non-consolidated districts.² Thus, reorganization of school districts is sometimes referred to as a panacea for educational problems, but it can have disadvantages as well as advantages. Reeves has stated,

A proper reorganization of local school districts is one of the most important needs for the provision of adequate public elementary and

¹Roy C. Buck, "School District Reorganization: Some Considerations for Sociological Research." Journal of Educational Sociology, (September, 1954) pp. 28.

²Orley W. Wilcox, "Misconceptions About School District Reorganization." American School Board Journal, (April, 1959) pp. 24-26.

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secondary schools in practically all state of the union.¹

The paramount reason for considering school district reorganization is to increase educational opportunities for boys and girls. Many changes have occurred in school districts throughout the country, but some children are still not getting the kind of educational programs they require. There is imperative need for additional changes. Many states, including Michigan, must have further information and direction to determine effective and proper reorganization procedures. Reorganization without a philosophy must be avoided.

As stated by the AASA Committee in 1962, there are few educational responsibilities with more far-reaching importance to the people of a state than the establishment of a sound structure for administering the schools of the local district.² How to keep that structure adapted to the changing needs of our society has been a persistent problem in American education. It is necessary to determine the present status of school district

¹H. A. Dawson and Floyd W. Reeves, Your School District. Department of Rural Education (Washington, D.C.: National Education Association of the United States, 1948), p. 13.

²Department of Rural Education of the National Education Association, School District Organization (Washington, D.C.: American Association of School Administrators, 1962) p. V.

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organization before any intelligent attempt can be made to assess and propose desirable courses for future action.

The people of Michigan have always been concerned with methods of providing better education for their children. The primary method of doing this in the state, just as throughout the nation, is through school district reorganization. Reorganization of school districts has been taking place in Michigan for over 100 years. However, many school district boundaries are essentially the same as they were when the districts were originally formed. Recent data have shown that Michigan's pattern of school district organization is inadequate to meet the needs of modern education.¹ Therefore, it should be improved in order to better equalize educational opportunities throughout the state. The most comprehensive legislation concerning reorganization in Michigan was created in 1964 when an act was passed by the legislature which provided for the formation of a state committee and county committees to study and make recommendations for the reorganization of Michigan school districts. The current emphasis on reorganization of school districts,

¹Annual Report, Division of Administrative Services, Department of Education, State of Michigan, July, 1965.

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particularly in Michigan since the passage of Public Act 289 of 1964, creates a special need for this research.

Under Public Act 289 many school districts have been reorganized very efficiently. However, others have taken no action or have reorganized ineffectively. In some intermediate districts where reorganization has been considered successful, and particularly in those districts which have opposed reorganization, great criticism of the legislation and reorganization procedures is being heard. A few school districts are even failing to follow the precepts determined by reorganization elections. An organized group called "The Friends of Michigan Schools" have launched a drive to halt Michigan's school reorganization program. As a result of the preceding activities, many people are confused about the purposes of reorganization and are suspicious of those promoting reorganization. Name calling, rumors, ill feelings, and litigation are occurring. These activities are not only hindering reorganization but are also creating difficulties in school districts where reorganization has been successful or has not previously been a problem. Hopefully, this study will solve some of the mysteries surrounding reorganization and will help people to reason

logically about reorganization of their school districts rather than emotionally.

Purpose of this Study

Educational history is of paramount value if for no other reason than the fact that it records the varying degrees of success achieved by experimenters in the field. The successes show the avenues for future exploration while the failures very often guard the unwary from any further waste of energy in the wrong direction. In the belief that a retrospective and current view of the progress of reorganization in the state of Michigan would be conducive to the establishment of a philosophy and proper procedures for school district reorganization, this study has been prepared.

This study includes a review of school district reorganization procedures and trends in Michigan and throughout the nation. The primary purpose of this study has been to survey the history and trends of school district reorganization in the state of Michigan and the events that have led to current school district reorganization legislation. Particular emphasis has been focused on a description of Public Act 289 of 1964 and the effects it has had on school districts in the state.

Michigan's reorganization progress has been evaluated and compared to that of the nation and to selected states. On the basis of an analysis of Michigan's school district reorganization history and results of the current legislation, predictions and recommendations have been made.

This study has attempted to answer the following questions:

1. What has been the pattern of school district reorganization in the state of Michigan?
2. What has been the nationwide pattern?
3. What type of legislation has been used in Michigan to bring about reorganization of school districts?
4. What type of legislation has been used in other states to bring about reorganization?
5. What type of legislation has been the most effective in Michigan and throughout the nation?
6. How does Michigan's pattern of school district reorganization compare to the nation and to other states?
7. What are the expressed purposes of reorganization?
8. What factors have been cited as hindrances to reorganization?

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9. What have been the effects of Act 289 in Michigan?
10. What is the future of reorganization in Michigan?
11. What additional legislation should be proposed pertaining to school district reorganization?

Significance of the Study

There have been several research studies concerned with the reorganization of school districts. However, there are still many questions to be answered about this topic, and no one has analyzed the effects of Public Act 289 in the state of Michigan. This study includes information for the use of the state board of education, and the state department of education. It should be significant to those committee members and professional people studying reorganization as well as to those citizens and children in school districts who will be affected by it. It should be especially valuable to those individuals who are charged with the preparation of further legislation affecting the reorganization of school districts.

Method

In an attempt to determine trends and causes of School district reorganization and the arguments both for and against reorganization an analysis of the literature

is presented. Also shown are the pattern and progress of reorganization in the entire nation and in individual states. A general history of the establishment and reorganization of Michigan school districts is presented along with a description of legislation affecting reorganization, and comparisons are made to the national pattern as well as to selected states. Public Act 289 of 1964 is described and the effects of it analyzed. In the final chapter are discussed the successes and failures of Michigan's reorganization procedures, the factors which have impeded and those which have implemented school district reorganization in Michigan, and recommendations for the improvement of Michigan's school district pattern.

Limitations of the Study

A complete study of school district reorganization in Michigan covering the entire state and a period well over 100 years from the early 1800's to 1966 would be an overwhelming task. Therefore, it has been necessary to restrict the scope of this dissertation for the sake of the reader as well as the writer. Consequently, this study is limited to the following factors: (1) a description of the literature pertaining to school district reorganization, (2) a survey of school district

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reorganization progress and procedures as reported by the chief state school officer of each of the fifty states, (3) historical background of Michigan's school district reorganization pattern and the legislation affecting it, (4) a description and analysis of Public Act 289 and the effects of it on Michigan's school districts.

This study is further limited by the fact that the data collected concerning school districts in the early years is limited and many times inconsistent.

Definition of Terms

Several key terms require definition.

Adequacy

An adequate system of school organization is one which combines maximum economy with maximum opportunity for a professional level of teaching. Pupil enrollment, tax base, and geographical size are all factors in determining adequacy.

Trend

This term refers to the increase or reduction in the numbers of school districts both in a nationwide and an individual state pattern, and the number of pupils in districts.

School District

This term refers to a legally recognized school system under the state school code.

High School District

This is a public school administrative unit in Michigan which offers twelve or thirteen years of education from the first grade or kindergarten through the twelfth grade.

Non-high School District

This term refers to a school district that operates less than a kindergarten or first grade through twelfth grade program.

Receiving District

This term refers to a district which accepts and provides education services for pupils from one or more school districts.

Sending District

This is a school district which sends some or all of its pupils to some other district for educational services.

County Unit

This term refers to a school district that is organized as an administrative unit coterminously with the political lines of the county.

Reorganization

This means the formation of new school districts, the alteration of boundaries of established school districts, and the dissolution or disorganization of established school districts through or by means of any one or combination of methods.

Consolidation

This is the legal procedure by which two or more school districts join together to form a larger district. Two or more high school districts are involved or no high school district may be involved.

Annexation

This is the legal procedure by which one school district joins or is attached to another school district.

Reorganization Legislation

This term means the procedures for reorganization of school districts as provided by law.

Local Control

This term refers to the administration and operation of a school district under a governing body composed of local residents.

State Committee

This means the state committee for the reorganization of school districts created by Public Act 289 of 1964.

Intermediate Committee

This term refers to the single or multi-county committee formed for the reorganization of school districts under Public Act 289.

Organization of the Following Chapters

Chapter II pertains to a review of related literature. The material covered includes the trends in school district reorganization, causes of reorganization, barriers to reorganization, results of reorganization programs, and adequacy as a goal of reorganization.

Chapter III is devoted to a national survey of school district reorganization based on data collected from the education office of each state.

In Chapter IV the history of school district reorganization in Michigan and the legislation that pertains to reorganization in Michigan is reviewed.

In Chapter V a description and analysis of Public Act 289 and a description of the effects this legislation has had and may have on school districts is presented.

Chapter VI contains the summaries of the study, conclusions, and recommendations.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Trends in School District Reorganization

Certain definite trends can be observed in any review of the literature regarding school district reorganization. Several writers agree that one of the most pronounced recent trends in the organization of American Public Education has been the consolidation of school districts. Norman indicated this movement has reversed the direction of efforts of the previous 100 years, when the trend was always toward the extension of educational opportunity by the creation of new school districts.¹

The N.E.A. Research Division pointed out that the U. S. Office of Education records show there have been significant changes in sizes of schools and administrative units from 1930 to 1952.² In 1930 there were

¹Loyal V. Norman, A Slice of Nevada School Reorganization, (Philadelphia: Durance and Company, 1964) p. 3.

²National Education Association Research Division, N.E.A. Research Memo, (Washington, D.C.: National Education Association, 1963) p. 7.

149,282 one-teacher schools in the United States. By 1940 this number had declined 23.9 percent to 113,600; in 1952 there were 50,742 one-teacher schools left, a decline since 1930 of 66.0 percent. In 1956 there were 35,000 one-teacher schools left.

The N.E.A.'s figures were corroborated in the Rural School Survey Report.¹ In 1931-32 there were 127,530 administrative school units according to the Rural School Survey Report. Most of these districts were small. By 1948 over 25,000, or one-fifth of these districts, had been reorganized into larger districts; by 1953, five years later, nearly half of the original number had gone; by 1958, after another five years, the total number had been reduced to 48,036. Thus, in the twenty-six years from 1932 to 1958, nearly two-thirds of the school districts had succumbed to consolidation and reorganization of one type or another.

The trend in the decrease of the number of school districts, shown by the Survey Report, was very uneven both in point of time and by geographic area. The greatest period of school district organization occurred during the five year period from 1948 to 1953, when the total number of school districts was reduced by 36.7 percent.

¹U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Small Schools Are Growing Larger, A Statistical Appraisal, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1959) p. 12.

But the elimination of small school districts was also great from 1953 to 1958, with a reduction during those five years of 28.4 percent.¹

During the two years preceding 1954 the number of school districts in the United States had been reduced by more than 7,000. McIntyre conducted a survey on November 1, 1951 which revealed that there were 72,637 basic school administrative units in the nation. The corresponding figure he found for November 1, 1953 was 65,294.²

The comparison of reductions in numbers of school districts did not carry the implication that the resulting units were equally adequate. In terms of numbers alone, however, the redistricting pace during the two years had not been as rapid as it was during the period from 1949 to 1951, when approximately 15,000 districts were eliminated.³

Dawson and Isenberg found that a total of 3,929 reorganizations of all types were proposed during the

¹U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Small Schools Are Growing Larger, A Statistical Appraisal, (Washington, D.C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1959), p. 12.

²Kenneth E. McIntyre, "Progress and Problems of Redistricting" American School Board Journal 128: (March, 1954), p. 38-40.

³Ibid.

three year period 1955 to 1958.¹ Of that number 967 were comprehensive and 2,962 were partial. Of all the proposals, eighty-one percent were adopted by the voters or designated officials; of the proposals for comprehensive reorganization, eighty-six and four-tenths percent were adopted, and for partial, eighty percent were adopted.

Gaumnitz prepared an article in 1959 pertaining to the decrease and increase of independent school districts. The purpose of the article was to examine these two contradictory movements statistically. The two contradictory movements referred to are the decrease of the number of school districts and the increase of the size of them. Mr. Gaumnitz found that the total number of school districts in the United States with enrollments of less than 600 decreased by 30.1 percent from 1953 to 1957 and that the districts with over 600 pupils enrolled increased 42.6 percent. He further found that the total pupils enrolled in these districts of less than 600 pupils decreased 31.7 percent while those enrolled in districts with more than 600 increased 34.7 percent.²

¹Howard A. Dawson and Robert M. Isenberg, "Status Report on District Reorganization." School Executive 78: (February, 1959), p. 75-76.

²Walter H. Gaumnitz, "Independent School Districts Decrease and Increase," School Life, 42 (December, 1959), pp. 14-17.

Bruce found that during 1959-1960, the reduction of school districts was negligible.¹ According to his findings there was need in all states, especially those with medium sized and large cities, for a complete reorganization and consolidation of school districts.

Trends in Individual States

Several writers have conducted studies of individual states and have shown how the trend in various states compares with the national trend of enlarging the sizes and decreasing the number of school districts.

Norman described one of the most drastic reductions of school districts which took place in the state of Nevada when 186 school districts were abolished in 1956, and in their place the Nevada Assembly created seventeen county districts. He found numerous problems connected with the reorganization, but also found that education was generally improved by the change.²

Hamlin and Sumption explained that Illinois in 1945 had about 12,000 school districts. Over 8,000 of those districts provided one-room schools as the only

¹William C. Bruce, "Is District Reorganization Halted?" American School Board Journal, 141 (December, 1960), p. 34.

²Norman, op. cit., p. 1

facilities for education. At that time there were over 600 high school districts superimposed on elementary districts, providing secondary educational opportunities for elementary graduates. Various other types of districts made up the total. By 1949, well over 200 community unit districts had been created. These districts superseded and eliminated over 5,000 existing districts. The areas included in the new community unit districts varied from four to 387 square miles. Their enrollments ranged from 200 to over 4,500 pupils.¹

The Maine School District Commission reported that reorganization in Maine had been effective in the reduction of the number of small high schools; of the ninety-two schools with fewer than 100 pupils operating in 1957, only forty-seven schools of this size were in existence in 1963.²

It was noted by Campbell and Garofalo that Ohio had 1,354 school districts in 1953. Of this number 934 offered both the elementary and high school programs.

¹H. M. Hamlin and M. R. Sumption, New Community Unit School Districts, Practices and Problems, (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois, 1951), p. 1.

²Maine School District Commission, Six Years of Progress, 1963, p. 3.

Of the 420 schools remaining, 404 districts had no high school and sixteen districts provided their children with education by sending them to neighboring districts.¹ However, through legislation, school district reorganization was considered in every county in the state.

The reorganization trend proceeded more slowly in California and Oklahoma than in many of the other states. In 1960, the California Commission on School district Organization indicated there were 1,683 school districts in the state, 705 of which had less than 200 units of average daily attendance and of these, 527 had less than 100 units of average daily attendance. By July, 1963, there were 155 unified districts serving approximately fifty percent of the pupils in California from kindergarten through the 12th grade. Kerr explained that some elimination of districts resulted from state laws in the early part of Oklahoma's history, but the principal results obtained from annexation by local elections have been in recent years. The largest number of school districts in Oklahoma at any one time was

¹Roald F. Campbell and Marius P. Garofalo, A Study Guide on School District Organization in Ohio, (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1954), p. 3.

5,880 in 1914. Forty-nine years later that number had been reduced to 1,160.¹

Michigan's school district reorganization also followed an interesting pattern. The Rural Michigan Commission described Michigan's school district organization in 1942.² The number of districts had gradually increased from fifty-five in 1835 to a maximum number, in any year, of 7,362 in 1912. After that date the number slowly decreased each year. The Michigan School Facilities Survey described Michigan's school districts in 1952:

*Nearly ninety-two percent of the public school children in the state were being educated by less than eleven percent of the school districts.

*More than one-fifth of the public school children of the state were attending school in overcrowded, makeshift, or otherwise unsatisfactory buildings.

*Nearly forty percent of the existing school buildings were erected prior to 1900, and only 6.4 percent had been built between 1945 and 1951.

¹Clay W. Kerr, "School District Reorganization in Oklahoma," (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Oklahoma, 1960).

²Michigan Department of Public Instruction, Rural Michigan (1942), p. 13.

*Twenty percent of Michigan's school districts had closed their schools and were purchasing their children's education elsewhere.

*More than half of Michigan's school districts, 53.6 percent, were operating one-room schools enrolling less than six percent of the state's public school children.

By February 1, 1953, two-thirds of the local school service areas of Michigan were in the process of studying the need for adequate facilities.¹

Reorganization as a Recent Problem

Numerous writers have suggested that school district reorganization has become a problem only in recent years. Chisholm describes school district reorganization as having emerged as a major problem only recently, although there was a sharply increased demand for high school education immediately after World War I which led to unprecedented numbers of high schools being constructed.²

¹Michigan Department of Public Instruction, A Report of the Progress of the School Facilities Survey in Michigan (Lansing: Michigan Department of Public Instruction: April, 1953), p. 7.

²Leslie T. Chisholm, School District Reorganization (Chicago: The Midwest Administration Center, University of Chicago, July, 1957), p. V.

Cole and others agree that school district reorganization developed momentum since World War II to meet the challenge of increased enrollments.¹

Benton stated that it was not until after the second World War that the educational system of Missouri entered a new era, an era in which the watchwords were "consolidation and foundation financing."²

Causes of Reorganization

The growth of population and increased demand for education as causes of school district reorganization are mentioned more often than any other factors. Dawson and Reeves point to changes in social and economic life as having created demands for longer school terms, greater number of years spent in school, enrichment and expansion of curriculum as leading toward larger units of school administration.³ Campbell and Garofalo

¹Everett Sickler Cole, "The History of Public Elementary Education in Wichita, Kansas from 1871 to 1963." (unpublished Ed. D. dissertation, Colorado State College, 1964).

²Edwin Joseph Benton, "A History of Public Education in Missouri, 1760-1964,": (unpublished doctoral dissertation, St. Louis University, 1965), p. 43.

³H. A. Dawson, Floyd W. Reeves, op. cit., pp. 27-30.

indicated that school district reorganization was given impetus in Ohio when the tremendous concern of the people of Ohio to provide better education for their children was recognized.¹ The AASA School District Reorganization Committee stated there has been an insistent demand to add depth, breadth, and quality to the educational program, and that school district reorganization has been maintained in every state for the fundamental purpose of dealing wisely and well with this and other administrative problems.² Hansford and others described the American concept of "Education for All" along with the tremendous birth rates in recent years, as having forced school district reorganization in many areas.³ The committee referred to the fact that boys and girls are staying in school longer today than ever before in history. At the turn of the century, only ten or eleven percent of the boys and girls of high school age were

¹Campbell and Garofalo, op. cit., p. 22.

²American Association of School Administrators, School District Organization, National Education Association, Washington, D.C., 1958.

³College of Education, Michigan State University, School District Reorganization, (East Lansing: Bureau of Research and Service, 1956) p. 3.

enrolled in public schools while today about eighty per-cent of that age group attends school.

McIntyre explained that school district reorgani-zation is not a cure-all; it does not carry with it an unconditional guarantee of good schools, but sound reorganization can be counted on to remove many obsta-cles that rob a large percentage of America's children of their right to receive a model education.¹

Financial Implications

Almost unanimous agreement is found among authorities that financial support is an outstanding consideration in school district reorganization. The National Commission on School Reorganization, Campbell, Reed, and others subjected the impact of school finance programs on school district reorganization to careful study. Campbell gathered data from Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, and Washington. Six fi-nance factors relating to school district reorganization were evaluated:

1. General aid
2. Equalization aid
3. Capital-outlay costs

¹Kenneth E. McIntyre, "The Kind of Schools We Need" Phi Delta Kappan, 128 (March, 1951), p. 320.

4. Payment for pupil transportation
5. Payment of tuition for non-resident pupils
6. Disposition of the assets and liabilities of former districts¹

Chisholm, Cushman, Campbell, Reed, and others agreed on five findings of a rather general nature concerning the relation between a state and local finance program and the reorganization of school districts.

Chisholm presents these relationships as follows:

1. The program of state and local support for the schools has a close relation to school district reorganization. It is apparent, therefore, that the school finance program should be geared to the need for achieving the proper school district organizational structure.
2. State support systems, by certain features they contain, often help the poorly organized, inefficient school districts to the extent that an undesirable structure of local school district organization frequently is perpetuated.
3. The effects of a finance factor on redistricting depend almost entirely on the specific nature of the legislation pertaining to this factor and its relation to the total program of state and local support for the schools.
4. In many cases, the amount of money appropriated for a given feature of the school finance program is at least as important as the particular feature itself.

¹Charles E. Campbell, "The Relationship of School Finance to the Reorganization of Local Administrative Units," (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Nebraska, 1953).

TABLE 1-A

Number of School Districts and Trends, 1932-1961, United States, by States

States	Number of School Districts				Rank in Number of School Districts			
	1932	1948	1953	1961	1932	1948	1953	1961
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Alabama	112	108	111	114	42	41	40	38
Alaska	17	23	28	30	49	49	48	47
Arizona	500	322	329	297	28	30	27	26
Arkansas	3,193	1,589	423	418	15	19	25	24
California	3,589	2,429	2,018	1,650	13	15	14	8
Colorado	2,041	1,884	1,147	341	21	17	19	25
Connecticut	161	174	172	176	39	36	35.5	32
Delaware	126	126	115	92	40	39	39	41
Dist. of Columbia	1	1	1	1	50.5	50.5	50.5	50.5
Florida	67	67	67	67	44	43.5	43.5	42.5
Georgia	272	189	203	199	33	35	33	31
Hawaii	1	1	1	1	50.5	50.5	50.5	50.5
Idaho	1,418	1,011	216	118	24	24	32	37
Illinois	12,070	11,061	2,607	1,552	1	23	10	9
Indiana	1,292	1,196	1,144	888	25	22	20	17
Iowa	4,870	4,856	4,558	1,391	12	9	5	11
Kansas	8,748	5,643	3,903	2,303	4	6	7	4
Kentucky	384	256	227	207	31	32	31	30
Louisiana	66	67	67	67	45	43.5	43.5	42.5
Maine	518	493	491	462	27	27	24	21
Maryland	24	24	24	24	48	48	49	48
Massachusetts	355	351	351	438	32	29	26	22
Michigan	6,965	5,434	4,736	1,981	9	7	4	5
Minnesota	7,773	7,606	5,298	2,420	6	2	3	3
Mississippi	5,560	4,194	1,417	150	10	11	16	35
Missouri	8,764	8,422	4,331	1,735	3	1	6	7
Montana	2,439	6,800	1,201	1,025	17	4	18	15
Nebraska	7,344	6,991	6,276	3,348	8	3	1	1
Nevada	266	211	185	17	35	34	34	49
New Hampshire	244	239	235	230	36	33	30	28
New Jersey	552	561	557	588	26	26	22	19
New Mexico	98	104	100	99	43	42	42	40
New York	9,467	4,609	2,961	1,280	2	10	9	12
North Carolina	200	172	172	173	37	37	35.5	33
North Dakota	2,228	2,267	2,111	1,066	19	16	13	14
Ohio	2,043	1,583	1,365	840	20	20	17	18
Oklahoma	4,933	2,664	1,888	1,255	11	13	15	13
Oregon	2,234	1,363	893	510	18	21	21	20
Pennsylvania	2,587	2,540	2,502	956	16	14	11	16
Rhode Island	39	39	39	41	47	47	47	45
South Carolina	1,792	1,737	103	109	22.5	18	41	39
South Dakota	3,433	3,409	3,385	2,964	14	12	8	12
Tennessee	194	150	150	154	38	38	37	34
Texas	7,932	5,145	2,146	1,539	5	8	12	10
Utah	40	40	40	40	46	46	46	46
Vermont	268	268	263	262	34	31	29	27
Virginia	125	125	127	131	41	40	38	36
Washington	1,792	628	551	419	22.5	25	23	23
West Virginia	450	55	55	55	29	45	45	44
Wisconsin	7,662	6,385	5,463	1,967	7	5	2	6
Wyoming	400	359	322	212	30	28	28	29

Grand Total 127,649 105,971 67,075 36,402

Source: American Association of School Administrators and Department of Rural Education Association. School District Organization; Journey that Must Not End. Washington, D.C.: The Association, 1962.

Alabama	
Alaska	
Arizona	
Arkansas	1
California	1
Colorado	
Connecticut	
Delaware	
Dist. of Col.	
Florida	
Georgia	
Hawaii	
Idaho	
Illinois	1
Indiana	
Iowa	
Kansas	1
Kentucky	
Louisiana	
Maine	
Maryland	
Massachusetts	
Michigan	1
Minnesota	
Mississippi	1
Missouri	
Montana	1
Nebraska	
Nevada	
New Hampshire	
New Jersey	
New Mexico	
New York	
North Carolina	
North Dakota	
Ohio	
Oklahoma	
Oregon	
Pennsylvania	
Rhode Island	
So. Carolina	
So. Dakota	
Tennessee	
Texas	
Utah	
Vermont	
Virginia	
Washington	
W. Virginia	
Wisconsin	
Wyoming	

Grand Total

Source: American
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TABLE 1-B

Number of School Districts and Trends, 1932-1961, United States, by States									
	Decrease in School Districts						Rank in % of Decrease		
	1932-48		1948-53		1953-61		-48	-53	-61
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Alabama	4	3.6	+3	+2.8	+3	+2.7	28	38	39
Alaska	+6	+35.3	+5	+21.7	+2	+7.1	41	40	43
Arizona	178	35.6	+7	+2.2	32	9.7	7	37	27
Arkansas	1,604	50.2	1,166	73.4	5	1.2	4	5	34
California	1,160	32.2	411	16.9	368	18.2	11	15	24
Colorado	157	7.7	737	39.1	806	70.3	22	9	3
Connecticut	+13	+8.1	2	1.1	+4	+2.3	40	33	38
Delaware	0	0.0	11	8.7	23	20.0	-	24	23
Dist. of Col.	0	-	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
Florida	0	0.0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
Georgia	83	30.5	+14	+7.4	4	2.0	12	39	33
Hawaii	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	-	-	-
Idaho	407	28.7	795	78.6	98	45.4	13	3	13
Illinois	1,009	8.4	8,454	76.4	1,055	40.5	21	4	16
Indiana	96	7.4	52	4.3	256	22.4	23	28	22
Iowa	14	.3	298	6.1	3,167	69.5	35	27	4
Kansas	3,105	35.5	1,740	30.8	1,600	41.0	8	12	15
Kentucky	128	33.3	29	11.3	20	8.8	10	21	28
Louisiana	+1	+1.5	0	0.0	0	0.0	36	0	-
Maine	25	4.8	2	0.4	29	5.9	26	35	29
Maryland	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0	0
Massachusetts	4	1.1	0	0.0	+87	+24.8	34	0	44
Michigan	1,531	22.0	698	12.8	2,755	58.2	17	18	8
Minnesota	167	2.1	2,308	30.3	2,878	54.3	31	13	10
Mississippi	1,366	24.6	2,777	66.2	1,267	89.4	14	6	2
Missouri	342	3.9	4,091	48.6	2,596	59.9	27	8	7
Montana	+4,361	+178.8	5,599	82.3	176	14.7	42	2	25
Nebraska	353	4.8	715	10.2	2,928	46.7	29	23	12
Nevada	55	20.7	26	12.3	168	90.8	25	19.5	1
New Hampshire	5	2.0	4	1.7	5	2.1	32	31	32
New Jersey	+9	+1.6	4	0.7	+31	+5.6	37	34	41
New Mexico	+6	+6.1	4	3.8	1	1.0	39	29	35
New York	4,858	51.3	1,648	35.8	1,681	56.8	3	10	9
North Carolina	28	14.0	0	0.0	+1	+0.6	19	0	37
North Dakota	+39	+1.8	156	6.9	1,045	49.5	38	26	11
Ohio	460	22.5	218	13.8	525	38.5	16	17	17
Oklahoma	2,269	46.0	776	29.1	633	33.5	5	14	19
Oregon	871	39.0	470	34.5	383	42.9	6	11	14
Pennsylvania	47	1.8	38	1.5	1,546	61.8	33	32	6
Rhode Island	0	0.0	0	0.0	+2	+5.1	0	0	40
So. Carolina	55	3.1	1,634	94.1	+6	+5.8	30	1	42
So. Dakota	24	0.7	24	0.7	421	12.4	24	25	26
Tennessee	44	22.7	0	0.0	+4	2.7	15	0	31
Texas	2,787	35.1	2,999	58.3	607	28.3	9	7	20
Utah	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0	0
Vermont	0	0.0	5	1.9	1	0.4	0	30	36
Virginia	0	0.0	+2	+1.6	+4	3.1	0	36	30
Washington	1,164	65.0	77	12.3	132	24.0	2	19.5	21
W. Virginia	395	87.8	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0	0
Wisconsin	1,277	16.7	922	14.4	3,496	64.0	18	16	5
Wyoming	41	10.2	37	10.3	110	34.2	20	22	18
Grand Total	21,678	16.98	38,896	36.70	30,673	45.73	-	-	-

Source: American Association of School Administrators and Department of Rural Education Association. School District Organization; Journey that Must Not End. Washington, D.C.: The Association, 1962.

