

INFORMATION TO USERS

The most advanced technology has been used to photograph and reproduce this manuscript from the microfilm master. UMI films the original text directly from the copy submitted. Thus, some dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from a computer printer.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyrighted material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. Each oversize page is available as one exposure on a standard 35 mm slide or as a 17" × 23" black and white photographic print for an additional charge.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. 35 mm slides or 6" × 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.



300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346 USA

Order Number 8900058

**Rural school problems and educational options: An
ethnographic study of a small school district in the Upper
Peninsula of Michigan**

Korpela, Waino William, Ph.D.

Michigan State University, 1988

Copyright ©1988 by Korpela, Waino William. All rights reserved.

U·M·I
300 N. Zeeb Rd.
Ann Arbor, MI 48106

PLEASE NOTE:

In all cases this material has been filmed in the best possible way from the available copy.
Problems encountered with this document have been identified here with a check mark ✓.

1. Glossy photographs or pages _____
2. Colored illustrations, paper or print _____
3. Photographs with dark background _____
4. Illustrations are poor copy _____
5. Pages with black marks, not original copy _____
6. Print shows through as there is text on both sides of page _____
7. Indistinct, broken or small print on several pages ✓ _____
8. Print exceeds margin requirements _____
9. Tightly bound copy with print lost in spine _____
10. Computer printout pages with indistinct print _____
11. Page(s) _____ lacking when material received, and not available from school or author.
12. Page(s) _____ seem to be missing in numbering only as text follows.
13. Two pages numbered _____. Text follows.
14. Curling and wrinkled pages _____
15. Dissertation contains pages with print at a slant, filmed as received _____
16. Other _____

U·M·I

RURAL SCHOOL PROBLEMS AND EDUCATIONAL OPTIONS:
AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF A SMALL SCHOOL DISTRICT
IN THE UPPER PENINSULA OF MICHIGAN

By

Waino William Korpela

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

College of Education

1988

ABSTRACT

RURAL SCHOOL PROBLEMS AND EDUCATIONAL OPTIONS: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF A SMALL SCHOOL DISTRICT IN THE UPPER PENINSULA OF MICHIGAN

By

Waino William Korpela

Many rural school districts today are facing a multitude of problems, including declining student enrollments, inadequate financial resources and deteriorating buildings. Ethnographic methodology was used to study one such district for 26 months.

Three major areas were addressed in the study. First, data were collected to determine what the school district's problems are. Second, the manner in which the traditions, values, beliefs, social patterns, preferences, and economics of the community interface with schooling were studied. Third, the various options that are available to the district were examined to determine which of them are feasible.

The community has an education is important tradition and the students of the district have traditionally achieved at a level above state and national norms.

The major problems that were identified are an unsafe and inadequate high school building and an elementary/junior

high school which needs major renovation, coupled with a low equalized valuation of taxable property, which would make it difficult to raise the funds for construction and/or renovation. The district also has had to cut some programs and services and hold teacher and administrator salaries below state and regional averages because of inadequate funds.

Several feasible educational options exist for the school district. These include possible merger with one or both neighboring school districts, with the construction of a new high school, or maintaining a separate high school and supplementing the current curriculum through distance learning, cooperative programming with neighboring school districts, or participating in an area center operated by the regional educational agency.

There is not a clear consensus in the community about a course of action that the district should follow. Most citizens would prefer to maintain a high school if it were possible to provide a quality education by doing so. A three-district consolidation, with the construction of a new high school, would probably provide the most comprehensive program. The citizens of the school district would probably support that option.

Copyright by
Waino William Korpela
1988

To Liola
and to our sons,
Michael, Kurt, Lee, Craig, and Karl

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The researcher sincerely appreciates the assistance that the following persons provided in various ways:

Dr. Charles Blackman,
teacher, advisor and chairman of the dissertation committee;

Dr. Ben Bohnhorst,
teacher and member of the dissertation committee;

Dr. George Ferns,
teacher and member of the dissertation committee;

Dr. Samuel Moore,
teacher and member of the dissertation committee;

Dr. James Buschman,
teacher of ethnographic research methodology;

Mr. Clarence Hoeft,
Superintendent, Bessemer Area School District;

Mr. Walter Rickard,
Principal, A. D. Johnston High School;
members of the Bessemer Area School District
Board of Education;

the faculty and other employees of the
Bessemer Area School District;

citizens of the Bessemer Area School District who
were willing to share their views with the researcher;

and

June and Margaret and other friends, colleagues and
teachers in the Upper Peninsula MSU doctoral program.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES.....	xii
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY.....	1
<u>The Problem</u>	1
<u>Purpose of the Study</u>	4
<u>Research Questions</u>	5
<u>Methodology</u>	9
<u>Limitations</u>	9
<u>Summary</u>	11
CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE.....	13
<u>Introduction</u>	13
<u>Rural School Problems</u>	13
<u>How Education in Rural Communities Interfaces With Traditions, Values, Beliefs, Social Patterns, Preferences, and Economics</u>	17
<u>Options For Dealing With Problems in Rural School Districts</u>	24
<u>An Exemplary Small Rural School</u>	28
<u>Summary</u>	30
CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY.....	33
<u>Introduction</u>	33
<u>Criteria for Ethnographic Study</u>	34
<u>The Researcher</u>	36
<u>The Site</u>	37

<u>Procedures</u>	37
<u>Negotiations to Enter the Site</u>	37
<u>Data Collection At the Site</u>	39
<u>Data Verification</u>	41
<u>Data Analysis</u>	42
<u>Summary</u>	45
CHAPTER IV: THE SETTING.....	47
<u>Introduction</u>	47
<u>An Abbreviated History of the Community</u>	47
<u>The Early Years</u>	47
<u>The Twenties and Thirties</u>	52
<u>The Forties and Fifties</u>	55
<u>The Sixties, Seventies and Eighties</u>	56
<u>The Bessemer Area Community Today</u>	58
<u>An Abbreviated History of the School District</u>	62
<u>1984-85</u>	66
<u>1985-86</u>	67
<u>1986-87</u>	71
<u>1987-88</u>	74
<u>Summary</u>	75
CHAPTER V: THE FINDINGS.....	77
<u>Introduction</u>	77
<u>What are the Problems That the School District is Facing?</u>	81
<u>Are declining enrollments a problem?</u>	81
<u>Is there a problem with the voters of the district not approving millage requests for operational purposes?</u>	83

<u>Are the financial resources of the district a problem and what are the limiting factors?.....</u>	86
<u>Does the operation of the Catholic elementary school negatively impact upon the financial resources of the district?.....</u>	89
<u>Are the current curriculum, programs, and services adequate to provide a quality education to the district's students?.....</u>	91
<u>Elementary School.....</u>	91
<u>Junior High School.....</u>	93
<u>Senior High School.....</u>	94
<u>Are class sizes a problem?.....</u>	96
<u>Are there students living in the school district who should be enrolled in school but are not?.....</u>	98
<u>Is there a problem with students dropping out of school?.....</u>	98
<u>Is there a problem with absenteeism?.....</u>	99
<u>Is there a problem with the students' level of achievement?.....</u>	99
<u>Is inappropriate student behavior a problem?.....</u>	105
<u>Is there a problem with current administrators or teachers not meeting state certification requirements?.....</u>	106
<u>Is it difficult to recruit teachers?.....</u>	107
<u>Are the relationships among various segments of the larger community and the school community harmonious?.....</u>	107
<u>Is there a problem with insufficient parent and citizen involvement in the affairs of the school district?.....</u>	115
<u>Is there a problem with the health, safety, and/or adequacy of the school buildings and grounds?.....</u>	116
<u>The A.D. Johnston High School.....</u>	116
<u>The Washington School.....</u>	120

<u>Massie Field.....</u>	123
<u>Is the condition of the bus fleet a problem?.....</u>	123
<u>How do Traditions, Values, Beliefs, Social Patterns, Preferences, and Economics Interface With Education In This Small Community?.....</u>	125
<u>What is the history of the community and its schools?.....</u>	125
<u>What is the ethnic composition of the community today?.....</u>	125
<u>Do the residents have a strong sense of community?..</u>	127
<u>How did the residents react to former school closings and to the annexation of the township schools to the city schools?.....</u>	129
<u>How does the economic condition of the region impact the school district?.....</u>	130
<u>Does the community provide all of the essential features and services of a complete social and economic community?.....</u>	131
<u>What do the residents of the district believe would happen to their community if they lost their high school?.....</u>	132
<u>What value do residents of the district place upon the education that students are receiving?....</u>	132
<u>Are the residents of the school district satisfied with the current educational programs and services that are provided?.....</u>	133
<u>How important are high school athletics to the school and to the community?.....</u>	135
<u>What are the attitudes in the community toward instituting changes in the educational delivery system?.....</u>	139
<u>Do the members of the board of education represent the ethnic and religious diversity, traditions, values, beliefs, social patterns, preferences, and economic status of the citizens they serve?....</u>	150
<u>Which Options for Providing an Educational Program to the Youth of the School District are Feasible and of Sufficient Quality to Merit Consideration?.....</u>	158

<u>Would the use of various technologies and other alternative methods of delivering the curriculum make it possible to enrich the current curriculum and/or to replace portions of the delivery system to make it more cost effective?.....</u>	159
<u>Is maintaining the status quo a feasible option?...</u>	161
<u>Is providing an educational program in a new K-12 school, without merger, a feasible option?.....</u>	162
<u>Is providing an educational program in renovated schools a feasible option?.....</u>	164
<u>Is a three-way merger of the Bessemer, Ironwood, and Wakefield school districts a feasible option?..</u>	166
<u>Is a merger between the Bessemer and Ironwood school districts a feasible option?.....</u>	171
<u>Is a merger between the Bessemer and Wakefield school districts a feasible option?.....</u>	175
<u>Would it be feasible to have the high school students attend the Ironwood and/or Wakefield schools on a tuition basis while continuing to operate an elementary/junior high school program?..</u>	180
<u>Summary.....</u>	182
CHAPTER VI: ASSERTIONS, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.	187
<u>Introduction.....</u>	187
<u>Assertions.....</u>	188
<u>Discussion.....</u>	190
<u>Implications for the Community.....</u>	197
<u>Recommendations for Further Research.....</u>	202
REFERENCES.....	204
APPENDIX A: A. D. JOHNSTON HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULUM AND REGISTRATION PACKET.....	210
APPENDIX B: MAP OF THE GOGEBIC RANGE SHOWING THE LOCATION OF SCHOOLS IN BESSEMER, WAKEFIELD AND IRONWOOD.....	216
APPENDIX C: KEHOE ANALYSIS OF THE HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULUM.....	217

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 1.	BESSEMER AREA S/D MILLAGE ELECTIONS, 1978-1987.....	85
TABLE 2.	1987-88 RESIDENT K-8 STUDENTS AND REGULAR PUBLIC SCHOOL CLASSROOM TEACHERS.....	90
TABLE 3.	1987-88 K-6 CLASS SIZES AT THE WASHINGTON SCHOOL.....	97
TABLE 4.	PERCENT OF 1980-86 4TH GRADE MEAP MATH SCORES IN THE HIGHEST CATEGORY OF ACHIEVEMENT.....	101
TABLE 5.	PERCENT OF 1980-86 4TH GRADE MEAP READING SCORES IN THE HIGHEST CATEGORY OF ACHIEVEMENT..	101
TABLE 6.	PERCENT OF 1980-86 7TH GRADE MEAP MATH SCORES IN THE HIGHEST CATEGORY OF ACHIEVEMENT.....	102
TABLE 7.	PERCENT OF 1980-86 7TH GRADE MEAP READING SCORES IN THE HIGHEST CATEGORY OF ACHIEVEMENT..	102
TABLE 8.	PERCENT OF 1980-86 10TH GRADE MEAP MATH SCORES IN THE HIGHEST CATEGORY OF ACHIEVEMENT.....	103
TABLE 9.	PERCENT OF 1980-86 10TH GRADE MEAP READING SCORES IN THE HIGHEST CATEGORY OF ACHIEVEMENT..	103
TABLE 10.	ACT PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES.....	104
TABLE 11.	BESSEMER AREA S/D BUS FLEET DATA.....	124
TABLE 12.	NUMBER OF ETHNIC ORIGINS OF 1986-87 KINDERGARTEN AND GRADE 12 STUDENTS.....	126
TABLE 13.	NUMBER OF 1986-87 KINDERGARTEN AND GRADE 12 STUDENTS WITH INDICATED ETHNIC ANCESTRY.....	126
TABLE 14.	RESEARCHER'S ANALYSIS OF CITIZEN PREFERENCES FOR VARIOUS EDUCATIONAL OPTIONS.....	143

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

The Problem

The baby boom following World War II and the subsequent decline in the birth rate have each significantly influenced the schools of America. One superintendent stated, "We were brought up on growth. Growth permeated the whole educational scheme. . . . We were managing growth in an atmosphere of abundance. Then came decline - a condition almost unknown in American history. For many superintendents, decline carried with it the beginnings of debacle or disaster" (Brodinski, 1981).

The decline of student populations in many schools is not the only factor that has caused problems for school districts during the seventies and eighties. Inflation, with especially rapidly rising energy costs, mandated programs and services for handicapped students, tax revolts, court decrees for desegregation, and various national education reports which are critical of the performance of public schools are some of the other factors that have contributed to the difficulties that school districts have faced in recent years.

Many rural school districts have had local conditions which have contributed to their problems. In the Upper Peninsula of Michigan the closings of mines and plants, the migration of young people to urban areas, and a decline in family farms are conditions which have had significant impact upon the region's communities and schools. The extent, timing, and consequences of declining student populations and related problems in the Upper Peninsula have varied from one school district to another, but all communities have had to deal with these problems to some degree.

A major problem that many school districts have had to wrestle with is reduced state aid due to reduced student population. During the 1987-88 school year an in-formula school district in Michigan (see pages 88-89 for information relating to in-formula and out-of-formula school districts), with a 30 mill tax levy and 20 fewer students than it had during 1986-87, would receive approximately \$56,500 less in state membership aid than it would have received had the 20 students been in attendance. The costs to the district for the same level of services that it provided the previous year probably would have increased due to higher salaries and other inflationary costs. It would not be possible, under those circumstances, for many small rural districts to maintain the same level of programs and services that they previously provided.

In some states the reduction in state revenues that has resulted from declining enrollments has been aggravated by

a reduction in the percentage of total educational expenditures that has been paid by the state. In Michigan the percentage of general fund revenues received by all K-12 public school districts in the state has declined from 40.3% in 1976-77 to 27.67% in 1985-86 (Michigan State Board of Education, 1982; 1986).

Another problem that many rural school districts face is deteriorating buildings, with insufficient local tax revenues to build new ones and no funds for new construction or renovations from the state or federal governments to assist them. Many of these schools are neither sanitary nor safe. Some are fire traps and most do not meet current code requirements for access by physically handicapped persons. Recently the federal government has recognized the danger from asbestos in many of these schools and is requiring that it be removed or encapsulated. No money has been provided, however, to assist with this costly operation.

The problems relating to small student enrollments that school districts had during the first six decades of this century were most often resolved through merger with other districts. By the sixties, however, many of the tiny school districts had disappeared. Some school authorities began to question whether merger was, in many cases, the best way to solve the problems associated with declining enrollments. They also began to question the wisdom of attempting to educate children in isolation from the communities in which they lived and to ignore totally the needs of communities

when consolidations and school closures were being planned. They began to look at other options such as cooperative programming at area centers, employing specialists through regional educational agencies, and distance learning via telephone, computers, and television.

School officials and other citizens in many communities have had long and often heated discussions concerning the best way to deal with various school problems. Various strategies have been used in attempts to find solutions. Some have worked in one situation but not in another. As Powers (1979) states, "Despite all the studies, planning and politicking over the past several years, there has been no discovery of a flawless route to innovative solutions to the problem" (p. 1).

Purposes of the Study

School administrators and school board members should have considerable knowledge about the various factors that affect education in their schools, if they are to make intelligent decisions concerning issues that will have lasting effects on their school district and community. They must have an understanding of the various problems that affect the district's finances, programs, services, facilities, and, most importantly, its children. They must know what alternatives are available for providing a quality education to the children of the district and they must understand how these educational options interface with

local traditions, values, beliefs, social patterns, preferences, and economics.

The purposes of the study were (a) to determine what the problems of the school district are, (b) to examine how traditions, values, beliefs, social patterns, preferences, and economics interface with education in this small community, and (c) to determine which options for providing an educational program to the students of the district are feasible and of sufficient quality to merit consideration.

Included within the study are a description of the findings and various assertions, implications, and recommendations that the researcher believes might be helpful to the administrators, members of the board of education, and citizens of the community as they work to find solutions to the school district's problems. The findings may be generalizable to other rural school districts and the study could serve as a model to other educators who intend to conduct similar studies.

Research Questions

Three major questions are addressed in the study. They are (a) What are the school district's problems, (b) How do traditions, values, beliefs, social patterns, preferences, and economics interface with education in this small community and, (c) Which options are feasible for providing a cost effective, high quality education to the students of

this school district? Numerous related questions are also addressed. The questions are:

1. What are the school district's problems?

- a. Are declining enrollments a problem?
- b. Is there a problem with the voters of the district not approving millage requests?
- c. Are the financial resources of the district a problem and what are the limiting factors?
- d. Does the operation of the Catholic elementary school negatively impact upon the financial resources of the district?
- e. Are the current curriculum, programs, and services adequate to provide a quality education to the district's students?
- f. Are class sizes a problem?
- g. Are there students living in the school district who should be enrolled in school but are not?
- h. Is there a problem with students dropping out of school?
- i. Is there a problem with absenteeism?
- j. Is there a problem with the students' level of achievement?
- k. Is inappropriate student behavior a problem?
- l. Is there a problem with the current administrators or teachers not meeting state certification requirements?
- m. Is it difficult to recruit teachers?

- n. Are the relationships among the various factions of the community and school harmonious?
 - o. Is there a problem with insufficient parent and citizen involvement in the affairs of the school?
 - p. Is there a problem with the health, safety, and/or adequacy of the school buildings and grounds?
 - q. Is the condition of the bus fleet a problem?
2. How do traditions, values, beliefs, social patterns, preferences, and economics interface with education in this small community?
- a. What is the history of the community and its schools?
 - b. What is the ethnic composition of the community today?
 - c. Do the residents have a strong sense of community?
 - d. How did the residents react to former school closings and to the annexation of the township schools to the city schools?
 - e. How does the economic condition of the region impact the school district?
 - f. Are all of the essential features and services of a complete social and economic community provided?
 - g. What do the residents believe would happen to their community if they lost their high school?
 - h. What value do residents of the district place upon the education that students are receiving?
 - i. Are the residents of the school district satisfied

with the current educational programs and services that are provided?