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Number and

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1932

1948

1953

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TABLE 1-C

Trends in the Number of School Districts

Year	Number of School Districts
1932	127,649
1948	105,971
1953	67,075
1961	36,402

Number and Percent of Decrease in the Number of School Districts for Various Periods

Years	Number	Percent of Decrease
1932-48	21,678	16.98
1948-53	38,896	36.70
1953-61	30,673	45.73 ¹

¹Ibid., p. 25.

5. Although the findings are not entirely conclusive, there seems to be a relation between the percent which state funds are of the total school cost and the progress made in school district reorganization, the progress tending to be greatest in the states in which the state aid is the highest.¹

According to Strolle, no other factor has a greater influence on the reorganization of school districts than the financing of the local program.² He recommended in his 1955 study that the pattern of school districts in Michigan should be changed to make it possible to better use the financial resources of the state.

The effect of reorganization on taxes was considered in numerous studies. An Illinois study indicated that one aspect of the trend in the formation of community unit districts is that more and more attention has been given to pupil population and to an adequate tax base. Hamlin and Sumption agreed, as they indicated that reorganization meant raising taxes in some areas and lowering them in others, but the net result was a more nearly fair distribution of the school tax burden and the elimination of a number of "protected" districts.³

¹Leslie T. Chisholm, School District Reorganization, (Chicago: The Midwest Administration Center, University of Chicago, July, 1957) p. 6.

²Roland S. Strolle, "A Study of School District Reorganization in Michigan," (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Michigan State University, 1955).

³Hamlin and Sumption, op. cit., p. 21.

The Rural Michigan Commission concluded that an entire community had a greater right to the tax revenues from real estate, oil wells, power dams, and other public utilities than any small section of a community.¹ Kerr took somewhat of a different view, as he concluded that one of the strongest reasons for opposition to school reorganization was fear of additional taxes for new buildings and transportation facilities.²

There is a great deal of agreement among writers that school district reorganization provides more efficient expenditures. The Maine and Minnesota School District Commissions both stated that human resources are much better prepared in larger schools and the cost per pupil is less.³ The Wisconsin Committee showed that the legislature attempted to solve tax problems caused by low valuation and small pupil enrollments through reorganization legislation.⁴ Benton explained that one

¹Michigan Department of Public Instruction, Rural Michigan, loc. cit.

²Kerr, loc. cit.

³Maine School District Commission. School District Reorganization in Maine, 1963. p. 5.

⁴Milwaukee County School Committee. Your Schools. A Plan by the Milwaukee County School Committee for Reorganizing School Districts. (Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Milwaukee County School Committee, July, 1950), p. 20.

of the major reasons for school reorganization legislation in Missouri was to provide better financing for schools,¹ and Chisholm agreed as he listed one of the objectives of reorganization as making possible an efficient expenditure of the taxpayers' money.²

Campbell and Garoalo, Roe, and others agree that school administrative units that fail at any one of several points, including school finance, indicate that organization is not satisfactory and improvement is needed.³

Bickley reached the following conclusions concerning school support from his study:

When the highest adjusted assessed valuation per resident pupil is twice the lowest adjusted assessed valuation within a county school district reorganization is deterred. Total adjusted assessed valuation variations between the highest and lowest total adjusted

¹Edwin Joseph Benton, "A History of Public Education in Missouri, 1760-1964," (unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, St. Louis University, 1965)

²Chisholm, op. cit., p. 1.

³Charles E. Campbell, loc. cit.

assessed valuation within the counties do not significantly deter school district reorganization.¹

Improved Transportation

Improved transportation facilities have provided impetus for school reorganization according to several authors. Also, reorganization has improved transportation. Hamlin and Sumption show that reorganization brought transportation to many children who had walked to school before.² The National Commission on School District Reorganization of 1948 recommended that adequacy standards for school districts be modified according to transportation problems.³ The trend toward consolidation of school districts instead of creation of new school districts to extend educational opportunity has come about partly because of the development of all-weather roads and dependable transportation, according to Norman.⁴

A perusal of the literature shows that the factor limiting school size to have received the most attention

¹Carl E. Bickley, "An Analysis of Selected Factors Which Aid or Deter School District Reorganization in Certain Indiana Counties," (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Indiana, 1958).

²Hamlin and Sumption, op. cit., p. 16.

³Dawson and Reeves, op. cit., p. 99.

⁴Norman, op. cit., pp. 6 and 7.

was the matter of transportation time. Dawson and Reeves stipulated a maximum travel time of one hour each way by bus for high school students.¹ Grieder and others used the same maximum.² Carpenter set a maximum of from fifty to sixty minutes each way for junior and senior high school pupils.³

Dawson and Reeves and others described improved road conditions which made possible the development of extensive transportation systems as being a major factor in increasing the size of attendance units through re-organization.⁴ Chisholm, on the other hand, explained that as means of transportation improved, certain areas developed the practice of contracting to send their children to neighboring districts in which high schools were maintained.⁵ This practice spread until in some states not more than ten percent of the school districts served all pupils of elementary and high school age

¹Dawson and Reeves, op. cit., p. 28.

²Calvin Greider and Stephen Romine, American Public Education: An Introduction, second Edition. (New York: Ronald Press Co., 1955), p. 257.

³William W. Carpenter, "Planning Satisfactory Local Administrative Districts," Junior College Journal 31: (September, 1960), p. 38.

⁴Dawson and Reeves, op. cit., p. 28.

⁵Chisholm, op. cit., p. 78.

within the districts. Reorganization was suggested as the method of solving this problem.

Delaying Factors

Various writers have reviewed factors found to delay the reorganization of school districts. Those listed by the N.E.A. Research Commission are as follows:

1. Politically ambitious local-school trustees have been unwilling to be displaced.
2. False local pride, community acceptance of the status quo, and resistance to change have combined to block it.
3. Misconceptions of what a reorganized district would mean have produced unwarranted fears.
4. Cumbersome procedures for reorganization have obstructed efforts.
5. State school finance structures in some states have favored small districts.¹

Fear of increased costs resulting in increased school taxes was described by Kerr and others as a hindrance to school reorganization. The Michigan State Committee showed this was a justified fear as some school districts actually have a loss in state aid as a result of reorganization.²

¹"Bigger and Fewer School Districts," National Education Association Bulletin, 38 (February 1960), pp. 15-17.

²College of Education, Michigan State University, op. cit., p. 15.

Bickley discovered when there has been long tenure of county superintendents, school district reorganization is deterred;¹ it is further deterred when there has been long tenure of city and town superintendents. He also found some evidence that the existence of nonpublic schools within the county deters reorganization, and when a majority of the school corporations within a county have a high school, school district reorganization is deterred.

Loss of Local Control

The American tradition of local control has been an obstacle to school district reorganization. Although public education is legally a function of the several states, Williams found that the custom of delegating to local districts the responsibility for establishing and maintaining public school facilities has been followed for such a long period of time that it has accumulated the force of law.² Hobbs showed that the strength of this tradition is indicated by the fact that a large

¹Bickley, loc. cit.

²Delos Dale Williams, "Oregon School District Reorganization of 1957-64 and Implications for Improvement," (unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, Oregon State University, 1965).

measure of the state legislation relative to school district reorganization, particularly in the midwest, is permissive rather than mandatory.¹

The following statement is listed in the California State Department of Education Manual for the Study of School District Organization by County Committees:

The sole aim (in school district reorganization is and should be to create school districts which, under given social and geographic conditions make it possible to provide children the best educational program. Rather than attempting to take the schools away from the people, therefore, district reorganization aims to strengthen and preserve the local school district system with the control of education chiefly in the hands of the parents.²

The AASA Commission in 1965 found people had the following fears concerning reorganization:

*Local control will be destroyed.

*The school plant will be taken out of the neighborhood and the children transported far away from home.

¹California State Department of Education, Manual for the Study of School District Organization by County Committees, (Sacramento, California: California State Department of Education, March, 1962), p. 4.

²Report of the AASA Commission on School Administration in Newly Organized Districts, Washington, D.C., 1965, p. 11.

*Parental influence on the children will be weakened.

*School taxes will increase.

*The close relationships between the home and the school, which have long been maintained in the smaller unit, will be destroyed.

*The community itself will be seriously weakened or destroyed.¹

Jacobsen, in a study of three small school districts in Idaho, found essentially the same social processes and forces operating. Fears of big schools, of a lack of belonging, of loss of the school and loss of "local control" were important hindrances to reorganization.²

Alford expressed the idea that a school is both an organ of the national society, educating its citizens, and also an important social institution in its local community. The question of reorganization of school districts exposes the conflict between these functions of a school: to unify adjacent districts in the interest of national educational

¹Report of the AASA Commission on School Administration in Newly Organized Districts, Washington D.C., 1965, p. 11.

²G. S. Jacobsen, "School District Reorganization in Selected Counties in Idaho," (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of California, 1957), pp. 65-66 and 239-247.

efficiency may threaten local autonomy and self-esteem.¹ In this article the problem is analyzed generally, and exemplified by the case of Calveras County, California. Alford shows that the conflict of interests is related to the whole issue of centralization in a modern democratic society.

Loss of Local control through reorganization was disputed in a study at the University of California. E. L. Morphet and J. G. Ross showed that smaller districts:

1. Do not have more local control; actually they have less.
2. Small districts can neither get nor hold outstanding instructors.
3. Costs for smaller schools and districts are found to be higher than in the larger districts. Even per pupil costs are greater.²

Goldhammer agreed with Morphet and Ross, as he pictured the school board as the central functioning agent for uniting the efforts of the schools and the desires of the community with the influences of county,

¹Robert S. Alford, "School District Reorganization and Community Integration," Harvard Educational Review 30: (Fall, 1960), p. 350.

²Edgar Morphet and John G. Ross, Local Responsibility for Education in Small School Districts, 1961. Legislative Problems No. 2, Berkley: University of California (January, 1961), p. 16.

state, and federal agencies.¹ Hence, his conclusion followed that the fewer boards in a particular area, the greater unification of educational opportunities for all children in the area.

The Rural School Survey Committee discovered that the tradition of local control created a block to reorganization.² Since by tradition government was achieved through the town meeting, it was natural that local school boards should govern local school districts. The school system which served the American people so well during the pioneer days is not given up lightly even though the economy has changed from agriculture to industry, from hand production to automation, and from rural living to urban living.

Lack of Leadership

Several studies of leadership in school district reorganization have been completed in the midwestern states. Farley and Janetos agree that a highly complex series of leadership activities are involved in a statewide

¹Keith Goldhammer, "The Power Structure Behind the Administration of the Community's Schools," American School Board Journal, 139 (October, 1959), pp. 27-30.

²Walter H. Gaumnitz, Small Schools Are Growing Larger, U. S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Office of Education, the Rural School Survey, Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1959, p. 1.

program of school district reorganization, and that one of the major reasons for the persistence of large numbers of inadequate and ineffective school districts seems to have been the lack of effective leadership.¹

Roe suggested that the lack of leadership was another hindrance to reorganization. It was found that recommending changes in institutions or customs that are as surrounded by nostalgic memories as the idea of the "little red school house" is very often unpopular with many people. Therefore, few people want to take the lead in recommending changes in school district organization. Roe indicated a further hindrance to reorganization as the lack of a unified pattern for the accomplishment of reorganization which tended to produce competition between villages and left the establishment of community school boundaries largely in the hands of local interest and pressure groups.²

¹Melvin Farley, "A Study of Local Level Leadership for School District Reorganization in Nebraska," (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Nebraska, 1953).

²William H. Roe, "Educational Administrative Reorganization in Michigan With Special Reference to Factors Affecting the Organization of Community School Districts," (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Michigan, 1950).

Results of Reorganization

Many studies have been made of the results of reorganization and most writers seem to be unanimous in determining that the results of reorganization have been positive. A bulletin issued by the United States Office of Education in 1953 discussing the educational changes which had occurred in certain reorganized school districts, pointed out that the number of one-teacher schools had been reduced and that important changes had been made in both the elementary and secondary curriculums. But the most significant change was in the higher college level of preparation from that the staff in the old district had at the time of reorganization.¹

Kiesel made the following statement concerning results of reorganization in California:

Every study which has been made thus far in this country has pointed to the desirability of unified districts instead of encouraging separately organized elementary and secondary school districts.²

¹C. O. Fitzwater, Educational Change in Reorganized School Districts, U. S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Office of Education, Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1953, p. 43.

²Ferd J. Kiesel, "Report of Second Conference on Unified School Districts: Advantages and Disadvantages of the Unified School District," (1953), p. 10.

Rosmond, Good, and others described advantages that were realized in reorganized districts in Maine.

1. Units of sufficient size to equalize educational opportunities have been formed in all areas not geographically isolated.
2. School programs have been improved at both elementary and secondary levels.
3. A greater uniformity of school taxes has been achieved.
4. Public funds expended for the support of schools are buying a better quality of education than was achieved prior to district organization.¹

Taxes during five years had increased only eight percent as against eleven percent in non-reorganized districts. In addition, greatly improved programs and additional transportation aid had been provided in reorganized districts.

Bough studied educational opportunities in Indiana before and after school district reorganization. The following seven conclusions were reached:

1. School district reorganization resulted in schools that were equal to or superior to the original schools in all respects.
2. Reorganization provided the greatest gains in education by means of a broader scope of class and extraclass offerings.

¹Maine School District Commission, op. cit., p. 7.

3. It (reorganization) resulted in an improved administrative structure.
4. It resulted in more qualified instructional staffs with more time to improve the quality of classroom instruction.
5. It resulted in an increase in number and quality of special services provided for students.
6. It provided for increased efforts to provide for individual differences of students and maximum development of each student.
7. Students in schools with limited class and extra-class offerings take advantage of increased educational opportunities offered in reorganized schools.¹

First studied the consolidation of three school districts in Michigan. Before consolidation Elkton and Pigeon both were operating high schools accredited by The North Central Association and the University of Michigan. Bay Port had its own small high school too. Across the rest of the area elementary youngsters converged upon the twenty-one one or two-room schools. At that time, of the sixty-three country schools operating in Huron County, twenty-two had no hand-washing facilities and three were completely without their own water supply. Fifty-six had privies instead of indoor toilets, and fifty-one were

¹Max Bough, "Educational Opportunities in the Secondary Schools of Vigo County, Indiana, Before and After School District Reorganization," Teachers College Journal, 35 (November, 1963), pp. 51-52.

constructed of combustible materials and lacked modern fire features. After ten years of study and direction, the voters passed the consolidation issue by a small margin. The merger was said to combine a solid tax base, an enlarged high school enrollment, and a school-minded adult populace interested in better education within the reach of available finances.¹

Schultz discovered there may be no inherent value in either bigness or smallness, the larger the school district, at least up to 1,200 and probably up to 2,000 or more pupils, the better the school opportunities and the greater the economy of operation. In his study of reorganized school districts in Iowa, the author found that the indoor gymnasium, well-equipped auditoriums, ample restroom facilities, and sufficient storage space were among the rewards of reorganization and consolidation. Well-stocked libraries with plenty of light and space became a reality, but the outstanding feature was that the attractive, more useable surroundings made it easier for teachers to give their best to the students and for students to give their best to their studies.²

¹Joan M. First, "The Elkton-Pigeon-Bay Port Story," Michigan Education Journal, 38 (September, 1960), pp. 7-10.

²John G. Schultz, "Fewer, Bigger, Better," National Education Association Journal, 48 (November, 1959), pp. 10-13.

The purpose of Kent's study was to determine the extent and adequacy of selected educational characteristics in nine reorganized high schools in Indiana which has completed reorganization by August, 1953. The following conclusions were drawn from the study:

1. In all areas under consideration, the nine reorganized high schools were superior to the twenty-three original high schools.
2. The greatest gains associated with consolidation occurred in providing more adequate physical facilities.
3. The instructional staffs of the nine reorganized high schools were not superior in training and experience, but they were working under conditions more favorable to satisfactory achievement.
4. Based upon the ratings of the Evaluative Criteria in the areas of program of studies, activity program, and school plant, the nine reorganized high schools appeared to be average or above in providing educational opportunities.¹

A Michigan State University Bulletin suggested that reorganization should obtain the following attributes:

1. Broader base for local control.
2. Good staff easier to obtain in larger districts.
3. Specialized educational programs broadened.
4. Varied curricula obtained.
5. Increased efficiency.

¹Walter Knight Kent, "Educational Opportunities in Nine Indiana Reorganized High Schools," (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Indiana University, 1957).

6. Improved facilities.

7. Enriched experiences.¹

One of the most comprehensive research studies of the effects of school district reorganization was conducted by Kreitlow in Wisconsin. Kreitlow began a study in 1949 with the objective of determining what actually happened after reorganization took place. He took children who in 1949 were in the first grade of five newly reorganized school districts and in five matched control communities, and determined the effects of reorganization in terms of educational opportunities, achievement, cost, and social impact when these children were in the first, sixth, ninth, and twelfth grades. His examination of the schools and the children in 1960, when they were in the twelfth grade, revealed the following facts: (a) greater educational opportunities were found in the reorganized schools than in the non-reorganized schools, (b) the students in the reorganized schools showed greater achievement than students in the control schools, (c) the cost in the reorganized schools was found to be twelve dollars per student higher than in the control schools, and (d) the

¹College of Education, Michigan State University, op. cit., pp. 5-8.

impact of reorganization on the community was found to be negligible.¹

Buck listed at least three questions that should be answered concerning any reorganization proposal:

1. When youth are lifted out of the primary contacts of home and neighborhood, what, if any, are the effects on discipline and delinquency?
2. Is the leadership base among youth actually broadened (as claimed) by the reorganization, or does the highly competitive situation actually squeeze out many capable youth?
3. Since the school is often the center of the secular life of the community, a strong force which draws parents into relations with each other, to what extent does reorganization alter the patterns of adult association?²

The Iowa Department of Public Instruction studied the effects of school district reorganization in that state between 1955 and 1962. The report concluded that reorganization improved the efficiency of Iowa Schools by making it possible to use administrators, supervisors, and consultants more prudently and effectively.³ There

¹Burton W. Kreitlow, School District Reorganization, Documentary, Par IV on 16 mm sound film, Madison: University of Wisconsin, Department of Education, 1961, 30 min.

²Buck, op. cit., pp. 26-27.

³Iowa Department of Public Instruction, Future Goals for Public Schools in Iowa, (November, 1953), p. 4.

was also an increase in the efficient use of teachers. During the same time period the quality of instruction improved. Annual test data among Iowa high school students remained relatively stable for a number of years, with no appreciable change having occurred between 1948 and 1955. Beginning in 1956, however, average test performance rose consistently every year. When school districts in Iowa were placed in enrollment categories, the average cost per pupil declined as enrollment increased, until the largest enrollment category was reached, where a slight increase occurred.

Fitzwater reported the results of a study covering 552 districts in eight states. He reported that the new teaching staffs had higher levels of college preparation than those employed in the old districts before reorganization. He also found staffs were improved by adding nurses, psychologists, guidance counselors, physicians, speech correctionists and dental hygienists. He described marked improvements in music, art, and vocational education programs.¹

Hamilton and Rowe studied the academic achievement of students in reorganized and non-reorganized districts

¹Fitzwater, op. cit., p. 47.

and found the preponderance of evidence indicated that greater academic achievement is likely to take place in larger schools. They learned that larger facilities often mean greater possibilities for specialization in remedial work, foreign languages, vocal and instrumental music, industrial arts, citizenship, health education, and other areas. Services in such specialized areas were found to be characteristic of larger school districts and are regarded by many educators as being of vital importance in producing well-rounded children and in equalizing educational opportunities.¹

The Research Department of the Illinois Education Association obtained and analyzed data from 118 districts which recently were organized as one unit from kindergarten through the twelfth grade. An analysis of the remainder of the total of 244 districts reorganized under the community unit law was also made when information was available from state records. Selected teachers and county superintendents who were associated with the reorganized districts were also questioned. The findings revealed that improvements in the educational program had been

¹Deforest Hamilton and Roberta N. Lowe, "Academic Achievement of Students in Reorganized and Non-Reorganized Districts," Phi Delta Kappan, 43: (June, 1962), pp. 401-404.

made but that a number of reorganized districts were inadequate.¹

Another major study investigated the achievements of reorganized schools in Missouri.² This study followed the general plan of comparing, first the educational services before and after reorganization and, second, certain administrative aspects of reorganized and non-reorganized schools. The latter comparisons were made by means of a check list developed from information which was gathered at the time of the first comparisons.

A study of the progress in school district reorganization was made by the Nebraska State Committee on School District Reorganization.³ The investigation was limited principally to two counties in south-central Nebraska, but it dealt with various phases of reorganization. Its findings, in general, parallel those reported for the studies of Illinois and Missouri.

¹Illinois Education Association, Research Department, Community Unit Schools (Springfield, Illinois: The Association, 1952), p. 14.

²Harold E. Green, "A Comparison of School Districts in Missouri Before and After Reorganization" (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Missouri, 1953).

³State Committee for the Reorganization of School Districts, (Nebraska School District Mergers, Lincoln, Nebraska: The Committee, 1954), p. 7.

The three studies found, in summary, that assessed valuation of school districts was increased greatly as a result of reorganization. Tax levies tended to remain constant in Illinois and Missouri but were reduced in Nebraska. The cost of instruction rose in Illinois and Missouri. Transportation costs were found to be affected most in Illinois, particularly by sparsity of population, salaries of bus drivers, and a limitation of transportation to home-school trips. The studies found that reorganized schools were offering additional and expanded educational services.

Adequacy as a Goal of Reorganization

A number of writers have discussed the relationship between school district reorganization and improvement of school districts. Although the purpose of this study is not to determine criteria for adequacy of schools, those studies concerned with the expressed advantages of reorganization cannot be omitted from any reorganization study.

In 1963 Packard discussed the advantages and limitations of large and small school districts and offered as an optimum size district one within the range of 4,000 and 25,000 pupils enrolled in kindergarten

through the twelfth grade. The greatest disadvantage of small schools appeared to be inadequate administration and lack of control by the board. On the other hand, the lack of communication seemed to be the greatest problem of large schools.¹

The following statement concerning adequacy introduces the 1965 Georgia Survey Report:

All public school reorganization is related to a common goal, but a distinction must be made between three major concerns: (1) program opportunities, which are conducted in (2) local school centers, which in turn are established by (3) school systems. Put another way, adequate systems must be created before adequate school centers can be established; and adequate local schools must be maintained if adequate opportunities are to be provided. The minimum opportunities to be equalized throughout the state of Georgia have been recommended by the Committee on Standards. To provide these opportunities the present study proposed criteria of adequacy in organization.²

Reeves and Dawson suggested it was necessary to have administrative units with at least 1,200 pupils. It was also found that gains in efficiency and economy could be expected as the size of the administrative unit increased up to approximately 10,000 pupils.³ No one

¹John C. Packard, "Local School District Size vs Local Control," The American School Board Journal, 146 (February, 1963), pp. 9-10.

²Division of Surveys and Field Services, George Peabody College for Teachers, Organization of School Districts in Georgia, Nashville, 1965, p. 1.

³Dawson and Reeves, op. cit., p. 131.

type of school district was proved to be superior to all others, but the conclusion was reached that immediate reorganization of school districts throughout the United States was needed to improve educational programs.

The A.A.S.A. Committee corroborated Dawson and Reeves as they explained that outmoded, inefficient weak school districts must be eliminated and the efforts of people who desire good schools should not be thwarted. The suggested method for doing this was reorganization of school districts.

The National Commission of School District Reorganization issued the following recommendations as far back as 1948:

1. At least 175 pupils ought to be enrolled in the kindergarten and grades one through six with seven teachers. A better program could be maintained with an enrollment of 300 pupils and twelve teachers.
2. At least 300 pupils, with seventy-five in each age group, ought to be enrolled in high school with twelve full-time teachers.¹

The U. S. Department of the Interior declared the states had the responsibility to establish plans and procedures for organizing the schools and the local school systems so as to make possible, as nearly as practicable, the attainment of these minimum standards for all children

¹Ibid., p. 79.

entitled to the privileges of public school. The A.A.S.A. Committee on School District Organization expressed in their report that school district organization was established and has been maintained in every state for the fundamental purpose of dealing wisely and well with these and other administrative problems so that educational programs for children and youth can go forward undisturbed and uninterrupted.

Chisholm listed the following objectives that are sought through reorganization of school districts:

1. To strengthen and preserve local control over education by developing throughout the state school districts that will be effective under existing conditions.
2. To make possible an efficient expenditure of the taxpayers' money.
3. To provide better educational opportunities for thousands of children.
4. To help enrich community life.¹

A number of studies have been conducted in relation to size of schools and adequacy of program. Wright studied and summarized eighteen of those conducted between 1956 and 1963.² According to the studies considering

¹Chisholm, op. cit., p. VI.

²Grace S. Wright, Enrollment Size and Educational Effectiveness of the High School, U. S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Office of Education, (Washington, D.C., Government Printing Office, 1964), pp. 1-3.

curriculum offerings, variety is increased with increase in enrollment size, up to a point, 2,000 or less. Also favoring the large high school was the factor of staff qualifications. A study of teacher qualifications as the sole variable reported that qualifications in general increased with size of enrollment; schools enrolling fewer than 400 pupils did not generally attract the best qualified teachers. Some evidence existed that achievement of pupils in or from very small schools was not equal to that of students from large schools as measured by standardized achievement tests, college grades, or degrees earned. In the area of extracurricular activities, fairly general agreement was found among the studies that smaller schools experience greater pupil participation. The findings of the eighteen studies showed that the optimum size of a high school for all-around educational effectiveness appeared to be something less than 2,000.¹

Various state study groups have proposed reorganization of school districts as a means of attaining certain desired standards of adequacy. The Connecticut Study Committee suggested advantages of reorganization:

²Ibid.

1. Advantageous deployment of personnel.
2. Better preparation of all students for the decisions and responsibilities of citizenship in an increasingly complex world and to prepare the most able students for college.
3. Provision of enough testing, guidance and evaluation services.
4. Sufficient instruction for the mentally, the physically, the socially, and the emotionally handicapped, the special instruction without which they cannot hope to gain full human stature.
5. Provision of financial advantages for teachers' salaries, capital investment, materials, transportation, and specialized services.¹

The Illinois Committee listed certain general advantages of school district reorganization:

1. Improved financing and purchasing.
2. Improved organization within the district.
3. Improved administration.
4. Improved curriculum.
5. Improved supervision and instruction.
6. Improved special services for school children.
7. Improved physical plants and instructional facilities.²

¹Connecticut State Department of Education, Bureau of Research, Statistics and Finance, Regional School Districts in Connecticut, 1962, pp. 1-2.

²Illinois Superintendent of Public Instruction, Opportunities and Benefits of the Community Unit School District in Illinois, Springfield, May, 1963, pp. 6-13.

The California Committee on School District Reorganization recognized the following factors in determining a satisfactory school district:

1. Complementary socio-economic make-up including community of interest;
2. Financial ability of an area, together with state funds, to provide education at a reasonable cost per student.
3. Equalization of the tax burden for support of schools; and
4. Adequate present and potential size of the pupil population to be served.¹

The Minnesota Committee listed some advantages that could be gained by the reorganization of Minnesota school districts.

1. More equal educational opportunity for all Minnesota youth
2. Better opportunities for a high school education
3. More equitable distribution of school costs
4. More diversified education.
5. Improved library, health and other facilities
6. More efficient administration and supervision

¹California Commission on School District Organization, Problems of School District Organization in California, California State Department of Education, 1962, p. 9.

7. Better trained teachers
8. Greater permanency in larger units
9. Opportunities for vocational education¹

McHenry who studied Utah schools and Williams who studied Oregon schools agreed on the goals of reorganization.² They described reorganization as leading to efficiency and economy in educational programs and services which would, at the same time, be compatible with the needs and demands of modern technological society.

The Superintendent of Public Instruction in the state of Washington stated that school district reorganization in his state was encouraged in order to give the patrons of school districts a greater voice in the management of their schools, and to improve the educational program and its related services for the children of these districts.³

The California State Board of Education spoke of school district reorganization as leading to improved schools:

¹State of Minnesota, Department of Education, Rural Division; Equality of Educational Opportunity, 1960, p. 3.

²Verne A. McHenry, "School District Reorganization in Utah," (unpublished Ed. D. dissertation, University of Nebraska, 1965)

³Williams, loc. cit.

It shall be the policy of the state board of education to encourage and give primary consideration to the formation of adequate unified school districts inasmuch as the adequate unified school district provides the greatest opportunity for continuous improvement of the educational program and for effective and efficient use of school funds.¹

In 1942 the Michigan Public Education Study Commission was appointed by Governor Murray D. Van Wagoner to make an exhaustive study of the educational inequalities of Michigan Public Education. One of the commission's major recommendations was that the state should encourage improved education through reorganization and that there should be a gradual reduction of the 6,239 school districts to 253 reasonably self-sufficient community school districts which would represent the combined social, economic, and educational interests of both rural and urban groups.

One of the most extensive studies of school district reorganization was conducted by Roland Strolle in Michigan in 1955. He too recommended reorganization of school districts as a means of making them adequate. He used the following criteria for adequacy:

1. An adequate school district should provide an educational program at least through grade twelve.

¹California Commission on School District Organization, op. cit., p. 2.

2. An adequate school district should have at least 900 enrolled in grades kindergarten through twelve.
3. An adequate school district should have a minimum of \$6,000,000 state equalized valuation or a per pupil valuation of \$7,000.
4. An adequate school district maintaining all twelve grades should possess the quality of social cohesiveness.¹

SUMMARY

Five general areas were covered in this review of the literature pertaining to school district reorganization; trends in school district reorganization, causes of reorganization, hindrances to reorganization, results of reorganization, and adequacy of school districts as a goal of reorganization.

The general trend described in the literature is that school districts throughout the nation increased as new districts were created until the early 1900's at which time the trend toward fewer districts with more pupils began. As a result of increasing population and demand for more education the pace of reorganization gained momentum after World War II, is continuing now, and is expected to reduce the number of school districts even further.

¹Strolle, loc. cit.

Causes of school district reorganization are growth of population, demand for extended educational services, improved transportation programs, and desire for better facilities. Financial considerations are also significant.

Hindrances to school district reorganization are described as fear of increased taxes, America's long established tradition of local control, lack of communication, lack of uniform goals, misunderstanding of what reorganization is, and lack of leadership.

Numerous studies of the results of reorganization have shown that it has typically led to improved educational programs, better financial support, a wider scope of subject offerings, equalized educational opportunities, improved training of staffs, and improved administrative conditions. However, some writers indicated that the positive aspects of reorganization were frequently exaggerated, and that school district reorganization should not be considered a panacea for educational problems.

Several writers have established criteria for adequate school districts to be obtained through reorganization. Many of them referred to enrollment size as the major element to consider. There was not, however, consensus as to what constituted a maximum or minimum size

for administrative units. Although there is not general agreement concerning the criteria of an adequate school district, the desire to obtain adequate school districts has been the primary factor stimulating reorganization in most areas.

CHAPTER III

AN ANALYSIS OF SCHOOL DISTRICT REORGANIZATION BY STATES

Public education being a state rather than a local function, school district reorganization is a state responsibility.¹ In the state, legislators have complete power except for whatever constitutional restrictions have been placed on them. Redistricting laws vary greatly both in approach and in effectiveness in bringing about better districts. Some states have enacted laws which directly reorganize all the districts within the state or all those below a specified size. Other states have several redistricting laws, in some cases none of them effective. A few states have completely reorganized, or very largely so, by means of a single statute.

Almost every state has some type of school district reorganization legislation. Several states have passed such legislation within recent years. Others passed effective permissive legislation long ago and

¹Fitzwater, op. cit., p. 3.

have continuously been improving their school districts through reorganization. A few states have so effectively reorganized their school districts that they have no need for further reorganization legislation. Since 1948 the average annual decrease in the number of school districts in the United States has exceeded 3,000. The sharp reduction in the number of districts undoubtedly results from the fact that several states have enacted legislation to compel reorganization.

A number of states solved their school district reorganization problems by adopting the county unit of administration through mandatory legislation.

A clarification concerning references to satisfactory reorganized school districts must be made. School districts may be organized into administrative units that appear to be of sufficient size and financial ability to offer good educational programs. However, this does not guarantee satisfactory organization of school attendance centers within the individual school districts. Small inadequate school buildings, or even one-room school houses, may still exist within what appears to be a well-organized school district. Therefore, statements in this study regarding satisfactorily organized school districts

merely refer to school districts that are of sufficient size to offer adequate K-12 educational programs.

Many people believe that efforts toward school district reorganization will continue unabated and that within the foreseeable future no more than 5,000 school districts will be operating.¹

A brief description of school district reorganization in other states is presented in the following pages. This information was obtained from an analysis of data received from the departments of education of the states studied. States are categorized as having made notable or limited progress according to the percent of decrease in the number of school districts within recent years.

States That Have Made Notable Reorganization Progress

Arkansas

The state of Arkansas had a statewide reorganization program approved in 1948, which reduced the number of school districts from 1,901 to 424. Since that time there have been few consolidations, and at the present time the state has 401 school districts.

¹American Association of School Administrators, School District Organization, op. cit., p. 4.

There is a proposal which will appear on the ballot in November, 1966, and if it is favorably approved by the voters, it will eliminate 137 school districts that now have less than 400 children enumerated. The legislation will cause all districts with less than 400 pupils to be dissolved and will prohibit thereafter the formation of any school district with less than 400 pupils.

California

In 1945, legislation was enacted establishing a school district reorganization program which, for the first time, provided a practical way of forming unified districts throughout the state. The State Commission of School Districts created by the 1945 legislature succeeded, through its regional commissions and local committees, in having studies made of most areas of the state, resulting in widespread increase in understanding of the need for and benefits of reorganization. In 1949 the State Commission's term ended, and its functions were assigned to the State Board of Education.

The State Board discharged its responsibility to review and act upon the merits of each proposal submitted in an attempt to use its authority to effect district organization that would provide for maximum recognition

of the principle of equal educational opportunity for children.

The county committees had the responsibility under law to formulate plans and recommendations for the organization of school districts. County committees in formulating plans and recommendations had to consider the following: (a) Community Identity, (b) Size, (c) Financial Ability, (d) Division of Existing Elementary, High School, or Unified Districts, (e) Boundaries of Proposed Districts. Each plan had to be approved by the State Board.¹

Since 1945 the number of districts in the state has been reduced by well over a fifth. Progress has also been made in eliminating overlapping elementary and high school districts, with the result that the number of unified districts has been almost doubled.

During the legislative session of 1965 many attempts were made to weaken the 1964 statutes but in every case they were defeated and the strong 1964 act was not changed. One bill, a financial measure, was introduced to provide an additional fifteen dollars to the financial program of unified districts and thus encourage districts, but this provision was not approved.

¹Bulletin of the California State Department of Education, School District Organization by County Committees (Sacramento, California, State Department of Education, March 1962), p. 4.

Colorado

The number of school districts in Colorado was reduced from 205 to 184 during 1965. This was accomplished in part by an act which was passed in the General Assembly's 1964 Session which provided in effect that county high school districts and their component elementary districts should cease to exist on February 1, 1965, and that, if the combined enrollments of such districts were less than 1,500, their areas were to be annexed to the adjacent district or districts containing enrollments of more than 1,500, all in accordance with a plan of annexation prepared by the County School Planning Committee.

The Department of Education of the State of Colorado is pleased with the fact that the voluntary program of school district reorganization initiated by the Colorado General Assembly and utilized by the citizens has virtually revolutionized the educational climate of the state to the point where old the "common school" district with its pattern of elementary education has been virtually replaced by school districts offering twelve grades of education as a minimum.

Number of Colorado School Districts:

1925 - - - 2,003	1959 - - - 792
1930 - - - 2,041	1960 - - - 478
1935 - - - 2,105	1961 - - - 382
1940 - - - 2,037	1962 - - - 316
1945 - - - 1,884	1963 - - - 263
1950 - - - 1,648	1964 - - - 222
1955 - - - 1,017	1965 - - - 205
1957 - - - 929	1966 - - - 184 ¹

Connecticut

The state of Connecticut has 169 towns operating 179 school districts. The towns vary in school membership from fewer than 100 resident pupils to about 25,000 pupils. Connecticut pioneered in the movement for the enlargement of secondary school districts after it thoroughly investigated this subject in the early 1930's. Subsequently, eleven regional high school districts now serve twenty-nine towns. The Connecticut statutes permit the formation, by proper procedures, of completely regionalized school districts. The Department of Education and

¹Colorado Department of Education, School District Organization, (Denver, Colorado Department of Education, January, 1966), p. 1.

State Board of Education encourage continued regionalization of school districts.

Idaho

As of July 22, 1966, Idaho had 106 high school operating districts and eleven elementary districts.

Idaho's school district reorganization program was initiated in 1947. In its early stages the program progressed so rapidly that by 1949 over eighty percent of the area of the state was in reorganized districts. Since 1949 progress has continued at a steady, though less spectacular pace.

By July 1954, the state had a total of 190 districts as compared with approximately 1,100 in 1947. Only eighty-three districts had not been reorganized, and eighteen of these did not operate schools. Ninety-six percent of the public school enrollment was in reorganized districts.

Indiana

In 1959 Indiana passed a school reorganization law which set up legal machinery to enable citizens in each of the counties to study their own school organization needs and to instigate changes if they believed improvement was needed. Studies of school corporations

were required by law and had to be made. The law did not require any changes if a majority of the local citizens did not want them. The law set up county committees, and recommended minimum standards for school districts. A few amendments have been made to the 1959 law but they are not significant.

When the reorganization law was passed in 1959 the aim was to reduce Indiana's 1,000 school districts to 200-250. As of July 28, 1966 Indiana had a total of 406 school districts.

Iowa

In conformity to the county administration law, the county board of education in each county in Iowa initiated detailed studies and surveys of the school districts within the counties for the purpose of promoting reorganization of districts by union, merger, reorganization or centralization which would effect more economical operation and the attainment of higher standards of education in the schools.

It was declared to be the policy of the state to have all the area of the state in a district maintaining twelve grades by July 1, 1962. Prior to July 1, 1962 no district could be reorganized without approval of the voters. After July 1, 1962 the county board

could attach any district that was not in a district maintaining twelve grades to such a district.

Iowa's plan called for the complete elimination of rural elementary districts and for a reduction in the total number of school districts to 300-350 by 1965. As of the Fall of 1965, Iowa had reduced the number of its school districts to 984.

Iowa is one of four states presently engaged in a cooperative project to analyze the organization, functions, and services of school districts in the Great Plains area. The cooperating states are Nebraska, South Dakota, Missouri, and Iowa. The two-year study is being conducted under a \$355,000 Title V grant from the United States Office of Education.

Kansas

Reorganization is referred to as unification in the state of Kansas. In September, 1963 when the unification process began in Kansas there were 1,848 school districts in the state with 510 districts operating high schools. Eighty-eight of these 510 high schools, prior to unification, had an enrollment of less than 300 students.

As of May 1, 1966, every county in the state was at least partially unified, and eighty-six counties were completely unified. At the present time there are 306 unified districts and forty-two non-unified districts in the state. Twenty-three of the forty-two non-unified districts are common school districts operating grades one through eight; seven are common school districts operating grades one through twelve; ten are rural high school districts; and two are second class districts.

Enrollment figures for unified districts and for districts that are to become unified for all purposes are as follows: of the 306 unified districts, eight districts will have an enrollment in grades one through twelve of fewer than 151 students; fifty-four will have an approximate enrollment of fewer than 401 students but more than 151 in grades one through twelve; the estimated enrollment in 132 more unified districts will fall between 401 and 800 students in grades one through twelve; fifty-eight more districts will have enrollments from 801 to 1,500 students; and fifty-four unified districts will have enrollments in excess of 1,500 students.¹

¹State of Kansas Department of Public Instruction, Unification Progress Report as of May 1, 1966, (Topeka, Kansas: Department of Public Instruction, 1966), p. 3.

Maine

In 1957, Maine had ninety-two high schools with less than one-hundred pupils. The legislature realized reorganization of school districts was needed. Communities were urged to band together in school districts to achieve a more judicious use of state and local tax moneys. Incentives offered at the state level were higher operational subsidies and school construction aid. District reorganization was effective in the reduction of the number of small high schools; of the ninety-two schools with fewer than 100 pupils operating in 1957, only forty-seven schools of this size were in existence in 1963. In August of 1966, Maine had a total of 265 school administrative units; fifty-eight districts, 207 towns.

Minnesota

Minnesota's school district reorganization laws were voluntary on the part of the individual school districts until 1963. With 7,600 school districts in 1947, Minnesota made a gradual reduction year by year until only 2,002 districts existed as of July 1, 1964. Of this number, 450 maintained both elementary and secondary schools, approximately 500 were non-operating districts, and approximately 1,000 were maintaining elementary schools

only, most of which were one-teacher schools. The legislature of 1963 passed a law abolishing the non-operating districts as of July 1, 1965. This law was the first with any element of compulsion connected with it.¹ As a consequence of the 1963 law, some 300 closed districts took action prior to July 1, 1965 to join other districts, and another 300 were attached after July 1, 1965 in accordance with the mandatory provisions of the law. The 1966 report shows a further reduction of about fifty school districts, so the total number as of July 15, 1966 was 1,424.

Missouri

Missouri's legislature recently passed legislation which provides for the merging of two or more common school districts which together have an area of fifty square miles or have an enumeration of at least two hundred children of school age.

To initiate a proposed merging of districts a petition is required, signed by at least twenty-five of the voters of the district or districts concerned. On

¹State of Minnesota Department of Education, Rising Educational Requirements Call for District Reorganization, (St. Paul, Minnesota; Department of Education, October, 1965), p. 11.

receipt of the petition the county superintendent determines the boundary lines of the new district to form, in his judgment, the best possible district. A majority affirmative vote of the total votes cast is required for adoption.

Also, the county board of education is authorized by law to currently study the needs for proposing more adequate and satisfactory school districts and from time to time submit specific plans for reorganization of school districts of the county.

Nebraska

When the Nebraska legislature passed the School District Reorganization Act in 1949, Nebraska had 6,734 school districts. This number was reduced each year so that from that time to 1962, 3,657 school districts were dissolved. This represents a reduction of fifty-four percent of the number of districts which Nebraska had in 1949. At that time Nebraska still had 3,077 districts, which was more than the combined total of Hawaii, Alaska, Washington, Oregon, Nevada, Idaho, Montana, Utah, Wyoming, Colorado, Arizona, and New Mexico.¹ However, by October 1, 1965 the number of school districts has been further reduced to 2,527.

¹Governor's 1963-64 Conference on Education, (Lincoln, Nebraska, Department of Education, 1964), pp. 1-24.

Further legislation has been passed in Nebraska to encourage the continuation of district reorganization. Under the provisions of a bill passed by the 1965 legislature, a majority of the legal voters of any Class I or II school districts may dissolve the district and attach the territory to one or more existing Class II, III, IV, or V school districts.

New Hampshire

New Hampshire citizens have authorized more reorganization of their school districts in the past two years than in any period since the Town School Act was passed in 1885. That act reduced the number of school districts in the state from more than 2,200 to less than 250.

The number of administrative districts has been further reduced to about 200 in the past two years, and more reductions are being contemplated by local planning boards.

The trend to enlarge districts in size, but reduce them in number, has gained strength from two major happenings on the educational scene in New Hampshire. The first is the recommendation of the 1962 Interim Commission Study on Education to reduce the number of districts and school supervisory unions. The second was

the legislative enactment of revisions of cooperative school laws, giving a clear pattern for reorganization studies and authorizing more state financial aid.

New Mexico

The state of New Mexico recently passed legislation for school district reorganization that is much like that of Michigan's current legislation. The New Mexico plan provides for reorganization of county school districts by combining them with adjacent municipal districts or creating independent districts and authorizing the state board to certify rural school districts as independent school districts.

Under the legislation each county board of education was required to prepare a plan for its administrative reorganization to combine it with an existing adjacent municipal or independent administrative unit or units, or to create new independent administrative units composed of all or some of the existing rural school districts under its jurisdiction. If a plan is not submitted or not accepted by the State Board, the State Board of Education shall effect the administrative reorganization of the county school system.

As of July 15, 1966, there were ninety school districts in New Mexico.

New York

New York passed a new reorganization law in 1965 which returned incentive aid as an impetus for school organization. It established a procedure for granting state aid for school building purposes to school districts scheduled for reorganization and granting additional state aid to certain school districts after reorganization. The state had 991 school districts as of March 1, 1966.

North Dakota

There were 2,275 school districts in North Dakota in 1947 when the school district reorganization law became effective. By July, 1964, there were about 650 school districts in the state. Many of the original districts ceased to exist as a result of individual school district petitioning for annexation to an adjoining school district. During the years 1962-1964 a number of districts were dissolved under the provisions of the law which provides that any district not operating a school for two consecutive years must be dissolved by attachment to an adjacent school district or districts. This section providing for the "automatic" dissolution of school districts that operated no schools for a two-year period was amended by the 1965 legislature requiring that the State Board of Public School Education, which is also the board

for reorganization, approve such automatic reorganizations. As of July 15, 1966, North Dakota had 600 school districts.

Oklahoma

The annexation law which changed the Oklahoma school district pattern to an extent greater than had any previous legislation was the "mandatory" annexation law passed in 1947. It required that all districts having an average daily attendance for the preceding year of less than thirteen pupils should be annexed by the State Board of Education to the district or districts maintaining high school in whose transportation area it was situated. Also, that all districts failing to maintain school during the next preceding year should be similarly annexed. This law had a revolutionary effect on the school district system in Oklahoma. Hundreds of non-high school districts whose attendance had reached thirteen or fewer were annexed to districts maintaining high school. Many other annexations occurred by elections held where citizens realized that their districts soon would be abolished in the same manner. The local advantage of the election was to give the people of the district a choice in selecting the district maintaining high school to which they were to be annexed.¹ Since

¹Kerr, loc. cit.

1947, when this law became effective, 3,290 school districts have been annexed or consolidated by mandatory action of the state board of education in compliance with the law, or by voluntary vote of the people. As of July 15, 1966, Oklahoma had 1,001 school districts.

Pennsylvania

The state of Pennsylvania has had a great deal of recent legislation passed which pertains to school district reorganization. An act was recently passed to permit the creation of independent school districts for reorganization purposes only. These independent districts are non-operative. The purpose of this act is to permit the placement of certain out-of-the-way areas into school districts which are more accessible because of mountainous terrain. Another act recently passed permits further voluntary reorganization of school districts. Another act that recently took effect relates to the election of county superintendents in Pennsylvania, granting the school directors of reorganized districts voting privileges, entitling them to services of the county office and limiting the term of office of the county superintendent. This act is preparing the groundwork for a reorganization of the intermediate units in Pennsylvania.

Of the 466 proposed reorganized administrative units in Pennsylvania, 413 were established as of July 1, 1966. Due to pending appeals in the Commonwealth Court, fifty-three proposed administrative units have not been able to establish. Depending on the court's decision, there could be an increase of as many as thirty-nine additional districts before the mandated reorganization is complete.

South Carolina

South Carolina went into a reorganization program along with building funds to help implement the organization in 1951. Since that time the state has cut down the number of school districts from 1,300 to 108, which is the number of districts in South Carolina at the present time.

The South Carolina Act provides an illustration of legislation which authorized a county agency and state agency to reorganize the school districts.

Tennessee

The Tennessee Legislature passed an act in 1963 which required that a planning commission be created in all counties where separate school districts were maintained. The duty of the planning commission was to study

and consider the need for and problems in conjunction with the consolidation of all public schools within the county into a unified school system and to make and file a written report with a proposed plan of consolidation.

The plan had to be approved by the affected governing body of any affected county or municipality or the board of education of an affected school district. It then had to be approved by a majority of the voters. Tennessee had 152 school districts in the 1964-65 school year.

Washington

When Washington became a state in 1889 more than 1,000 school districts were already in existence. By 1900 the number of districts had increased to 2,022, and by 1910 had reached a peak of 2,710 school districts. Then, with the change from pioneer conditions, when it was deemed necessary to have a public school within walking distance of the children of every small community, to more modern conditions of improved roads and transportation facilities, the number of school districts was reduced under acts of the legislature providing for consolidation of school districts. As a result, the number of school districts had decreased to 1,609 by 1939, and by 1945 to 723. The marked decrease in the

number of districts from 1939 to 1945 was effected under the intensive school district reorganization program of 1941-45 initiated by the legislature.

As of September 30, 1965 there were 378 school districts in the state of Washington classified as follows:

1. Elementary only, or non-high school district:
 - a. One-room districts: non-operating, 13;
operating, 22; total - - - - - 35
 - b. Graded school districts (two or more
teachers) - - - - - 92
 - Total 127
2. Unified school districts operating schools
from kindergarten through high school, and
in a limited number of cases advanced second-
ary schools or community colleges - - - - -
Total 250
3. Union high school districts - - - - -
Total 1
- Grand Total 378¹

The trend in Washington contemplated and encouraged by the school district organization statute is for non-high school districts to unite with the high school districts which serve them. The intent, according to the State Board of Education, is not that the elementary school in the non-high school district necessarily may be

¹State of Washington, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Changes in School District Organization, (Olympia, Washington, Department of Public Instruction, September, 1965), p. 14.

discontinued, but rather that (1) the patrons of these districts may have a voice in the management of the high schools which serve their children, and (2) that the educational program and its related services for the children of these districts be improved.

The budget and appropriations act of 1965 contained a proviso that stimulated more activity in school district reorganization than for some time. This proviso stipulated that an additional weighting factor for apportionment purposes for the 1966-67 school year be allocated to those non-high school districts which enroll fewer than 100 pupils and which are judged to be remote and necessary by the state board of education.

Out of eighty-one districts with enrollments under 100 students, only fifteen have been categorized as remote and necessary by the state board. As a result, even though the other districts involved will not feel the effects of this legislation until the next school year, between fifteen and twenty of them voluntarily requested annexation to unified districts during the six month period, January to July. As of July 19, 1966 the total number of districts was 363.

Wisconsin

The state of Wisconsin, since 1848, adopted a series of laws affecting school district reorganization. The most recent were the 1953 law which abolished non-operating school districts by ordering them to operate a school or be consolidated with operating districts by orders of school district reorganization agencies; the 1959 law which made it mandatory that all of the area of the state become a part of a school district operating a high school by July 1, 1962 or be placed into such districts after that date by county school committees without recourse to local referendum; the 1961 law by which school boards were authorized to reorganize school districts to the extent that they might annex adjacent territory to districts operating high schools or to adjust school district boundary lines by mutual action.

In 1964, co-operative educational service agencies were created to act as service units between the local districts and the state superintendent's office. The 1965 legislature established two new school district reorganization authorities, namely, the Agency School Committee and the State Appeal Board.

As of July 1, 1966 Wisconsin had a total of 552 elementary and high school districts.

States That Have Had Limited Reorganization Progress

Introduction

Several states have had no problem with school district reorganization because the original organization of their school districts provided satisfactory administrative units for their educational programs or because they were well organized at an early date due to effective legislation. Others have problems with school district reorganization but have been backward in improving their situations.

Alaska

The state of Alaska had seventeen school districts in 1932 and has thirty at the present time. The number of school districts has increased slowly with the growth of population.

There are two school systems in the state of Alaska--the state system and the Bureau of Indian Affairs System. The state directly operates schools through the Department of Education. These are called state-operated schools. In addition, twenty-one city and one borough operate schools under general state laws. These are district schools. A number of independent school districts were merged into various boroughs just prior to 1964.