- j. How important are high school athletics to the school and community?
 - k. What are the attitudes in the community toward instituting changes in the educational delivery system?
 - l. Do the members of the board of education represent the traditions, values, beliefs, social patterns, preferences, economic status, and religious and ethnic diversity of the citizens they serve?
3. Which options for providing an educational program to the youth of the school district are feasible and of sufficient quality to merit consideration?
- a. Would the use of various technologies and other alternative methods of delivering the curriculum make it possible to enrich the current curriculum and/or to replace portions of the delivery system to make it more cost effective?
 - b. Is maintaining the status quo a feasible option?
 - c. Is providing an educational program in a new K-12 school, without merger, a feasible option?
 - d. Is providing an educational program in renovated schools a feasible option?
 - e. Is a three-way merger of the Bessemer, Ironwood, and Wakefield school districts a feasible option?
 - f. Is a merger between the Bessemer and Ironwood

school districts a feasible option?

- g. Is a merger between the Bessemer and Wakefield school districts a feasible option?
- h. Would it be feasible to have the high school students attend the Ironwood and/or Wakefield schools on a tuition basis while continuing to operate an elementary/junior high school program?

Methodology

Ethnographic methodology was used in conducting the research. This methodology was chosen because the focus of the study was on the manner in which education interfaces with the traditions, values, beliefs, social patterns, preferences, and economics of the community and, in addition, included many questions about the problems of the district and the options that the community has to solve these problems. Ethnographic methodology provided a richness and a variety of information that was needed for a study of this magnitude and complexity.

Limitations

The researcher is aware, though he believes that he was able to conduct his study in most part in an objective manner, that it was not possible to divorce himself totally from emotional involvement in the issues. For example, when the Bessemer Education Association publicly chastised

the board of education for alleged incompetence, it was very difficult for him not to view this assault in a personal manner. For some time he did not feel totally at ease with some members of the teaching staff and he is certain that at least some of them also felt uncomfortable in his presence. Being a member of the board of education and an administrator with the regional educational agency may, therefore, have limited his ability to receive completely accurate information from some school employees.

Likewise, being a long time resident of the district may have provided the researcher with some information that he would not have learned if he were a relative stranger but it also may have had a deleterious effect upon his ability to gather other accurate information. Some residents may dislike or distrust him for various reasons and may therefore have given him inaccurate information. Others may have told the researcher what they thought he wanted to hear.

Whenever a study of this magnitude is undertaken it is impossible to learn the views of all persons at the site or even to sample all of the subgroups in the community. There may, therefore, be points of view about the issues studied which are not included in the sample.

Cusick (1983) wrote, "There is a generalizability to be had from these one-of-a-kind studies, but it rests not on the promise of proposition-like laws, but on the general sociological assumption that since behavior is bound up with structure, then behavior that occurs in a particular setting

may also occur in a similar setting" (p. 134). It is probable, therefore, that the findings of this research can be generalized to a limited degree to other communities and to other school districts. This must be done, however, with the knowledge that countless variables among communities and school districts will make comparisons difficult. The reader will need to determine, based upon the circumstances of each situation, to what degree the findings in this study may generalize to that situation.

Summary

Declining enrollments and other factors, such as rapidly rising energy costs, mandated programs and services, and deteriorating physical plants have created severe problems for many school districts in the nation during the 1970s and 1980s. Local and regional circumstances have added to the problems of many school districts.

Small in-formula school districts in Michigan are negatively affected by declining enrollments because the major share of their state aid is dependent upon the number of students enrolled. Many school authorities no longer view merger as the only or, in some cases, the best solution to the problems that rural schools with declining enrollments and other problems face.

The researcher's purposes in the study were to examine (a) the problems that the school district has, (b) how

traditions, values, beliefs, social patterns, preferences, and economics interface with education in this small community, and (c) the educational options that are feasible in this school district. Numerous related questions were also presented. Ethnographic research methodology was used to find responses to the questions.

The researcher indicated several limitations to the study, including the fact that his career has associated him with the site and that he served as a member of the board of education during the study, thus possibly affecting his ability to get accurate information from all of his sources. He also recommended that readers be cautious in generalizing the findings to other sites because of the countless variables that are present in a study of this magnitude.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

A computer-assisted search of the literature produced numerous articles that were relevant to the study. Other articles were located via a manual search by the researcher.

The review of literature that was conducted focused on (a) the problems that many schools in rural communities have, (b) how traditions, values, beliefs, social patterns, preferences, and economics interface with education in rural communities, and (c) which educational delivery options are feasible in rural school districts. The review is presented with a separate focus on each area. The areas do, however, merge with one another. There is, therefore, considerable overlapping in the review.

Rural School Problems

There is a multitude of problems that rural schools face. Many of them are the result of declining enrollments. Other problems identified by Sher (1978) include the number of rural school-age children who are not enrolled in any school, the high rates of absenteeism, the need for highly

competent teachers and administrators, the lack of special education programs and other specialized services, and the need for capital and operating funds. Superintendents from several small rural school districts in Colorado identified the lack of adequate finances, difficulty in the recruitment of teachers, and the relations between school and community as problems (Muse, Barker and Smith, 1983).

Inadequate and inequitable school funding mechanisms continue to create problems for many rural schools. Jess (1981a) stated:

What we are finding is that many school finance reforms failed to address the specific needs of rural and small schools because legislatures have tried to develop simplistic answers to the complex problems of school finance. Finance laws, if they are to meet the needs of both rural and urban communities, must be flexible enough to allow communities to develop and support educational programs that are best suited to their local circumstances. Until the problems associated with school finance are corrected, the quest for better schools will be severely limited. (p. 12)

The achievement of students in rural schools has traditionally been lower than in larger towns and in suburban schools. Edington (1979) wrote that rural academic achievement has begun to reach the national average recently, as have rural teachers' qualifications and salaries. He stated however, that students from extremely small schools, which contain 10 percent of the population, perform at a level significantly below the national average in most subjects.

Having voters approve adequate taxes to support a quality program can be a problem in urban, suburban, or rural districts. In rural areas, however, these problems may be greater. DeFoe (1981) stated that values tend to be more traditional and change tends to come more slowly in rural areas. She wrote, "Existing constraints are homogeneity and isolation. In the homogenous community there is less disagreement over values, and therefore, less conflict, unless a question of economic consequence arises. Declining enrollment in the school is such an issue because it forces the question of raising local school taxes to support the school" (p. 8).

Stephens (1987) indicates that one of the most threatening problems for rural schools is the reduction in the number of parents who have children in school because parents and other relatives have traditionally been one of the most important support groups for education. He writes, "With fewer parents and relatives of rural school-age children present to aid in the determination of options, solutions to the pressures facing rural school districts will be harder to find" (pp. 25-26).

Edington (1979) reported that a major problem relating to rural education has been a lack of policy which has recognized that there are vastly different needs associated with educating people in rural areas. He stated that, "Most people with the power to make policy decisions concerning education at the federal level and, a great many times, at

the state level have a major interest in urban and suburban rather than rural problems" (p. 3). He wrote that the policy in the United States is one of attempting to fit all school systems into one mold. Not only does he believe that there are great differences among urban, suburban, and rural areas but that any policy for education in rural America must take into account the vast differences in people from different rural areas. He stated that a weakness at the federal level is that the various agencies, which have been concerned with developing educational policy for rural areas, have been looking at education by itself without looking at the needs of total rural communities, including economic and rural development. He argued that rural communities, rural society, the supporting agencies for education and, in fact, the total society must be taken into account.

Guthrie and Skene (1974) state that there is a definite shift in the locus of power away from local school district boards of education. They attributed this shift to a number of factors, including rulings by courts which have required greater equity in funding schools, thereby increasing the involvement of states in establishing educational policy. Other factors which they indicated have contributed to this shift include urbanization, school district consolidation, increased politicization of education, which increases the influence that is exercised upon education from governors' offices, legislatures and from Washington, increased control of education by professional educators,

and the growth of political power by teachers.

Sher (1978) indicated that the balance between outside regulation and local control must become more equitable if rural schools are to improve. He wrote that state and federal assistance to rural schools has been scarce while mandates and regulations have been abundant and heavy handed, leading to a loss of local control.

How Education in Rural Communities Interfaces With
Traditions, Values, Beliefs,
Social Patterns, Preferences, and Economics

There have been changes in the social and cultural patterns in small towns and rural areas which have come about because of communications media, especially because of the influence of suburban middle class life which is seen on television. In spite of those changes there remains a unique relationship between rural schools and the communities in which they exist (DeFoe, 1981).

Peshkin (1978), in a comprehensive study of a rural community and school in Illinois, stated that the experience of growing up in a small, cohesive community is felt deeply, for better or worse. Within a given area the people share common interests and loyalties not because they have the same language, race, or religion, but because they have a shared outlook, history, occupations, institutions, and purposes. He wrote, "Rural areas are considered outposts of traditional American values, places that hold fast to the

old virtues of God, country, and self-reliance" (p. 29).

Peshkin stated that those who felt positively about small towns and their schools had a conviction that people live a good life there. He wrote, "The residents believe their school belongs to them and that the well-being of their community is tied to their school" (p.194). He added, "Many move-aways and stay-at-homes alike retain abundant affection for Mansfield and small-town life, looking back fondly on their high school days, unaware that they had been deprived of notable opportunities of any sort" (p. 199).

Peshkin acknowledged that there are some people in small communities who do not share the sense of community that is felt by most residents. Another major weakness that he identified in Mansfield was that the community inculcated its youth with some social values, such as antiblack sentiment, that conflicts with national ideals, and that the school, though it had no policy which supported this sentiment, was a forum for its expression and its reinforcement by peers.

Peshkin also indicated that Mansfielders may admit that there would be advantages to a county-wide consolidated high school system but that they would not agree to consolidation because the sense of loss would be so great. He wrote, "When asked about the purposes of schooling, Mansfielders focus on what is best for their children. When asked, to the contrary, about consolidation, they focus not on what is best for their children, but on what is good for their

community and acceptable for their children" (p. 202).

Yet, in spite of the deficiencies that Peshkin recognized in the community and its school, he wrote, "is it not preferable, as small school districts struggle to solve financial problems and to meet academic standards, that they be imaginatively assisted to overcome their deficiencies rather than disappear as the price of those deficiencies" (p. 208).

Sher (1978) stated that the active interdependence between the community and school in rural areas is one of the key attributes of rural education. He argued that the linkages between school and community must be expanded and strengthened in any reform legislation, if such legislation is to be productive. He wrote, "Any reform strategy which seeks to circumvent local traditions, values, beliefs and capabilities, rather than building upon them, is bound to fail" (p.1).

Kay (1982) wrote that traditionally there have been two major considerations for evaluating proposals for school consolidation; economic efficiency and school size. He stated that a third factor, the effects that consolidation has on the communities served by the schools, should be considered when consolidation is being discussed. He wrote, "Many of those who favor consolidation of public schools have traditionally been in positions of power and influence and have dominated debate on this issue. They have often relied on a narrow range of grounds to make their case.

Their tendency has been to focus exclusively on the schools, as if they are entities separate from the communities which they serve" (p. 8).

Kay suggested that there is a tendency to forget that people learn before they go to school, after they leave school, and outside of school. He maintained that education cannot be analyzed, understood, and changed in isolation from the cultural context in which it functions and that schooling is intimately woven into the fabric of society. He therefore felt that making the connection between schools and the communities they serve is crucial.

Hobbs (1981b) indicated that fifteen years ago it was fashionable for social scientists and journalists to gloomily describe the demise and probable death of small towns. He wrote that instead, in the 1970's, social scientists documented the remarkable persistence of small communities and significant increases in rural population. He did acknowledge, however, that though many towns have survived as places, most have not survived functionally because they no longer have all of the essential features and services of a complete social and economic community. He stated that in spite of those deficiencies, rural communities have survived as places to live because residents express a preference for small town life. He cited surveys and polls, including those by Harris and Gallup, which showed small towns and rural areas as the first choice of residence for Americans. He stated that schools are an

important source of pride and identity in those communities.

Skenes and Carlyle (1979) wrote, "To people in small districts who wish to keep their schools, consolidation seems short-sighted and unrealistic because it does not take into account community desires and needs, local district rights to self-determination, and the good educational programs already provided in some small schools. Nor do calls for consolidation take into account the sense of powerlessness, loneliness and rootlessness which people often experience when thrown into larger social systems over which they feel they have no control" (p. 45).

Bussard (1981) stated that even residents who do not have children in school feel that the high school is important to the community. She wrote that the high school may be the location of varied community events and is often the largest and most prominent building in town. She stated that about 73 percent of all K-12 or 1-12 school districts in the United States are single high school districts and that they are, more than other districts, the focal point of school tradition and community pride. She wrote, "It is often the reference point for an overall sense of well-being about the community" (p.9). She indicated that, in the consortium of single high schools with which she was involved, the parents of high school students also felt that a high quality high school is important for maintaining the prestige of the community, for maintaining property values, and for attracting new residents.

Many authorities believe that one of the most effective ways to improve any school is to involve the community actively in the life of the school and in the decision making process. Wilson and Rossman (1986), in an examination of exemplary schools, found that the best schools today are open to their communities. They actively recruited the human resources of their communities, used parents as promoters, communicators, and decision makers in aggressive public relations campaigns, had staff members who were adept at attracting financial resources from the community and who invited themselves and their students into the community, and, finally, those exemplary schools used a variety of methods to build an identity, which led to school spirit and community pride and support. The authors wrote that the exemplary schools that they examined followed no single recipe for success but, "Rather, they have mixed a complex set of histories and traditions that link the school and its surroundings into a culture of caring. In so doing, they have built support and good will for the school, as well as expanded the learning opportunities for the school's most important constituents: the students" (p. 711).

Powers (1979) indicated that the public is now very reluctant to accept changes developed by professionally dominated committees in isolation from the community they serve. He stated, "The message is clear: changes in educational policy cannot be made without reference to community objectives and values (p.13). He acknowledged that schools

are complex organizations which do require professionally trained experts but indicated that when declining enrollment appears, school officials have too often followed traditional decision making practices and excluded the public from any real involvement in the process. He wrote, "If schoolboards and administrators engage the entire community in addressing these realities and reexamining the goals of education, they might well advance toward creating a system which responds not only to present constraints of money and population, but also to the needs and goals of their various constituencies - students, parents, teachers and others in the community" (p. 18).

Wachtel (1979) stated that it is not surprising, when declining enrollment and reduced finances force communities and their schools to make cutbacks in valued areas of education, that citizens want to take part in developing the priorities which determine choices about what will be maintained, reallocated or eliminated. She advised citizens to participate in the decision making process by becoming involved as members of councils, special task forces, independent districtwide groups, or independent neighborhood groups. She suggested that the committee or group represent the entire community, or that as a minimum, every segment of the community be surveyed. She stated that it is important for a group to start by exploring all alternatives for solving problems.

Options For Dealing With
Problems In Rural School Districts

The traditional method for dealing with many serious problems in rural schools has been through the consolidation of two or more school districts. Conant (1959) stated that a high school with less than 100 students in a graduating class could not offer a comprehensive program. Therefore, he maintained that the number of small high schools must be drastically reduced through reorganization. He presented arguments for consolidation much as most people in positions of authority had done through the first six decades of this century. In recent years the rate of school mergers has slowed, but once again, due to the decline in school enrollments, proposals for consolidation in many areas have sparked heated discussion among its advocates and opponents.

There are many authorities today who continue to recommend consolidation as the preferred method for improving educational options to students in small schools. Mullins (1973) reported that school districts nationwide have been decreasing at an astounding rate and he predicted the trend would continue until the end of the century when the number of districts would level off at approximately 5000. He suggested that there are no hard and fast rules or guidelines to determine who should consolidate, but stated that proponents of consolidation feel that anything more than 5000 districts means inefficiency and second-rate schooling.

Truesdell (1972), in a study of small Iowa school districts, found that population trends, curriculum and staffing demands, and new methods of financing education had placed small Iowa schools in an increasingly precarious position. He wrote that the data in his study suggested that the interests of small schools would be best served if, through reorganization, they could become part of a district with at least 1200 students. He said, "Districts with 1200 to 2000 students seem to be able to meet realistic staffing and curricular offering standards, and at a reasonable per pupil cost" (p. 31).

A report on New Mexico's very small school districts indicated that most superintendents from those districts, which ranged in size from 262 to 60 students, did not believe that the districts were providing adequate, comprehensive programs. The study recommended that consolidation be encouraged when a district could no longer provide an adequate, comprehensive program, and that decisions relating to consolidation be made while viable choices remained, rather than after it becomes imperative (Swift, 1982).

Bruss and Bryan (1983) wrote that during the past 30 years the consolidation of school systems has greatly increased curriculum offerings and, consequently, educational opportunities for students. They recommended that states with neighboring school districts located across state lines authorize those districts to use consolidation and other cooperative educational arrangements to enhance the

education of students in those communities.

Others support consolidation because they view it as an opportunity for revitalizing stagnant systems, some because they believe that it provides continuity of curriculum and equity in funding, and still others support it because they see it as an opportunity to improve education efficiently through specialization (Hobbs, 1981a; Mullins, 1973; Virgin and Kinzinger, 1980).

Some authorities support consolidation but feel that the recommended sizes of school districts are not feasible. Truesdell (1972) indicated that the Great Plains Study recommendation of 3500 students as optimum is unrealistic and that the recommendation that all school districts be located in a town of at least 2500 people is not possible in many Iowa counties. He did state, nevertheless, that those who are planning reorganization should attempt to make a growing community the center of the expanded district.

Some opponents to consolidation have indicated that bigger is not always better. They have cited the problems of urban districts, the costs of unstoppable demands for more services in larger consolidated districts, transportation problems and the domination of the entire consolidated district by one part of it, which often results in persistent feuds between town and country or city and village, as reasons why districts should not merge (Mullins, 1973).

Sher (1978) stated that consolidation has been useful and beneficial in some rural communities but that most of

the grossly inadequate rural schools in the United States have been closed. He indicated that consolidation occurred in thousands of communities in which such drastic reform was neither appropriate nor necessary. He wrote that many rural school reformers have linked needed substantive improvements in rural education with their own agendas for rural structural reform, which most often has been school consolidation or some other desired organizational structure. He argued that structural reforms and substantive reforms must be treated as separate and distinct issues, each of which is important in its own right.

Some rural schools have used methods in teaching students which were not recognized for their worth. Sher (1978) wrote that there is great irony in the fact that widely praised progressive and innovative schools in the cities and suburbs have earned plaudits by adopting a variety of practices such as individualized instruction, cross-age grouping, older students teaching younger students, using the community as a learning resource, mainstreaming handicapped children, and emphasizing the basics, when for many decades, rural schools have been advised by policy makers and academics to eliminate these practices.

The challenge of offering a broad and varied curriculum is one of the most frequent concerns that small high schools have (Barker and Logan, 1985). There have been numerous methods used in attempts to provide educational excellence. Other methods, in addition to consolidation, include sharing

of personnel and equipment, communication technology, computer assisted instruction and television. Others include correspondence courses, video-taped instruction, traveling teachers, contracting, electronic blackboards, satellite transmitted academic resources, and regional vocational, special, and academic education centers (Barker and Logan, 1985, Beck and Kimmel, 1981; Farley, 1981; Hobbs, 1981a; Muse, Barker, and Smith, 1983).

Hobbs (1981a) suggested that another way to ease the problems that rural districts face would be for teacher training institutions to provide training programs for rural educators which are aimed at producing qualified generalists rather than specialists, much as has been done in medicine through the use of the family practice physicians.

An Exemplary Small Rural School

It is recognized that some rural schools are extremely inadequate and in great need of assistance while others would be considered excellent by nearly any standard (Sher, 1978). A school district that has adopted many of the options that are available for dealing with rural school problems is the CAL Community School District in Iowa. The district has earned an excellent reputation in the process. Jess (1981b) suggested that the outstanding success of the CAL District was due to the positive parent and community involvement in the schooling process. He believes that the residents value the advantages of their small-scale

educational program and view the school as a center for educational, recreational, and social activities for the students and community. "They believe that a student's educational needs are best served when a close and cooperative relationship exists between the home and school. They feel that this partnership is best nourished in a local community setting" (p. 285).

Courses that were offered in the CAL School District, in addition to regular elementary and middle school academic programs, included a learning disabilities resource program, a gifted/talented program, exploratory Spanish, classes in local history and the value of rural living, participation in a Reading is Fundamental program, and seventh and eighth grade exploratory courses in home economics and industrial arts. High school students were offered 70 different academic and vocational courses. Mini-courses and independent studies were available to students when a particular course was not scheduled. A contractual arrangement with a larger neighboring district provided instruction to severely handicapped students, a cooperative foreign language program with four other small schools in the area provided instruction for four years in two different languages, the district participated in an area-wide computer-assisted instructional program, video recorders were used, a state-subsidized Artists-in-the-Schools program brought professional artists into the school, and a variety of extracurricular activities was provided. The district also operated a pre-kindergarten

program which was attended by ninety percent of the eligible three and four year old children.

Jess reported that twenty-four citizens volunteered as aides in the district and that various advisory committees were used to plan, evaluate, and make recommendations for a variety of programs. In addition, representatives from various groups served on a school policy advisory committee, the school mailed a newsletter each month to every household in the district, and the school assessed community attitudes toward the school on a periodic basis.

The authors of an article on the CAL Community School, which was included in the April, 1979, issue of PHI DELTA KAPPAN, characterized the school as small, rural, and good. The authors stated that this school stood as a rebuke and embarrassment to those who say a small school can't be a good school (Jess, 1981b). Sher (1978) wrote that most rural schools have the capacity to become excellent and effective community institutions; that it requires only the combination of local initiative, external assistance, creativity, and the will to provide children in rural areas with the best education possible.

Summary

The review of literature included a reading of studies and articles about (a) the problems that many rural schools have, (b) how traditions, values, beliefs, social patterns, preferences, and economics interface with education in rural

communities, and (c) various educational options that are feasible in rural school districts.

The rural school problems that were identified in the literature included declining enrollments, some children not being enrolled in school, absenteeism, a need for highly competent teachers and administrators, and the lack of special education and other specialized services. Other problems included the lack of adequate capital and operating funds, difficulty with teacher recruitment, poor relations between schools and communities, and student achievement being below national norms. Other authors indicated that there is a lack of policy associated with educating people in rural areas and that there is a shift in the locus of power away from the local level to the state and national levels.

Various issues were presented concerning the relationship between rural schools and the communities they serve. The authors described the relationship in many ways, including the belief that the bonds are strong because of intense loyalties, shared outlooks, and common purposes, interests, occupations, institutions, and history. Several authors indicated that there are also negative factors associated with these relationships. For example, the inculcation of various prejudices in some rural schools and communities conflicts with our national ideals. Also the good of the community sometimes takes precedence over a good education for the students who live there.

Numerous authorities continue to advocate consolidation as the best and most cost effective way to improve the education of students in rural communities. Others argue that the negative results from school mergers often outweigh the positive factors. Other options that were identified for use by rural school districts to improve or maintain their programs include the sharing of personnel and equipment with other districts, using communication technology, utilizing computer assisted instruction, television, correspondence courses, contracting, video-taped instruction, traveling teachers, electronic blackboards, satellite transmitted academic resources, and regional vocational, special, and academic education centers.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

A school and the community it serves do not exist in isolation from each other. They are inextricably bonded to each other, to other smaller and larger groups of people with common ties and interests, and to their pasts. Schatzman and Strauss (1973) state:

The field researcher understands that his field - whatever its substance - is continuous with other fields and bound up with them in various ways: Institutions necessarily reach out towards other institutions and are penetrated or overlapped by them; social movements are often barely distinguishable from the whole cloth they would attempt to re-weave. From the perspective of social process, institutions and social movements have no absolute spatial boundaries and no absolute beginnings or ends. Their parameters and properties are conceptual discoveries, and then, only for theoretical and practical working purposes, are they assigned boundaries. (p. 2)

Many of the questions in the study are concerned with the relationship between the school and the community it serves, including its traditions, values, beliefs, social patterns, preferences, and economics. The answers to these questions could be best learned by conducting the research in the context of the school, the community, and their

history. Ethnographic research provided the means by which the study could be conducted.

Criteria for Ethnographic Study

The criteria for good ethnographic study are presented by a number of authorities. Bogdan and Biklen (1982) suggest that, in addition to considerations of access, the researcher should consider whether the study is relevant to issues that are of importance to education or to society as a whole.

It is recommended that ethnographic research be done in a natural setting, in contrast to a controlled laboratory situation, and that the natural setting be disturbed as little as possible while data are being collected (Bogdan and Biklen, 1982; Kimball and Partridge, 1979; Spindler, 1982). Conducting a study in a natural setting is important because qualitative researchers assume that human behavior is significantly influenced by the environment in which it occurs (Bogdan and Biklen, 1982).

Ethnographic research, in addition to being conducted in a natural setting, is also preferably done in the context of the community in which the site is located, rather than in a small site in isolation. This is because the site and its community have an impact upon each other (Bogdan and Biklen, 1982; Kimball and Partridge, 1979; Schatzman and Strauss, 1973).

Bogdan and Biklen (1982) indicate that the researcher is the key instrument in the collection of data and state that data are recorded primarily in a descriptive manner through words and pictures.

Several ethnographic authorities indicate that the researcher must be cognizant of the processes which are occurring in the setting being observed, in addition to the outcomes. They also suggest that the observer attempt to understand the meaning that people at the site attach to various activities and to search for the hidden meaning in things that they say and do. The assumptions that people make about their lives and their perspectives on various matters can have important implications for what is happening in the site (Bogdan and Biklen, 1982; Kimball and Partridge, 1979).

The data for ethnographic studies are collected through participant observation, informants, interviewing, and the review of records. The data from these sources are compared to determine the validity of working hypotheses (Bogdan and Biklen, 1982; Gordon, 1980; Kimball and Partridge, 1979; Schatzman and Strauss, 1973).

Many ethnographic authorities do not limit the collection of data to the aforementioned methods. Schatzman and Strauss (1973) indicate that a field researcher is a methodological pragmatist who sees any method of inquiry, at any time, as a system of strategies and operations that are designed for getting answers to questions which interest

him. Likewise, Spindler and Spindler (1982) believe that ethnographers may profitably draw from an interdisciplinary corpus of concepts and research techniques.

Schatzman and Strauss (1973) suggest that the researcher pay great attention to negotiating entry to his site and that he recognize that entry is a continuous process of establishing and developing relationships. They state that, "entering relatively complex human organizations is a process in which he will be engaged long after 'permission' to enter has been granted" (p.23). This view is supported by Kimball and Partridge (1979).

The Researcher

The researcher has spent 29 years in education as a teacher, counselor, school psychologist, and administrator. During a major portion of the period that the study was conducted he was employed by the Gogebic-Ontonagon Intermediate School District as the director of special education. He also served as a member of the Bessemer Area School District Board of Education, including his final year as the president of the board. He resigned from the board effective June 30, 1987 and assumed the superintendency of the Gogebic-Ontonagon Intermediate School District on July 1, 1987.

The Site

The study was conducted in the Bessemer Area School District, which is located in Gogebic County at the west end of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. The district includes the city of Bessemer and all but six sections of Bessemer Township. Detailed information about the district is provided in chapters IV and V.

The site was selected because the school district has developed numerous problems over a long period of time. The board of education and the community became acutely aware of potentially greater problems during the 1985-86 school year. Citizens became involved in discussion and debate concerning which educational options would best serve the students and community. It was a site well suited for the purposes of the study.

Procedures

Negotiations to Enter the Site

Schatzman and Strauss (1973) recommend that the researcher become familiar with the site to determine its suitability and feasibility, and to gather information about the place and people in preparation for negotiating entry (p. 19). The writer was familiar with the site due to his residence in the community and due to his involvement as an educator and as a member of the board of education in the

district. He had learned much about both the formal and informal systems that existed in the schools and community prior to his decision to conduct his dissertation research there.

The writer did not need formal approval for much of his research. He was free to watch, listen, and talk to people on the streets, at bars, or in cafes without anyone's permission. He also was free to attend basketball and football games, advisory committee meetings, school board meetings, and other public meetings and gatherings.

It was necessary, however, though formal approval was not required, for the writer to gain and maintain the trust of people in the community that he interviewed or with whom he visited. Without trust the true feelings of many people would not have been expressed openly, thereby affecting the validity of the study. In that respect, it was necessary for him to negotiate entry with each person that he dealt with on an individual basis. A major negotiating point was to assure people that the comments they made in private situations would remain confidential.

It was not the intention of the writer to do the major portion of his research within the Bessemer Area schools. The views of administrators, teachers, other staff members, and students were, however, important to the study. It was convenient to watch, listen and learn from and about them in the schools. Access to school records and documents also was necessary. The researcher discussed his proposal with

the superintendent and high school principal and received their support. Permission to conduct a portion of the study in the Bessemer Area schools was then requested and received from the Board of Education.

Data Collection At the Site

The researcher collected data from December, 1985 through January, 1988. He visited the schools on many occasions to meet with students, teachers, administrators, and other employees. He went to a variety of community and school activities, including football and basketball games, school board meetings, advisory committee meetings, and various other community functions to collect data as a participant-observer and as a pure observer. He talked informally to people at these functions and elsewhere throughout the school district. Fieldnotes were taken during or immediately following these contacts.

Interviews with school employees, school board members, members of the school district ad hoc advisory committee, and a sampling of other segments of the community were conducted. The interviews were loosely structured to allow individuals an opportunity to discuss those matters which were most important to them. The interviews generally started with a brief explanation of the researcher's study and an opportunity for the interviewee to ask questions or

make comments about the study. The researcher would then ask an open ended question such as, 'What do you think should be done with the school situation in Bessemer?' Other questions followed which attempted to determine how strongly the interviewee felt about an issue. For example, if a person stated that a merger with one or both of the neighboring school districts seemed to make the most sense the researcher would ask a question such as, 'Would you favor a merger if the Bessemer Schools had sufficient funds to maintain a quality curriculum?' If a person stated that he wished to maintain the high school in Bessemer, he would be asked a question such as, 'Which courses or extracurricular programs would have to be cut before you would agree to a merger?' Notes were taken of all interviews during the course of the study.

Several informants in the community were asked to provide information concerning what other people said about the issues. Persons who served as informants included several educators and a woman who works in a local business and is socially active in the community. The informants were not asked to divulge the names of persons who made statements about pertinent issues.

An extensive search of historical information about the school and community was made. Historical information was collected from a number of books about the area, and from newspapers, school records, and a tabloid titled, "Bessemer Michigan Centennial Souvenir Edition: 1884-1984."

Considerable information was also acquired from a community survey relating to educational options that was conducted by the Bessemer Area School District during September, 1985. Other data were retrieved from the minutes of meetings of the board of education, from the report of the community advisory committee, from various school documents, such as curriculum guides and standardized test records, and from various other school studies and reports.

Data Verification

Three methods of data collection were used in most part by the researcher. These were participant observation, interviewing, and the review of many documents, reports, and records. Additional information was received from several informants.

Gordon (1980) recommends that multiple methods of data collection be used whenever possible to cross-check the validity of data. He refers to this multiple method collection of information as triangulation. He writes,

Often the nature of the problem under investigation demands a multimethod approach because the various methods give totally different kinds of information that can supplement each other, because we do not know how to interpret some of the information unless we can couple it with other information, or because we need a cross-check to verify the validity of our observations. . . .

Community studies must triangulate information from public records, personal documents, newspapers, direct interviews with the focal persons,

interviews with others about the focal persons, participant-observation, and pure observation merely to obtain the many types of information needed to cover the complex phenomenon we call a community." (p. 12)

The researcher used this triangulation methodology to establish the validity of the information he was collecting through various means.

Data Analysis

The procedures for the analysis of ethnographic research data that are recommended by Bogden and Biklen (1982) were used with some minor modifications by the researcher in his study. These procedures included:

1. Collecting data from a wide range of sources and a wide range of subjects during the early stages of the study and then forcing himself to review the data and narrow the focus of the study. The researcher, for example, initially began his data collection modeled somewhat upon Peshkin's (1978) broad study of a rural school district in Illinois. However, after reviewing his initial data he narrowed the focus of his study, reducing specifically the portion that related directly to the students in the district.

2. Forcing himself to make decisions concerning the type of study that he wanted to accomplish. The researcher decided in this phase of the analysis of his data, for example, that he needed answers to numerous questions that

would not require typical ethnographic inquiry techniques. Questions that relate to the condition of the school buildings and the district's finances are important to the study but they could be answered through simple collection techniques. Other questions that are important to the study could not be answered through data collection at the site at all. It is important, for example, to know what educational alternatives, such as interactive television instruction, could be used by the district. This information was available through the researcher's training and experience in education and through the review of literature.

3. Developing analytic questions which helped the researcher reformulate his work. The researcher developed numerous analytic questions (as listed on pages 5-8) which helped him organize his study as he collected data and began his analysis and writing.

4. Focusing the collection of new data based upon what he had learned from previous data collection. Once the researcher had formulated some initial analytic questions he was able, for example, to get needed data by asking specific questions in formal or informal interviews. This new information, in turn, assisted in further analysis.

5. Writing many observer's comments about ideas as they were generated. Several months after the researcher had begun collecting data he was told by a resident of the district that she favors a three-way merger of the Bessemer, Ironwood, and Wakefield school districts because it would

provide students with a better curriculum. After further discussion she then indicated that her real first choice was to keep the high school in Bessemer if an adequate curriculum could be provided. Several other citizens had made similar comments. The researcher made the following comment in his field notes: "I sensed that _____ is torn between the educational alternative she intellectually feels would best serve the students in the district and her gut-level feelings about the issue. I'm beginning to get an impression that her internal conflict is representative of many people in the community."

6. Trying out ideas and themes on people who are perceptive and articulate. The researcher found that several of the educators employed by the district and several of the members of the community advisory committee were able to discuss many of the issues in a very perceptive and articulate manner. Their observations helped the researcher formulate his study.

7. Exploring the literature while he was conducting the study. The researcher found that he was able to formulate many of his questions by reading in the literature about the crucial issues with which he is concerned. He was also able to compare his perspectives and findings with those of other researchers and authors.

8. Playing with metaphors, analogies, and concepts. The researcher, for example, sees an analogy between the early struggle among the workers and the owners of the

mines and logging operations on the Gogebic Range and the current struggle between the in-formula and out-of-formula school districts for a share of the state's resources for public elementary and secondary education.

9. Developing coding categories of the data that have been collected. The researcher developed a coding system for his field notes and interviews that categorized the data according to whether the respondents were lay citizens of the district, members of the community advisory committee, teachers, members of the board of education, members of the administrative staff, members of the support staff, or students. The data were further coded to differentiate 27 categories of information. By categorizing the data the researcher was able to use them to develop new analytic questions, confirm or disconfirm previous hypotheses, and to decide if additional data were needed.

10. Writing the dissertation and discussing it with his dissertation advisor. This forced the researcher to analyze and reanalyze the ideas, themes, and hypotheses that he was formulating.

Summary

The researcher used ethnographic research techniques to conduct his study. These field methods are described by various authorities and include such recommendations as doing the study in the context of the community in which the

site exists, being cognizant of the hidden meanings in what people say and do, and collecting data through participant observation, interviewing, and reviewing records, reports, and previous studies.

The researcher is an educator employed by the regional educational agency that serves the school district that was the focus of the study. Permission to conduct a portion of the study in the schools was obtained from the superintendent, high school principal, and board of education.

Data were collected primarily through participant observation, interviewing, and extensive review of various documents. The researcher used triangulation, a method of cross checking information from various sources, to verify the accuracy of the data that were collected and used in the study. The researcher used the data analysis techniques that are recommended by Bogden and Biklen (1982), with some minor modifications.

CHAPTER IV: THE SETTING

Introduction

An abbreviated history of the community, a description of the community as it exists today, and a brief history of its schools are provided in this chapter. This information provided a context which helped the researcher better understand the school district and its problems. The data were obtained through participant observation and from books, papers, documents, interviews, and the researcher's personal knowledge of the community and its history.

An Abbreviated History of the Community

The Early Years

Iron ore was discovered on the Gogebic Range at the west end of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan in 1880, at the site of the Colby mine at Bessemer. During 1882 a few cabins were built and a few rudimentary beginnings were under way to begin mining. During 1884 and 1885 a railroad was constructed between Bessemer, the other major range communities, and Ashland, Wisconsin so that iron ore could be shipped to iron and steel mills via the Great Lakes. A

land rush, unparalleled in the history of the north country, began in 1884. In 1885 there were two thousand miners on the Gogebic Range. In 1887 Bessemer was incorporated as a village (Havighurst, 1958; Lemmer, 1954; Rund, 1984; Sawyer, 1911).

During the first decades following the opening of the mines on the Gogebic Range there were immigrants from Canada, the British Isles and almost every country in Europe. The largest immigrant groups in Bessemer and Bessemer Township were Finnish and Polish. Other residents were German, Irish, Hungarian, Yugoslavian, Italian, Cornish, Swedish, Slovenian, Norwegian, French Canadian, Croatian, Austrian and others. Many of them came to the area because they wished to find employment in the iron mines. Almost all were young, adventurous, daring men and women who were not afraid of hard work and hardships (Havighurst, 1958; Hill, 1983; Rund, 1984).

Small villages, called locations, sprang up throughout the Gogebic Range. In Bessemer and Bessemer Township such locations included Puritan, Anvil, Palms, Ramsay, Tilden, and Yale. Similar locations were established from east of Wakefield to west of Hurley, Wisconsin. Generally these locations had one or more grocery stores, a barbershop, taverns, and other businesses.

Most of the homes that were built in these locations were constructed by the mining companies near the mines and rented to employees at low rates. Many boarding houses were

also built to accommodate unmarried workers and the married miners who had come to seek employment without their wives and children. Most miners could walk to work because the homes and boarding houses were located near the mines.