An overall plan is now being followed which provides for the gradual consolidation of school districts and for the consolidation of state and Bureau of Indian Affairs operated schools into a single state school system.

Montana

The state of Montana Department of Education indicates that the state has no school district reorganization statutes.

Oregon

Minor legislation was passed in Oregon in 1965 concerning boundary changes and administrative school districts. As of July 1, 1966 Oregon had 390 school districts.

Rhode Island

Very little legislation concerning school district reorganization has occurred in Rhode Island. At the present time there are forty school districts, including three regional school districts, in Rhode Island.

South Dakota

South Dakota has only very limited legislation for the reorganization of their school districts. Each

county board of education has authority to reorganize the school districts within county boundaries whenever any of the following is true:

1. Twenty percent of the electors of an existing school district present a petition to the county board of education requesting their district be attached to another district, a majority of the voters of both districts approve the annexation.
2. A school district has taxable property assessed at a lower valuation than one hundred thousand dollars.
3. A school district has failed to elect a school board member or members as provided by law.
4. Sixty percent of the votes cast in a special election approve the dissolution of a school district and its combination with another district or districts.
5. A school district has failed to operate a school during the two preceding fiscal years.

As of July 1, 1966 South Dakota had a total of 2,054 school districts, of which 225 were independent school districts (K-12), and 1,829 were common school districts(K-8).

Texas

Most of the reorganization that has taken place in Texas has been on a voluntary basis. The statutes call only for methods by which common and independent school districts may consolidate to form a new district. Also, county school boards of trustees do have authority to annex common school districts to independent school districts under certain conditions.

Vermont

Vermont has had very limited legislation pertaining to school district reorganization. However, the 1965 legislature created a temporary advisory commission to study and recommend procedures for school district reorganization. The act provides for the creation of a temporary advisory commission on reorganization of school districts kindergarten through grade twelve. The commission has responsibility to prepare guidelines and a plan for each area of the state. The total number of school districts in Vermont in the Fall of 1965 was 262.

Wyoming

Wyoming has two possible procedures for reorganizing school districts. One is through the district boundary

board and the other through the Reorganization Act of 1947. The district boundary board method is normally not used unless there is considerable local pressure for reorganization.

Wyoming is a state with a strong belief in local autonomy of schools. There is absolutely no authority vested in the state committee, none in the director. Therefore, reorganization in Wyoming has proceeded at a very slow pace. At the present time the state has one hundred and sixty-four school districts.

County Units

Introduction

The county unit school district has a history dating back to well before the beginning of the twentieth century. For the most part, it took hold in the South, where the county has from the beginning of the nation been a strong unit of local government. The development of the county unit school district has been gradual in most states that have it; and it has been perhaps a matter of necessity, since most of the states that adopted it could not afford the extravagance of the inefficient common school district so highly prized by the people of the more affluent states.¹

¹American Association of School Administrators, School District Organization, op. cit., p. 7.

The county unit school district has long been advocated as the most effective unit of school administration by some of the recognized professional people in school administration. Other professional experts have condemned the county unit for neglecting the community aspects of school organization.¹ Regardless of their opinions, the opponents of county units have been fighting a losing battle as the numbers of school districts organized as county units have continued to increase.

Alabama

There has been no recent legislation nor activity pertaining to school district reorganization in the state of Alabama. The school districts of Alabama were organized into county and city administrative units under mandatory legislative procedures in 1903. As of July 15, 1966 Alabama had a total of 118 school districts--sixty-seven county and fifty-one city school systems.

Florida

Prior to 1947, Florida had the "county unit" system insofar as school board, financial administration, and supervision of instruction were concerned. Each

¹Ibid.

county still had, as late as 1946-47, a number of school districts, which made a total of 650 for the state.

Through the years before 1947 the number of school districts had been greatly reduced by local elections for consolidations. In 1947, all districts within each of sixty-seven counties were simply abolished and one district established, co-extensive with the boundaries of the county itself.

Georgia

Georgia's State Constitution of 1945 did away with all school districts in the state, with the exception of independent city systems, and made the county the unit of administration. There has been a continuous trend in the state toward merging of the independent systems with county school systems. Since the number of independent city systems is gradually being reduced, the State Department of Education anticipates that within the foreseeable future, the independent city systems will cease to exist as separate units, with the possible exception of the city of Atlanta. As of July 14, 1966 there was a total of 196 school districts in the state, thirty-seven independent systems in operations, and one hundred and fifty-nine county systems, each of which was a school district. Each county, exclusive of any independent

school system, comprises one school district and is controlled by the county board of education. There were no examples of mergers across county lines although the constitution provided for such reorganization.

Recently, the state had a very comprehensive study of school district reorganization conducted by the Bureau of Surveys and Field Studies, George Peabody College for Teachers, which set up some principles for use of the state board of education in dealing with local school systems in the area of district organization.

At the present time, a constitutional amendment is pending, to be voted on at the general election in November, 1966, which will make it possible for any two or more local school systems to merge into larger units by local referendum when such mergers are desired. The Department of Education feels that if the amendment becomes a part of the constitution, it will serve as an intermediate step between the present requirement that such mergers must be through constitutional amendment and the implementation of the Peabody Report.

Kentucky

Ten years ago Kentucky had 120 county units and 107 independent districts. There has been a gradual trend in the state toward complete county units, which

has been going on for many years. As of July 15, 1966, Kentucky had 200 school districts.

Louisiana

The organizational structure of Louisiana's public school system, as provided in constitutional and statutory provisions, requires that the parish (county) school board serve as the administrative unit of the public schools operated within the legally established boundaries of the parish.¹ The boundaries of the parish of Orleans and city of New Orleans are coextensive. Other exceptions to this provision are areas within three parishes, which constitutional and legislative action have designated and recognized as separate city school systems. Accordingly, there are sixty-four parish and three city school systems, or a total of sixty-seven basic school units at the local level of the state public school organizational structure.

Mississippi

Mandatory legislation to reorganize school districts was passed in Mississippi in 1953. The Mississippi

¹State of Louisiana Department of Education, Factors in Schools' Holding Power, (Baton Rouge, Louisiana, Department of Education, 1964, p. 5-6).

law gave authority to county boards of education and required them to reorganize the local districts in each of their respective counties in a manner that would meet the approval of the State Educational Finance Commission by July, 1957. This requirement for action was made effective by the provision making it possible to deny state school funds to any county until such time as the county board put into effect a plan of school district reorganization that met the approval of the State Finance Commission. As a result of this legislation, the 1,417 local school districts were reorganized into 151 districts by July, 1957.

At the present time Mississippi has the following types of school districts:

County Units - - - - -	68
Consolidated Districts - - - - -	29
Municipal Separate Districts - - - - -	<u>52</u>
Total	149

Nevada

Mandatory legislation approved by the state legislature established the county unit in Nevada. In 1956 the Nevada Legislature abolished more than 180 then existing school districts and established seventeen county school districts in their stead. The legislature,

at the same session in 1956, provided for the creation of joint school districts; however, none of the districts have seen fit to form joint school districts up to the present time.

North Carolina

North Carolina was one of the earliest states to reduce the number of school districts and consolidate its schools. In 1839 the legislature provided for dividing the state into local school districts, each of which should have not more than six miles.

In 1923 the legislature established the county as the school district and required the county boards of education to prepare county-wide plans for the consolidation of schools.

Utah

Information concerning reorganization of school districts in the state of Utah is rather meager since Utah school districts have been organized on a county and cities of first and second class basis since 1915. The only move for any further reorganization of school districts since 1915 came in the 1955 session of the legislature. At that time the State Department of Education proposed a bill to the legislature for elimination of all districts within counties wherein the total school population was

less than 4,000 children in said counties. However, the bill did not pass. There are at the present time, in the state, three such counties which in the 1915 reorganization were divided into more than one school district for political and wealth reasons. There have been no other changes. Utah has forty districts.

Virginia

The state of Virginia adopted the modified county unit school through mandatory legislation in 1923.

West Virginia

In 1933 West Virginia's public school system adopted the county unit system. At that time the number of school districts was reduced from 397 to fifty-five. The situation remains the same today.

SUMMARY

There are great variations in the type of reorganization legislation adopted by the states. However, most state reorganization legislation has the following features:

- *Its approach is statewide whenever reorganization is needed.

- *It provides for county or other local committees to make studies of redistricting needs and to develop proposals for new districts, which are submitted to the voters for ratification.

- *It emphasizes systematic planning based on local conditions and needs.

- *It provides for a state administrative agency which is empowered to develop policies and procedures.

The goal in every state that is conducting reorganization activities appears to be to reduce the number of school districts in an effort to improve educational opportunities. Many states have set minimum standards for their school districts.

Much reorganization legislation is aimed at consolidating elementary and secondary school districts rather than maintaining them as separate administrative units.

A great effort is being made to eliminate closed school districts.

Although some states have limited reorganization legislation, they are conducting extensive statewide studies in an effort to improve their school district organization structure.

The county unit school district is advocated more than any other as the most effective unit of school administration. Several states have reorganized their school systems as county units.

Many states have had their school districts effectively reorganized through using permissive legislation, but others have found it necessary to use mandatory school district reorganization legislation.

Several states have had no problem with school district reorganization because the original organization of their school districts, or early reorganization legislation, provided satisfactory administrative units for their educational programs. Others have numerous problems concerning school district reorganization but have been backward in improving their situations.

Recent reorganization in some states is notable. The North Dakota, Connecticut, Kansas, Washington, and Pennsylvania state legislatures have passed significant school district reorganization legislation within the past two years.

CHAPTER IV
EVOLUTION OF SCHOOL DISTRICT REORGANIZATION
IN MICHIGAN

Origin of School Districts

The French occupied Michigan for 150 years, and the English held it for another twenty-three years. There is no record of a school having been established in Michigan under either of the two governments. However, in 1783 Michigan was ceded to the United States, and in 1785 the sixteenth section of each township was pledged by the government for the support of schools.

The territory of Michigan was organized in 1805, and the first school law was enacted by the territorial authorities in 1809. However, there is little information concerning the law. The territorial government ordered that school districts be established in populated centers.

The first schools in Michigan were private and were maintained in the city of Detroit in the early 1800's.¹

¹Michigan Superintendent of Public Instruction, Historical Sketches of Education in Michigan, (Lansing: W. S. George & Co., 1881) pp. 7-8.

The first state law passed in Michigan to provide for a system of common or primary schools was in 1827. This act provided that every township containing fifty inhabitants or householders should employ a schoolmaster, of good morals, to teach children to read and write, and to instruct them in the English and French languages, as well as in arithmetic, orthography and decent behavior, for such terms of time as should be equivalent to six months in each year. Every township containing one hundred families or householders was to hold school for an increased length of time; and to provide in addition a schoolmaster or teacher to instruct children in the English language. Every township containing 200 families or householders was to be provided with a grammar schoolmaster of good morals, well instructed in the Latin, French and English languages. If any township neglected to procure and support such teacher as was required for the various lengths of time, the township incurred a penalty in proportion from fifty to one hundred and fifty dollars; and the penalty was to be levied by warrant from the court upon the inhabitants of the deficient township, and was appropriated for the use of such schools that had complied with the law, and whose circumstances most required such assistance. The inhabitants were to choose

five persons within their townships as inspectors of common schools.¹

In 1828 Congress authorized the Governor and council to take charge of the school sections, to protect them from waste and injury, and to provide by law for leasing them. In 1833 the Michigan school law of 1828 was repealed and another act passed, which provided for the election of three commissioners of schools and ten inspectors, whose duties were more extensive than they had been under the original law. They were charged with the protection of section sixteen, with power to lease and manage it in whatever manner they deemed best calculated to enhance its value. Any funds arising from such care and management were to be applied to the support of the common schools.

In 1835, the same year in which the law was passed to form a Constitution and state government, an amendment to the act of 1833 made it the duty of the school commissioners to make yearly dividends of all moneys coming into their hands by virtue of their office, for rents or damage done to section sixteen, and to distribute and pay over the amount to the directors, in

¹Ibid., p. 11.

proportion to the number of pupils taught, according to the provisions of the law of 1833.¹

The First Legislature

The first legislature of the state of Michigan convened at Detroit, November 2, 1835. The subject of education did not receive attention at this time, but at an extra session in 1836 the effective organization of the future school system came up for consideration. The act for the organization of school districts was passed in 1836. In 1837, in accordance with the act, Mr. Pierce, who was later to be appointed the first State Superintendent of Public Instruction, submitted a comprehensive plan for a system of public instruction.

The Pierce Plan

When Michigan was admitted to statehood, there were already fifty-five school districts in operation. The John D. Pierce Plan, which had been adopted by the legislature in 1837, authorized each township board of school inspectors, later the township board, to divide the township into nine school districts of approximately four square miles each. The boundaries of these primary

¹Ibid., p. 12 and 13.

districts were subject to change by the township inspectors in accordance with changing need. With very little modification, several districts formed under this system of primary school districts have come down to the present day. Even in 1837, however, it was recognized that the primary district was too small to support secondary education, and the county accordingly was made the unit for the academy or secondary school.¹

This legislation resulted in the formation of a new school district wherever an additional school was needed. By 1850 the state had over 3,000 districts, and by 1880 over 6,000. The peak number was reached in 1912, when the total stood at 7,362 and did not drop below 7,000 until the early 1920's.²

Owing to the rapid increase in population in many districts, especially in villages and cities, it became necessary under the original law, which contemplated the employment of but one teacher in each district, to divide the district in order to employ a sufficient number of teachers. The people, however, did not favor such divisions, and the legislature consequently

¹Ibid., pp. 12 and 14.

²Fitzwater, op. cit., p. 204.

authorized the inspectors to form union school districts, each having an enlarged board. Out of this ultimately grew the graded and high school law which was enacted in 1859.¹

Although the first graded school district was established in the city of Detroit in 1842, it was not until 1859 that the general graded act was passed which established graded school districts throughout the state. By this act a district having more than one hundred children between the ages of five and twenty years was empowered to organize as a graded district and to elect a board consisting of six trustees. At the time this law was first enacted, districts organizing under its provisions secured much greater powers than they could exercise under the more simple organization. Later, graded school districts were also authorized to operate a high school.

Special Act School Districts

In nearly all the incorporated cities of the state and in several of the larger villages, the schools were organized during later years under special enactments,

¹Michigan Superintendent of Public Instruction, op. cit., p. 22.

which made such provisions for the government and management of the schools in cities and villages as seemed best adapted to their immediate needs. These several enactments are so dissimilar in character that no general description of their provisions can be made in this study.¹ All but five of these special act districts were repealed by July 1, 1966.

From the annual reports of the boards of school inspectors, the statistics for Table Number 2 were compiled in order to show the whole number of school districts, including all kinds, that were reported each year from 1836 to 1880.

Union School Districts

All the early schools of Michigan were from necessity ungraded schools, and no attempts were made for several years after the organization of the school system of the state to introduce the grading of schools. The act of legislation for the grading of schools was that of 1843, providing for the formation of union school districts. This law provided that whenever the board of school inspectors of any township shall deem that the

¹Ibid., p. 23.

TABLE 2

1836 - 55	1860 - 4,087
1837 - 382	1861 - 4,203
1838 - 1,020	1862 - 4,268
1839 - 1,325	1863 - 4,382
1840 - 1,506	1864 - 4,426
1841 - 2,215	1865 - 4,474
1842 - 2,312	1866 - 4,625
1843 - 2,410	1867 - 4,744
1844 - 2,518	1868 - 4,855
1845 - 2,683	1869 - 5,052
1846 - 2,869	1870 - 5,108
1847 - 2,942	1871 - 5,299
1848 - 3,071	1872 - 5,369
1849 - 3,075	1873 - 5,521
1850 - 3,097	1874 - 5,571
1851 - 3,307	1875 - 5,706
1852 - 3,383	1876 - 5,834
1853 - 3,410	1877 - 5,947
1854 - 3,465	1878 - 6,094
1855 - 3,514	1879 - 6,252
1856 - 3,525	1880 - 6,352 ¹
1857 - 3,748	
1858 - 3,946	
1859 - 3,968	

¹Ibid., p. 23.

interests of any of the school districts would be best promoted by so doing, they could form a single district out of any two or more districts therein, and classify the pupils in such district into two or more classes, according to their proficiency and advancement in learning, and require that such pupils be taught in district schools or departments as classified by them, and such districts may have the same number of schoolhouses, if necessary, and raise the same amount of taxes which the original districts forming the same could raise if not united. Among the first to be organized under the provisions of that law were the schools of Jonesville, Flint, Coldwater, Marshall, and Battle Creek. Other cities and villages were not slow in recognizing the advantages to be gained by being so organized, and before many years had passed, a significant number had availed themselves of the provisions of this law. But the decade from 1850 to 1860 was very largely a period of experimentation in the history of the graded and union schools.¹

¹Ibid., p. 36.

Secondary Education

The original secondary schools were established as branches of the University in 1837 when the law establishing the University was approved. Originally the branches were supported from state funds, but this was stopped due to lack of financial resources, and as a result they began to fade.¹

During the early years of the state's history, quite a number of academies and seminaries were incorporated by special acts of the legislature, in each of which more or less secondary instruction was given. However, there is very little on record concerning the operation of these institutions. These academies and seminaries increased with the decadence of the branches of the University. Most of these incorporated institutions were under the fostering care of various religious denominations. The legislature, in granting charters, gave them a legal existence but extended no financial aid to them.

During the decade from 1850 to 1860, there was much doubt as to whether the secondary schools should be made an integral part of the public school system of the

¹Ibid., p. 49.

state or whether they should be left independent and entirely to the fostering care of private corporations. However, the academies and seminaries gradually began to disappear before the advancing growth of the union school system.¹

A case that had great significance for secondary education was heard by the Michigan Supreme Court in 1874. A suit had been filed to restrain the collection of school taxes assessed for the support of the high school in the Village of Kalamazoo. The Court upheld the right of school authorities in union school districts of the state to levy taxes upon the general public for the support of high schools. From this time the public school districts began to grow in numbers and usefulness.

Graded School District Act

It was found that the provisions of law were too limited as to the powers granted school districts, and as a consequence several cities, led by force of their necessities, asked for and obtained from the legislature special enactments. This fact, united with the experience of sixteen years, prepared the way for the law of 1859,

¹Ibid.

which gave to any district having not less than two hundred children between the ages of four and eighteen years, authority to organize as a graded and high school district, and granted to districts that might so organize much greater powers than could be secured under the previous general law. Two or more adjoining districts could also, under this enactment, be united to form a graded school district. In 1861, this law was changed so that districts having at least one hundred children between the ages of five and twenty years might be organized under its provisions. Under the provisions of this law the graded school districts of the state increased rapidly until there were nearly 400 by 1880.¹ Table Number 3 shows the growth of the graded school districts from 1859 to 1880.

The State Superintendent of Public Instruction had great pride in the progress of education in Michigan as is shown by his report in 1860:

The territory of the state is distributed into more than four thousand school districts, each having its group of homes and home interests and its separate schoolhouse and school, where the great work of educating the young goes on yearly. In three thousand of these districts are living, as shown by the school census of 1860, two hundred and forty-six thousand six hundred and eighty-four children, of the ages to which the law adjudges instruction to be due.

¹Ibid.

TABLE 3

GRADED SCHOOL DISTRICTS

1859 - 58	1870 - 248
1860 - 85	1871 - 266
1861 - 75	1872 - 300
1862 - 106	1873 - 311
1863 - 119	1874 - 327
1864 - 123	1875 - 295
1865 - 147	1876 - 303
1866 - 148	1877 - 338
1867 - 179	1878 - 350
1868 - 208	1879 - 353
1869 - 235	1880 - 389 ¹

¹Ibid., p. 38.

There were employed the past year in the care of these schools and the education of these children, seven thousand nine hundred and forty-one teachers. Nearly two thousand citizens bore the office and discharged the duties of school inspectors in the supervision of this work, and more than twelve thousand district school officers were engaged in the management of the affairs of the separate districts.

There is invested in school-houses and other school property, in the primary school districts of the state as shown even in the partial returns, the magnificent sum of \$1,506,616.34.

The wages of the teachers of the schools, last year amounted to \$467,286.50; and if we add to this the amount paid to school officers, the cost of school library and books, and the expenses attendant upon maintaining children at school, the whole annual cost of our educational interest will fall little short of one million dollars, a sum greater than the entire aggregate of expenditures by the state government for all other purposes.¹

In 1861 the superintendent of public instruction continued his praise of the graded school district in his annual report as he stated that if the graded school district plan possessed the advantages claimed for it, then a true policy would require that the schools in the 235 districts should be organized and taught as graded schools. In all cases, he said, in which the number of

¹Report of the Michigan Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1860.

pupils in attendance demanded the employment of more than one teacher, the school should be graded.¹

Continued Progress

The state superintendent's report in 1862 recommended substitution of the township school system in the place of the district system. Legislation for this was introduced in 1861 but left unfinished. The superintendent recommended permissive reorganization laws for township and town schools.²

The statistics of primary schools as gathered from the reports of the school officers, were in most respects, highly gratifying to the state superintendent in 1865. The census of children between the ages of five and twenty years of age showed that in no other year in the history of the state had the population increased so much as during the school year 1865.³ No reports were received from certain districts, but exclusive of those, the returns received showed an aggregate

¹Report of the Michigan Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1861.

²Report of the Michigan Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1862.

³Report of the Michigan Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1865.

of 396,205, which was 15,433 more than the fall returns of 1864. The actual gain, therefore, was put at something over seventeen thousand. The school census, compared with the general, showed the whole population to have been a little more than three times as great as the number returned in the school census.

The 1865 superintendent's report stated there were 132 graded school districts containing an aggregate of 76,033 children between the ages of five and twenty.¹

In 1866 no reports were received from eight towns which in 1865 had reported 513 children, but still reports were received from 735 townships and cities, an increase of twenty-two. No new counties were reported. The number of districts was reported as 4,625, an increase over the previous year of 151. The number of children between the ages of five and twenty years was 321,311, an increase during the year of 22,704, which was the largest increase in the history of the state.

The number of counties from which reports were received in 1867 was fifty-eight. This was the same number as the year before, though the report from Chipewa was omitted as had been that of Delta from the last year. There were in the state sixteen other counties,

¹Ibid.

most of them without inhabitants. The number of townships and cities was 774, an increase of forty-nine. This increase was nearly all in the new counties, and showed the rapid progress of settlement in the state.

The number of school districts reported was 4,744, an increase of 119. The inspector's report showed 182 new districts organized. This discrepancy showed that more districts failed to report than in 1866, though in some cases it was thought that two districts had been made into one. The number of children between five and twenty years of age was 338,244, an increase of 117,108. The number reported attending school was 243,161. This was a loss of over three thousand, but it was one of the peculiarly unreliable items. The number of graded schools reported in 1867 was 179, an increase of twenty-four. Also, the comment was made that at that time almost one-third of the children of the state were contained in 179 school districts.¹

¹Report of the Michigan Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1866.

Further Consolidation

On February 7, 1867, the legislature by an act which took immediate effect, established a new school district out of parts of three old ones, in the same township, and provided that a tax, levied in the latter districts for 1866, should be collected in the same manner as though they had remained unaltered, and that the old districts, together with the new one, should respectively be entitled to certain relative portions of the whole tax. The township school inspectors opposed this act but the Supreme Court held that the action was legal.

The number of districts reported in 1868 was 4,843. Of these, 3,703 were whole districts and 1,140 were fractional, that is, situated partly in two or more townships. Many of these fractional school districts are still remaining in Michigan. The state superintendent suggested that many evils had grown out of this organization of districts in two, three, and sometimes four townships; and that it should be avoided as far as possible. The increase in the number of districts reported from the previous year was ninety-nine.¹

¹Report of the Michigan Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1868.

Dissolution and Annexation

A Supreme Court decision pertaining to the dissolution and annexation of school districts was written in 1869. Under the statute in question the school inspectors of any township were empowered to divide the township into such number of districts, and to regulate and alter the boundaries of said school districts, as was from time to time necessary, they could dissolve one organized district and annex another.

The opinion of the court was as follows:

It will be perceived that the number of districts in any township is to be determined by the school inspectors. This follows, necessarily, from the language of the section, which confers authority to divide the township from time to time into such number of districts as may be necessary. If they may divide the township into twelve districts, why may they not divide it into ten, by enlarging the boundaries of one or more of those in existence? or which is the same thing, by annexing two or more so as to constitute but one district as may from time to time in the judgment of the inspectors become necessary. The power could not, perhaps, be derived from the words regulate and alter the boundaries. but these words taken in connection with the authority to divide from time to time as may be necessary, justified, legally, the order made by the inspectors.¹

¹Report of the Michigan Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1869.

A question also arose in 1869 concerning the establishment of school systems in newly formed townships. The court gave the following opinion:

The question will admit of but one answer. Upon becoming one of the organized townships of the state, without special conditions, it becomes a township within the meaning of the Constitution and laws, and clothed with the same rights and powers, and subject to the same duties which belong to new townships generally. It was the equal in rights and duties of all new townships not specially fettered by particular legislation.

Such being the status of the new township, the people were entitled and required to conform in all respects to the general laws of the state bearing upon townships and township affairs. They were required to elect school officers, organize school districts, and to institute and set in motion a complete system from the beginning.¹

Recommendations for Consolidation

The tendency to divide the territory into smaller districts has been referred to throughout this study. The disposition continued through the 1870's, even in sparsely settled portions of the state. The desire to be near the schoolhouse led to these divisions. The results, according to the state superintendent, were feeble districts, unable to build only small schoolhouses and employ inferior teachers at a cost for each

¹Ibid.

pupil of twice and often more than twice, the cost for a pupil in the best schools in the cities and large towns. The superintendent further explained that there is a limit to the division of territory into districts, beyond which it was not profitable to go, although it might be convenient.

The state superintendent went even further and definitely stated that the best method of districting the state was to make the township constitute the school district. He went on to suggest that the formation of small districts should not be encouraged and unless there were most manifest advantages to be secured by a division, it should never be done.

The number of organized counties from which reports were received in 1871 was sixty-seven, an increase of three over the last year. The number of townships and cities was 883. This was an increase of twenty-five, besides nine towns whose reports were not received. The number of districts was 5,299, an increase of one hundred and ninety-one. The number of new districts organized was one hundred and ninety-six. The number of children reported attending school was 292,466, but 533 districts with an aggregate census of 14,729, failed to report any

attendance. If these districts were added to the others, it made something more than 300,000 who attended school in 1870.¹

A change in the pace of school district development and attendance figures was noted in the superintendent's report of 1880. He indicated that the statutes showed an unsatisfactory situation. With an increase in the number of school children during the previous year of 10,187, the total attendance in school was 17,564 less than during the year ending September 2, 1878. The year which ended September 6, 1880, on the other hand, showed an increase in the school census of 19,228 and in the total attendance of 1,190 greater than the increase in the total number of school children and a consequent increase of 1.4 in the percentage of attendance. The number of graded schools reported was 389, an increase of thirty-six over the previous year.²

A few years later, in 1889, the number of districts had increased fifty-eight, making 7,145 districts in the state at that time. Of this number, 7,046 were

¹Report of the Michigan Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1871.