Wakefield, six miles to the east, and Ironwood, six miles to the west, were also growing rapidly as new mines were developed in those communities. Hurley, which adjoined Ironwood on the Wisconsin side of the border, was involved in mining, logging, and entertaining men from all parts of the Gogebic Range. Havighurst (1958) wrote, "During the five-year fever, the Gogebic towns sprang up, and for a while they were the most famous, or infamous towns of the north" (p. 56). He also stated that, "Hurley was a good-time town, with gambling, girls, and piano music, with rows of saloons, variety shows, and amusement halls" (p.57).

Lumber for the construction of homes and businesses, as well as timber for the mines, was in great demand. Saw mills sprang up throughout the county, including mills in Ramsay and North Bessemer.

Work in the mines was dangerous and unsanitary. During a one year period from 1888 to 1889 there were 24 fatal accidents in Gogebic County mines, with one fatal accident for each 63,268 tons of ore that was mined. The total killed during a one year period from 1905 to 1906 increased to 35, though the tonnage per fatal accident improved to 86,268 (Lemmer, 1954).

Some of the early pioneers who wearied of the difficult

and dangerous work in the mines and lumber industry bought cutover land and began to farm. Others worked the thin, rocky soil and also continued to work in the lumber mills, woods, or mines.

Working in the mines or woods, at saw mills or on farms were not the only dangerous places during those early days. In its first years Bessemer supported forty-eight saloons. Town officials passed laws against alley rioting, improper diversions, and smoking on the dynamite wagon (Havighurst, 1958). At night one scarcely dared to go on the dirt roads or plank sidewalks of Bessemer because many innocent victims were killed (Rund, 1984).

Gogebic County was separated from Ontonagon County in 1887 and, in a close decision, Bessemer narrowly defeated Ironwood in an election to become the county seat. The Michigan legislature granted Bessemer a city charter in 1889. The township seat was moved from Bessemer to Ramsay in 1890 (Rund, 1984).

Before the turn of the century an electric generating and lighting system, a hospital, central water and sewer systems, telephone and telegraph services, a street car service which connected Bessemer to range communities to the west, two newspapers, physicians, lawyers, churches, and numerous businesses served Bessemer (Rund, 1984).

Sawyer (1911) reported that the city had populations of 2,566 people in 1889, 3,911 in 1900, and 4,583 in 1910.

Athletics were important in the community, beginning

from the earliest days of settlement. Baseball was the number one sport until 1897, when football was added. Girls became involved with athletics in 1899 when a basketball team was formed (Rund, 1984).

Patriotism was not lacking during this early period on the Gogebic Range. July 4th celebrations, with parades, races and bands, were reported as early as 1899. Men from the city and township participated in the war with Spain at the turn of the century and later in World War I. Love of country was also being fostered in the local schools through flag etiquette programs (Rund, 1984).

A struggle began early on the Gogebic Range for the unionization of workers in the iron mines. The mining companies fought these efforts and fired many of the men who were leaders in the unionization effort (Alanen, 1981; Barkell and Salmi, 1983). It was not until the early 1940s, following the passage of the National Labor Relations Act of 1935 (Wagner Act), that workers were free to join national labor organizations in the copper and iron ore producing areas (Alanen, 1981).

As early as 1895 there was recognition by iron mining officials that labor problems were more than just the discontent of a few Huns, Poles, Slavs, and Finns, and that the iron ore mining corporations of the Lake Superior region would have to adopt a program of employee benefits and planned community development. Conditions improved with the implementation of benefit programs. Most programs were

formulated in company boardrooms, however, with virtually no input from employees or the community and many provisions of these programs were allocated on a selective basis. Mining industry officials thought that workers should appreciate employer generosity in providing homes, schools, hospitals, churches, libraries, and land for gardens and pastures. Some workers did side with management but many did not. Some supported a socialist philosophy which was generally opposed to management views of social issues (Alanen, 1981; Barkell and Salmi, 1983).

The Twenties and Thirties

By 1920 the population of Bessemer had grown to 5,482. The importance of the mining industry to the Gogebic Range was evident. Bessemer collected \$270,000 in taxes in 1920, with the mining companies paying \$202,400 (Rund, 1984).

It was especially difficult for the iron mining communities of the Lake Superior area when the depression of the 30s hit the country. Shipment of iron ore from all Lake Superior mines dropped from 23,500,000 tons in 1931 to 3,500,000 in 1932 (Havighurst, 1958). The communities on the Gogebic Range were basically one industry towns. When the mines closed, or severely restricted their operations, the majority of the workers were laid off. Many families attempted to supplement the limited help that they received from the relief office by raising a garden and by cutting their own wood.

Corrigan (1976), in reference to the severity of the depression on the Gogebic Range, wrote:

The winter of 1932 was a heartbreaker with despair showing on all the people, perfectly honest people getting farther in debt with the hope that times would get better, but times kept getting worse. Prices were dropping, wages were lower, and there was no work.

The mines, mills and woods operations were cutting down with many good men traveling around looking for work. There were jungles and soup kitchens all over. Men slept on the sawdust in mill boiler rooms, on the floor in the depots, jails or town halls, or wherever they could find protection from the cold. (p.187)

During 1937 there were 50 dairy farms in Gogebic County with approximately 5,000 of 40,000 people living on farms (Rund, 1984). During the depression farmers had the advantage of raising much of their own food but they were unable to sell much of the produce that they raised. One Bessemer Township farmer and his wife raised 375 bushels of potatoes in 1932 and gave most of them to hoboes in a nearby jungle because they were unable to sell them. His journal shows that their farm income during 1932 was \$122.53 from selling cream to the Bessemer Creamery and \$56.35 from selling produce. He earned an additional \$223.85 by transporting students on a horse drawn school bus.

Many families were helped after Roosevelt's New Deal programs were implemented. Of approximately 40,000 people in Gogebic County in 1936 there were 2,432 workers involved in federally funded Works Project Administration (WPA) programs. Projects in Bessemer included a new city hall, a

grandstand at the athletic field, and a city water reservoir, pumping house, and storage building (Rund, 1984). A major WPA project in the township was the park and swimming area at Ramsay.

Conditions in the logging camps of the Gogebic Range remained generally deplorable during the thirties. Lice, bedbugs, two-man bunks, hay-straw mattresses with gunny sack ticks, a total lack of washing facilities, poor lighting, improper ventilation, and bunkhouses that were too hot near the wood stoves and too cold away from them made life at logging camps mostly miserable. Continuing attempts to unionize woods workers led to many confrontations in which many workers were severely beaten by company toughs and the police (Bernhardt, 1979; Corrigan, 1976).

At Marenisco, on June 30, 1937, a group of strikers intercepted six Ahonen logging trucks and unloaded them. State police officers and local sheriff deputies, armed with tear gas, clubs and guns dispersed the mob and arrested 46 lumberjacks. That evening a group of vigilantes gathered at the Gogebic County fairgrounds at Ironwood. Armed with two-by-fours and pick handles they attacked the strike headquarters at the North Star Hall at North Ironwood, the Swede-Finn Hall at Bessemer and the union office at Ironwood. They then found three of the strike leaders at a local restaurant and severely beat two of them. One of the injured men asked to be brought to a doctor but he was driven instead to Saxon, Wisconsin. From there he was

driven to Ashland, Wisconsin, where he spent three days at a hospital (Bernhardt, 1979).

The Great Depression of the Thirties apparently had a dramatic and lasting political effect upon the people of Bessemer, Bessemer Township, and the entire Gogebic Range. Gogebic County election records show that Republican presidential candidates have won in Bessemer two times since the 1928 election. Eisenhower received 54.7% of the vote in 1956 and Nixon received 51.8% during the 1972 election. No Republican presidential candidate has come close to winning in Bessemer Township since the 1932 election.

The Forties and Fifties

Most of the virgin timber had been harvested from the Gogebic Range by the end of World War II. Bernhardt (1979) wrote that the age of the lumber camp and the lumberjack came to an end in the early fifties due to the one-man power saw and due to better roads and automobiles. The new woodsman lived at home with his family and drove to work.

Following World War II the iron ore mines on the Gogebic Range continued to provide numerous jobs. In 1952 the Peterson Mine was opened and there were a reported 2,800 miners working at Gogebic Range mines (Rund, 1984).

Farming on the Gogebic Range declined dramatically following World War II. Many of the youth who grew up on farms were unwilling to continue working and living under

conditions which provided little income beyond a subsistence standard of living.

The Sixties, Seventies and Eighties

By the late fifties and early sixties the iron mines began to close due to competition from foreign countries and because of the development of the taconite pelletizing process. This new process was suitable for concentrating iron ore from the Marquette Range and from Minnesota, but it was not suitable for Gogebic Range ore.

As the mines closed many of the men who lost their jobs left with their families to seek employment elsewhere. By 1960 the population of Bessemer had dropped to 3,304 and the township population had dwindled to 2,083. During 1966 the Peterson Mine was the last of the Gogebic Range mines to close (Rund, 1984).

However, the White Pine Copper Mine, 35 miles to the east in Ontonagon County, which at one time employed over 3,000 men, continued to provide many jobs to former iron miners. Most of the men from Bessemer and the other Gogebic Range communities chose to commute to White Pine rather than move there. The number of jobs at White Pine also diminished greatly during the seventies when the total number of people employed there dropped to under 1,000.

The decline in agriculture in Gogebic County that began in the forties continued unabated into the eighties. By 1986 the number of dairy farms in the county had dwindled to

five, according to the Gogebic County agricultural agent. Other types of farming have not replaced dairy farming to any meaningful extent.

The Gogebic Range has an average annual snowfall of 200 inches. During most winters the snowfall exceeds 200 inches on the high slopes facing Lake Superior. Ski hills were developed on the range beginning in the sixties and cross country skiing and snowmobiling became popular during the seventies. The influx of tourists created new jobs at the ski hills and in support services such as gas stations and dining establishments. Those jobs, however, most often pay minimum wage. The standard of living of many families dropped precipitously. The emigration continued as more people left in search of work. Many young people attended college outside of the area and did not return to live because jobs in their areas of training were not available.

The logging industry, though it no longer provided as many jobs, continued to provide some employment. Several small industries moved into the area and a prison camp replaced a Job Corps Center on the Ottawa National Forest near Marenisco. A new hospital was built between Bessemer and Ironwood and a new campus was constructed for Gogebic Community College at Ironwood during the sixties. Voters also approved millage for the construction of a vocational center on the community college campus, a medical care facility at Wakefield, and an addition to the court house at Bessemer. The Gogebic Range communities also cooperated in

other endeavors. The Gogebic Range Water Authority was established to provide ample water to various communities and to several of the area ski hills.

Bessemer and Bessemer Township celebrated their centennials during 1984. Thousands of A. D. Johnston High School alumni and other visitors and residents participated in the joyous activities which included parades, dinners, dances, ball games, and an all school reunion.

The Bessemer Area Community Today

The population of Bessemer today is approximately 2500. The population of the township is about 1500.

The old mining locations in the township and city are now bedroom communities. Downtown Ramsay, in its heyday, had over twenty businesses, including grocery stores, clothing stores, variety stores, gas stations, and taverns. Only one bar, two churches, the township hall and the post office remain.

All of the former mining company houses have been sold by the mining companies. Most of them are owner occupied. Many have been maintained in good condition. Others have been extensively remodeled and some new homes have been built. The park and swimming area on the Black River, near the center of the community, are attractive. The junk yard located at the former Eureka Mine and some vacant as well as some occupied home sites are not.

The barren appearance that Bessemer and the other range communities and locations had during the early years of settlement disappeared with the second growth of maples, birches, aspen, spruce, and various other trees and bushes. The red coloration from iron ore which previously was seen most everywhere has been washed away over the years by rain and melting snow or covered by grass and other vegetation.

A four lane highway connects Bessemer with Wakefield to the east and Ironwood to the west. High hills and bluffs, several hundred feet in height, lie north of the city. To the south lie other hills. The business community and homes are situated in the valley and on the hillsides between. Most of the older homes have been remodeled or they have been maintained in good condition. A number of new homes have been built on the east end of the city and elsewhere throughout the community.

Eight churches, representing various Christian denominations, are located in the city and township. There are numerous organizations, in addition to various church clubs and groups, which are also active in the community. These organizations include an American Legion post and auxiliary, a Veterans of Foreign Wars post and auxiliary, a chamber of commerce, a women's club, a Masonic lodge, and the Bessemer Township Business and Professional Men's Club. Others also participate in range wide organizations, including the Gogebic Country Club.

Several restaurants, bakeries and taverns in Bessemer provide local residents as well as tourists with needed services. Many local residents meet daily in these establishments to discuss topics ranging from world affairs to the latest high school ball game. Two supermarkets have replaced all but two of the family operated grocery stores that once were located throughout the mining locations and city. A sawmill and lumber yard are located at the east end of town and a newly reopened plywood factory and a fishing rod plant are located in the city.

Other businesses in Bessemer include a clothing store, two insurance agencies, a pharmacy, a hardware store, a bank, a variety store, a commercial laundry, two ambulance companies, two oil and gasoline wholesalers, several gas stations, two auto dealers, an attorney's office, a gift shop, and a florist shop. There are also several other light manufacturing, construction and repair businesses located in the city and township. Numerous medical specialists are located near the Grand View Hospital, which is located a few miles west of the city in Bessemer Township.

Some customers are drawn into Bessemer from the other range communities but many people from Bessemer and Bessemer Township also visit and shop at the larger business district at Ironwood. The competition between the Ironwood and Bessemer business communities does contribute to feelings of hostility in some owners of Bessemer businesses. One Bessemer businessman expressed anger and frustration to the

researcher over the relocation of the United Parcel Service distribution center from Bessemer to Ironwood. He feels that the Ironwood business community wants everything to be located in Ironwood.

Many members of the Bessemer business community are optimistic about the future of Bessemer and the Gogebic Range. The ski hill corporations continue to invest large sums of money into new snow making equipment, new ski runs, and new dining and lodging facilities. The owner of the Bessemer Auto Company stated that in the last five years he had invested \$85,000 back into the business because he had faith in the future of this area. The Steiger Lumber Company had invested in excess of \$235,000 into its mill at Bessemer during 1985 (Challenge - 86, 1986).

The election one hundred years ago, in which Bessemer was made the county seat, is of great importance to the community today. Government is the largest employer in Bessemer, though not all employees are Bessemer residents.

The courthouse complex, which includes the courts, sheriff's office and jail, road commission and department of social services operations, provides more than 100 full-time jobs. Other government agencies which provide employment include the school district, city, post office, U.S. Forest Service, Michigan Secretary of State office, Michigan Liquor Control Commission store, and the Western Upper Peninsula District Health Department. More than 200 jobs are provided by government agencies in total (Vista, 1986).

It is generally recognized that the future of Bessemer is tied to the future of the entire Gogebic Range. During 1985 the various cities and townships cooperated to form the Gogebic County Economic Development Commission. The purpose of the commission is to use the expertise of persons from all agencies and professions to foster economic growth on the Gogebic Range. It was involved in the sale and opening of the Bessemer Plywood Corporation (Vista, 1986). However, two attempts during 1986 to get approval of a county-wide millage to support the commission were defeated by substantial margins.

Gogebic County reported a work force of 6,750 during November, 1987. The reported unemployment rate for Gogebic County was 9.1% compared to an Upper Peninsula average of 9.7%, a state average of 7.4%, and a national average of 5.6% (Tucker, 1988).

An Abbreviated History of the School District

Education was apparently a priority in the Bessemer area beginning with the earliest days of settlement. Many of the early immigrants were literate and had a deep respect for education (Hill, 1983).

The first school in Bessemer was founded in 1886. Elementary schools were built in most locations in the city and township so that children could walk to school. A new high school, which was attended by students from the city

and township, was completed during the summer of 1887. By 1894 there were 255 students in the city school system. By 1916 Bessemer had seven public schools, 1400 students and 50 teachers. In 1919 the St. Sebastian Parochial School was started with an enrollment of 200 students (Rund, 1984).

During the 1922-23 school year the Bessemer City School District operated the A.D. Johnston High School and five elementary schools. The Bessemer Township School District operated 10 elementary schools that school year. Fifty-six teachers and administrators were employed in the city schools and forty-three teachers and administrators were employed in the township schools (Teachers and School Officers Directory of Gogebic County, Michigan, 1922-23).

A number of elementary schools were closed in Bessemer and Bessemer Township during the twenties and thirties as the small one and two room schools were consolidated. Additional schools were closed in both the city and township, beginning in the late forties, as the population continued to decline. The township school district closed the Anvil and Puritan schools following the 1948-49 school year. The city school district closed the Barber School in 1960 and the township district closed the Harding School in 1963. Only the Ramsay School in the township, the Washington School, the A.D. Johnston High School and the St. Sebastian School remained.

A number of Bessemer Township parents enrolled their children at the Bessemer Washington School on a parent paid

tuition basis in the late seventies because they felt the township school no longer provided the extracurricular and curricular programs needed for a well rounded education. The township school district board of education discontinued the kindergarten and grade nine classes after the 1979-80 year due to low enrollments.

The 1980 4th Friday membership in grades one through eight at the Ramsay School dropped to 98 students. The Bessemer Township School District Board of Education elected to have all students attend schools outside of the district during the 1981-82 school year, with district paid tuition. Students had a choice of attending school in Bessemer, Ironwood or Wakefield, though transportation was provided only to Bessemer. Of the 225 public school students from the township, 197 elected to attend school at Bessemer, 7 chose Ironwood and 21 attended the Wakefield schools.

The township school district was annexed to the city district in February 1984 and the combined district was renamed the Bessemer Area School District. The two school districts that had 16 schools in 1922-23 and 102 teachers and administrators and more than 2000 students in 1928-29, had merged to become one district with two schools, 36 teachers and administrators, and 514 students. Declining enrollments had reduced the combined student population to less than 25% of what it had once been.

The closings of those schools were not accomplished without resistance from people who lived in the communities

they served. There was a strike by students and parents following the closing of the junior high school at the Anvil School in 1948. One of the students who attended the Anvil School at that time remembered that there were only 10 students in the junior high school. He indicated that all of the students stayed on strike for the first week and about half of them remained on strike during the second week. He stated, "The parents were very upset. They called a town meeting and invited members of the board to come, but none of them came. The superintendent came the following week and explained the situation to us. We decided then to attend the Ramsay School."

A former employee, who served as a teacher, principal and superintendent with the township schools for over 40 years, recounted that there was considerable resistance in the communities where schools were closed. He stated, "The parents at the Anvil Location wouldn't send their kids to school at Ramsay for a week to ten days. They saw their school as the community center. When we closed the Puritan School we took a lot of flak on that. We were accused of everything. They sure put up a lot of holler."

There also was considerable anger expressed when the township board began to discuss sending students to other school districts on a tuition basis and planning for merger with the city district. Several former board members stated that they received threatening phone calls, that there were attempts to cast doubt on their integrity, and that the

board was accused of holding illegal board meetings. Most of the people in the township had decided, however, that it was impossible to continue providing cost effective, quality education with such a small number of students. The vote in favor of annexation was 399 (71%) to 151 (29%).

1984-85

During the 1984-85 school year the superintendent and high school principal met with representatives from other local school districts and the Gogebic-Ontonagon Intermediate School District to determine whether there was interest in, or a need for, cooperative programming. A cooperative academic program for the schools of Gogebic County resulted from those meetings.

The Bessemer Area School District Board of Education approved participation in the cooperative program and made advanced composition, physics and Spanish available to students from Wakefield, Ironwood, Marenisco, and Watersmeet. The Ironwood Area School District offered to make all of its courses available to students from other districts and the Wakefield Township School District made French I and II, advanced math, and physics available to students from the other schools in the cooperative.

The Bessemer School District Board of Education directed the superintendent to prepare a budget for three years beyond the annual budget. This three year financial projection was based upon a number of assumptions, including no

changes in staff, continuation of the 30 mill property tax levy, enrollment declines based upon his best estimates, and improvements in state aid based upon the average of past increases. His budget projections, based upon these assumptions, showed that an audited fund balance of \$472,752 at June 30, 1984, would be depleted at June 30, 1986. The projections indicated deficits of \$305,779 at June 30, 1987, \$678,218 at June 30, 1988 and \$1,113,368 at June 30, 1989.

The board of education and administration discussed various options that could be implemented to reduce costs. It was decided that a community survey would be taken in an effort to gain input from the citizens of the district concerning which options would be acceptable to the community.

The audit of the school district's books for 1984-85 showed a general fund balance of \$162,245 at June 30, 1985. This was \$65,800 less than the \$228,045 balance which was projected in the budget.

1985-86

The board acted in several ways to reduce costs for the 1985-86 school year. The home economics teacher, who had previously worked full-time for the district, was shared on a half-time basis with the Wakefield School District. A combination third and fourth grade class was created which made it possible to operate with one less elementary teacher. The elementary and junior high school teaching principal was assigned to full-time teaching duties at the

high school as the replacement for a teacher who resigned. The superintendent's office was moved from the high school to the elementary/junior high school and the superintendent was assigned the added duties of principal at that building, with the assistance of a head teacher.

The Wakefield School District enrolled eight students in the Bessemer Spanish classes. Neither Bessemer nor any of the other school districts in the cooperative enrolled students in another school district's academic classes.

The community survey was mailed to approximately 3000 residents of the district during September, 1985. Responses were received from 498 individuals.

The Bessemer (A. D. Johnston High School) Speedboys football team completed the regular season with no ties or losses. After winning three playoff games they were defeated in the Michigan Class D Championship game. Hundreds of fans from Bessemer and other communities on the Gogebic Range traveled about 600 miles to see the playoff games and 1100 miles to see the championship game at the Silverdome in Pontiac. A. D. Johnston High School alumni/ae traveled from throughout the country to see the game. A total of \$8,731 was donated to the Speedboys Booster Club by area citizens and businesses to pay for the costs of the team's participation in the games.

The superintendent's preliminary 1986-87 budget, which was presented to the board of education in December, showed a deficit of \$141,213 on June 30, 1987 with a property tax

levy of 30 mills and a salary freeze for all employees. The deficit was reduced to \$31,713 using a projected property tax levy of 33 mills and a salary freeze.

The board of education appointed a citizen committee in January to advise the board on the future operation of the schools. All persons who asked to be named to the committee were appointed.

A cash donation of \$3500.00 from the class of 1940 was presented in January to the A.D. Johnston High School for the purchase of instructional equipment. The gift was presented to the board of education, "with a lot of love," by a four member alumnae/i delegation that had been instrumental in raising the funds. The presenter stated that the effort was made because, "Bessemer is first and foremost in our hearts."

At the March meeting of the board of education a member of the Bessemer Education Association, speaking on behalf of the association, read a prepared statement to the board before an audience of approximately 65 people. The audience consisted of teachers, other employees, spouses of employees, members of the parent-teacher organization, the media, and other citizens of the community. The statement instructed the board to discontinue any discussion of tuitioning Bessemer students into other school districts, accused the board of fiscally irresponsible performance in recent years, and stated that the board and administration had programmed the district on a course of self-destruction. The statement

read in part, "For the past two years. . . . during which (time) that authorization has been in effect, your failure to levy the full 33 mills has cost the Bessemer schools 150 thousand dollars. That money. . . gentlemen. . . can never be recovered. It's lost to this school district forever."

A member of the board resigned, indicating that he did not want to put up with the same kinds of pressures he had faced when the discussions about closing the Ramsay School in Bessemer Township were taking place. He stated, 'I can't take anymore of this. . . . I went through this same thing with the township annexation and I can't take it anymore.'

The teachers worked without a master contract until April. The contract was ratified following the receipt of a fact finder's recommendations which both parties had agreed to accept.

The community advisory committee presented a number of short term recommendations to the board of education in April. The committee recommended that the board (a) consider levying additional millage for the 1986-87 school year, (b) consider offering staff retirement incentives, (c) try to freeze all salaries for one year, (d) investigate other sources of revenues, (e) investigate cooperative programs with other districts so as to maintain the curriculum if lay-offs become necessary, (f) utilize the teaching staff better by, for example, eliminating study halls and extending the length of teaching hours, and (g) investigate alternatives to the medical insurance plans.

The board elected to trim costs from the 1986-87 budget by contracting for nursing services instead of employing a nurse, by not heating the Ramsay bus garage, and by dropping the track program. The board also elected to levy all 33 of the authorized mills for the 1986-87 school year. The cuts and increase in millage, together with other projected expenditures and revenues, resulted in a tentative balanced budget.

The financial audit of the school district's 1985-86 revenues and expenditures showed a general fund balance of \$100,996 at June 30, 1986. General fund expenditures exceeded general fund revenues during the 1985-86 fiscal year by \$61,249.

1986-87

Census data were received in July which showed the five to 19 age range population remaining almost the same as the previous year, with an increase from 684 to 686 persons. The birth to age four population, however, fell 8.3% to 177, from 193 the previous year.

The Wakefield School District enrolled eight students in the Bessemer Spanish classes. They were again the only district that enrolled students in another school district's classes that were available through the cooperative academic program that was formed by the school districts in Gogebic County.

The enrollment for the 1986-87 school year was 523 students. This was an increase of 16 students from the previous year.

The teachers' association rejected the initial contract agreement that the negotiating committees reached. Two year contracts were later ratified between the board and the association and the board and support staff union. The Bessemer teachers continued to be the lowest paid teachers on the Gogebic Range.

The community advisory committee report was presented to the board of education in March 1987. The primary recommendation was that the Bessemer Area School District should be preserved and operate as long and as economically as possible while maintaining a quality curriculum. The committee also recommended that the board investigate and possibly engage a feasibility study for determining the possible rehabilitation, demolition, or use of the schools.

A report from the University of Michigan Bureau of Accreditation and School Improvement Studies (Hon, 1987) was also received. The report commended the district for its efforts to preserve the educational delivery system. This report again addressed the poor condition of the high school. The consultant wrote that this must be a year of hard decisions for the community, board of education, administration and educational staff. The consultant expressed deep concern for the students' well-being, in terms of fire safety and sanitation.

The school district received a letter from the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools in May stating that the A. D. Johnston High School had been accredited for the 1986-87 school year.

School census data indicated that the birth to age four population in the district had fallen from 177 to 173 during the past year. The 5-19 age population had dropped from 863 to 835 during the same period.

The voters gave the board of education authorization to levy 33 mills for school district operations in the June election. The authorization, which is for a three year period ending in 1990, passed by a vote of 272 to 118.

A letter was received in June from the Superintendent of the Wakefield Township Schools in which he indicated that he had been directed by his board of education to invite the superintendents and members of the boards of education of the neighboring school districts to discuss various topics. The topics for discussion included, but were not limited to (a) sharing programs, (b) sharing staff members, (c) sharing transportation concerns and costs, (d) cooperative effort in studying the future education in each school system, and (e) possible consolidation of districts. The Bessemer Board of Education placed the letter on file, pending a decision on whether a facilities study would be conducted.

A budget for the 1987-88 school year was adopted with projected expenditures of \$1,717,955 and projected revenues of \$1,656,625, with an additional \$61,330 of fund balance to

be used to pay for the excess expenditures. The amount of the estimated June 30, 1988 fund balance that will be available for expenditure during the 1988-89 school year will be approximately \$20,170.

1987-88

The board of education authorized a study by an outside firm to assess the district's facilities, to provide information on the facility needs of the district, and to provide information relating to the costs of renovation alternatives and new construction.

There were no students from Bessemer or any Gogebic County school district enrolled in any of the classes that were offered through the cooperative academic program. The cooperative was formed by the school districts in Gogebic County during the 1984-85 school year.

The official student membership count for the 1987-88 school year was 530, including 11 nonresident students, four of whom were not released by their school district of residence and could not be counted for state aid purposes. This was an increase of seven students from the 1986-87 count.

The feasibility study for various building options was received by the school district in December. In January, 1988 the board of education responded in the affirmative to a request from the Wakefield Township School District Board of Education to meet to explore possible merger or other educational delivery options.

Summary

The setting for this study is the Bessemer Area School District and the community it serves. The setting and the entire study are presented in the context of the community and its history, including the history of the schools.

The school district is comprised of the city and all but six sections of the township, each of which has roots that date back to the 1880s when iron ore was discovered on the Gogebic Range. An influx of people from Canada, Europe, and the British Isles resulted in numerous boom towns, including Bessemer and many small communities which grew around the mines throughout the Gogebic Range. Logging, farming, and numerous businesses and services followed.

A generally prosperous economy, except when the rest of the nation suffered economic depressions, was maintained until the fifties, when the iron mines began to close. The population of Bessemer dropped from 5,482 in 1920 to 3,304 in 1960 and the township population declined similarly. By 1966 the last of the iron mines closed, the virgin timber was gone, and almost all farming had ceased.

The population of Bessemer today is approximately 2,500 and the population of the township is about 1,500. The old mining locations are now bedroom communities. Bessemer has numerous small businesses to serve the residents of the area and tourists. People are employed by the White Pine Copper Mine in Ontonagon County, the area ski hill corporations,

lodging and eating establishments, the woods industry, various government agencies, and other small industries and businesses. Many workers are paid at or near the federal minimum wage level. The economy of the area is generally depressed, with a November, 1987 unemployment rate of 9.1%. Many citizens, however, remain optimistic about the area in spite of the depressed economy.

The city and township school districts at one time operated fifteen elementary schools and a high school, which combined served over 2,000 students. Today the high school and the Washington School serve 530 students in the combined district.

The district has attempted to maintain a quality curriculum for the students of the district. However, both school buildings are in poor condition and the district's teachers receive the lowest salaries on the Gogebic Range.

The board of education has taken steps to involve the community in providing solutions to the district's problems. A community survey was taken and an advisory committee of interested citizens was appointed. The committee advised the board to maintain an independent school district for as long as it is feasible to do so. Most recently a facilities study report, which was conducted upon the recommendation of the advisory committee, was received and the board of education agreed to meet with Wakefield Township officials to discuss the possible merger of the two districts.

CHAPTER V: THE FINDINGS

Introduction

The Bessemer Area School District and the community it serves are the site of the study. Data were collected through participant observation, pure observation, interviews, extensive examination of documents, newspapers, books, and reports, and from informants.

Three major questions and numerous related questions were addressed in the study. The questions are:

1. What are the school district's problems?
 - a. Are declining enrollments a problem?
 - b. Is there a problem with the voters of the district not approving millage requests?
 - c. Are the financial resources of the district a problem and what are the limiting factors?
 - d. Does the operation of the Catholic elementary school negatively impact upon the financial resources of the district?
 - e. Are the current curriculum, programs, and services adequate to provide a quality education to the district's students?

- f. Are class sizes a problem?
 - g. Are there students living in the school district who should be enrolled in school but are not?
 - h. Is there a problem with students dropping out of school?
 - i. Is there a problem with absenteeism?
 - j. Is there a problem with the students' level of achievement?
 - k. Is inappropriate student behavior a problem?
 - l. Is there a problem with the current administrators or teachers not meeting state certification requirements?
 - m. Is it difficult to recruit teachers?
 - n. Are the relationships among the various factions of the community and school harmonious?
 - o. Is there a problem with insufficient parent and citizen involvement in the affairs of the school?
 - p. Is there a problem with the health, safety, and/or adequacy of the school buildings and grounds?
 - q. Is the condition of the bus fleet a problem?
2. How do traditions, values, beliefs, social patterns, preferences, and economics interface with education in this small community?
- a. What is the history of the community and its schools?
 - b. What is the ethnic composition of the community today?

- c. Do the residents of the school district have a strong sense of community?
 - d. How did the residents react to former school closings and to the annexation of the township schools to the city schools?
 - e. How does the economic condition of the region impact the school district?
 - f. Are all of the essential features and services of a complete social and economic community provided?
 - g. What do the residents of the district believe would happen to their community if they lost their high school?
 - h. What value do residents of the district place upon the education that students are receiving?
 - i. Are the residents of the school district satisfied with the current educational programs and services that are provided?
 - j. How important are high school athletics to the school and community?
 - k. What are the attitudes in the community toward instituting changes in the educational delivery system?
 - l. Do the members of the board of education represent the traditions, values, beliefs, social patterns, preferences, economic status, and religious and ethnic diversity of the citizens they serve?
3. Which options for providing an educational program to

the youth of the school district are feasible and of sufficient quality to merit consideration?

- a. Would the use of various technologies and other alternative methods of delivering the curriculum make it possible to enrich the current curriculum and/or to replace portions of the delivery system to make it more cost effective?
- b. Is maintaining the status quo a feasible option?
- c. Is providing an educational program in a new K-12 building a feasible option?
- d. Is providing an educational program in renovated schools a feasible option?
- e. Is a three-way merger of the Bessemer, Ironwood, and Wakefield school districts a feasible option?
- f. Is a merger between the Bessemer and Ironwood school districts a feasible option?
- g. Is a merger between the Bessemer and Wakefield school districts a feasible option?
- h. Would it be feasible to have the high school students attend the Ironwood High School and/or the Wakefield High School on a tuition basis while continuing to operate an elementary/junior high school program?

It is important that the responses to the above questions be viewed in the context of the relationship that exists between the Bessemer schools and the community that these schools serve.

What are the Problems
That the School District is Facing?

Are declining enrollments a problem?

The Bessemer Area School District, including its predecessors, the city and township school districts, has a long history of declining enrollments. During the twenties the city and township school districts together had in excess of 2,000 students enrolled at 15 elementary schools and the A. D. Johnston High School. By the 1945-46 school year the combined student populations had declined to 1,050. There was an increase following World War II, with the combined enrollment rising to 1,083 in 1950-51 and peaking at 1,193 during the 1954-55 school year. A new slow decline began with the count falling to 1,085 in 1960 and 982 in 1970. A more precipitous decline began in the early seventies and continued into the eighties, with the enrollment at 863 in 1975-76, 639 in 1980-81, and 507 in 1985-86. The student population in 1985-86 had declined by more than 75% from its peak enrollment in the twenties.

The decline in student enrollments in the school district during more recent years, from 1971-72 to 1985-86, was 48.8%. This decrease compares to a 24.0% enrollment decline in all Michigan public schools during the same time period (Hubbell, 1986). The enrollment increased to 523

during the 1986-87 school year and to 530 during the 1987-88 school year. These increases are not, however, an indication that student memberships in the district are on an upward swing. They are instead attributable in most part to (a) students who had attended special education classes in Wakefield and Ironwood and had returned to attend special education classes at Bessemer and (b) students who were enrolled in the prep kindergarten class that was initiated in 1986-87.

Projections of pupil enrollments are not always accurate. Kehoe (1984), for example, projected that the Bessemer Area School District enrollment for 1987-88 would be 402 students. The actual enrollment is 530 students, or 31.8% more than Kehoe's projection. Student membership data and preschool census data do suggest, however, that student enrollment in the Bessemer Area Schools has reached a degree of stability and that there should be no major increases or decreases during the next five years. This projection is supported by the building feasibility study which was recently completed (Daverman, 1987). The report indicates that enrollment has stabilized and that projections indicate no further decline or increase based upon current data.

This projection could be significantly altered by, for example, the opening or closing of a plant, mine, or parochial school. It could also be altered greatly over a period of several years if there is a general improvement or worsening of the Gogebic Range economy.

Is there a problem with the voters of the district not approving millage requests for operational purposes?

When the board of education distributed a questionnaire to the citizens of the school district during the fall of 1985 the citizens were informed that the number of mills levied by the district that year was 30 mills, whereas the authorized rate was 33 mills. They were asked to indicate what they thought the maximum number of mills should be to support their schools. Only seven respondents indicated it should be less than 30 mills, whereas 127 indicated that it should be 30 mills, and 226 opted for more than 30 mills.

Comments relating to millage and taxes that were made on the questionnaire included:

We are an old community! Many of us reside in our own homes that are subject to school taxes - and pressures continually mount to put us out of our homes. . . . We do not derive any direct benefits from the school program! It is not to say we do not want to pay our fair share for the support of schools. Other seniors live in subsidized housing. . .and contribute no monies for the programs. This area has exported its best product - its educated children - the communities that received our children did not contribute to our costs of education for their benefit.

"Not sure" what the millage should be "but would not be adverse to an increase."

"None for senior citizens."

"As much as is needed to provide quality education."

"Paid taxes 44 years - Don't raise taxes!"

"Higher millage would be an increase in taxes - We older folks cannot pay higher taxes and keep our homes."

"What is needed."

Nobody going school for the past 50 years. Paying high school taxes for nothing. Chuck the whole education system!!! Go get a job and work for a living. The school board doesn't care how I live. Let it go down the drain, like you did to Ramsay School. I'm tired of having my pockets picked. Ramsay is always included, when you need more money. That's all we hear raise taxes!

"As much as it takes."

"We are operating as we did when the mining companies paid most of the taxes."

. . . I feel overwhelmed at the present cost of education. . . . My world consists of listening to older people, some only 55 who have to sell some of their furnishings to pay for pills they use.

"I don't understand millage but I believe I'd be willing to support whatever is necessary!"

Our school population is decreasing and the ability to pay is also decreasing. We are getting a larger number of people on social security and pensions. Our people are leaving their homes because they find it harder to maintain them and to pay the ever increasing taxes.

The millage election results in the Bessemer Area School District during the past decade are shown in Table 1. The voters have approved the requests in all elections, except for two in 1978. The June, 1978 loss by 11 votes was followed by a second loss in November. These losses were followed by a 76% affirmative vote in February, 1979. The voters have approved continuation of the 33 mill levy by varying amounts since that election.

The data indicate that there is a solid group of voters

that turn out in opposition to millage requests but that there is a substantially larger bloc of voters who vote affirmatively on these questions. Many of them do not vote in all millage elections, but do so when it becomes apparent that their votes are needed. Voter approval of extra voted millage does not, therefore, appear to be a problem in the district. However, the constitutional limitation that is placed upon the maximum number of mills that can be levied is a problem, as will be shown in the response to the next question.