²Report of the Michigan Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1880.

reported as having maintained school, and the superintendent's report showed that school was maintained in thirty-three districts more in 1889 than in 1888. The school census had increased 10,146 and a peculiar feature of this increase and one that had been observed for four or five years previously, was that it all came from the graded school districts. There had been for several years a steady increase in the census of the graded districts over that of the ungraded districts. The total enrollment in all the schools was 423,604, or 66.1 percent of the school census. The graded schools showed an increase of 3,285 in the enrollment, but this was overbalanced by the 4,899 decrease in the ungraded districts, so that the total gives a decrease in the enrollment of 1,614. There were 503 graded school districts with a total enrollment of 201,087, or an average of 654 pupils to each district. There were also 6,642 ungraded districts with a total enrollment of 310,885, or an average of forty-six pupils to each district.¹

¹Report of the Michigan Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1889.

Upper Peninsula Township Act

The Graded School Act made no provisions for secondary education in the more sparsely settled rural areas of the state, and when this situation became particularly serious in the Upper Peninsula, the legislature, in 1891, approved the Township School District Act. This law permitted formation of township school districts in the Upper Peninsula.¹

In 1900 the state superintendent offered several reasons for the consolidation of school districts. He indicated that there were too many school districts, and therefore too many schoolhouses and too many teachers employed. He also stated that as the counties had grown older the forests and swamps had disappeared, the roads had become better, and the means of transportation easier. Yet notwithstanding the fact that school facilities had greatly increased, the number of children of school age in many districts had constantly decreased. In many districts where there had been fifty school children thirty years before, there were in 1900 scarcely half that number, and little prospect that the schools would gain their former enrollment unless the territory of the district were greatly enlarged.

¹Thaden, op. cit., p. 13.

Recommendations for Minimum Standards

The Superintendent of Public Instruction in 1900 proceeded to make definite recommendations: Ordinarily, no township should contain more than six school districts; eight should be the maximum. A county school of only ten or a dozen pupils was considered too small to support a teacher and too small for the best work of the pupils themselves. An example presented was of a county with just seven districts to a township which would make a county of sixteen townships contain 112 districts. Used as an example were several counties containing sixteen townships, each approximately six miles square, or having thirty-six square miles. Barry County had 146 districts; Kalamazoo 138; Eaton 146; Ingham 136; Livingston 135; Clinton 129; Ionia 143; and Gratiot 132. It was indicated in the report that there were 1,105 school districts in those counties when 900 would have been sufficient.

It was suggested that school districts should be reorganized and many of them abandoned. Township boards of inspectors were told to enlarge districts instead of making new ones. The legislature was asked to repeal that part of the school law limiting districts to nine sections of land; and Grange's and Farmer's Clubs

who protested against the inequalities of taxation were told to regulate some of the inequalities fostered by themselves.¹

There were 671 districts in the entire state in 1898 in which were enrolled 56,779 school children. There were 449 teachers and 23,966 pupils in all the township districts of the state. At the time of the passage of the law of 1891 for the organization of township districts, there had been only eight township districts in the entire state of Michigan. In 1893, sixty-seven townships had been reported as organized into single school districts, and that number constantly grew until in September 1898 there were 115 township districts--ninety-two in the Upper Peninsula, and twenty-three in Lower Michigan. All except four of the 136 districts in the Upper Peninsula were organized under the 1891 Act.

The state superintendent took a strong stand for school district consolidation in 1906 as he said the following:

One of the serious economic questions of the day is that which considers the alarming fact of the great congestion of our population in the

¹Report of the Michigan Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1900.

large cities and the consequent depopulation of our rural districts. The causes of this are many, but among them is the fact that in increasing numbers our boys and girls are clearly recognizing, as they should, that their generation will, in a more emphatic sense than is true at present, be an educated generation, and if they are to maintain themselves they must have better training than is afforded by the ordinary district school. As a result of this some are going out from the country homes to the cities and towns to seek a high school education.

In the opinion of many the remedy lies in the consolidation of districts and the establishment of central schools.

Three methods have been suggested by which the central school idea may be realized.

First, it is suggested that the smaller and weaker districts shall be consolidated and that the number in each township shall be reduced to four. A fifth district will be made at the center of the township and a high school building erected large enough to accommodate the children of all grades living in the district and all the high school pupils from the entire township. A second plan, known as the Ohio Plan, consists of the abandonment of all the district schools in a township and the massing of all the pupils into one central school . . . a third plan is that suggested by the law passed at the last legislature of Michigan known as the Humphrey Rural High School Bill. This law is only applicable to townships in which there is not already existing a village or graded school.

The central school high school would eventually become the social center of the consolidated district. In its assembly room could be given courses of lectures and there might be held teachers' and patrons' meetings, debates, concerts, etc., etc. The Farmers' Club also might gather at this central point for natural consultation as to wages and means of making life better. The mental and social horizon of every man, woman, and

child would thus be enlarged, and life take on a deeper and more blessed meaning.

One thing more should be said. There is no disposition on the part of this department to influence the people to do something which their own best judgments will not, to the fullest extent, commend. The whole matter is very properly in the hands of the people themselves and no man or set of men can carry out any reform without their approval. Laws bearing on the subject should contain the referendum. The purpose of this department will be accompanied when the facts have been placed before the people for their consideration.¹

Tax for Transportation and Tuition

The legislature of 1903 provided that the districts formed under the township unit act might vote a tax for the transportation of pupils to and from school, and that the district might use the funds derived from the mill tax for the purpose of transporting pupils. Provision was also made by which the district might vote a tax sufficient to pay the tuition and daily transportation of qualified students to any high school which the school board might select. This made secondary school instruction possible but avoided the necessity of establishing a rural high school. So far as legal authority was concerned, consolidation of schools, rural

¹George J. Jackson, The Development of State Control of Public Instruction in Michigan, (Lansing: Michigan Historical Commission, 1926), p. 127.

high schools, transportation of pupils, and high school transportation were provided, and theoretically at least the children of rural communities had achieved somewhat equal educational opportunity.¹

Increasing Population

The 1909 superintendent's report indicated that there had been a thirty percent increase in the total population of the state in the preceding ten years according to the federal census. School population of the state had increased twenty-three percent, enrollment in the primary and secondary schools, twenty-eight percent.

A line drawn east and west through the center of the Lower Peninsula would have shown that sixty percent of the counties showing an increase of population during the decade were south of this line. An examination of the percentages of total population enrolled in school by each county and the percentages of those of school age enrolled showed that the counties ranking lowest in these two items were situated in the same section of the state in which the individual growth had been so rapid.

¹Ibid., p. 129.

The superintendent's report mentioned that the James Law effect would be interesting to note in the future. This law provided for the establishment of Continuation Schools in cities of five thousand and over. This law made it compulsory for all minors under eighteen years of age who had left school to attend one of these schools during a certain period of the week.

A total of 146 township units had been established by 1909, under the 1891 law which permitted formation of township school districts in the Upper Peninsula. In 1909, legislation was enacted which permitted formation of such districts anywhere in the state.¹ Districts formed under this act were generally unsatisfactory, both educationally and sociologically. The township was an artificial land surveyor's unit and rarely had any relation to the natural community.²

In 1910 an act was passed amending the free tuition law. The failure to define a high school and an eighth grade graduate previously prevented the perfect operation of the law. The amendment defined a high school as a graded district maintaining twelve grades of work with at

¹Fitzwater, loc. cit.

²Thaden, op. cit., p. 13.

least two teachers devoting their entire teaching time to the ninth, tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grades. It also provided that a child must hold a county eighth grade diploma in order to have his tuition paid, or have passed the eighth grade in a graded district, or have had his tuition paid the previous year under the free tuition law. Thus provision was made for an eighth grade examination by the Superintendent of Public Instruction which previously had been unauthorized. The law was one which very directly benefited boys and girls of the rural communities. The implications were that the number of these pupils to receive a high school education would be greatly increased.¹

Significant Legislation

Two acts with significance for school district reorganization were approved in 1911. One amended the township unit law by providing that women could vote on the question of organizing under that law and sign petitions for it, and also provided that graded districts having a population of nine hundred or less could be included in a township unit district. Act sixty-one provided

¹Report of the Michigan Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1910.

that township boards could change the boundaries of primary districts organized by special act of the legislature.¹

Michigan had, in 1914, over two hundred high schools with a total enrollment of fifty thousand. More than three-fourths of these were in small cities and villages. They served communities that were distinctively agricultural or that were surrounded by agricultural territory. Approximately one-third of the high school pupils of the whole state were non-residents, and these came largely from the rural districts. These facts, according to the state superintendent, were gratifying to educators because they indicated that parents recognized the value of an education above that prescribed by law and in advance of that given by the high schools. The superintendent's report recommended the 7-12 and K-6 plan of organization as well as specific courses for each grade.²

Rural Agricultural School District Act

In 1917 the legislature enacted the Rural Agricultural School District Act, which permitted consolidation

¹Report of the Michigan Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1911.

²Report of the Michigan Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1914.

of three or more contiguous rural districts into a single administrative unit. This was an attempt to adapt the local rural school district structure to changing economic, education, social and fiscal needs. The act provided specifically for the merger of three or more adjoining districts with a total assessed valuation of not less than \$700,000 or a total land area of not less than eighteen sections.¹

A summary of the reorganization activity and the state superintendents under which it occurred from 1842 to 1918 is given on the following pages:

Sawyer	1842	Legislature permitted Detroit to organize as one school district.
Comstock	1843	Legislature extended the above provision to any township containing a city or village.
Comstock	1844	Favored consolidation of districts in cities and villages.
Comstock	1846	Legislature permitted the districts in any township to consolidate.
Mayhew	1847	Advocated the establishment of union schools in every county of the state.
Shearman	1850	Stressed the preparatory function of the union school.
Mayhew	1857	Defined the term <u>union school</u> .
Gregory	1859	Legislature enacted the high school law.

¹Thaden, op. cit., p. 13.

Gregory	1860	Recommended the township unit plan.
Gregory	1861	Defined the term union school. Outlined a course of study for union schools. Enumerated the advantages of the township unit plan.
Gregory	1864	Urged the township unit plan.
Hosford	1866	Urged the township unit plan.
Briggs	1873	Urged the township unit plan.
Gower	1880	Enumerated the values of the township unit plan.
Gass	1883	Presented arguments for the township unit plan.
Estabrook	1888	Recommended that voters be given opportunity to express themselves with respect to adoption of the township unit plan.
Fitch	1891	Legislature permitted townships of the Upper Peninsula to organize on the township unit plan if so desired.
Fall	1901	Aggressively advocated school consolidation.
Wright	1908	Township unit plan a means of solving the rural school problem. Constitutional revision extended act of 1891 to the entire state.
Johnson	1918	Asked for reorganization of schools through consolidation as a means of solving the problem of the rural school. ¹

Establishment of Rural Agricultural Districts moved slowly at first. By 1920 only six had been formed,

¹Jackson, op. cit., pp. 131-132.

but in 1925 there were forty-eight, and in 1930, eighty-one. As of 1930 there were 6,159 districts of primary grades and 673 high school districts for a total of 6,832 school districts in the state.¹

In 1931 it was made possible for any primary school district in any township, regardless of location, to be annexed to any township school district after each district had voted in favor of annexation. Also, the board of education of a rural agricultural school or township school was given authority to pay tuition and provide transportation for any or all pupils to a nearby graded township, city or rural agricultural school district. Such sending schools were entitled to receive the regular state aid for transportation of pupils as was provided for rural agricultural schools.²

The rural agricultural school district occupied a unique position as a special type of school district in Michigan. By the 1940-41 school year the rural agricultural school districts had increased to 143.

¹Fitzwater, op. cit., p. 205

²Report of the Michigan Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1931.

Community School Districts

The superintendent's report for the 1937-39 biennium indicated that major changes in school districts had, for the most part, been made to establish community school districts. He recommended studying carefully several factors for the organization of a sound comprehensive educational program which could be operated economically. Following are the factors which were listed as having a direct relationship to the program of community school district reorganization:

- a. Knowledge of the history of the community
- b. Population, data, trends, and locations
- c. Roads
- d. Land use
- e. Curriculum needs
- f. School organization within the proposed district
- g. Transportation needs
- h. Budget, surveys, maps, miscellaneous data
- i. Public relations and social interpretation

It was further stated that the question of determining the boundaries of enlarged school districts, the type of such district to be maintained, and the

location of these schools was a problem for the people within the local area to decide.¹

The superintendent, in 1940, explained that reorganization programs were being more generally accepted because it was possible to offer more complete instructional programs at less unit cost. However, the savings made were usually absorbed by the demand for more complete community programs of education. It was pointed out that reorganization programs did not necessarily require the transportation of children to some central spot. In fact, it was often much more desirable to educate the elementary children relatively close to their homes and thus avoid the high costs of transportation. Reorganization was spoken of as a measure to avoid the unsatisfactory situation which was described as a crazy quilt pattern with blocks of greatly varying wealth all within a natural community of interests.

The number of pupils attending high schools from districts not maintaining grades beyond the eighth for whom the state paid tuition grew from 33,620 in 1933-34 to 46,641 in 1939-40, notwithstanding the fact that the number of rural schools in the state had been reduced by

¹Report of the Michigan Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1937-39.

the legal organization of community schools during that period. Out of every 100 on the school census in primary school districts 9.3 went to high school in 1933, but that number had increased to 15.4 in 1939-40, an increase of sixty-five percent.

The state superintendent, in his 1940 report, requested a law which would allow debts to be paid by the property upon which it was originally levied following reorganization. Districts were hesitating to consolidate because of an existing debt for which they had no responsibility.¹

In 1942, Michigan had a total of 6,274 school districts. Of the 6,274 school districts, 108 were urban districts centered around incorporated places of 2,500 or more inhabitants. The other 6,166 were rural districts. Of these, 159 were township districts; 173 were agricultural school districts; 134 were districts in suburban areas; and 102 districts were centered around villages with less than 2,500 inhabitants.¹

¹Report of the Michigan Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1940.

²Michigan Department of Public Instruction, Rural Michigan, op. cit., p. 13.

Michigan Public Education Study Commission

A comprehensive study of the educational system in Michigan was carried out by the Michigan Public Education Study Commission, which reported its recommendations and findings in 1942.

These recommendations and findings were summarized by Thaden as follows:¹ All currently organized districts of less than 10,000 population should be reorganized: (1) around relatively self-sufficing and permanent natural centers of populations, (2) with at least three million dollars of state equalized real and personal property valuation with possible exceptions where population density is low, and (3) capable of adequately serving a minimum enrollment of 360 students from the seventh through the twelfth grades.

School district maps showed possible reorganizations of districts that would meet the three major provisions just stated. About one-half of the 533 twelve-grade school districts existing in 1944 did not meet all three of the provisions.

Fitzwater reporting the same commission's recommendations, points out that the 6,239 districts existing in 1942 would be reduced to 253. The commission recommended

¹Thaden, op. cit., p. 16.

that a nine-member county committee should be created in each county to assist in the organization of school districts. Each committee would study the commission's preliminary reorganization proposals for the county and within two years submit a report of its recommendations to the state superintendent.¹ Apparently the state superintendent was expected to implement the proposals.

Although the commission's recommendations were not incorporated in new legislation, they did stimulate reorganization activity. During the next four years, from 1944-45 to 1948-49 school year, the total number of districts in the state was reduced by 966. This was a rate of reduction nearly four times that of the previous four-year period. The number of rural agricultural districts increased from 189 to 242 and township districts from 171 to 186.

Primary Districts

In 1943 there were 1,117 primary districts which closed their schools completely. In most instances the pupils were transported to districts with twelve grades rather than to adjoining primary districts. In addition, there were over 500 other primary districts which did not

¹Fitzwater, op. cit., p. 206-207.

offer a complete eight-grade program but closed one or more grades. Their pupils also were usually transported to districts with twelve grades.¹

Area Studies Program

An area studies program was passed by the legislature in 1949. It had the following provisions:

1. Area studies based on a county, a portion of a county, portions of two or more contiguous counties, or on two or more entire counties were to be authorized by the state superintendent of public instruction upon receipt of a petition and plan for the proposed study.
2. A petition and plan for an area study could be initiated in three ways: (a) by the county board of education, (b) by the county superintendent of schools, or (c) by local citizens numbering at least five per cent of the total vote cast within the proposed area in the last preceding general election.
3. All proposals for setting up an area study were to be subject to the approval of the state superintendent. He was also required to prescribe the procedures for the establishment and termination of area studies.
4. The proposed plan had to designate the membership of the area study committee. The members selected were to be proportionately representative of urban and rural areas as nearly as practicable.
5. The functions of an area study committee included (a) making a comprehensive study of educational conditions and needs of the area, and recommending

¹Michigan Department of Public Instruction, Rural Michigan, op. cit., p. 13.

changes in school district organization which, in the judgment of the committee, would afford better educational opportunities, more efficient and economical administration of public schools, and a more equitable sharing of public school support; (b) conferring with school authorities and residents of school districts of the area, holding public hearings, and providing information about educational conditions and needs to school officials and to the public generally; and (c) making a report to the state superintendent within two years. This report was to deal with educational conditions and needs of the area and was to include a map or maps showing boundaries of existing school districts, the location of school lands and buildings, school transportation routes, and the boundaries of recommended school districts.

6. Area study committees were empowered to accept contributions toward the cost of making area studies, and such contributions might be in money, services or materials.¹

An analysis of the reports of counties conducting area studies indicated much more extensive reorganization activity occurring than in other counties. In nineteen counties having an area studies program the total number of districts was reduced by one-fourth. Two counties reduced their districts by more than half, and another had a reduction of nearly one-half.²

In the 1947-48 school year there were 5,186 districts in the state. Of this number, more than 4,000 were

¹Fitzwater, op. cit., p. 208.

²Ibid.

primary districts. Slightly over 1,000 districts that year were sending their pupils to other school districts.¹ Several of these 1,000 were closed districts and sent all their pupils to other school districts.

In 1950 the state superintendent reported there were still 1,000 closed school districts in the state, each retaining a board of education and having a budget, but hiring other school districts to do the work of education for which they were originally created. He recommended that the closed districts be annexed to neighboring operating districts.²

Reorganization Progress

As of January 1, 1951 the superintendent's report indicated there were 4,860 school districts in Michigan. Consolidation of a group of contiguous districts into one district had resulted in the unification of 123 former districts into sixteen new districts during the year from July 1, 1948, to June 30, 1949, and of sixty-five former districts into nine new districts during the year from July 1, 1949 to July 1, 1950. During the corresponding periods, fifty-seven districts and sixty-two districts, respectively, were annexed to other

¹Report of the Michigan Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1947-48.

²Report of the Michigan Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1950.

districts. Thus, at that time, consolidation and annexation remained the two general procedures by which reorganization of school districts could be accomplished.¹

The School Facilities Survey published in 1953 indicated that as of March 1, 1951 there were 4,810 individual school districts existing in the state. Of this total, 858 (17.8 percent) were educating 91.7 percent of the public school children. The remaining pupils were being served by 2,986 separate school administrative units. In addition, one-fifth of the school districts, 966, had closed their doors and were operating no school at all.²

The 1952-54 biennial report of the superintendent of public instruction indicated that 300 school districts had joined with other districts to create more efficient and effective school operating units during the previous year. This was the greatest progress ever made in school district reorganization in the history of the state. The report recommended legislation that would eliminate closed school districts as a major step in the improvement of the educational structure.

¹Report of the Michigan Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1951.

²School Facilities Survey, 1953.

From the previous biennial report total of 4,249 school districts, the number had been reduced to 3,491 as of July 1, 1956. This indicated a decrease of more than one school district per day during the two-year period. Eighty-two percent of all children on the school census were residents of K-12 districts. However, only 542 of the state's 3,491 school districts were of the K-12 type. Again the state superintendent recommended legislation to encourage the development of school districts large enough and strong enough to provide sound educational programs through at least grade twelve.¹

Mandatory Legislation

The Michigan Legislature's first departure from permissive legislation came in 1955 when it passed a law to legislate closed school districts out of existence. The law provided that within two years every district that did not operate a school would be attached to an operating district. This law caused the elimination of over 200 school districts in the state of Michigan.

Both the township district and the rural agricultural school district were embodied in the fourth

¹Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1952-54.

class school district act of 1955. The legislature provided that each school district organized as a graded township or rural agricultural school become a school district of the fourth class.¹

In 1959 there were 2,360 individual school districts in the state of Michigan. This was 193 fewer than the 2,553 districts existing on July 1, 1958. In terms of grades operated, 545 school districts were classified as twelve-grade districts. The remaining 1,815 administrative units provided less than a twelve-grade program or were closed and provided no educational program at all.²

At the end of December, 1961, there were 552 high school districts, but only 537 of them offered a K-12 program; the other fifteen were not operating a full twelve-grade program. The 552 high school districts had over ninety-one percent of all pupils in membership and had over ninety-one percent of the state equalized valuation. On the other hand the remaining 1,355 districts had less than nine percent of the state equalized

¹Thaden, op. cit., p. 22.

²Michigan Department of Public Instruction, Report of the Administrative Services Division, 1958-59.

valuation and less than nine percent of all pupils in membership. There were 1,907 school districts in the state.¹

On May 5, 1962, there were 1,824 school districts in the state of Michigan. This number was 136 less than the total existing on March 1, 1961, the date of the last superintendent's report. Of the total of 1,824 school districts, 553 were classified as twelve-grade districts; the remaining 1,271 districts provided less than a complete twelve-grade program.

In the 1962 report, the state superintendent recommended that attention be focused on the problem of the small high school. It was explained that 130 of the 136 school districts having less than 200 secondary students could be eliminated through reorganization without causing pupils to have long distances to travel. The superintendent further recommended that extensive regional reorganization studies be initiated and encouraged and that small districts be counseled to work cooperatively with their neighbors.²

¹Michigan Department of Public Instruction, Report of the Administrative Services Division, 1961.

²Michigan Department of Public Instruction, Report of the Administrative Services Division, 1962.

On June 30, 1963, there were 1,590 school districts of all types in the state of Michigan. This was 205 fewer than existed on the same date one year previous. Of the 1,590 school districts existing at that time, 554 offered programs from kindergarten through grade twelve.

Although the vast majority of mergers consisted of the annexation of primary districts to K-12 districts, other kinds of reorganization were taking place.

During the preceding year, fourteen primary districts were annexed to other non-K-12 districts forming larger elementary administration units. In twelve cases, large fourth class non-K-12 districts were annexed by K-12 districts, thus unifying total program administration. In three instances, existing K-12 districts were annexed to other K-12 districts in order to provide a more adequate administrative unit and offer a more comprehensive program.

Through the consolidation method, four mergers took place involving two K-12 districts in each case. Two new consolidations for elementary purposes were completed, and one new K-12 district was established by this method.

Public Act 289

The passage of Public Act 289 of 1964 by the Michigan Legislature made reorganization studies mandatory on an intermediate district basis. The intent of these studies was not only to incorporate all non-high school districts into those operating K-12 programs, but, through reorganization, to combine effectively existing districts into units capable of offering a comprehensive educational program through grade twelve.

At the time of the passage of Act 289, Michigan had 545 school districts classified as K-12 and 893 non-K-12 districts.¹

SUMMARY

Very little progress was made in the establishment of schools in Michigan until 1827, at which time the first law was passed requiring that townships containing at least fifty inhabitants provide schools. When Michigan was admitted to statehood, however, there were already fifty-five school districts in operation.

¹Michigan Department of Public Instruction, Report of the Administrative Services Division, 1964.

Originally, school districts in Michigan were organized on the basis of local need and not as a part of an overall plan. In most cases the school districts were small and designed to support a one-room, one-teacher elementary school.

The need for expanded school districts and more advanced educational progress became obvious at an early date. The very first state superintendent of public instruction recommended legislation for further reorganization, and most of the state superintendents thereafter recommended reorganization of the school districts in the state.

The state of Michigan had over 3,000 school districts by 1850 and 6,000 by 1880. The peak number was reached in 1912, when the total was 7,362, and did not drop below 7,000 until the early 1920's.

Special act school districts were formed in several villages and incorporated cities. All but five of them have now been repealed.

The early schools of Michigan were ungraded union schools.

The Graded School District Act, which provided that any district having not less than 200 children between the ages of four and eighteen years could organize

as a graded and high school district, was passed in 1859. The graded school districts increased rapidly.

The original secondary schools were established as branches of the university in 1837, and there was a question as to whether the secondary schools should be made part of the public school system or whether they should be left to the care of private corporations. However, the academies and seminaries disappeared as the union school system advanced.

The Supreme Court in 1866 held that school districts within the same townships could be united and could collect taxes. The court also held that the commissioners could dissolve and annex school districts in their townships.

The Graded School District Act for the Upper Peninsula was approved in 1891. This law permitted the formation of township unit school districts in the Upper Peninsula.

The state superintendents continued to recommend school consolidation in order to improve quality of education in state school districts.

Provision was made by the 1903 legislature for school boards to vote a tax for the transportation and tuition of pupils to high school.

School population continued to increase with the growth of the state's population.

In 1911, the Township Unit Law was amended by providing that women could vote on the question of organizing school districts and that graded school districts could be included in the formation of a township unit district.

In 1917, the Rural Agricultural School Act was enacted, which permitted the consolidation of three or more contiguous rural districts into a single administrative unit.

A summary of the reorganization activity from 1842 to 1918 shows that each of the state superintendents had encouraged reorganization of school districts.

The Michigan Public Education Study Commission made comprehensive recommendations for school district reorganization in 1942. This study greatly stimulated reorganization activity, although its provisions were not adopted by the state legislature.

The Area Studies Program was approved by the legislature in 1949. This study contributed to extensive school district reorganization in various counties of the state.

The Michigan Legislature's first departure from permissive to mandatory legislation came in 1955 when it legislated schools with closed districts out of existence.

The reports of the state superintendents of public instruction continued to show progress in the reorganization of school districts and to recommend further reorganization legislation.

Finally, the passage of Public Act 289 of 1964 by the Michigan Legislature made reorganization studies mandatory on an intermediate district basis.

CHAPTER V

AN ANALYSIS OF PUBLIC ACT 289

Evolution of Public Act 289

Throughout the entire history of the state of Michigan, school district reorganization has been taking place, and legislation pertaining to it has been passed. Interestingly enough, despite all the conflict over reorganization, almost every superintendent of public instruction has asked, at one time or another, for additional legislation to force or at least stimulate school district reorganization in an attempt to equalize educational opportunities for all youngsters in the state.

Added to the activity of reorganization that has been taking place in the state is the progress that other states have been making in the area of school district reorganization. Many of them passed legislation identical to the Michigan act, while others approved legislation pertaining to reorganization of their school districts which was much more mandatory than that of Michigan.