TABLE 1: BESSEMER AREA S/D MILLAGE ELECTIONS, 1978-1987

<u>Year</u>	<u>Mills*</u>	<u>Votes</u>	
		<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
1978	35	388	399
1978	33	**	**
1979	33	666	213
1981	33	180	143
1984	33	488	139
1987	33	272	118

*Total, including allocated and extra voted millage.

**Data not available.

Are the financial resources of the district a problem and what are the limiting factors?

During four of the five fiscal years from 1983 to 1988 the expenditures of the Bessemer Area School District have exceeded its revenues as follows:

1983-84 (Audit)	(\$18,888)
1984-85 (Audit)	(\$307,526)
1985-86 (Audit)	(\$57,368)
1986-87 (Audit)	\$33,140
1987-88 (Budget)	(\$81,544)

A fund balance of \$477,651 at June 30, 1984 will have been reduced to approximately \$20,170 at June 30, 1988. A payment of \$175,000 to the State of Michigan, as part of an out-of-court settlement for a state aid overpayment from a previous year, accounts for a major share of the reduction in the fund balance during the 1984-85 school year. The reduction in the fund balance has happened even though the district has reduced its teaching and administrative staff, kept the salaries and wages of its employees considerably lower than the salaries and wages in neighboring districts, and has taken other action to cut costs.

An examination of the audits during this five year period reveals that very little has been spent in the areas of building repairs, maintenance, and improvements, even though, as will be shown later, this is one of the school district's major problem areas. It will also be shown that

there are some deficiencies in various curriculum areas. It is obvious, therefore, that the school district does not have sufficient revenues to meet its needs.

There are a number of factors which limit the ability of the school district to raise additional revenues. First, the district is restricted in the amount of millage that it can levy for operational purposes to (a) millage that is provided through the allocation process and (b) millage that is authorized by a vote of the electorate. The allocated and the extra voted millage have both been set at a total of 33 mills in the school district by a vote of the electorate for three years, through 1990. If the board wishes to levy more than 33 mills it would have to be authorized by the voters in another election.

Even if additional millage were approved by the electorate it would not necessarily mean that the school system would be able to collect it. The Michigan Constitution limits the amount of non-charter millage that can be levied to 50 mills by all units of government. The number of non-charter mills levied by all units of government in the Bessemer Area School District during 1987 was 49.5. The Bessemer Area School District could possibly levy an additional 0.5 mills if it was authorized by the voters of the district or more than a half mill if the voters gave their approval and Bessemer Township did not levy the number of mills that it levied in 1987. Consequently, either with or without additional voted millage for the school district a

situation could develop in which both the township and the school district levied authorized voted millage, with the result being that the 50 mill constitutional limit would be exceeded. If the two units of government could not reach an agreement on the issue it would then be resolved through whatever legal procedures are established to deal with such situations.

The major portion of state aid in Michigan is paid to local school districts through a formula which provides an equal yield for equal effort to school districts that have a state equalized valuation which is low enough to qualify them as in-formula districts. The equal yield concept does not apply to out-of-formula school districts, some of which receive considerably greater per pupil revenues with much less effort than that of many in-formula school districts.

During the 1987-88 school year the Michigan state aid formula guarantees each public school district a per pupil yield of \$306.00, plus \$75.10 for each mill levied, plus \$30.00 if certain high school graduation requirements are met, plus \$14 if the district attains an average class size of not more than 25 pupils for grades K, 1, 2, and 3, taken collectively (Michigan 84th Legislature, 1987). The state, thereby, guarantees the Bessemer Area School District that the combined revenues from its 33 mill property tax levy and its state membership aid will generate \$2,828.30 for each eligible student. The formula provides combined revenues of \$1,487,686 for 526 students. The state equalized valuation

of all taxable property in the Bessemer Area School District during 1987 was \$25,685,798. The 33 mill levy will raise \$847,631 in local property taxes and the state will pay \$640,055.

If the state equalized valuation in the district had risen 36% to \$35,000,000 in 1987 it would not have produced any additional revenue for the district. Instead the local property tax would have raised \$1,155,000 and the state would have paid only \$332,686, with an identical total yield of \$1,487,686. An increase in the school district's state equalized valuation would only have raised additional revenue if it had risen by more than 75.5%, to more than \$45,081,393. Such an increase, which is very unlikely in a community such as Bessemer, would have made it an out-of-formula school district.

Does the operation of the Catholic elementary school negatively impact upon the financial resources of the district?

There are 93 students enrolled at the St. Sebastian School during the 1987-88 school year, 84 of whom are residents of the Bessemer Area School District. If the St. Sebastian School were not in operation and all of the resident students had attended the Washington School it would have increased the student populations in each grade as shown in Table 2.

The superintendent of the Bessemer Area School District stated that if all resident students at the St. Sebastian

**TABLE 2: 1987-88 RESIDENT K-8 STUDENTS
AND REGULAR PUBLIC SCHOOL CLASSROOM TEACHERS**

	St. Sebast.	Washington	Total	Washington
<u>Grade</u>	<u>Students</u>	<u>Students</u>	<u>Students</u>	<u>Teachers</u>
PrepK	0	16	16	0.5
K	9	35	44	1
1	6	43	49	2
2	11	45	56	2
3	18	27	45	1
4	10	36	46	2
5	7	30	37	1
6	7	41	48	2
7 & 8	16	64	80	4.6

School had been enrolled at the Washington School during the 1987-88 school year it would have necessitated employing an additional teacher for the 3rd grade and probably another one for the 5th grade. He estimated that the additional cost to the district for two teachers would have been approximately \$40,000. The additional 84 students would, however, have generated \$237,577 of additional state aid to the district. The operation of the St. Sebastian School does, therefore, have a negative impact upon the financial resources of the school district.

Are the current curriculum, programs, and services adequate to provide a quality education to the district's students?

Elementary School

Elementary school students, during the 1987-88 school year, receive instruction in reading, spelling, writing, speech, mathematics, social studies and science from their classroom teachers. An art teacher provides instruction two times each week in grades one through four and once each week in the fifth and sixth grades. A teacher aide, who has a degree in music and formerly had teacher certification, works with the classroom teachers to provide vocal music.

Students in the upper elementary grades may elect to receive instruction in instrumental music. A library, which is directed but not staffed by a trained librarian, is available. A practical nurse, supervised by a registered nurse, provides nursing services.

A prep-kindergarten class serves 16 students who are old enough to attend the regular kindergarten but who, on the basis of evaluations that were conducted, do not have the developmental skills that are considered necessary for success in the regular kindergarten.

Elementary school students in need of special instructional assistance attend a Chapter I remedial reading class, a learning disability class or a class for educable mentally impaired students. Other students attend classroom programs

for trainable mentally impaired students, severely mentally impaired students, or preprimary impaired students that are operated by the Gogebic-Ontonagon Intermediate School District. Speech therapy, teacher consultant services, school social worker services, school psychological services, and preprimary impaired home programs are also provided by the intermediate school district.

The Gogebic-Ontonagon ISD also provides the services of a consultant for gifted and talented students. The consultant works with a faculty member from the Washington School who serves as the local school coordinator for the gifted program. Gifted and talented students are provided with special activities and projects in their regular classrooms.

Kehoe (1984) identified vocal music, a librarian, and physical education as curriculum and staffing needs in the elementary school. (See Appendix C for Kehoe's curriculum analysis.) Likewise, the board-appointed community advisory committee recommended that, rather than cutting programs to save money, there should be improvements made at the elementary school level by introducing computers into the classrooms and by implementing fine arts and physical education programs.

Many Bessemer Area School District elementary teachers and other school personnel, plus some parents believe that the elementary school has not received a fair share of the funds which the district spends. They complain that money has been provided for football and basketball programs and

for other athletic expenses but that there has been no money for elementary school music or physical education and that there has been little money for new books and other instructional supplies in the elementary grades.

Junior High School

Instruction in spelling, physical education, science, English, art, and math is provided in the seventh and eighth grades. Seventh grade students also have geography and eighth grade students have history and a choice of home economics or shop. Several students also receive instruction in the remedial reading and special education classes.

The special education programs and services that are provided by the Gogebic-Ontonagon Intermediate School District are also available to junior high school students, as are the services of the nurse. The services of the trained librarian are available to provide direction to the overall operation of the library but he is not available to work directly with students.

Kehoe (1984) listed several deficiencies in the junior high program. They included a lack of home economics and industrial arts for seventh graders, limited vocal music and co-curricular activities, the absence of a counselor, and the lack of programs for academically talented students. (See Appendix C for Kehoe's curriculum analysis.) The community advisory committee identified a need for enrichment in areas such as vocal music and basic computer courses.

There was concern expressed by a number of school personnel that junior high school students do not have a rigorous enough program, that the science program does not have the equipment and supplies needed for a quality program, that there are too many study halls, and that there is an overabundance of teachers for so few students. One high school teacher stated that the junior high school program is weak, with deplorable science facilities and a lack of adequate science materials and equipment.

Senior High School

The A.D. Johnston High School at Bessemer has received North Central Association accreditation continuously from 1905 to the present date. The most recent evaluation by the association was conducted in 1984 and stated, "With a few exceptions, the curriculum is appropriate for a school of this size. The very strong 'basic' curriculum is most commendable" (Hartzell, 1984).

The 1987 University of Michigan accreditation report (Hon, 1987) cited three violations relating to curriculum and programs. The violations were due to an adult aide not being in the library during the time that the librarian was absent and insufficient magazine and newspaper titles.

The district has met the curriculum requirements for incentive funds that are included in the 1985-86, 1986-87, and 1987-88 state aid acts. During the 1987-88 school year the courses that are provided include four years of

English, advanced composition, art, band, choir, Spanish I, six courses in social sciences, six in natural sciences, five in math, seven in secretarial and business areas, and 20 courses in industrial arts and vocational education. (See Appendix A for the complete curriculum.) The vocational education courses are provided by the Gogebic-Ontonagon Intermediate School District at the area vocational center at Gogebic Community College and by the Ironwood Area School District at the Ironwood High School.

The superintendent expressed the opinion that the high school curriculum is better now than it was when he was a student in the district during the forties and fifties. The high school principal believes that the current curriculum is adequate, although he would like to add a few courses such as vocational math.

Some faculty members believe that parts of the total program need to be strengthened. One member stated that the curriculum is above average but not outstanding, and that there is a lack of continuity in the curriculum from the elementary school through the high school.

The staff at the high school includes a half-time librarian and a four-sevenths time counselor. A half-time learning disability program is also provided but there are no remedial classes available. Special education programs and services provided by the intermediate school district are accessible to high school students.

Extracurricular activities at the high school level

include baseball, basketball, drama, football, track, intramurals, pep club, student government, yearbook, newsletter, ski team, and volleyball.

Kehoe (1984) identified an absence of speech courses, only two years of Spanish rather than a four year sequence, and limited vocal music as deficiencies in the A.D. Johnston High School curriculum. (See Appendix C for Kehoe's curriculum analysis.)

Are class sizes a problem?

The data show that there are problems with the number of students in various classes in the elementary, junior high, and senior high schools. It appears, when one examines only the student:teacher ratios, that class sizes are ideal. When actual class numbers are examined, however, it becomes apparent that class sizes vary greatly.

During the 1987-88 school year the elementary school program includes thirteen regular classrooms. The student:teacher ratio for the elementary grades, including a prorated share of all special teachers, is 16.5:1.

Michigan Governor James Blanchard has recommended that no more than 20 students be enrolled in any K-3 classroom. (Blanchard to seek, 1988). The data in Table 3 show, using Blanchard's recommendation as the standard for the lower elementary grades and using a standard of no more than 25 students for grades 4-6, that several grades exceed these limits by small numbers and that grades three and five

exceed them by fairly large amounts. Classes 4-A, 4-B, and 6-B are, conversely, considerably below these standards and are therefore not cost effective.

TABLE 3: 1987-88 K-6 CLASS SIZES AT THE WASHINGTON SCHOOL

<u>Class</u>	<u>Number of Students</u>	<u>Class</u>	<u>Number of Students</u>
Prep K	16	3	27
K-A	18	4-A	18
K-B	17	4-B	18
1-A	21	5	30
1-B	22	6-A	23
2-A	22	6-B	18
2-B	23		

Seventh and eighth grade students are taught by 11 teachers, with a full-time equivalency of 4.6 teachers. Only two of them are assigned full time to the junior high school. The student:teacher ratio during the 1987-88 school year is 13.9:1 in the junior high school. Actual class sizes range from 15 to as many as 41 students.

The high school has 12 full-time and seven part-time teachers. The student:teacher ratio, with 15.2 full-time equivalency teachers assigned to the high school, is 12.7:1. Actual class sizes, however, range from six students in a

home economics class to a maximum of 26 students in a business class.

Kehoe (1984) stated that there were 52 classes in the high school enrolling 20 or fewer students, including 27 classes with 14 or less students. He suggested that such a large number of classes with so few students is an inefficient use of tax dollars.

Are there students living in the school district who should be enrolled in school but are not?

Neither Bessemer Area School District officials nor Gogebic-Ontonagon Intermediate School District officials are aware of any children living in the school district who should be attending school but are not.

Is there a problem with students dropping out of school?

A comparison of high school dropout rates indicates that the percentage of students completing high school within the Bessemer Area Schools has been high. Dropout rates for the 1985-86 school year, as reported by the Michigan Department of Education (1987), show the state composite dropout rate for 1985-86 to be 5.8%, the Upper Peninsula composite rate as 2.5%, the Gogebic-Ontonagon Intermediate School District composite rate as 2.4%, and the Bessemer Area School District rate as 0.0%.

Education Week (Public high school, 1983) reported the percent of high school graduates in 1980-1981, as a percent

of 9th grade enrollment, to be 72.1% in the United States, 72.5 percent in Michigan, and 86.0% in Minnesota, which had the highest percent in the nation. During the same year the percent of graduates at Bessemer, as a percent of 9th grade enrollment, was 87.3%. Subsequent year percentages of graduates at Bessemer, as a percent of 9th grade enrollment, were 94.0% in 1981-82, 102.9% in 1982-83, 98.4% in 1983-84, 85.5% in 1984-85, 83.3% in 1985-86 and 109.3% in 1986-87.

Is there a problem with absenteeism?

Student attendance in the Bessemer Area School District is high. During the 1985-86 school year it was 95.7% in the elementary grades and 95.8% in grades 7-12. During the 1986-87 school year it was 92.8% in the elementary school and 95.3% in grades 7-12. During the first semester of the 1987-88 school year it was 97.2% in the elementary school and 96.2% in the high school. These student attendance rates compare favorably with the 1986-87 estimated composite state attendance rates of 92% that are used by the Michigan Department of Education on various federal reports (T. Howard, personal communication, March 15, 1988).

Is there a problem with the students' level of achievement?

The data indicate that Bessemer Area School District students, as a group, do not have problems with academic achievement and that they generally perform above national and state norms on standardized tests. Most alumni and high

school students indicate that they received, or are receiving, an excellent education.

The percentages of students from the Bessemer public schools, the composite of the eight constituent districts of the Gogebic-Ontonagon Intermediate School District, the composite of the public schools of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, and the composite of the public schools of the entire state of Michigan, that scored in the highest category of achievement on the math and reading portions of the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) are shown in tables 4 to 9 (Michigan Department of Education, 1980, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1986).

Bessemer fourth grade students scored very well in comparison to the other groups except on the 1981 examination when they scored uncharacteristically low on both the math and reading sections of the test and again on the 1982 math portion of the test.

A greater percentage of seventh grade students from Bessemer scored in the top category in math during all years, except on the 1986 examination, when the Upper Peninsula composite percentage was higher. Students in the seventh grade also scored at a higher rate in the top category on the reading examinations during all years except on the 1982 and 1985 examinations when they had a lower percentage than the composite percentages for the Upper Peninsula and the Gogebic-Ontonagon Intermediate School District.

**TABLE 4: PERCENT OF 1980-86 4TH GRADE MEAP MATH
SCORES IN THE HIGHEST CATEGORY OF ACHIEVEMENT**

	<u>Michigan</u>	<u>U.P.</u>	<u>GOISD</u>	<u>Bessemer</u>
1980	72.3	80.0	84.3	88.0
1981	74.2	81.5	82.8	66.7
1982	77.8	81.5	84.4	70.6
1983	80.5	84.2	85.1	92.9
1984	82.6	86.0	87.0	86.2
1985	83.6	85.7	83.2	83.8
1986	<u>85.0</u>	<u>85.9</u>	<u>89.1</u>	<u>89.7</u>
MEAN	79.4	83.5	85.1	82.6

**TABLE 5: PERCENT OF 1980-86 4TH GRADE MEAP READING
SCORES IN THE HIGHEST CATEGORY OF ACHIEVEMENT**

	<u>State</u>	<u>U.P.</u>	<u>GOISD</u>	<u>Bessemer</u>
1980	70.7	81.5	81.7	92.0
1981	72.9	82.2	85.0	66.7
1982	75.6	82.0	81.7	79.4
1983	75.9	84.8	80.2	82.1
1984	77.7	86.0	83.0	79.3
1985	79.3	85.7	78.2	89.2
1986	<u>80.3</u>	<u>86.0</u>	<u>85.9</u>	<u>89.7</u>
MEAN	76.1	84.0	82.2	82.6

**TABLE 6: PERCENT OF 1980-86 7TH GRADE MEAP MATH
SCORES IN THE HIGHEST CATEGORY OF ACHIEVEMENT**

	<u>Michigan</u>	<u>U.P.</u>	<u>GOISD</u>	<u>Bessemer</u>
1980	58.7	66.0	66.2	82.7
1981	59.4	68.1	64.3	78.4
1982	62.5	67.3	69.2	73.2
1983	63.8	68.2	71.4	90.9
1984	65.7	69.9	68.8	73.7
1985	66.2	70.5	71.5	80.6
1986	<u>69.6</u>	<u>74.2</u>	<u>72.3</u>	<u>72.4</u>
MEAN	63.7	69.2	69.1	78.8

**TABLE 7: PERCENT OF 1980-86 7TH GRADE MEAP READING
SCORES IN THE HIGHEST CATEGORY OF ACHIEVEMENT**

	<u>State</u>	<u>U.P.</u>	<u>GOISD</u>	<u>Bessemer</u>
1980	76.7	83.3	82.7	86.5
1981	77.9	84.4	82.5	86.5
1982	80.1	85.4	81.4	78.0
1983	80.2	85.9	88.9	95.5
1984	80.8	86.7	88.3	89.5
1985	80.3	87.0	87.2	83.3
1986	<u>81.8</u>	<u>86.9</u>	<u>86.2</u>	<u>93.1</u>
MEAN	79.7	85.7	85.3	87.5

**TABLE 8: PERCENT OF 1980-86 10TH GRADE MEAP MATH
SCORES IN THE HIGHEST CATEGORY OF ACHIEVEMENT**

	<u>Michigan</u>	<u>U.P.</u>	<u>GOISD</u>	<u>Bessemer</u>
1980	57.7	67.0	69.9	82.9
1981	58.8	66.1	68.2	84.8
1982	61.0	68.3	73.8	78.8
1983	64.4	70.8	70.2	91.1
1984	66.4	71.9	70.1	85.4
1985	67.8	71.5	68.0	65.4
1986	<u>68.4</u>	<u>73.3</u>	<u>70.4</u>	<u>75.0</u>
MEAN	63.5	69.8	70.1	80.5

**TABLE 9: PERCENT OF 1980-86 10TH GRADE MEAP READING
SCORES IN THE HIGHEST CATEGORY OF ACHIEVEMENT**

	<u>State</u>	<u>U.P.</u>	<u>GOISD</u>	<u>Bessemer</u>
1980	73.3	79.5	78.8	92.9
1981	76.3	81.8	84.1	90.9
1982	77.9	82.5	83.8	88.5
1983	80.0	82.3	84.3	96.4
1984	81.6	86.2	81.6	95.8
1985	81.9	85.7	81.2	84.6
1986	<u>81.1</u>	<u>84.7</u>	<u>81.9</u>	<u>83.3</u>
MEAN	78.9	83.2	82.2	90.3

TABLE 10: ACT PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES

	<u>AD Johnston</u>	<u>Michigan</u>	<u>U.S.</u>
1973-74	22.5	19.6	18.9
1974-75	21.3	19.2	18.6
1975-76	19.6	18.5	18.3
1976-77	21.7	18.9	18.4
1977-78	19.7	18.9	18.5
1978-79	19.2	18.9	18.6
1979-80	18.3	18.9	18.5
1980-81	19.1	18.6	18.5
1981-82	20.5	18.7	18.4
1982-83	21.5	18.6	18.3
1983-84	21.7	18.8	18.5
1984-85	19.9	18.9	18.6
<u>1985-86</u>	<u>17.8</u>	<u>18.9</u>	<u>18.8</u>
Mean of Means	20.2	18.9	18.5

Bessemer students in the tenth grade had a greater percentage of pupils in the highest category on the math portions of the tests during all years except on the 1985 examination. On the reading portion of the examinations they were only outscored by the Upper Peninsula group on the 1985 and 1986 tests.

The average of the mean scores in math and reading at each grade level, from 1980 to 1986, indicates that Bessemer students have done better than the state average in math and reading at all three grade levels. Bessemer students outscored the composite of students from the Upper Peninsula, with the exception of the 4th grade average math and reading scores, and they also outperformed the composite of students

in the Gogebic-Ontonagon Intermediate School District, with the exception of the 4th grade average math score.

The average scores for A.D. Johnston High School students taking the American College Testing assessment during the period 1973-74 through 1985-86 are, during most years, above the Michigan and national norms (Hubbell, 1987; J. Rudolph, personal communication, February 23, 1987). Only the 1979-80 and 1985-86 groups at Bessemer, as indicated in Table 9, scored lower than the comparison groups.

Approximately 48% percent of the students at Bessemer took the A.C.T. assessment from 1972-73 through 1985-86, compared to approximately 47% of all students taking the test in Michigan. In the A.D. Johnston class of '86, 34% of the students qualified as A.C.T. State of Michigan Semi-finalists, compared to a state average of 23.1%.

Follow-up data collected by the high school counselor show that during the year following graduation from high school, 59.4% of the class of 1981, 55.1% of the 1982 class, 62.9% of the 1983 class, 62.3% of the 1984 class, 80.9% of the 1985 class, and 83.0% of the 1986 class enrolled at technical schools, universities, or colleges. The greatest percentage enroll at Gogebic Community College. Data on students who receive college degrees are not available.

Is inappropriate student behavior a problem?

The administrators and other staff members of the Bessemer Area Schools indicate that, in general, there are

very few serious problems with student discipline. The students seem to agree that discipline in school is not only good but that it is one reason why they think their school is better than others on the Gogebic Range. One nonresident student stated that when his family moved to the area his father checked out the schools and decided that Bessemer had the best schools and the best discipline.

The 1984 Report of the North Central Association Evaluation stated, "The citizens and students of Bessemer Township and the City of Bessemer are proud of the job the staff is doing and feel they have good discipline at the high school" (Hartzell, 1984, p.2).

The administrators and teachers indicate that there is a problem with many high school students drinking alcoholic beverages out of school. They also suspect that there are, in addition, some students who, at least on occasion, use marijuana and other illegal drugs. These out of school problems generally do not create direct problems in the school.

Is there a problem with current administrators or teachers not meeting state certification requirements?

The Bessemer Area School District employs 36 teachers and two administrators during the 1987-88 school year. Both administrators and 13 teachers have master of arts degrees and the remainder have bachelor of arts or science degrees. All of them meet state certification requirements for the

positions they hold. At the high school 18 teachers teach in their major area of preparation and only one teaches in his minor area of preparation.

Is it difficult to recruit teachers?

The Bessemer Area School District employs 24 teachers with 15 or more years of experience and only five with fewer than 10 years of experience. Consequently, there has been little need to recruit teachers in recent years. The last teacher employed at the high school/junior high school level was the librarian, in 1983. The superintendent stated that there were about 10 candidates for that position.

Several elementary school and several special education positions have been filled in recent years. The superintendent stated that there were about 15 applicants, including numerous candidates with excellent credentials, for the last regular elementary teaching position. There were only a few applicants, however, when the special education teacher vacancies were advertised for the 1986-87 and 1987-88 school years, with none of the applicants having full approval in the area of specialization that was being sought.

Are the relationships among various segments of the larger community and the school community harmonious?

The 1984 Report of the North Central Association Evaluation stated, "The citizens and students of Bessemer Township and the City of Bessemer are proud of the job the

staff is doing and feel they have good discipline at the high school" (Hartzell, 1984, p. 2).

Many citizens, students and high school teachers indicated that the high school principal, who was an iron miner, tough hockey player, and good boxer as a young man, is one of the reasons why students take their education seriously. One former student stated, "He was fair and friendly but he wasn't going to let anything get out of hand."

The high school principal feels that the good relationships that he has with teachers and students is demonstrated when they invite him to go hunting and fishing with them. He stated that he has good relationships with most parents and other citizens in the community. He suggested that one of the reasons that the Bessemer schools are as good as they are is because of the cooperation that the schools receive from parents.

One teacher attributed the good education that students get in Bessemer to the spirit that exists in the schools. He described it as, "The feeling that both the students and the teachers have. The attitude." This generally positive attitude among the students and teachers was expressed to the researcher often as he talked to individuals in the school and community.

Not all of the relationships that exist among groups and individuals in the school and community have been positive in recent years, however. The board of education and the Bessemer Education Association were unable to negotiate

a contract for the 1985-86 school year prior to the opening of school. This impasse and other school-related problems that were beginning to surface at that time aggravated the feelings of distrust and anger that previously existed between the two groups. It was agreed that the unresolved issues would be presented to a fact finder and that the parties would incorporate his recommendations into the master contract.

The board of education received a letter from the association in December 1985 in which the association expressed its desire to keep the school system operating and its belief that Bessemer area citizens wished to see the school system survive. The letter asked for a meeting between the association and board to discuss various issues, including providing assistance in getting voters to pass additional millage and to improve public relations.

The association president was present at the December board meeting at which the board decided to appoint a community advisory committee. He indicated that the association supported the board's decision to appoint a committee and stated that a meeting between the association and board would not be necessary at that time.

At the March 1986 meeting of the board a member of the Bessemer Education Association, speaking on behalf of the association, read a prepared statement that was very critical of the board of education. (See pages 69-70.)

A member of the board resigned prior to the close of

the meeting, stating that he did not want to endure the same kind of pressures that he had faced when the discussions about closing the Ramsay School in Bessemer Township were taking place. He stated, 'I can't take anymore of this. . . . I went through this same thing with the township annexation and I can't take it anymore.'

Several other members of the board were very upset over the incident and felt it was uncalled for. One member told the researcher, "I don't think anyone could get any lower." Another stated, "I think it stunk. There was no justification for doing it." A third member was less incensed. He stated, "That was the BEA (Bessemer Education Association) riling up the people. It was job related. They were just looking out for their jobs." Another member admitted that he was upset at the time it happened but said that he later came to believe that it was not a personal attack but was rather a calculated maneuver by the BEA to rally public support for maintaining the high school in Bessemer.

The superintendent responded to the teachers' statement in April. He indicated that the board had promised the electorate in 1979, after two millage defeats in 1978, that only the amount of millage that was needed to operate would be levied. He stated that the charge of fiscal irresponsibility that had been made by them was totally unfounded and that they had made false statements in their presentation before a pre-sought audience and media witnesses. He also stated that the \$150,000 that the association said had been

lost forever was not lost at all, but was instead in the pockets of the taxpayers.

The teachers worked without a master contract until April, when the contract was ratified following the receipt of the fact finder's recommendations. Contract negotiations for the 1986-87 school year were held during the summer but a tentative two-year contract that was reached by the negotiating teams was rejected by the teachers. A new negotiating team was named by the association and a new two year contract was ratified in October. The new salary schedule continued to provide Bessemer teachers with the lowest teaching salaries on the Gogebic Range.

Members of the board agree with the administration that there are some excellent teachers in the school system and that most of the others are good. Some of them do not agree, however, that there are no poor teachers. Several members feel that a few teachers are just putting in their time and collecting their paychecks. Some members suggested that teachers are not sufficiently involved in the affairs of the community.

Members of the board stated that most support personnel appear to be doing a good job. Most members indicated, however, that they receive a considerable number of complaints from the public concerning the poor job that is done to keep the high school, and especially the locker rooms and gymnasium, clean. One member stated that he placed a paper under a radiator at the high school and that it remained there for

several months. Most members stated that they believed the buildings should and could be kept clean even though they are old.

Alumni/ae of the Bessemer schools generally indicated that most of the teachers they had were good or excellent. Not all teachers, however, are held in high esteem. One recent graduate described one of his former teachers as an individual for whom he had a lot of respect as a person but that he "put no effort into making the class stimulating. He sat at his desk and read from the book." He added, "All he needed to do was use a little imagination."

Many citizens expressed hostility toward the teachers of the district even though they feel that they are doing a generally good job of teaching. Much of this hostility appears to be due to the demands by the teachers for better salaries. Some citizens suggested that people who work 180 days a year should not expect to receive salaries which are comparable to those received by college graduates who work all year. Others indicated that the district's teachers and other employees should be willing to forego salary increases or even be willing to take salary cuts in order to keep the schools open.

The teachers are aware of the negative feelings that exist toward them. One suggested that many of the scathing comments about teachers are made in jest. He nevertheless stated that such comments are indicative of an undercurrent of negative feelings toward teachers.

The teachers in turn expressed some anger toward the community. Several were especially incensed with members of the community and board who suggested that teachers should move and find employment elsewhere if they are not satisfied with the salaries that they are receiving. One teacher stated, "It isn't that easy to just pick up and leave when you have a family and you've been in a community for many years."

Several teachers stated that the community does not support its teachers the way it should. Another teacher indicated that there are some people in the community who resent the fact that both she and her husband have jobs. She believes that this resentment is due to the scarcity of jobs in the area and also because of the low pay that many people receive.

The teachers at the various grade levels participate in rather informal social groups. Several teachers in the elementary grades are considered loners by other members of the staff. Several sources stated, however, that they are accepted and liked by the other elementary teachers but that they remain in their rooms preparing lessons, correcting papers, and performing other jobs during their free time. Several female elementary teachers form one group, participating in various activities together. A number of male junior high and elementary school teachers also participate in an informal social group. Many of the male high school teachers form a third informal group. Several male faculty

members at the elementary, junior high, and high school levels are also considered loners. They are not, however, shunned by the other teachers. Only one teacher is considered to have a somewhat roguish disposition by many fellow employees.

Many of the support staff indicated that most of the teachers are hard working, excellent employees and stated that the relationships that exist between the two groups are positive. One secretary stated that her children had attended the Bessemer schools and that they talk about the good teachers they had. She then added, "A lot of people talk about the excellent and strict teachers that Bessemer has. . . . Not all teachers are excellent. The elementary teachers are really good." These positive feelings were reciprocated by many teachers at the elementary school toward the support staff.

There were some negative feelings expressed by a number of elementary school teachers toward the high school staff and vice versa. These elementary teachers feel that many of the male high school teachers are not concerned about the needs of elementary school students but rather that their primary concern is athletics. The high school teachers who expressed negative feelings toward some of the elementary school faculty stated that many of those teachers have no understanding of the special needs of high school students and that they mistakenly believe that athletics are extremely expensive and not important.

It is apparent that there are problems relating to the relationships that exist among various segments of the schools and community. It is probable that these problems will become more serious if the district's other problems are not resolved.

Is there a problem with insufficient parent and citizen involvement in the affairs of the school district?

An examination of the data suggests that the formal involvement of parents and other citizens in the affairs of the school district is very limited. The participation at parent-teacher organization meetings, for example, usually consists of about 14-18 parents and two to four teachers. Parent attendance at parent-teacher conferences, however, is better, with about 80% of one or both parents of students in the elementary school, about 65% in the junior high school and close to 50% at the senior high school attending.

Citizen attendance at meetings of the board of education generally includes one or two teachers and, on occasion, several other members of the community. In recent years there has been no public participation at the annual truth-in-taxation hearings or at the public budget hearings.

There are occasions, however, when larger numbers of citizens do attend board of education meetings. Numerous parents and teachers attended an August 1985 special board meeting due to concern over the large number of students in the only first grade class and another group attended the

March 1986 meeting of the board, as described previously.

A school district survey was mailed in September 1985 to all registered voters in the district and to the parents of students who were not registered to vote. The survey asked questions relating to taxes, presented options that the district could pursue, and asked which programs and services should be cut if it became necessary to do so. Only 498 of approximately 3000 survey forms were returned.

Citizen participation at some board of education and millage elections is less than 400 voters out of an adult population of approximately 3400 in the school district. At other recent elections it has exceeded 600 voters.

Considerably more participation exists at an informal level, however. Board members, teachers, administrators, and other employees have considerable contact with parents and other citizens at grocery stores, bars, meetings, ball games, on the streets, in their homes, and in back yards.

Is there a problem with the health, safety, and/or adequacy of the school buildings and grounds?

A. D. Johnston High School

The A.D. Johnston High School is situated prominently near the center of the city on level ground. The major highway through the city (US-2) borders the high school property to the south and the Gogebic County Courthouse occupies the block to the north. Residences are located to

the west of the school and an auto dealership and several residences lie to the east. The major portion of the city's business establishments are located within a few blocks of the high school to the south and east. Massie Field, which includes the track, football field, baseball field, and the spectator stands, is located two blocks north of A.D. Johnston High School. The school and field are separated by the courthouse complex.

The oldest portion of the A.D. Johnston High School is a two story building which was constructed in 1904 with brick veneer, wooden framing, and a wooden interior. A large bell tower sits atop the old high school. The newer portion of the school, which was built in 1932 with masonry and steel construction and brick veneer, includes the gymnasium on the ground floor and classrooms on the second floor. A boiler room, which is connected to the north side of the gymnasium, was added in 1957. A labyrinth of passageways connects the two portions of the building. The high school includes 11 classrooms, a physics and chemistry classroom/lab, a biology and science classroom/lab, a study hall, a band room, a gymnasium, locker rooms, shower rooms, the principal's offices, and the counselor's office.

The deplorable physical condition of the A.D. Johnston High School has been mentioned in various studies. Kehoe (1984) stated, "Bessemer High School needs to be rehabilitated and the oldest section may need to be replaced" (p. 54). He further stated, "There are problems relating to health,

safety, energy inefficiency, and educational adequacy that will require substantial capital outlay to resolve satisfactorily" (p. 82).

The 1984 Report of the North Central Association evaluation team stated, "The high school facility is obviously outdated and is in poor physical condition. . . . The high school locker and shower facility for physical education and interscholastic sports are totally inadequate, unsafe and unsanitary. This should be given immediate attention. . . . The building does not meet any standards in terms of safety, fire regulations, and handicapped. . . . Lavatories are in very poor physical condition. . . . The lighting in the building is very poor" (Hartzell, 1984, p. 10).

The January 14, 1987 University of Michigan accreditation report also addressed the inadequacy of the high school plant. It reported violations of standards relating to building maintenance, and plant and equipment adequacy at the A.D. Johnston High School (Hon, 1987).

The community advisory committee stated in its report, "The older section of the high school is (in) a critical situation which cannot long continue. While repairs are needed, the newer section of the high school plant appears to be salvageable." The committee recommended that the board of education investigate the feasibility of having a study done by an architectural, engineering, or contracting firm to determine what could be done with the high school.

Members of the board are very cognizant of the deteriorated condition of both schools. Several members stated that they believed nothing could be done to make the high school acceptable and that a new school is needed if the district is to remain independent. Others indicated that the old portion of the high school could be razed and that a new addition could be added to it or to the Washington School. They believe that the buildings need new roofs, new wiring, new boilers, new radiators, new windows, and that the Washington School brick veneer must be tuck-pointed.

The board elected to contract with Daverman Associates, Inc. to conduct a feasibility study of its schools in 1987. The Daverman Report (1987) listed numerous deficiencies for the A. D. Johnston High School and the Washington School, including many deviations from the current state building codes. The following were included in the report on the A. D. Johnston High School:

1. The three story building does not provide access for physically handicapped persons. (A stair-track device does allow a student who is confined to a wheelchair to move from floor to floor.)
2. The stairs are not enclosed.
3. The classrooms over the gymnasium do not have a second exit.
4. The suspected wood construction in the attic of the original school will require compartmentalization.
- 5 There is no automatic fire protection system which

is required for three story structures.

6. The steel structure in the addition is not protected.
7. The electrical distribution system needs significant improvement.
8. Asbestos, which appears to have been used in the building, will have to be removed or incapsulated.
9. There are deficiencies in the clock, fire, public address, and smoke alarm systems.
10. The shower/locker rooms require major improvements.
11. The band and science rooms need improvements.
12. The toilets and plumbing systems require a major upgrade.
13. The interior finishes need to be improved and the carpeting, ceilings, and lighting need to be replaced or improved.
14. The exterior of the building needs to be renovated.
15. The site is very limited, with the front lawn being the only land available.

The Daverman study identified the current total existing area at the A. D. Johnston High School as 34,000 square feet. It was recommended that a new high school contain 37,300 square feet.

The Washington School

The Washington School is located six blocks from the A.D. Johnston High School, a few blocks east and south of

the business district in a residential area. It is a three story brick structure that was built on the hillside, facing north, in the early 1920s. A shop, which is also used by high school students, was constructed in the late thirties. It is attached to the rear of the school. The school has 17 classrooms, a science laboratory, an art room, a band room, an industrial arts area, two home economics rooms, a library and study hall, a gymnasium and stage, a swimming pool, a locker area, and four offices. One of the rooms which was designed as a small office is used as a classroom for the learning disability program.