The Area Studies Act of 1949 had a particular effect upon the people of Michigan who were responsible for public education. Due to the information and

recommendations defined in this study, reorganization was considered to be needed more than ever before.¹

An important individual study to have an outstanding effect was the one of Roland Strolle in 1955 as he declared many of the school districts in the state of Michigan were inadequate and reorganization was desperately needed.² Many of his specific recommendations were adopted by those who prepared Public Act 289.

Changing economic needs, growth of population, and demand for better education were all factors in the creation of Public Act 289.

Therefore, it can easily be determined that this act evolved through very natural processes as the state legislation changed, as other states set precedents, and as sophisticated studies showed need.

Description of the Legislation

Public Act 289 of 1964 was approved by the legislature March 31, 1964. The purpose of the act was to stimulate school district reorganization by providing

¹Fitzwater, op. cit., p. 208.

²Strolle, loc. cit.

for the study and development of plans for the reorganization of school districts and for elections to accomplish reorganization.

State Committee

A state committee was appointed by the Governor, composed of seven members, one who represented the Upper Peninsula, one the area above the Bay City-Muskegon line, and five representing the remainder of the state. The state superintendent was appointed non-voting chairman of the committee.

The duties of the committee were to develop policies and procedures for a statewide school district reorganization program planned so that all areas could become part of a twelve grade school system, direct area surveys and develop a manual of procedure for intermediate superintendents of schools, review and approve or reject intermediate district plans, and present a yearly progress report to the legislature. The state committee was directed to make a final report to the state legislature on or before September 1, 1968.

The State Committee established the following principles for reorganization of school districts:

1. First in importance is quality and breadth of education programs.

2. School districts should be organized around community centers or combinations of community centers, and villages or neighborhood centers, when identifiable, should not be divided between two or more proposed units.
3. Neighborhood schools on all levels shall be continued and new ones established whenever and wherever the school population justifies such neighborhood schools.
4. The plan should consider the utilization of good existing educational facilities now available or under construction.
5. The boundaries of proposed school districts should make for geographical compactness, and for efficient bus transportation.
6. Barriers to efficient transportation of pupils, such as lakes, rivers, forests, swamps, and expressways, should be a factor in the determination of school district boundaries.
7. Whenever population density permits, the proposed district unit should have, or should have an early potential for, a total K-12 public school minimum enrollment of 2,000 or more.

8. The ability to finance a school program should be a consideration in planning the school district. (Author's note: \$12,000 per pupil.)
9. The plan for the proposed school district organization within the intermediate district shall be based on a comprehensive study of present educational conditions and present and future educational needs. (Studies that have been completed recently in an intermediate school district may be used to the extent that such studies conform to the guidelines proposed by the State Committee.)¹

Intermediate Committees

A committee composed of eighteen registered resident electors was formed in each intermediate district of the state. Three members were appointed from the intermediate board of education, five members were elected to represent the school districts operating less than twelve grade programs, and five members fairly

¹Michigan Department of Public Instruction, Guidelines for School District Reorganization, Department of Public Instruction, 1964, p. 17.

representing all areas of the intermediate district were appointed by the probate judge.

The responsibility of the intermediate district committee was to follow the procedure guide prepared by the state committee. The obligation of the intermediate committee was also to hold public hearings and generally publicize the activities concerned with school district reorganization. The committee was instructed to prepare a revised plan if their first plan was rejected by the state committee. If the revised plan was not accepted, the state committee prepared a plan for reorganization of school districts in the intermediate district.

The intermediate committees will be dissolved upon completion of a plan, acceptance by the state committee, and a favorable vote of a majority of electors in the school district.

Voting Methods

There were two methods of voting stipulated in Act 289. The entire area encompassed by the intermediate plan could vote as a unit on the question, or only the proposed districts provided for in the plan could vote. In either case, a majority of the electors who voted were needed for approval. If method number one was used

and failed, method number two could then be used. However, no further election could be held after method number two was used.

Philosophy of the Legislation

Responsibility for School District Reorganization

School districts are instruments of the state and operate at the will of the state legislature;¹ All of the school districts in Michigan could be eliminated, or the boundaries could be changed at any time. Therefore, the state has the responsibility to provide adequate legislation for school districts to form administrative units that will be able to offer the best possible education for all children. Although it is the responsibility of all individuals and agencies to help provide adequate educational programs and facilities, it is primarily the responsibility of the state to do so. Studies show that states which have reorganized their school districts extensively received the primary stimulus to do so from their State Department of Education.²

¹Constitution of the State of Michigan of 1963, Article VIII, Section 1.

²National Education Association, School District Organization, op. cit., p. 2.

Michigan has always maintained a system of local control of school districts in spite of the fact that the state has the power to control them. However, Public Act 289 introduced mandatory procedures leading to school district reorganization. As a result of the state accepting its responsibility, more reorganization progress has taken place since passage of Act 289 of 1964 than ever before.

Cooperative Approach

As stated above, the legislature has the authority to reorganize or eliminate all of the school districts in Michigan and can act without the approval of the local school districts or of the people affected. However, such autocratic action would do much to antagonize the citizens involved, and many years would pass before positive support of the schools could again be developed. Also, mandatory legislation to force the reorganization of school districts according to county lines or other political boundaries was not used because often such lines were artificial and might have little relation to the community centers. The Michigan Legislature and Department of Education were aware of the latter facts. Therefore, school district reorganization legislation was put into effect that would be relatively mandatory but would

still leave the actual decision to the local communities or at least to those representing the intermediate districts. The state committee that approves or disapproves reorganization plans is composed of individuals who are independent of state government and of the legislature, and the initiative for actually establishing a reorganization plan is left to each intermediate school district. Once the legislation was passed, the role of the Department of Education was to act in an advisory capacity for those intermediate districts that requested such aid. The desirability of Public Act 289 is that it leads to improved school district patterns, and still follows the democratic process.

Characteristics of the Legislation

*Public Act 289 of 1964 embodies many characteristics that have been recommended by experts and that are similar to those contained in the reorganization legislation of several states which have successfully reorganized their school districts.

*The approach under this legislation is statewide.

*The legislation provided for local committees to make studies of redistricting needs and to develop proposals for new districts.

*The legislation was democratic in approach as it provided that local reorganization plans had to be submitted to the voters for ratification.

*The legislation emphasized systematic planning based on local conditions.

*The plan provided for a state committee to develop policies and procedures.

*The plan has both permissive and mandatory elements.

*Guidelines to determine minimum standards for adequate school districts are employed.

Factors Stimulating Reorganization

There were numerous factors that helped promote school district reorganization. Many local school superintendents and intermediate superintendents had sufficient vision to see the advantages of consolidating school districts into larger administrative units. Also, some of the lay people on the intermediate reorganization committees were outstanding individuals who worked strenuously for effective school district reorganization.

Financial difficulties of small districts, increased costs generally, and demands for more education were all factors promoting reorganization of school districts.

Restrictions in the Legislation

The time element was a disturbing factor for some of the intermediate school district committees as they did not have enough time to properly gather necessary information and adequately prepare plans. Consequently, several districts submitted inadequate plans, and several more asked for extensions of time to prepare their plans.

The clause in the legislation limiting the final number of school districts in the state to 500 was a weakness as far as achieving satisfactory school reorganization was concerned, because those opposed to reorganization often used this as an argument against reorganizing. However, the minimum number of school districts was inserted in the legislation as a compromise measure to help assure passage of the act. The incongruity of suggesting 500 as a minimum number of school districts in the state is sharply illustrated by the excerpts from the 1962 State Superintendent's Report which appear on pages 126-127 of this study. In 1962 there were 553 twelve-grade districts in the state of Michigan, and at that time the State Superintendent explained that 130 of the 136 schools having less than 200 secondary students could be eliminated through reorganization without causing pupils to have long distances to travel. If this basic recommendation

had been followed along with the elimination of non-high school districts, the total number of school districts would have been reduced to 423.

Another definite weakness in the act was the clause that prevented the consolidating of two or more districts of the third class or higher. This too was contained in the legislation as a compromise measure. It has had an effect in preventing efficient reorganization in some areas.

Also, due to difficulty in having the legislation approved, there was no requirement contained in it concerning continuation of extra voted operating millage of school districts. The attorney general's opinion on this matter was that high school districts that consolidated under Public Act 289 would have their extra voted operating millage abolished. Again, this prevented the consolidation of high school districts.

Problems Encountered in Reorganization

The greatest problem of attempting to reorganize school districts in Michigan was the fear people had of losing their local schools. For years some of the schools in small communities had been locally controlled, had been mainstays of the community, and had given their

communities identity. Therefore, great resistance was demonstrated in these areas to the requirements of Act 289.

In several cases school board members and school administrators objected to reorganization of their districts because they feared loss of their districts, and because they feared loss of their jobs or at least a loss of power.

Many of the intermediate superintendents were, themselves, extremely conservative and did not wish to see changes occur in their areas, and so opposed reorganization. Others did not directly oppose it, but had difficulty in taking the leadership of their intermediate committees in order to promote effective reorganization. This, of course, parallels the description of the reorganization problem defined by Chisholm as a lack of leadership.¹

The fear of increased taxes caused difficulties for those who wished to reorganize, as some people preferred weak school programs to increased taxes.

Reorganization programs were seriously retarded by misunderstanding of citizens often caused by lack of communication, or by intentional actions to mislead.

¹Chisholm, op. cit., p. 36.

There was even an organized committee in the state and a paid lobbyist to oppose the reorganization of school districts.¹ This caused rumors, created distrust of the State Department of Education and generally retarded reorganization of school districts. Also, litigation was sometimes introduced that created problems involving reorganization.

Types of School Districts and Reorganization
Legislation Prior to the Passage of
Public Act 289

At the time of passage of Public Act 289, Michigan had five classifications of school districts.

Primary Districts

Originally the township board of each township had authority to divide the township into such number of school districts as was from time to time necessary, number the districts, and alter the boundaries as circumstances rendered proper; each district had to be composed of contiguous territory and in as compact form as possible.

The board of education in a primary district is composed of three members--president, secretary, and treasurer.

¹Appendix, p. 234.

Fourth Class School District

Originally any school district containing more than seventy-five children between the ages of five and twenty years and a total population of less than ten thousand could, by a majority vote of the qualified electors, organize as a graded school district.

Also, whenever a majority of the qualified electors of any organized township voted in favor, the township would be a single school district; this was called the Township School District. Three or more contiguous rural school districts having a total assessed valuation of not less than seven hundred thousand dollars, or a total area of eighteen sections, could be consolidated into a Rural Agricultural School District. Agriculture, manual training, and home economics had to be established as part of the regular course of study.

Each school district organized as a graded, township or rural agricultural school district at the time of taking effect of the School Code of July 1, 1955, became a school district of the fourth class. Any school district having a school census of more than seventy-five and less than 2,400 children between the ages of five and twenty may organize as a fourth class school district.

Third Class School District

Any school district having a school census of more than 2,400 and less than 30,000 children between the ages of five and twenty, may organize as a third class school district.

Second Class School District

Any school district having a school census of more than 30,000 and less than 120,000 children between the ages of five and twenty may reorganize as a second class school district.

First Class School District

Each city which attains a school census of 120,000 or more children between the ages of five and twenty years of age may reorganize as a first class school district.

Special Act School Districts

A great many Special Act School Districts were created by the legislature prior to 1907, often at the behest of mining and lumbering interests. Such districts do not fit the regular Michigan school district classifications, but operate under special provisions. There were at one time 160 special act districts in Michigan. Most of these have been repealed.

Numbers of Districts

Following are the numbers of districts that operated in each classification in July, 1964:

Primary	570
Fourth Class	660
Third Class	90
Second Class	2
First Class	1
Special Act	<u>7</u>
Total	1,330

Several districts had sufficient population to be in a higher class than that in which they operated but had not made provisions to be reclassified.

Reorganization Legislation

All of the legislation in Michigan pertaining to reorganization of school districts was permissive, except for the mandatory elimination of closed school districts, previous to the passage of Public Act 289. Below are described the various types of reorganization legislation in effect at the time of the approval of Act 289.

Consolidation of Districts.--Any two or more school districts, except districts of the first and second class,

in which the total number of children between the ages of five and twenty years was seventy-five or more, could consolidate to form a single school district if the majority of all electors voting approved the consolidation and the assumption of bonded indebtedness.

Annexation of One District to Another.--Any School district was annexed to another school district whenever the board of the annexing district determined so by resolution and a majority of the qualified school electors of the district becoming annexed, voting on the question, approved the annexation.

Transfer of Territory Between Districts.--The county board of education could, in its discretion, detach territory from one district and attach it to another when requested to do so by resolution of the board of any district whose boundaries would be changed by such action, or when petitioned by not less than two-thirds of the resident owners of the land to be transferred.

Miscellaneous Reorganization Legislation.--There were also in effect certain methods of reorganizing school districts through dissolution of districts and division of districts.

Status of School Districts

Public Act 289 was approved by the legislature March 31, 1964 and became effective August 28, 1964. However, due to provisions of the legislation, the act did not have a direct effect on school districts until some months later. Therefore, the status of school districts as of July 1, 1964 has been compared to the status of school districts as of July 1, 1966 for the purpose of this study.

Since the survey unit under Public Act 289 is the intermediate district, data have been assembled on this basis as well as on the state as a whole.

This study did not attempt to analyze all of the implications of Act 289 nor to reach conclusions based on the total effect of the act, since at the very time the study was being done reorganization committees were making plans, reorganization elections were being held, and much action was pending.

Michigan had 545 school districts classified as K-12 on July 1, 1964. In size these districts ranged from Detroit with 294,060 pupils to St. James with fifty-nine pupils in grades kindergarten through twelve. From the standpoint of valuation per child, the range was from \$65,352 for Essexville to \$984.00 for Gwinn.

Several factors may be considered in defining an adequate school district. This analysis considers the three most significant ones, the K-12 district as the basic administrative unit, enrollment and financial ability. The enrollment considered by the State Department of Education to be adequate in Michigan is 2,000 pupils in grades kindergarten through the twelfth.¹ Various tax studies indicate that reasonable financial ability lies somewhere between the median and the mean of a series. In Michigan, this figure reported by the Department of Education in 1965 was slightly over \$12,000 per membership pupil.²

As of July 1, 1964, Michigan had 310 high school districts in the state that had enrollments below 2,000, and 339 K-12 districts that had less than \$12,000 per resident membership pupil. There were 212 districts that fell below both the minimum enrollment and financial standards. Added to this were 893 non-high school districts. Therefore, the state had a total of 1,438 school districts, 1,330 of which were considered inadequate in one way or another.

¹Michigan Department of Public Instruction, Report of the Administrative Services Division, 1965.

²Ibid.

Results of the Legislation

Analysis of Data

The data collected pertaining to the results of Public Act 289 have been compiled into four tables and incorporated into this study. The data are reported according to the disposition of reorganization proposals, method of voting and success of elections. A general analysis of the data with interpretative statements and observations are reported in the following paragraphs.

Intermediate Plans

The State of Michigan has sixty intermediate school districts. As of July 1, 1966 the State Committee on School District Reorganization had received plans from reorganization committees in fifty-eight of the intermediate school districts. Fifty-three of the reorganization plans submitted by intermediate committees were accepted by the State Reorganization Committee, although several of them had to be temporarily returned for slight revisions or more information.

Table 4-a reveals the disposition of the intermediate plans that have not been approved by the State Reorganization Committee. Two intermediate districts, Menominee and Cass, had not submitted plans as of

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July 1, 1966. Menominee was merely delinquent in presenting a plan to the State Committee. However, the Cass Intermediate Reorganization Committee split evenly in voting on their proposals and thus submitted two plans to the State Committee. The Attorney General ruled that since neither plan was approved by a majority of intermediate committee members, neither plan could be accepted, and so it was considered that no plan had been submitted.

Table 4-a further reveals that three reorganization plans from intermediate districts were rejected by the State Committee. These were Cheboygan-Otsego-Presque Isle, Ottawa, and Traverse Bay Area. The reorganization committees of these intermediate districts are required to revise and re-submit their plans to the State Committee. If the plans are again rejected by the State Committee, or if the intermediate committees refuse to re-submit their plans, the State Committee will prepare plans for the reorganization of their school districts. The electors in the intermediate districts will still vote on the proposals.

As shown in Table 4-a, the Alpena-Montmorency-Alcona and the Sanilac Intermediate Districts submitted plans for consideration but had not had their plans approved as of July 1, 1966.

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Status Quo

Seven intermediate school districts had no non-high school districts and were generally well-organized. Examination of Table 4-b shows that these seven districts are primarily concentrated in the dense population, metropolitan areas of the state. The State Committee approved the proposals submitted by the intermediate committees, consequently elections were not required and were not held in any of the districts.

TABLE 4-aPublic Act 289 - Reorganization

Status of Intermediate School Districts in Michigan That Have Not Had Reorganization Plans Approved, July 1, 1966

Plan Not Submitted	Cass
	Menominee
Plan Rejected by State Committee . . .	Cheboygan-Otsego- Presque Lake
	Ottawa
	Traverse Bay Area (Grand Traverse, Benzie, Kalkaska, Antrim)
Approval of State Committee Pending. .	Alpena-Montmorency- Alcona
	Sanilac

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TABLE 4-b

Public Act 289 - Reorganization

Well Organized Intermediate School Districts in Michigan.
No Election Required Under Provisions of Public Act 289.
July 1, 1966

Clinton	Kalamazoo
Genesee	Livingston
Gladwin	Macomb
Iosco	

Election Results

Tables 4-c and 4-d reveal that twenty-eight reorganization elections were held in intermediate districts under provisions of Public Act 289 prior to July 1, 1966. Tables 4-c and 4-d indicate that the results of Public Act 289 elections have not been highly successful, as only twelve elections were completely successful, and six partially successful, while ten of the reorganization proposals were disapproved by electors.

Method #1--Twenty-two intermediate school districts selected Method #1 for their reorganization election. Table 4-c reveals that fifteen of these elections were held prior to July 1, 1966, and seven Method #1 elections are pending. Table 4-c reveals that a high percentage of Method #1 elections were unsuccessful, only five of the

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fifteen proposals held under provisions of Method #1 were approved by electors, while ten were disapproved. However, the importance of this factor is somewhat reduced since in accordance with the requirements of Public Act 289, each district that held an unsuccessful election under Method #1 must submit a revised reorganization plan and hold another election under provisions of Method #2. The ten intermediate districts that held unsuccessful Method #1 elections must submit revised plans and vote again under Method #2 (see Table 4-c).

Method #2--Twenty-four intermediate districts selected Method #2 for their first reorganization election. Table 4-d reveals a high degree of success with Method #2, as seven of the elections were completely successful and six were partially successful. No Method #2 election was completely unsuccessful. Twenty-one Method #2 elections are pending, eleven of them in intermediate districts that will be voting for the first time, and ten as reported earlier, that previously held unsuccessful elections under provisions of Method #1 (see Tables 4-c and 4-d).

The reference to a partially successful election requires further explanation. Under Method #1, the entire area encompassed by the intermediate district votes

TABLE 4 C
PUBLIC ACT 289 - REORGANIZATION

Michigan Intermediate Districts With Method No. 1 Elections Completed or Pending, July 1, 1966

Successful Elections - Method #1

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TABLE 4 - C

Public Act 289 - Reorganization

Michigan Intermediate Districts With Method No. 1 Elections Completed or Pending, July 1, 1966

Successful Elections - Method #1

Inter- mediate District	Election Date	K-12 School Districts	K-12 Member- ship	Non-High School Districts Dis- appearing	Non- High- School Census	Non-High School Member- ship	K-12 Mem- bership After Reorganiza- tion
Kent	5-25-66	Rockford	3047	Courtland 1	117	53	3100
		Kenowa Hills	2911	Alpine 10 (part)	32	17	2928
		Kent City	1121	Tyrone 8 Frl.	168	136	1257
		Cedar Springs	1830	Nelson 3 Frl.	84	33	
				Nelson 7	34	20	
				Courtland 6 Frl.	40	20	
				Spencer 1 Frl.	71	42	
				Courtland 5	73	27	
				Spencer 2 Frl.	23	17	
					<u>325</u>	<u>159</u>	1989
Lake	5-14-66	Lowell	2178	Lowell 6	37	28	
				Grattan 5 Frl.	155	19	
				Vergennes 1	20	22	
				Vergennes 4 Frl.	76	32	
					<u>288</u>	<u>101</u>	2288
Lake	5-14-66	Sparta	2686	Alpine 10 (part)	32	9	2695
				Yates Township	130	87	
				Webber 7	129	80	
				Cherry Valley	34	17	
				Lilley 5	61	47	
					<u>354</u>	<u>231</u>	892
Midland	6-13-66	Coleman Bullock Creek	1325 1961	Pleasant View #1	176	119	1375

TABLE 4-C, Public Act 289 - Reorganization (continued)

Inter- mediate District	Election Date	K-12 School Districts	K-12 Member- ship	Non-High School Districts Dis- appearing	Non- High School Census	Non-High School Member- ship	K-12 Mem- bership After Reorganiza- tion
Montcalm	5-16-66	Central Montcalm	1712	Crystal 7 Frl. Ferris 3 Part of Bushnell 5	62 35 17 <u>114</u>	22 19 16 <u>68</u>	2030 1780
		Tri-County	1060	Pierson 1 Pierson 4	44 34 <u>78</u>	27 32 <u>59</u>	1119
		Carson City- Crystal	1405	Crystal 1 Bushnell 5 (part) Bloomer 4 Bloomer 6	37 40 8 <u>106</u>	25 20 closed <u>55</u>	1460 1777
		Lakeview	1719	Six Lakes (part)	79	58	
		Montabella Edmore and Blanchard	919 506	Six Lakes (part)	250	227	1652
Tuscola	5-9-66	Millington	1772	Arbela 1	46	18	1790
		Unionville	667	Columbia 1 Columbia 2	34 64 <u>98</u>	0 22 <u>22</u>	689
		Mayville	1139	Dayton 2 Dayton 4 (2/3) Dayton 5 (1/2) Fremont 5 Fremont 6 (75%) Fremont 7 Indianfields 7 (90%) Watertown 1	50 20 40 23 40 25 30 43 <u>271</u>	30 closed 15 closed 27 33 0 closed <u>105</u>	1244

Inter- mediate District	Election Date	K-12 School Districts	K-12 Member- ship	Non-High School Districts Dis- appearing	Non- High School Census	Non-High School Member- ship	K-12 Mem- bership After Reorganiza- tion
Kingston			720	Dayton 4 (33%)	15	closed	
				Dayton 5 (50%)	40	closed	

Unsuccessful Elections - Method No. 1

<u>Intermediate District</u>	<u>Election Date</u>
Allegan	5-9-66
Berrien	5-16-66
Ionia	6-13-66
Jackson	5-17-66
Lapeer	4-4-66
Manistee	5-16-66
Mecosta-Osceola	6-13-66
Oceana	5-16-66
St. Joseph	5-16-66
Van Buren	5-9-66

Elections Pending - Method No. 1

Eaton	9-12-66
Hillsdale	7-20-66
Muskegon	8-2-66
Oakland	10-5-66
St. Clair	
Shiawassee	9-15-66
Wayne	

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as a unit on the question. If a majority of the qualified electors present and voting approve the plan, it becomes adopted and effective throughout the intermediate district. However, under Method #2 the proposed districts provided for in the approved plan vote by proposed districts on the question. If a majority of the qualified electors present and voting in a proposed district approve the plan for that proposed district, it becomes adopted and effective throughout the proposed district. Therefore, under the provisions of Method #2, it is possible for an election to be successful in one or more proposed school districts within an intermediate school district, but also unsuccessful in one or more proposed school districts within the same intermediate district. Whether the election results are successful or unsuccessful, those intermediate districts that held elections under Method #2, whether or not an election was held first under Method #1, have completed the requirements of Public Act 289 of 1964.

Examination of the data in Table 4-d will show a distinct success pattern in Method #2 elections. No election under Method #2 was completely unsuccessful, and a high percentage were completely successful. This has definite implications for reorganization legislation and would be worthy of consideration when proposing such legislation.

TABLE 4 - d

Public Act 289 - Reorganization

July 1 1966

TABLE 4-d

Public Act 289 - Reorganization

Michigan Intermediate Districts With Method No. 2 Elections Completed or Pending, July 1, 1966

Successful Elections - Method #2

Inter- mediate District	Election Date	K-12 School Districts	K-12 Member- ship	Non-High School Districts Dis- appearing	Non- High School Census	Non-High School Member- ship	K-12 Mem- bership After Reorganiza- tion
Barry	6-13-66	Hastings	3341	Baltimore 5 Hastings 10 Fr1.	38 52 <u>90</u>	26 21 <u>47</u>	3388 1162 3678
Branch	4-4-66	Bronson Coldwater	1647 3648	Noble 2 Girard 3 Fr1.	22 28	15 30	1741 1045
Clare	4-13-66	Clare	1716	Grant 1 Fr1.	33	25	187
Ingham	6-20-66	Dansville	1024	Wheatfield 6	46	21	1045
Mason	6-28-66	Custer Scottville	530 1212	Sheridan 2 Grant 3 Fr1. Riverton 2 Fr1.	30 25 301 <u>326</u>	closed 16 215 <u>231</u>	530 1443
		Ludington	2754	Hamlin 2 Hamlin 9 Pere Marquette 2 Summit 3	159 344 169 179 <u>851</u>	93 221 95 119 <u>527</u>	3281
Saginaw	6-13-66	Birch Run	1338	Taymouth 3 Taymouth 4 Taymouth 5 Taymouth 9 Taymouth 40 Taymouth 38	58 98 191 118 294 245 <u>1004</u>	30 56 61 67 156 156 <u>573</u>	1911

TABLE 4-d, Public Act 289 - Reorganization (continued)

Inter- mediate	Election	K-12 School Districts	K-12 Member- ship	Non-High School Districts appearing	Non- High School Census	Non-High School Member- ship	K-12 Mem- bership After Reorganiza- tion
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TABLE 4-d, Public Act 289 - Reorganization (continued)

Inter- mediate District	Election Date	K-12 School Districts	K-12 Member- ship	Non-High School Districts Dis- appearing	Non- High School Census	Non-High School Member- ship	K-12 Mem- bership After Reorganiza- tion
		Buena Vista	3515	Buena Vista 5 Buena Vista 7 Frl.	248 99 <u>347</u>	144 19 <u>163</u>	3678
		Saginaw	22,165	Zilwaukee Kochville 7 Kochville 5	662 240 231 <u>1133</u>	494 135 123 <u>752</u>	22,917
		Swan Valley		Liskow (Thomas 1) Carr (James 1) Jordan James 4) Swan Creek 2 Frl. Shields (Thomas 12)	295 230 134 94 <u>1161</u> <u>1914</u>	203 127 58 43 <u>918</u> <u>1349</u>	1349
		Ann Arbor	15,100	Ann Arbor 3 Frl. Superior 1 Frl. Superior 2 Frl.	21 34 86 <u>141</u>	10 20 37 <u>67</u>	15,167
		Willow Run	4054	Superior 7	38	27	4,081
Washtenaw	6-13-66						

Inter- mediate District	Election Date	K-12 School Districts	K-12 Member- ship	Non-High School Districts Dis- appearing	Non- High School Census	Non-High School Member- ship	K-12 Mem- bership After Reorganiza- tion
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Partially Successful Election - Method No. 2

Inter- mediate District	Election Date	K-12 School Districts	K-12 Member- ship	Non-High School Districts Dis- appearing	Non- High School Census	Non-High School Member- ship	K-12 Mem- bership After Reorganiza- tion
Calhoun	4-25-66	Albion	3793	Albion 2 Fr1. Albion 4 Sheridan 2 Fr1. Sheridan 2 Concord 4 Fr1. Parma 7 Fr1.	40 69 37 51 51 85 <u>333</u>	15 30 33 20 22 56 <u>176</u>	3969
Coor (Roscommon, Ogemaw, Oscoda, Crawford)	6-20-66	Grayling West Branch -Rose City	1000 1940	Frederic O'Connor 5	222 76	204 39	1204 1979
Eastern Upper Peninsula (Chippewa, Luce, Mackinac)	4-25-66	Sault Ste. Marie	3947	Soo Township Bruce Township Dafter No. 10	691 385 103 <u>1179</u>	507 224 57 <u>788</u>	4735
		Rudyard Newberry	2667 1377	Trout Lake Seney Columbus Township Lakefield Township Portage Township Pentland Township Hulbert Township	92 58 105 169 165 403 100 <u>1000</u>	49 closed 60 72 90 172 56 <u>450</u>	2716 1827
		DeTour	321	Raber Township Drummond Island	155 150 <u>305</u>	96 87 <u>183</u>	504

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TABLE 1. SUMMARY OF ELECTION RESULTS - METHOD NO. 2 (CONTINUED)

Inter- mediate District	Election Date	K-12 School Districts	K-12 Member- ship	Non-High School Districts Dis- appearing	Non- High School Census	Non-High School Mem- ber- ship	K-12 Mem- bership After Reorganiza- tion
Gratiot	6-2-66	Breckenridge	1343	Wheeler 3	34	14	

Partially Successful Election - Method No. 2 (continued)

Inter- mediate District	Election Date	K-12 School Districts	K-12 Member- ship	Non-High School Districts Dis- appearing	Non- High School Census	Non-High School Member- ship	K-12 Mem- bership After Reorganiza- tion
Gratiot	6-2-66	Breckenridge	1343	Wheeler 3 Jasper 3 Porter 1	34 67 37 <u>138</u>	14 45 27 <u>86</u>	1429
Monroe	5-13-66	Monroe	5988	Custer Golden	3352 531 <u>3883</u>	2088 198 <u>2296</u>	1429
		Jefferson	2291	Berlin 2	107	51	2342
		Airport	2273	Ash 10 Exeter 3 Exeter 5 Exeter 6	74 43 186 76 <u>379</u>	42 15 45 37 <u>139</u>	190
Newaygo	5-9-66	Newaygo Grant	987 1227	Croton Grant 5 Grant 4 Ashland 1 Fr1. Ashland 2 Ashland 3 Ashland 5 Ashland 6 Fr1. Grant 2 Grant 3	157 52 107 37 46 56 59 65 49 77 <u>548</u>	89 18 27 closed 18 28 34 closed 24 26 <u>175</u>	1076 1402

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Elections Pending - Method No. 2No Previous Election Held

<u>Intermediate District</u>	<u>Election Date</u>
Bay-Arenac	8-15-66
Charlevoix-Emmet	10-10-66
Copper Country (Houghton, Baraga, Keweenaw)	-
Delta-Schoolcraft	7-25-66
Dickinson-Iron	9-26-66
Gogebic-Ontonagon	9-26-66
Huron	10-3-66
Isabella	8-12-66
Lenawee	9-27-66
Marquette-Alger	9-12-66
Wexford-Missaukee	9-12-66

Elections Pending - Method No. 2Unsuccessful Election Previously Held Under Method 1

Allegan	10-3-66
Berrien	10-3-66
Ionia	12-12-66
Jackson	-
Lapeer	9-26-66
Manistee	11-10-66
Mecosta-Osceola	-
Oceana	-
St. Joseph	10-3-66
Van Buren	-

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Results of the elections under Public Act 289, revealed in Tables 4-c and 4-d, are the transfer of 14,000 children from non-high school districts to districts maintaining grades kindergarten through twelve, the formation of one new high school district, and an increase in the total membership of forty-six high school districts.

Status of Intermediate School Districts

Table 5

A brief explanation of the status of each intermediate district as a result of Public Act 289 is given in Table 5. An examination of Table 5 will reveal that the sharp reduction in the number of school districts since July 1, 1964 resulted primarily from the direct effects of Public Act 289. Furthermore, it will reveal that many of Michigan's school district reorganization problems would have been solved if all elections held under the provisions of Public Act 289 had been successful.

The numerical columns in Table 5 have not been totaled. Columns two and three indicate the number of districts that existed in each intermediate district previous to the district's Public Act 289 election. The dates of the elections vary which causes the totals of columns two and three to be invalid. Columns four, seven and eight have not been totaled because of the tentative status of many of the intermediate school districts.

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An examination of Table 5 will show six districts that voted under Method #2 were only partially successful in passing their reorganization proposals. These districts have completed the requirements of Public Act 289, but non-high school districts still exist within all six intermediate districts.

Table 5 shows several intermediate districts had unsuccessful elections under Method #1, and shows that every instance in which a highly ambitious organization proposal was presented, such as a single school district within a county, a negative vote was the result. These intermediate districts that rejected the proposals under Method #1 must now vote under Method #2. However, it is expected that their reorganization proposals under Method #2 will be greatly modified, and merely meet with minimum requirements of Public Act 289.

Table 5 indicates that the total number of districts that would have existed if all reorganization proposals had passed successfully would have been more than the 104 that met the three criteria of enrollment valuation, and K-12 program, as determined by the State Reorganization Committee.

As shown by Table 5 only twelve of twenty-eight elections held under Public Act 289 were completely successful. In view of the results of the school district reorganization elections that have been held to this time, it is anticipated

that many of
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that many of the pending elections will be unsuccessful. This leads to the conclusion that new mandatory legislation will be needed to adequately reorganize Michigan's school districts.

Significance of Act 289

It is apparent from the findings that school district reorganization proceeded at a rather slow pace for many years in Michigan. An exception to this slow pace occurred in 1957 due to the mandatory legislation which forced the elimination of closed school districts. There was no reduction of school districts comparable to 1957 until the 1964 year, at which time Public Act 289 began to have an effect. Due to this legislation the percentage of decrease became even greater in 1965 and 1966. Much of the reduction in school districts during 1964, 1965 and 1966 was a direct result of reorganization elections held under the provisions of Public Act 289. However, the act also had indirect results since it stimulated many school districts to attempt to solve their reorganization problems through traditional annexation and consolidation procedures rather than to wait for the effects of Public Act 289.

For example, the St. Johns School District in Ingham Intermediate District annexed twenty-five primary districts that had for many years resisted all attempts toward

TABLE 5

Summary of Reorganization Activities Under Provisions of Public Act 289 to July 1, 1966.	
No. of School Districts Previous to Public Act 289 Elections	No. of School Districts After Public Act 289 Elections
	Non-

TABLE 5

Summary of Reorganization Activities Under Provisions of Public Act 289 to July 1, 1966.
No. of School Districts Previous to Public Act No. of School Districts After Public Act
289 Elections 289 Elections

Intermediate District	Non-High School District	High School District	Proposed High School District	Method and Result	Date	Non-High School District	High School District
Allegan	50	9	9	1 No	5-9-66	50	9
Alpena-Alcona Montmorency	2	4	3	Approval of State Committee	Pending		
Barry	17	3	3	2 Yes	6-13-66	0	3
Bay-Arenac	2	7	7	2	8-15-66	Pending	
Berrien	16	14	14	1 No	5-16-66	16	14
Branch	2	3	3	2 Yes	4-4-66	0	3
Calhoun	22	11	10	2 Partial	4-25-66	16	11
Cass	12	4		Plan not submitted by Intermediate Committee			
Charlevoix-Emmet	5	13	6	2	10-10-66	Pending	
Cheboygan-Presque Isle-Otsego	7	10		Plan rejected by State Committee			
Clare	1	3	3	2 Yes	6-13-66	0	3
Clinton	0	6	No election required			0	6
Crawford-Oscoda-Ogemaw-Roscommon	4	8		2 Partial	6-20-66	2	8
Delta-Schoolcraft-Iron	10	10	4	2	7-25-66	Pending	

Table 5, Continued

Non-	Proposed	Method	Non -	High
	High		High	School
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Table 5, Continued

Intermediate District	Non-High School District			Proposed High School District			Method and Result	Date	Non-High School District	
	Non-High School District	High School District	High School District	Non-High School District	High School District	High School District			Non-High School District	High School District
Dickinson-Iron	1	5	5	5	2	2	Pending			
Eastern Upper Peninsula	18	10	10	10	2	2 Partial	4-25-66	15	10	
Eaton	28	7	7	7	1	1	9-12-66	Pending		
Genesee	0	21	21	No election	required			0	21	
Gladwin	0	2	2	No election	required			0	2	
Gogebic-Ontonagan	3	12	12	10	2	2	9-26-66	Pending		
Grand Traverse-Antrim-Benzie-Kalkaska	16	14	14	5	2	2	Plan rejected by State Committee			
Gratiot	11	6	6	5	2	2 Partial	6-2-66	8	6	
Hillsdale	0	8	8	1	1	1 No	2-20-66	0	8	
Houghton-Baraga-Keweenaw	8	9	9		2			Pending		
Huron	34	10	10	10	2	2	10-3-66	Pending		
Ingham	1	12	12	12	2	2 Yes	6-20-66	0	12	
Ionia	46	5	5	5	1	1 No	6-13-66	46	5	
Iosco	0	5	5	No election	required					
Isabella	2	5	5	5	2	2	8-2-66	Pending		
Jackson	9	13	13	1	1	1 No	5-18-66	9	13	
Kalamazoo	0	9	9	9	No election	required		0	9	
Kent	18	19	19	17	1	1 Yes	5-25-66	0	19	
Lake	6	1	1	1	1	1 Yes	5-15-66	0	1	

Table 5, Continued

Intermediate District	Non- High School District	High School District	Proposed High School District	Method and Result	Date	Non- High School District	High School District
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Table 5, Continued

Intermediate District	Non-High School District	High School District	Proposed High School District	Method and Result	Date	Non-High School District	High School District
Lapeer	9	5	4	1 No	4-4-66	9	5
Lenawee	4	14	4	2	9-27-66	Pending	
Livingston	0	5	5	No election required		0	5
Macomb	0	21	21	No election required		0	21
Manistee	3	4	1	1 No	5-16-66	3	4
Marquette-Alger	12	11	6	2	9-12-66	Pending	
Mason	8	4	4	2 Yes	6-28-66	0	4
Mecosta-Osceola	11	8	7	1 No	6-13-66	11	8
Menominee	2	5	Plan not submitted by Intermediate Committee				
Midland	1	4	4	1 Yes	6-13-66	0	4
Monroe	11	9	9	2 Partial Yes		4	9
Montcalm	9	7	7	1 Yes	5-16-66	0	7
Muskegon	9	12	1	1	8-2-66	Pending	
Newaygo	24	5	5	2 Partial	5-9-66	14	5
Oakland	2	28	28	1 Yes	10-5-66	Pending	
Oceana	16	4	1	1 No	5-16-66	16	4
Ottawa	17	7	Plan rejected by State Committee				
Saginaw	16	12	13	2 Yes	6-13-66	0	13
St. Clair	11	7	7	1		Pending	

Table 5, Continued

Non-High School	High School	Proposed High School	Method and	Non-High School	High School

Table 5, Continued

Intermediate District	Non- High School District	High School District	Proposed High School District	Method and Result	Date	Non- High School District	High School District
St. Joseph	8	8	4	1 No	5-16-66	8	8
Sanilac	49	7	Approval of State Committee Pending				
Shiawassee	2	8	7	1	9-15-66	Pending	
Tuscola	19	10	10	1 Yes	5-9-66	0	10
Van Buren	8	11	11	1 No	5-9-66	8	11
Washtenaw	6	10	10	2 Yes	6-13-66	0	10
Wayne	8	36	33	1		Pending	
Wexford-Missaukee	14	6	6	2		Pending	

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reorganization previous to passage of Public Act 289. Also, the Sanilac Intermediate District had more annexations during 1965 and 1966 than at any previous time. The same type of activity occurred in many other intermediate districts due to pressures brought about by passage of Public Act 289.

Adequate School Districts

General criteria for an adequate school district as defined by the State Reorganization Committee (see page 176) were as follows:

1. A kindergarten through twelve grade program.
2. A minimum enrollment of 2,000 pupils in kindergarten through twelfth grade.
3. A minimum of \$12,000 per resident child.

As of July 1, 1966 there was a total of 977 school districts. Four hundred and thirty-seven of these districts did not meet the state committee's requirement of offering a K-12 program, which left only 540 districts that did meet the first requirement.

Of the 540 K-12 districts 100 had an enrollment of less than 2,000 pupils. Therefore, they did not meet the committee's second criterion, although they did meet the requirements of having a K-12 program and at least \$12,000 for every resident pupil.

An additional 130 districts were inadequate because they had less than \$12,000 behind each resident pupil, although

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they did meet the criteria of having 2,000 enrollment and offering a K-12 program.

Two hundred and six districts were inadequate on the basis of two criteria. They had less than \$12,000 for each resident pupil, and had fewer than 2,000 pupils enrolled. However, they did offer a K-12 program.

This left only 104 districts, of a total of 977 in the state of Michigan, that met all three criteria for adequacy that were suggested by the State Reorganization Committee.

Future Outlook

It is impossible to accurately predict the outcome of elections, but due to the findings of this investigation, it is expected that under the pending 289 elections of intermediate districts many more school districts will be eliminated. However, none of the proposed plans provide for the elimination of inadequate high school districts. The most optimistic prediction of the results of the elections envisions no more than elimination of non-high school districts, but the current legislation will not significantly improve high school districts.

Power groups in intermediate districts such as St. Clair, Wayne, and Cass indicate they will do everything possible to defeat reorganization elections, which means that inadequate

TABLE 6

Number of School Districts 1956-66			
Year	Total Number of Districts	Number of Districts Reduced	Percentage of Reduction
1956	3,491	301	8.62%
1957	3,190	637	19.97%
1958	2,553	193	7.56%
1959	2,360	109	4.62%
1960	2,251	255	11.33%
1961	1,996	200	10.02%
1962	1,796	162	9.02%
1963	1,634	196	12.0 %
1964	1,438	218	15.16%
1965	1,240	243	19.60%
1966	977	263	26.70%

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school districts will remain in those areas after all provisions of Public Act 289 have been completed. Furthermore, several intermediate districts held elections that were only partially successful under Method #2, but since no other election is required after Method #2 has been used, inadequate school districts will remain in those areas also. Even intermediate districts that held successful reorganization elections or that maintained the status quo do not have all constituent local districts organized into satisfactory administrative units.

SUMMARY

The entire history of school district reorganization in Michigan shows that the current reorganization legislation is a natural result of educational activity in the state.

Public Act 289 of 1964 was the most comprehensive legislation pertaining to school district reorganization that was ever approved by the Michigan Legislature. The purpose of the act was to stimulate school district reorganization by providing for the study and development of plans for the reorganization of school districts so that all children in Michigan would be in adequate school districts. An adequate school district was generally considered to be one that had a minimum pupil enrollment of 2,000 pupils, \$12,000 behind every resident child, and a kindergarten through twelfth grade program.

A state reorganization committee was appointed as well as a committee in each intermediate school district. The duty of the state committee was to develop plans and procedures for a statewide reorganization program, and the intermediate committees were to prepare reorganization plans for their respective districts.

Any plan presented had to be approved by the electors before it could become effective.

The legislation is semi-permissive and relies on the cooperation of various parties in order to put it into effect. Its characteristics are similar to those contained in reorganization acts of many other states.

There were various factors that stimulated reorganization as well as many that retarded reorganization.

Michigan had five classifications of school districts when the legislation took effect and several permissive methods for reorganizing school systems.

Generally, the plans submitted by intermediate school districts were very fine and were readily approved by the state committee. However, a few proposals created special problems.

At the very time this study was being conducted, school district reorganizations were taking place. The fact that all elections under provisions of the act had not been completed somewhat limits this analysis. However, certain significant conclusions evolved from the investigation.

Results of elections were relatively satisfactory, although many inadequate school districts existed in Michigan as of July 1, 1966. The pending elections under provisions of Act 289 will eliminate some of the inadequate districts, but still there will be many remaining after all requirements of Public Act 289 have been met.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Conclusions

A review of the literature pertaining to school district reorganization reveals that reorganization of school districts is continuing at a rapid pace throughout the nation. This trend began shortly after World War II as a result of an increasing population and demands of the public for improved educational services. Most people seem to have awakened to the fact that educational needs have changed and that to keep pace with the changes, schools have to offer much more sophisticated programs than ever before. Therefore, the reduction of school districts will continue until many more children are located in administrative units that will provide effective educational programs. Reorganization has been impeded by several factors such as distrust, misunderstanding, and lack of knowledge about the program. Thus far, however, the desire to obtain adequate school districts has been strong enough to overcome most delaying factors. This desire to obtain adequate school districts has been the primary factor stimulating reorganization. Also, studies of the results of reorganization

programs have shown a much greater number of positive features than negative ones existing in school districts after they have reorganized. However, there are many who still oppose reorganization, and the lack of agreement concerning criteria to measure school district adequacy creates a problem for proponents of reorganization. Much more study is needed concerning the results of reorganization and the criteria for determining an adequate school district.

The progress of school district reorganization on a state level is revealed by the national survey of all the states. The following conclusions concerning individual states were reached:

1. According to data collected from the various state departments of education there are great variations in the type of reorganization legislation adopted by the states. However, there are common features in their reorganization legislation. Examples of these common features are a statewide approach, provision for county or local committees, emphasis on systematic planning, and provision for a state administrative agency to develop policies and procedures.
2. The goal in every state that is conducting reorganization activities seems to be to reduce the

number of school districts in an effort to improve educational opportunities.

3. Many states have established minimum standards of adequacy for their school districts. Generally these standards deal with minimum enrollment and financial ability.
4. Most states appear to be making great efforts to eliminate closed school districts.
5. Several states have had limited reorganization activity but are conducting extensive statewide studies to determine the effectiveness of their school administrative units.
6. A few states still have separate elementary and secondary school districts, but are attempting to consolidate them. Unfortunately, some states have statutes pertaining to school financial support that deter consolidation of elementary and secondary school districts.
7. Fairly general agreement was found that the method of organizing school districts along county political lines has been more expedient in reorganizing school administrative units than any other method.
8. Several states have had to use mandatory legislation to satisfactorily reorganize their school districts.

9. Based on trends observed since World War II, it is reasonable to assume that school district reorganization will continue in the various states.
10. The state of Michigan has not been in the forefront in school district reorganization, but Public Act 289 of 1964 has many features in common with the reorganization legislation of several states that have successfully reorganized their school districts and should cause Michigan to move among the leaders in school district reorganization.

Originally the school districts of Michigan were organized on the basis of local need without an overall plan for the state. However, the need for expanded school districts and more advanced educational programs became obvious at an early date. The very first state superintendent of public instruction recommended legislation for school district reorganization, and this set the pattern for later state superintendents. People in the state of Michigan have always demonstrated a sincere interest in the education of their children. However, Michigan has not been a leader in the reorganization of school districts. Consequently, just a few years ago the state had an excessive number of school districts that did not meet minimum enrollment and financial standards. The state had a peak number of 7,362 school districts in 1912, but from that point on reorganization reduced the number of districts each

year. Educators, citizens, and legislators seemed to develop an understanding of the continued need for establishment of more adequate school districts through reorganization. Although there have always been examples of opposition, all reorganization legislation passed since the early 1920's has provided improved methods of reorganizing school districts into more adequate administrative units. Reorganization in Michigan was stimulated by permissive legislation and by various state department sponsored and university sponsored studies of school district reorganization. However, the philosophy of the state to pass only permissive legislation for school district reorganization and to leave initiative to local communities undoubtedly retarded reorganization progress in Michigan.

According to the historical pattern of school district reorganization in Michigan, it is merely a matter of time before school districts will be further reorganized into more adequate administrative units. The longer it takes for this to be done, the more harm will be done to those children residing in school districts generally defined as inadequate. Citizens of Michigan have long had the opportunity to organize their school districts into satisfactory units under permissive legislative measures, and recently were stimulated to reorganize under semi-mandatory legislation. However, it is

clear that more mandatory legislation will be needed to attain the objective of adequate school districts throughout the state.

Public Act 289 of 1964 was the most extensive school district reorganization legislation ever approved in the state of Michigan. This act evolved naturally from the history of school district reorganization in Michigan, and it followed the philosophy that was established in the state as far back as 1900. Although it is a permissive law, it has mandatory features in it, which at least forced every intermediate district to study its school district situation and to make recommendations for the annexation of non-high school districts and consolidation of inadequate high school districts. This was the legislature's first departure from permissive legislation except for the 1955 act which eliminated closed school districts.

There are weaknesses in Public Act 289 as a result of compromises that had to be made to obtain passage by the legislature. Several problems developed in putting the legislation into operation. Misunderstanding of citizens and organized opposition contributed to the difficulty of making the act operational. Another problem was that the state reorganization committee had not defined specific criteria for determination of an adequate school district. Lack of leadership and self interest among intermediate

and local superintendents delayed reorganization in some areas of the state.

Public Act 289 of 1964 helped eliminate many non-high school districts and helped improve some K-12 districts. Although the act was effective in improving Michigan school districts both directly and indirectly, there were certain weaknesses in the law and difficulties in the application of the law. Two years after the inception of Public Act 289 Michigan still has only 104 adequate school districts out of a total of 977. After all requirements of the law have been completed many of the inadequate districts will continue to operate.

Although it may have been very simple for the legislature to merely have all school districts reorganized into county or other preconceived units, this type of action may not have provided the best units to meet the educational needs of Michigan children. Therefore, the Michigan Legislature passed legislation that left the initiative to intermediate committees and local citizens to form their school districts into more adequate administrative units. However, some conservative, hard-core administrators and board members fought reorganization and managed to maintain their grossly inadequate school systems. Because opposition to central control of any kind is deeply ingrained in these

districts, there is little chance that any type of permissive legislation will cause them to consolidate or annex. Consequently, since many communities did not take advantage of the opportunity to form more adequate school districts, an immediate strengthening of legislation is needed to complete the reorganization of school districts into adequate administrative units for all children in the state.

Implications for Further Research

Further research on school district reorganization should be conducted as follows:

A study should be done to develop criteria and an instrument that can be used to determine adequacy of school districts.

Studies should be conducted to determine the effects that school district reorganization has had on the educational program of districts that have been reorganized.

Studies should be conducted to measure the effects that school district reorganization has on the learning of children in reorganized school districts.

Studies should be conducted to determine changes in interest and participation of citizens in school districts that have reorganized.

Additional studies should be made to evaluate the progress, kinds of legislation, and results of school district reorganization in other states.

Primary consideration should be given to an analysis of the total results of Public Act 289 of 1964, when all provisions of the act have been completed.

A study should be conducted to determine socioeconomic changes that occur as a result of school district reorganization.

Studies should be conducted to determine maximum and minimum pupil enrollment for adequate high schools in the state of Michigan.

Studies should be made in Michigan to determine the adequacy of small high schools.

A detailed study should be conducted of the factors that have caused retardation of school district reorganization in Michigan.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are included in this study to suggest guidelines for those who are interested in or responsible for reorganization of school districts.

1. That the Michigan State Department of Education take an active public relations role in dissolving fears and informing citizens at the "grass roots" level of the advantages of reorganizing school districts into more adequate administrative units.

2. That a brief history of the development of Michigan's public school system and school district reorganization, including a description of the responsibility of the state in reorganizing school districts, be prepared in a manual for distribution to local and intermediate school districts and communities.

3. That a long range plan with definite goals for school district reorganization be prepared by the State Department of Education. Such a plan should be subject to revision as educational needs change.

4. That specific criteria and guidelines be defined by the State Department of Education and made available in manual form for the reorganization of school districts into more adequate administrative units.

5. That the special legislative acts that established the remaining special act school districts be repealed.

6. That additional study be conducted to determine if previously reorganized school districts should be further reorganized in order to form more adequate school districts, particularly in those intermediate districts where suggestion for further study was made by the reorganization committee.

7. That the State School Aid Act be related to degree of adequacy of school districts as determined by the State Department of Education.

8. That special provision be made in the State School Aid Act for isolated school districts that have no opportunity to reorganize into more adequate school districts.

9. That financial stimulus be provided for districts that improve themselves through annexation or consolidation.

10. That legislation be approved to provide for the mandatory reorganization of all remaining non-high school districts.

11. That legislation be approved that provides for an equitable settlement of operational millage and bonded indebtedness among districts that are reorganized.

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REORGANIZATION OF DISTRICTS

Act 289, 1964, p. 584; Eff. Aug. 28.

AN ACT to provide for the study and development of plans for the reorganization of school districts and for elections to accomplish same; to provide for the creation of state and intermediate reorganization committees; to prescribe their powers and duties; to provide for hearings and elections on reorganization plans; and to prescribe the powers and duties of the superintendent of public instruction.

The People of the State of Michigan enact:

388.681 Reorganization of school districts; definitions. [M.S.A. 15.2299(1)]

Sec. 1. As used in this act:

(a) "Reorganization of school districts" means the formation of new school districts, the alteration of boundaries of established school districts, and the dissolution or disorganization of established school districts through or by means of any one or combination of the methods as set forth in this act.

(b) "State committee" means the state committee for the reorganization of school districts created in this act.

(c) "Intermediate committee" means the committee for the reorganization of school districts created in this act.

(d) "Plan of reorganization" means a concrete proposal for readjustment and realignment of the boundaries of school districts within an intermediate school district area.

(e) "Non-high school district" means a school district presently operating less than a kindergarten through twelfth grade program.

(f) "School code" means Act No. 269 of the Public Acts of 1955, as amended, being sections 340.1 to 340.984 of the Compiled Laws of 1948.

388.682 State committee; appointment, distribution, vacancies, compensation. [M.S.A. 15.2299(2)]

Sec. 2. There is created, for the term of time necessary to complete the requirements of this act, a state committee for the reorganization of school districts, appointed by the governor, and composed of 7 members, at least 1 of whom shall represent the Upper Peninsula, 1 the area above the Bay City-Muskegon line, and 5 shall be appointed in such manner as to represent fairly the remainder of the state. The superintendent of public instruction shall be the nonvoting chairman of the committee. Vacancies shall be filled by appointment of the governor. Members of the state committee shall serve without compensation. The members of the committee shall be appointed within 60 days after the effective date of this act.

388.683 Same; officers, records, meetings, quorum. [M.S.A. 15.2299(3)]

Sec. 3. Within 90 days after the effective date of this act, the state committee shall organize by electing a vice-chairman and a secretary. The vice-chairman shall act as chairman at the request of the superintendent of public instruction. The secretary shall keep the records of official committee meetings and prepare and distribute materials as requested by the state committee. Meetings of the committee shall be held upon the call of the chairman or any 3 of the members thereof. Five members, which may include the superintendent of public instruction, constitute a quorum.

388.684 Same; school district reorganization program, surveys, approval of proposals, reports. [M.S.A. 15.2299(4)]

Sec. 4. The state committee shall:

(a) Within 12 months after the effective date of this act, develop policies, principles and procedures for a statewide school district reorganization program planned so that all areas may become part of a school district operating or designed to operate at least 12

grades. In no case can an intermediate district committee plan be submitted under this act which would require the merger of 2 or more school districts of the third class or higher. There shall be created no less than 500 school districts operating 12 grades.

(b) Direct area surveys and develop a manual of procedure to be printed and distributed to all intermediate district superintendents of schools.

(c) Perform either by itself or by its authorized representative any or all of the duties required by this act to be performed by the intermediate school district superintendent, the intermediate district board of education, the intermediate district committee, or the probate judge or judges, in case of failure by any or all of them to perform these duties.

(d) Review and approve or reject intermediate district plans within 60 days after receipt of plans from the intermediate district committees.

(e) Report to each intermediate district the acceptance or rejection of the proposed plans with recommendations for changes.

(f) Present a progress report on reorganization under this act to the state legislature on or before March 1 of each year.

388.685 Intermediate committee; membership, election, vacancies, organization, duties. [M.S.A. 15.2299(5)]

Sec. 5. (1) A committee shall be organized in each intermediate district in the state to be known as the intermediate district committee for the reorganization of school districts. The intermediate district superintendent of schools shall be nonvoting chairman of the intermediate district committee, and he shall preside over all meetings of the intermediate district committee. The intermediate district committee shall complete the requirements of this act and comply with the requests made by the state committee.

There shall be 18 members on the intermediate district committee each of whom shall be a registered resident elector. In intermediate districts containing no district operating 12 grades or more and in intermediate districts containing no non-high school districts the committee shall consist of 13 members.

(2) Members of the intermediate district committee shall be chosen as follows:

(a) The intermediate board of education shall appoint 3 of its members to serve on the committee.

(b) The intermediate district superintendent of schools, by notice sent by mail, shall call a meeting of the boards of education of all school districts operating a program of 12 grades or more in the intermediate district. The meeting shall be held at some convenient place within the intermediate district within 60 days after the effective date of this act. The intermediate district superintendent shall act as chairman of this meeting, and the board members shall elect by ballot 5 persons to serve on the intermediate district committee not more than 2 of whom shall be from any one constituent district, unless there are fewer districts than there are positions to fill. The 5 persons receiving the highest number of votes shall be declared elected. No person may be elected to or serve on the committee who is an employee of any constituent school district or of the intermediate school district. The chairman shall appoint 3 or more tellers to conduct the election and to canvass the vote. Whenever not more than 2 of the 5 members fail to serve on the committee, the remaining members shall fill the vacancy from the same constituent district in which the vacancy occurs. Whenever 3 or more vacancies occur at the same time, the vacancies shall be filled in the same manner as the original committee members were elected.

(c) The intermediate district superintendent of schools, by notice sent by mail, shall call a meeting of the boards of education of all school districts operating less than a twelve-grade program in the intermediate district. The meeting shall be held at some convenient place within the intermediate district within 60 days after the effective date of this act. The intermediate district superintendent shall act as chairman of this meeting, and the board members shall elect by ballot 5 persons to serve on the intermediate district committee not more than 2 of whom shall be from any one constituent district, unless there are fewer

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districts than there are positions to be filled. The 5 persons receiving the highest number of votes shall be declared elected. No person may be elected to or serve on the committee who is an employee of any constituent school district or of the intermediate school district. The chairman shall appoint 3 or more tellers to conduct the election and to canvass the vote. Whenever not more than 2 of the 5 members fail to serve on the committee, the remaining members shall fill the vacancy from the same constituent district in which the vacancy occurs. Whenever 3 or more vacancies occur at the same time, the vacancies shall be filled in the same manner as the original committee members were elected.

(d) The intermediate district superintendent of schools, by notice sent by letter, shall notify the probate judge of the area, who, within 60 days after the effective date of this act, shall appoint 5 members to the committee fairly representing all areas of the intermediate district. The qualifications of these members shall be the same as those of the other members of the committee. The probate judge shall fill all vacancies that may occur among his appointees. In any intermediate district where there are 2 or more probate judges the judges acting jointly shall make the appointments.

(3) Organization of the intermediate district committee shall be completed in each district within 6 months after the effective date of this act. If an intermediate district committee has not been organized within 6 months, the state committee shall appoint the members within 60 days thereafter. In which event the same limitations shall apply as provided in this section.

388.686 Same; meetings, records; district reorganization plan, hearings, approval, revision, dissolution of committee. [M.S.A. 15.2299(6)]

Sec. 6. Each intermediate district committee shall elect a secretary who shall keep the minutes and records of all official meetings. Meetings shall be held upon the call of the chairman or any 3 members of the committee. A majority of the committee shall constitute a quorum. The intermediate district committee shall follow the procedure guide provided by the state committee and prepare a district reorganization plan, which shall be submitted to the state committee for its approval or disapproval. The plan shall provide for the reorganization of school districts within the intermediate district so that all areas of the district may become a part of a school district operating or designed to operate at least 12 grades. The intermediate district committee shall hold at least 1 public hearing regarding the plan but may hold as many more as it deems necessary. Hearings shall be advertised by publication at least once in a newspaper of general circulation in the districts 10 days or more before the scheduled hearing. The intermediate district plan for reorganization shall be submitted to the state committee for its consideration within 9 months after receiving the manual of procedure from the state committee. If the intermediate district plan is approved by the state committee, the plan shall be submitted to the electors as provided in section 7 of this act. If an intermediate district plan is rejected by the state committee, a revised plan shall be submitted by the intermediate district committee within 90 days after receipt of the rejection of the original plan. If the revised plan is not accepted by the state committee, the state committee shall submit a plan for the reorganization of the school districts in the intermediate school district and the intermediate committee shall also submit a plan for the reorganization of the school districts in the intermediate school district. The intermediate school district board shall submit both plans to the electors of the intermediate school district and the plan receiving the larger number of votes shall be submitted to the qualified electors of the intermediate school district in accordance with the requirements of method 2 provided in section 7 of this act. Following this election, the intermediate committee shall be dissolved and the requirements of this act shall have been met and no further plans shall be re-submitted for 5 years by either the state committee or the intermediate district. The intermediate district committee shall also be dissolved on completion and acceptance of the plan by the state committee and the vote or votes on the plan by the electors of the proposed school district.

388.687 Optional methods of election for adoption of reorganization plans, conduct. [M.S.A. 15.2299(7)]

Sec. 7. Not less than 90 days nor more than 6 months following approval of an intermediate district plan as provided in section 6 of this act elections shall be held according to one of 2 methods. The intermediate district committee shall determine which election method shall be used.

Method 1. The entire area encompassed by the intermediate district plan shall vote as a unit on the question: "Shall the approved reorganization plan for the intermediate district be adopted?"

Yes ()

No ()"

If a majority of the qualified electors present and voting approve the plan it shall be declared adopted and shall become effective throughout the area on the date of the election if the election is held after April 30 but before September 1. The effective date shall be July 1 following if the election is held after August 31 but before May 1.

Method 2. The proposed districts provided for in the approved plan shall vote by proposed districts on the question: "Shall the approved reorganization plan for a proposed local district within the intermediate district of be adopted?"

Yes ()

No ()"

If a majority of the qualified electors present and voting in a proposed district approve the plan for that proposed district it shall be declared adopted and shall become effective throughout the proposed district on the date of the election if the election is held after April 30 but before September 1. The effective date shall be July 1 following if the election is held after August 31 but before May 1.

If election method number 1 is adopted by the intermediate district committee and if the question voted on fails to obtain an affirmative majority, then another election using method number 2 shall be held not less than 90 days nor more than 6 months after the date of the first election. The results of this election using method number 2 shall be final and the requirements of this act shall have been met.

If the intermediate district plan provides that the boundaries of an existing school district shall remain the same such district shall not participate in an election held under either method number 1 or method number 2.

If the election is held under method number 1, the plan to be voted on shall not cause an existing school district to be divided between 2 intermediate districts but property transfers may be made later according to the provisions of chapter 5, part 2 of the school code. The plan may provide for division of districts within an intermediate district.

If and when voting method number 2 is used, the plan shall not cause an existing school district to be divided between 2 proposed local districts within the intermediate unit but property transfers may be made later according to chapter 5, part 2 of the school code.

No property transfers shall be made after the approval of the intermediate district plan by the state committee until after the elections provided for in this section have been held.

The question of assumption of bonded indebtedness shall not be included in any election held under the provisions of this act but the provisions of sections 412 and 413 of the school code regarding assumption of debt shall apply.

The qualifications of electors shall be the same as now provided in the statutes for votes on consolidation and annexation and the provisions of the general election laws shall apply.

The board of education of the intermediate school district shall conduct the election or elections provided for in this section according to the general election laws and according to chapters 7 and 8 of part 2 of the school code.

388.688 Classification of districts formed. [M.S.A. 15.2299(8)]

Sec. 8. Districts formed under the provisions of this act shall be classified as second, third or fourth class districts depending upon the school census as provided for in chapters 3, 4 and 5, part 1 of the school code.

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388.689 Consolidation, annexation or division of districts. [M.S.A. 15.2299(9)]

Sec. 9. After the effective date of this act, the superintendent of public instruction, when requested to approve a consolidation, annexation or division of a district, shall give careful consideration to the progress of the implementation of the requirements of this act.

388.690 School aid, apportionment. [M.S.A. 15.2299(10)]

Sec. 10. School districts formed under the provisions of this act shall be entitled to and receive financial aid from the state in the manner provided by legislative appropriation for school aid purposes except that the apportionments of state aid due any school district formed under this act in the 2 fiscal years next following reorganization shall not be less than the aggregate of state aid which would have been due proportionately to the component districts prior to the reorganization. It shall be the duty of the superintendent of public instruction in making apportionments of state aid to adjust the amount of state aid due each such school district accordingly.

388.691 Board of education of newly-formed district. [M.S.A. 15.2299(11)]

Sec. 11. Where the proposed district involves expansion of the boundaries of an existing twelve-grade district by addition of non-twelve-grade territory the board of education of the twelve-grade district shall continue as the board of the enlarged district.

Where the proposed district involves the merger of 2 or more twelve-grade districts with or without the addition of non-twelve-grade territory, or where the proposed district involves merger of non-twelve-grade districts into a new twelve-grade district a board of education fairly representing all areas of the new district shall be appointed by the intermediate district board to serve until a new board is elected as provided in section 410 of the school code.

388.692 Board of education of district losing identity, records, property. [M.S.A. 15.2299(12)]

Sec. 12. The boards of education of any district which lose identity shall turn over their books, records, funds and property to the new board within 10 days after the effective date of the reorganization. If any existing district is divided, the intermediate district board, or boards, shall specify the division of assets and liabilities.

388.693 Final report; termination of act. [M.S.A. 15.2299(13)]

Sec. 13. The state commission shall make a final report to the state legislature on or before September 1, 1968, and this act shall expire on the date of filing the final report.

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Volume No. 6

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THE MICHIGAN SCHOOL OBSERVER

(Official Publication of The Friends of the Michigan Schools)

Volume No. 6

Special Reorganization Issue

Number 3

REORGANIZATION: AIMS AND RESULTS

Who Is Behind School Reorganization?

Research to find out just "WHO" is behind the vigorous push for school district reorganization here in Michigan was very enlightening, and clearly illustrates the technique of inverted pyramiding of evidence to support pre-conceived notions.

The search started with the book called "Michigan State Aid Survey - 1953", sometimes called the Sly Report. This report, made for the Citizens Advisory Group to the Legislative Interim Tax and Revenue Study Committee, suggested that Michigan had too many small units of government "which defeat any real expression of local democracy". These small units of government "which defeat any real expression of local democracy" are the townships and school districts.

The Sly Report, when referring to schools, used as authority and reference for such statements the following: A book called "Paying for Public Schools in Michigan", published at the University of Michigan in 1951 by the Bureau of

(continued on page 4)

School Consolidation

MERGER BY NAKED FORCE

Legislation fostered by the State Department of Public Instruction will be introduced this year at Harrisburg to compel the 2277 school districts of the Commonwealth to merge into 172 districts, of which 8 will be in Montgomery County.

The customary drums are being beaten, the usual "Citizens" groups will be formed, the old promises of "efficiency" and "economy" will be made and heavy pressure will be brought upon

(continued on page 2)

One State-Wide School District

This radical proposal was the substance of a trial balloon thrown out by Octavius Townsend, president-elect of the Michigan Education Association. To make it more or less official E. Dale Kennedy, executive secretary of the M.E.A., was also present at this news conference held at Michigan State University Union Building. We

(continued on page 2)

Dormitories In the Schools

THE COMMISSIONER PREDICTS

Speaking before a group of Nassau County teachers and administrators, Commissioner of Education James E. Allen, Jr., New York, predicted sweeping changes in schools by the end of the century. He predicted that by the year 2000 children will

- Enter school at two or three years of age
live part of each week in schools containing bedrooms as well as classrooms
- Attend schools geared to their educational needs and interest rather than schools in their own districts.

Noting that "education is a vital national concern and the time has come to do more than merely say so," he said the State cannot afford to let lagging school districts continue to lag. "Schools are no longer purely local in character," he added.

from N. Y. State School Board Assn. Edit. Note: Project "Head Start" is the beginning of the program to enroll kids at two and three years of age.

In reply to an article taken from the Michigan School Board Journal: In this article Commissioner of Education James E. Allen of New York predicts that in the not too distant future, your child will be taken from his home when two or three years of age and placed in a school dormitory, which might be in some other district rather than his own. In other words he would have a bedroom as well as a classroom and his education would actually begin at the tender age of

(continued on page 3)

Selected Data for Michigan's 535 High School Districts, 1962-63 Compiled by Department of Public Instruction

School Enrollment	Education Cost per Student
1000	\$327.16
2500	341.08
4500	386.10
7500	423.86
15,000	414.91
35,000	464.47

Editorial

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THE MICHIGAN**SCHOOL OBSERVER**

Volume No. 6 Special Reorganization Issue Number 3

EDITOR

Miss Edna Conklin

229 N. Cochran, Charlotte, Mich. 48813

Friends of Michigan Schools

Box 1151, Lansing, Michigan 48904

Editorial**Purposes of Reorganization**

Ever since the Socialist movement started in 1905 in the United States the social planners have been gradually gaining control of education through centralization. Reorganization of school districts is a key part of their program, because the group that controls education directs the thinking of our future leaders.

TO THE SOCIALIST

Reorganization is imperative for the following reasons:

1. With every school district that is eliminated, the influence of the citizen is reduced. At one time there were 7200 school districts in Michigan. Today we are getting down near the 1000 mark. Last year a bill was introduced to reduce the 500 in the reorganization act to 400. The Supt. of Public Instruction recommends 300. Privately, the planners are talking of a few regional districts for the state.

2. Children are away from the home influence longer each day. It is not unusual to find small children getting on a school bus before daylight in the winter months and home after dark in the evening.

3. The school is further removed from home so the parents will have less knowledge of what is going on.

4. With the school gone the most important community center has vanished. When the community spirit deteriorates, moral values decline. The tremendous increase in juvenile delinquency and teenage crime is a result of this moral breakdown of the home and community. School reorganization is certainly one of the contributing factors to our present problem in this area.

5. The opportunity for a student to develop leadership is diminished. (See letter to editor, page 3)

6. The bigger the district, the higher the cost of educating each child. (See graph on page one.) Reorganization has resulted in a tremendous increase in taxes. Many rural areas have experienced 200 to 300% increase a few years after annexation. City residents have not escaped either. Recently in a news article the Supt. of the Alpena Schools (only county-wide district in Michigan) admitted that school taxes in the city of Alpena have nearly tripled.

To the Socialist, who believes in government ownership of all property, excessive taxation is the civilized way to appropriate it.

—Harmon Cropsey, President

For those who want further information, the book **Turning the Tides** by Shafer and Snow is recommended. Get it from your local bookstore, library, or order from Friends of Michigan Schools, Box 1151, Lansing, Mich. \$2.00 postpaid.

ONE STATE - WIDE SCHOOL

(continued from page 1)

quote part of the news item which appeared in the April 26, 1963, issue of the Lansing Journal.

Links School Financing to One State District

"The president-elect of the Michigan Education Association said

Friday he believes the only solution to financing of public schools in the future may be a single, state-wide school district controlled by the state.

"This view was expressed by Octavius Townsend of Ishpeming during a press conference at the Michigan State University Union

Building.

"Townsend said he could see no likelihood of such a plan being approved in the immediate future because of various conflicts of a political nature and resistance among individual school districts.

ASSURE EDUCATION

"But he emphasized that such a plan would provide the right to an equal education to all youngsters in Michigan and help eliminate the areas where inadequate school programs are in effect due to lack of funds.

"In response to questions, Townsend said such a district under state control would mean parceling out state tax funds to areas where they are most needed in the state and not necessarily in equal amounts.

"Townsend said this was a personal view and no details have been worked out. But he added that in his view, legislation could be passed permitting various areas to vote extra taxes beyond what the state provided if they chose to do so."

Friends of Michigan Schools have always contended that the "progressive educationists" wanted completely centralized control of schools. One state-wide school district controlled completely by Lansing or Washington or perhaps New York is their idea of "democracy". They want no interference from anyone in carrying out their plans.

Actually a dictatorship such as posed, plus more funds which they always want, would leave the educationists free. Free to do what?

SCHOOL CONSOLIDATION

(continued from page 1)

teachers, school administrators and school board members to make them pass resolutions of approval which will then be broadcast far and wide at the taxpayers' expense.

The plan has been going on under cover for a long time, but it is now out in the open where it can be fought. Under the plan, the local school districts will be given a few years to merge into the desired units "voluntarily." If they refuse, they will be forced into them involuntarily.

This plan is the greatest threat to democratic self-government that has ever been proposed in

(continued on page 3)

Letter to the Editor

Sense of Achievement Lost In Big Schools

Statements made recently relative to the K-12 proposal for the revamping of local school districts have been, to my thinking, woefully lacking in putting emphasis on an issue of critical importance to students.

A major cause of delinquency and crime among students of the pre-university age, is a feeling of frustration, impotence, and inferiority in their dealings with other students of their age. In our schools, great emphasis is placed on achievement within the group. Failure to find that achievement is often a catastrophic blow to youthful self-esteem. This failure to achieve a relative success in areas of importance to the group, leads students to condemn that unit, and search for importance outside of school activities and, too often, outside the law.

In our present county school system there are many small school units. In these units students are searching for achievement, recognition, and confidence. Because the units are small, many are finding these crucial foundations of character. Take away the small unit and substitute K-12 and the result will be a minority of excellence and a vast preponderance of disinterest and discontent. After all, a band, orchestra, or choir can only have so many members, a ball team so many players, a student government so many officials.

If the people of Michigan let an extravagant-minded legislature bully them into K-12 consolidation, I believe they will have regrets, not the least of which will be an enormous tax burden to cope with rapidly increasing numbers of criminals and malcontents.

DOUGLAS WOLFE.
15 W. Fayette St.
Hillsdale.

SCHOOL CONSOLIDATION

(continued from page 2)

Pennsylvania. At one fell swoop, true local control over the schools is to be contemptuously destroyed, local control that has guided and fostered our schools since the beginning.

It is a cardinal principle of Home Rule that those who are

sought to be merged must give their consent to the merger. Indeed, a cardinal principle of our Nation is "Government with the consent of the governed."

We should look with pity on these "experts" for in their blind worship of bigness they are seeking to tear down the pillars of the Temple of Liberty. They would herd the children into great educational factories. They would destroy what little control the parents have over what is taught and who teaches. They would reduce the individual—so far as is possible—into the mass.

Both our Montgomery County Boroughs Association and our State Association of Boroughs have gone on record for some years against such a proposal. What we realize is that if the school districts can be cavalierly merged without the consent of the voters, it will be only a short time before the Planners will endeavor to compel us to merge into the large units of government — without the consent of the voters.

This nation was founded and grew strong because men fought for the right to govern themselves. The strength of democracy has always been the participation of the citizens. Where an issue is close to men's hearts they strive vigorously to maintain it, but when it is far removed, indifference and passive unconcern take over. This is the great curse of centralized government and of units too big for the individual opinion to count.

Voluntary merger is an acceptable principle, but forced merger is repugnant to every right-thinking man. It must be fought whenever it rears its head.

—Pennsylvania Twp. News

DORMITORIES IN THE

(continued from page 1)

two or three years. The school term would also be lengthened, Mr. Allen says, "Schools are no longer purely local in character."

Since Mr. Allen sets himself up as an authority, it would be interesting, indeed, to find out how the schools under his jurisdiction are actually getting along at the present time.

A recent article written by one of his teachers and appearing in the September, 1962, issue of the Atlantic Monthly presents a rather

disturbing picture of New York schools. The teacher says, and I quote, "It is pure fiction to say that what takes place in some New York schools is education, and to assert that it is education which takes place in a great many of the so-called better neighborhood schools of New York is equally fictitious. I spent my three years of high school teaching in what is generally regarded as the best schools."

It is not unusual to walk into a classroom and hear eighth graders reading at a fourth grade level. When beginning a class period, it often takes at least ten minutes to gain even a semblance of order. Often the whole forty minute period is spent in trying to achieve discipline.

He states further: "I was not very surprised when the attendance officer at one Junior High with whom I was having lunch one day told me that with the school year less than three months old, the twentieth pregnancy among the student body of twelve to fourteen year olds had been discovered." He said, "There is a cop on continuous duty and no girl may leave the room unless accompanied by another girl."

All in all, it would seem that Commissioner Allen is not in a very logical position to give advice. And yet these are the very people, and we have them right in Michigan, who are advocating centralized control of our schools.

Conditions in Washington, D. C. schools seem, if possible, to be even worse.

The following are excerpts from the January 21, 1963, issue of U. S. News and World Report taken from an article relative to the schools of our U. S. Capitol:

"Fear rages through many school buildings. Violence, assaults, disrespect for teachers are undesirable acts of students. Teachers have become hopeless in the struggle. Some are attempting to hang on until they can retire. Many have given up the fight."

Not unusual are organized extortion gangs where older boys forceably take lunch money from younger boys and girls, stealing of clothing, radios, books, molesting students in corridors and threats of violence. Teachers and school officials are slow to report these

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Friends of Michigan Schools Viewpoint

We favor local control of education which can only be accomplished by retaining as many school districts as possible in the state.

We believe any reorganization should be decided by the free and knowledgeable vote of the people of the districts involved. We oppose a dictated reorganization whether by direct order or through coercion.

We favor legislation which will guarantee the right of local citizens to make these decisions and provide the machinery to enable them to have the type of school district they want.

We favor keeping children in schools as close to their home as possible. Parental interest is in direct relation to the proximity of the school to the home. The home atmosphere, so essential to the complete educational development of the child, can never be replaced by the use of house mothers and dormitories as proposed by some educators.

For more information about the Friends of Michigan Schools write Box 1151, Lansing.

Chaos Ahead

Under P. A. 289 (Reorganization Bill) as passed by the legislature in 1964, all extra operational millages cease if the plans are approved. If the election is in August, the plan goes into immediate effect. There would not be sufficient time to set up an election before the September 15 deadline for certifying millage. Unless the bill is amended or the law is changed, some new districts will be operating under extreme financial distress.

Seven Steps In Reorganization

1. Township elementary districts
2. High school district
3. Combine two or more high school districts
4. County-wide district
5. Regional (several counties) - recommended by Dr. Bartlett, former Supt. of Public Instruction

6. State-wide - recommended by Octavius Townsend when he was president of MEA as the best way to equalize educational opportunities

7. Nationwide - through strings attached to Federal Aid
Note: Many times some steps are by-passed.

DORMITORIES IN THE

(continued from page 3)

disturbances for fear of reprisals. Many serious offenses never appear in the press.

The undesirable conditions just mentioned are not isolated cases.

Do you wish to have your child subjected to influences beyond your control such as those just mentioned? If not, do not listen to those who are trying desperately to deprive you of any and all voice in school affairs.

WHO IS BEHIND SCHOOL

(continued from page 1)

Government, Institute of Public Administration; and another book called "The Forty-Eight State School Systems", published in 1949 by the Council of State Governments, 1313 E. Sixtieth Street, Chicago, Illinois.

Examination of these two books shows that both of them emphasize the idea of school district reorganization, but again, like the first book, not on the basis of research and factual findings, but using as their authority still another book.

It is with this last book that we come to the bottom of the inverted pyramid. The title of the book is "Your School District" and it was published in 1948 by THE NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION. Here, at last, is the real "WHIO" behind school district reorganization.

The first sentence of this book is

THE MICHIGAN SCHOOL OBSERVER

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as follows - - "School district reorganization is imperative." The rest of the book is simply a well organized effort to sell the reader on the conclusion already reached in the first sentence. It is full of talk about "educational opportunities," "administrative units" and all the rest of the favorite phrases of the "Progressive Educator", all designed to further the original pre-conceived notion that school district reorganization is necessary. Finding the "WHIO" behind the reorganization movement would be gratifying if it weren't for the fact that the propaganda started in this book has spread upward through the years and found its way into the so called factual reports upon which the present day arguments are based.

We, the parents of the children whose education is affected, are supposed to reconcile ourselves to the idea that only the "professional educators" have the knowledge or ability to form correct opinions about the education of our children. We, the parents, are uninformed laymen. The sad fact of the matter is that these "professionals" have sunk so deeply into the Godless, socialistic mire stirred up by John Dewey, George Counts, Harold Rugg and others of similar beliefs, that to accept their "professional opinions" at face value is to be naive indeed.

School district reorganization is imperative - - for those who would impose socialism upon us - - in order to gain effective control of our schools. It is through the schools that their "new education", with its lack of moral or spiritual values can be spread like poison through our communities. **THE TIME TO STOP IT IS RIGHT NOW.**

—by Research Committee
Cass Co. Chapter F.M.S.

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IRA POLLEY
Superintendent of Public Instruction

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Lansing, Michigan 48902

July 11, 1966

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E. O. Schroeder contacted you in 1964 to request school district reorganization information concerning your state. This is a follow-up of that request. We would appreciate it very much if you would send us a copy or description of legislation pertaining to school district reorganization that has become effective in your state since 1964.

Would you also send a current summary of the number of your school districts.

Sincerely,

Roger A. Boline
Roger A. Boline, Consultant
Administrative Services

RAB/gr

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