Twenty-five steps must be climbed to enter the northwest entrance of the Washington School from the street below. Entry can also be made to the school through a less accessible northeast doorway. There are utility entrances from the back of the school. None of these entryways is barrier free. Barrier free entrance to the bottom floor of the school is possible through a doorway and interior ramp on the east side of the building. This barrier free entry is into a classroom.

The physical condition of the Washington School is generally better than the A.D. Johnston High School. It, nevertheless, also needs extensive maintenance and repair, including major work on the roof, tuckpointing of the brick exterior, and new insulated windows.

Approximately 9,000 square feet of blacktopped and graveled area behind the school serves as a playground. A

grass and dirt area on the east side of the school, approximately 4,500 square feet in area, is also used as a playground. Playground equipment includes a slide, four swings, monkey bars, two teeter-totters, a merry-go-round, and some equipment that was constructed from timbers and tires for children to climb over and through.

The Daverman (1987) report states that there appears to be adequate space at the Washington School to accommodate projected student enrollments. The report identified the following deficiencies at that school:

1. It is a 3-story building with no provision for access by physically handicapped persons. (The building does, in fact, have access for physically handicapped persons via an exterior door and ramp that leads into a classroom on the bottom floor.)
2. The stairs are not enclosed.
3. There is no automatic fire protection system.
4. Suspected wood construction in the attic will require compartmentalization.
5. There are inadequate and outdated electrical and heating systems.
6. There is asbestos insulation on the heating system pipes which will require abatement.
7. The clock, public address, fire, and smoke systems require major upgrading.
9. The toilets and plumbing require major upgrading.
10. There is a need for carpeting, new lighting, and

other building finishes.

11. The roof needs to be replaced.
12. The building exterior needs to be updated.
13. The site is very limited.

Massie Field

Massie Field has been maintained in excellent condition. Football practices are not held on the playing field, which allows the turf to remain in good condition for games. Ample seating is available for track, football, and baseball spectators. Lights make it possible for football games to be played at night.

Is the condition of the bus fleet a problem?

The bus fleet during the 1987-88 school year consists of eight buses, two of which are used as spares. Four large buses are used for the regular morning and afternoon runs. One of those buses is used to transport students who participate in vocational education classes at the Ironwood High School and the vocational center at Gogebic Community College. Another large bus and one 20 passenger bus are used to make noon kindergarten runs. A second 20 passenger bus, equipped with a wheelchair lift, is used to transport two students who are confined to wheelchairs. The seating capacity, year of purchase, number of miles driven, and condition of each bus, as rated by the bus mechanic, are shown in Table 11.

Two members of the board's transportation committee reported to the full board at the April, 1987 meeting that the bus fleet is getting old and that a new bus should be purchased. They stated that if the board does not take action soon to improve the bus fleet it would be faced with a situation of having to purchase several new buses at one time. A new 66 passenger bus was, consequently, ordered during the 1987-88 school year.

TABLE 11

BESSEMER AREA S/D BUS FLEET DATA

<u>Seating Capacity</u>	<u>Year Purchased</u>	<u>Miles Driven</u>	<u>Condition</u>
66	1988	0	New
65	1983	57,000	Good
65	1980	98,000	Poor
65	1979	57,000	Good
20	1977	108,000	Poor
20	1976	111,000	Poor
54	1975	95,000	Unsafe
60	1970	105,000	Unsafe
54	1970	95,000	Poor

How do Traditions, Values, Beliefs, Social Patterns,
Preferences, and Economics Interface
With Education In This Small Community?

What is the history of the community and its schools?

The histories of the school district and the community it serves are provided in Chapter IV.

What is the ethnic composition of the community today?

The family names of students attending the Washington School and the A.D. Johnston High School are evidence of the varied ethnic heritage of the area. Most students today, however, have mixed ethnic parentage. A student with a Polish or Italian surname may be a member of a Protestant church whereas a student with a Swedish or Finnish surname may belong to the Roman Catholic Church.

During the 1986-87 school year 39 of 46 seniors at the A.D. Johnston High School responded to a questionnaire from the principal concerning their ethnic backgrounds. The parents of 43 kindergarten and prep-kindergarten students responded to a questionnaire from the kindergarten teacher concerning the ethnic background of those students. The data which are compiled in Tables 12 and 13 are evidence of the intermarriage among the various ethnic groups that have settled on the Gogebic Range. All of the sampled students were of European ancestry except three seniors and six

TABLE 12: NUMBER OF ETHNIC ORIGINS OF
1986-87 KINDERGARTEN AND GRADE 12 STUDENTS

	<u>Kindergarten</u>	<u>Grade 12</u>
Single	1	2
Twofold	3	13
Threefold	8	6
Fourfold	13	12
Fivefold	11	4
Sixfold	1	2
Sevenfold	3	0
Eightfold	2	0
Ninefold	1	0

TABLE 13: NUMBER OF 1986-87 KINDERGARTEN AND GRADE 12
STUDENTS WITH INDICATED ETHNIC ANCESTRY

<u>Nationality</u>	<u>Kindergarten</u>	<u>Grade 12</u>
Finnish	28	19
German	19	17
Italian	15	17
Swedish	22	10
English	17	8
French	14	11
Polish	13	12
Irish	15	6
American Indian	7	3
Norwegian	6	3
Czechoslovakian	3	5
Dutch	5	2
Scottish	6	1
Austrian	4	1
Danish	3	1
Croatian	2	1
Bohemian	1	1
Slavic	1	1
Swiss	0	2
Yugoslavian	1	1
Black	1	0
Greek	1	0
Jewish	1	0
Russian	1	0
Scandinavian	1	0
Serbian	1	0
Slovakian	1	0
Spanish	1	0

kindergarten/prep-kindergarten students with reported small percentages of American Indian ancestry, one kindergarten student with a small percentage of Jewish ancestry, and one kindergarten student with mixed European, Black and American Indian ancestry.

Do the residents have a strong sense of community?

Gregor (1977) describes the community of the Mehinaku Indians of Central Brazil as one that is limited by definite barriers, including waterfalls and rain forest. These barriers have isolated this small enclave of tropical forest Indian culture and allowed it to remain almost completely intact for many generations.

Most American communities, in contrast to such aboriginal ones, are a melting pot of numerous cultures and ethnic groups. Public education and intermarriage have facilitated the integration of various ethnic and religious groups in many American communities and almost all of them are closely linked to each other and the rest of the world through modern methods of transportation and communication.

The Bessemer Area community is a mixture of various European and American cultures and ethnic groups. It is linked to the other Gogebic Range communities, the Upper Peninsula of Michigan community, the state, the nation, and the world via good highways, air transportation, mail, cable television and telephone. The concept of community in the school district is, for these and other reasons, a nebulous

one. It incorporates smaller communities within it, abuts and overlaps the borders of neighboring communities, and is a part of other larger communities.

The Bessemer Area School District includes the city of Bessemer and numerous smaller communities in the city and township which were developed around the various iron mines. These mining locations, or villages, include Ramsay, Anvil, Palms, and Puritan. A sense of community developed in the city and in each of the mining locations. Another area which developed a sense of community was the farming area southwest of Bessemer in the former Harding School vicinity.

The students in Ramsay, Anvil, Puritan, and Harding attended school through the ninth grade in their respective communities until those schools were closed. Those schools helped to develop a sense of community in their catchment area. Students from those K-9 schools attended the A.D. Johnston High School as sophomores, juniors, and seniors. When the Anvil, Puritan, and Harding schools were closed the students from those communities attended the Ramsay School, which helped to further develop a sense of community in Bessemer Township. When these students attended the A.D. Johnston High School a new sense of community was developed.

Many students who attended school in Bessemer Township and the A.D. Johnston High School consequently developed divided loyalties. They identify with the community in which they grew up and with the A.D. Johnston High School, but some do not have any feelings of identity with the city.

The feelings of community and loyalty by the residents of the district are further complicated by the migration of people on the Gogebic Range. Many range residents do not live in the community in which they grew up or in the school district that they attended. The data from the survey which was conducted by the board of education suggest that about one-half of the residents in the Bessemer Area School District are not indigenous to the district. Many of these people do not have feelings of intense loyalty to the community in which they live or to the school district. Many of them like their adopted community but feel that, unless you were born there, you are never fully accepted.

In summary, the citizens of the district live in various communities throughout the school district and they belong to numerous churches, clubs, and other organizations which tend to segregate them. The Bessemer schools are, however, the primary institutions with which many citizens of the district identify. They, consequently, play a major role in the promotion of social intercourse and integration and in the promotion of the larger community.

How did the residents react to former school closings and to the annexation of the township schools to the city schools?

Many residents expressed considerable anger when the school in their community was closed. Several accounts of these reactions are provided on pages 64-66 in the abbreviated history of the school district.

How does the economic condition of the region impact the school district?

The depressed economic condition of the Gogebic Range since the early sixties has had a major impact upon the Bessemer Area School District. The causes of this economic depression and their effects upon the schools and the community are presented in the section on the history of the community during the sixties, seventies, and eighties (pp. 56-58), the section on the community today (pp. 58-62), and the section on the abbreviated history of the school district (pp. 62-74). This chronic economic depression has affected the school district in the following ways:

1. The low valuation of the total taxable property in the school district makes it difficult to generate adequate revenues for the construction and/or renovation of schools.

2. The emigration of individuals and families out of the area in a quest for employment has resulted in reduced student memberships and reduced state membership aid.

3. The reduced state membership aid to the district has caused the elimination of several programs and services and it has been a factor in the payment of low salaries to teachers and administrators.

4. A pall has been cast over the Gogebic Range during the past quarter of a century which has created a mood of defeat in many people who feel, for example, that it would be a waste of tax dollars to invest into a new school.

Does the community provide all of the essential features and services of a complete social and economic community?

Most of the essential services of a complete social and economic community are provided in Bessemer and Bessemer Township. A description of the various businesses, clubs, churches, organizations, and government and private services are included in the section on the Bessemer area community today (pp. 58-62).

The Bessemer and Bessemer Township community cannot be viewed, however, in isolation from the larger Gogebic Range community. The four Gogebic Range cities and the many small mining locations are in such close proximity that they must be viewed as a larger community which provides more of the essential features and services than any one provides alone.

Some citizens believe that there are two additional features that are needed to make Bessemer and the Gogebic Range a complete social community. These are regular cultural activities, such as art shows, theater productions and presentations by symphonic orchestras, and a four year college or university. A local group does present several theater productions each year and theatrical and musical productions are presented by visiting groups periodically. Northland College, a private, liberal arts, four year school at Ashland, Wisconsin, is 45 miles away, Michigan Technological University is 100 miles away, and Northern Michigan University is 140 miles from Bessemer.

What do the residents of the district believe would happen to their community if they lost their high school?

Many residents indicated that Bessemer would begin to die if the high school closed. Several suggested that in a few years it would look like Ramsay, with most of the businesses boarded up. Others suggested that the demise of the city would not happen quickly but that it would instead be a slow process. One resident spoke for many when he stated:

If it were possible I would like to keep our high school. It is important to the community. It kind of draws people together. When you lose your high school the town loses something. I don't mean it dies. There are other communities that have lost their schools and didn't die but you begin to lose population. The people who live in the community don't move out but you don't get young people with children moving in.

What value do residents of the district place upon the education that students are receiving?

The data indicate that most people in the school district place great value upon the education that students are receiving. The students agree that their education is very important to them. Almost two-thirds (63.5%) of the high school students were in a college preparation curriculum during the 1986-87 school year.

One high school faculty member stated that he is amazed at the serious manner with which most students approach

their studies. He indicated that when he was in high school in another community he spent very little of his free time studying but that at Bessemer he sees students studying in the halls and on the steps before school, during noon hour, and after school.

Many residents of the school district favor consolidation because they feel it is the best way to improve the curriculum. Other residents, including numerous teachers and other employees, stated that they wished to keep the high school in Bessemer but they also added that if the curriculum were to be diminished it would then be necessary to have a merger.

Other indications that the residents of the district place great value upon the education that students receive include high student attendance rates, low student dropout rates, few problems with student behavior, high student achievement rates, and millage approval with a minimum of dissension.

Are the residents of the school district satisfied with the current educational programs and services that are provided?

There was no major concern expressed by the residents of the district with the current educational programs and services that are provided at the high school. There were suggestions that additional courses in foreign languages, advanced science and math courses, and more instruction with computers would enrich the curriculum. There was concern

expressed by many individuals, however, that the curriculum would begin to deteriorate because of declining resources.

High school students indicated that they get a good education. Only one student complained about the education he was receiving in an individualized vocational training placement with an area business. Several other students indicated that they would like to take vocational education courses but were unable to do so because they needed to take courses in their college preparation program and there was insufficient time to do both.

Numerous school personnel indicated dissatisfaction with the current junior high school program, with many comments about the weak science program. Such concerns with the junior high school curriculum were not expressed by persons from outside the school, however.

Some parents and teachers of elementary school students indicated dissatisfaction with the elementary school curriculum because it did not include a physical education program or a vocal music program. An elementary school music program was instituted during the 1987-88 school year by employing a teacher aide who has a degree in music education, but whose teaching certificate had expired, to work with the classroom teachers. It was also suggested by some residents that computers should be introduced into the elementary school curriculum because an early exposure to computers is necessary if they are to achieve at a level with students from other districts who have computers.

How important are high school athletics to the school and to the community?

Athletics were important in the community, beginning from the earliest days of settlement. Baseball was the number one sport until 1897, when football was added. "Highlighting the season was the game with Ironwood and a defeat was the beginning of a strong rivalry which still exists" (Rund, 1984, p. 84).

The importance of athletics in the school and community today is reflected in the composition of the Bessemer Area School District faculty. Sixteen of 19 male faculty members have served as coaches in one or more sports.

Many elementary school teachers and some junior high and senior high school teachers indicated that sports are important to students and to the community but they suggested that it tends to be overemphasized at times. They feel that some of the resources spent on athletics should be spent in other ways.

Most teachers believe, however, that athletics are very important to the school and the community. One teacher said that her family moved to the area so that their son would have an opportunity to play football. She stated, 'We chose Bessemer because of its excellent academic and athletic reputation.'

Another teacher stated, 'The contact that teachers have with students in sports carries over into the classroom.'

It's good for everyone. When people say too much is spent on athletics they're trying to find a scapegoat.'

One member of the high school faculty said, 'Many people feel that too much emphasis is placed on athletics and I would agree that at times this is so. Some people have told me that jocks get all of the press and that they resent it when their child is an excellent student but gets very little recognition.' He continued, 'The whole issue of athletics is like a double-edge sword because I can see the negative aspects but I also see good things about it.'

Another member of the faculty stated:

Athletics are very important to students. They provide opportunities for learning that cannot be taught in other ways. They provide an outlet for some students and give the community something it can identify with. There have to be limits to everything. There has to be a balance between academics and athletics. . . . I don't feel athletic programs get more than their share of the school's resources. Much of the resources are provided through the booster club. . . . I admit that football is expensive, but if you're going to play the game you have to provide good equipment or your students will be injured. . . . Other programs are costly too. Compare the costs of the band, for example, to the costs of athletics. There is a misconception . . . (by) some people concerning the resources that are spent on athletics.

The students at both the high school and the junior high school indicated that athletics are very important to them. Sports play an important role in their identity as Speedboys. Forty students played football during the 1985 season and 38 participated in 1986. That is more than a third of the total male enrollment of the high school. The

Speedboys have a record of 285 wins, 203 losses, and 19 ties in football from 1921 through the 1985 season. During the tenure of the current head coach, from 1971 through the 1986 season, the record has been 92 wins and 50 losses. During recent years there have usually been one or more Speedboys who have won state level football honors in class D, which consists of high schools with student enrollments below 312.

The record in boys basketball from 1921 through the 1985-86 season is 564 wins and 575 losses, including a record 60 straight losses in the sixties. However, the record from the 1969-70 season through the 1985-86 campaign is 243 wins to 134 losses.

More than one-half of the boys and almost one-half of the girls at A.D. Johnston High School participated in one or more sports during the 1985-86 school year.

Students, in response to questions about how they felt about athletics, made comments such as, 'Great!', 'Glad we had the opportunity.', and 'I think athletics is very important. I wouldn't have gone to school here if there wasn't athletics.' One student said it was important because it made you proud of your school and another indicated that a lot of kids would turn to smoking and drinking if they didn't have athletics.

The researcher asked a group of 17 eighth grade students how many would still prefer going to A.D. Johnston High School if it were necessary to eliminate all sports due to a lack of funds. Only two students indicated that they

would still prefer going there whereas 13 students indicated that they would prefer going to another school where sports would be available.

When the Speedboys entered into the state football playoffs in 1985, following their undefeated regular season, there were banners and signs throughout the city and township proclaiming support for the team. Hundreds of adults, in addition to almost unanimous support from older students, attended pep meetings and drove hundreds of miles through snowstorms to the games. Several hundred fans drove 1100 miles to see the championship game at Pontiac. The community and the entire Gogebic Range donated \$8,731 to reimburse the school district for the costs associated with the games.

The 1986 Fourth of July parade was dedicated to the Bessemer Speedboys, with their football coach as the grand marshal. Several floats, which trumpeted their 1985-86 athletic accomplishments, were seen by a crowd which was, by some estimates, bigger than the crowd at the centennial parade in 1984 (Karpus, 1986).

All members of the board of education indicated that athletics and other extracurricular activities are important to students but that they should not take precedence over academics. Some board members believe, however, that the board has, at times, supported athletic programs at the expense of academic programs. They indicated that athletic programs have not been cut unless there was insufficient

student interest in those programs, but that elementary vocal music and physical education programs were eliminated.

The board of education, upon recommendation of the superintendent and high school principal, voted to discontinue football competition with the Ironwood School District after the 1986 season. It was a difficult decision, considering the great interest in the game, not only in Bessemer and Ironwood, but throughout the Gogebic Range. The high school principal, when asked about the decision, explained, "We know it has been a great rivalry and it was our biggest game of the year, but we just wouldn't be competitive down the road. . . . We had 42 kids out for football, freshman through senior, while Ironwood had 97. . . . We just felt our kids would be overmatched competitively and the bottom line is that we have to think of their safety and well being" (Trethewey, 1986).

There are, nevertheless, many residents of the school district who are not avid sports fans. Many of them recommended cutting sports first to reduce costs, if it became necessary to do so.

What are the attitudes in the community toward instituting changes in the educational delivery system?

Many of the alumnae/i of the A.D. Johnston High School, that the researcher interviewed or visited with informally about their schools, were concerned about the possibility that the A. D. Johnston High School may be closed due to

declining enrollments, inadequate funds, and other problems. Almost all of them, however, indicated that they were not willing to keep the school open if it meant that students of the district would receive an inadequate education.

The Bessemer Area School District Board of Education distributed a survey to the citizens of the district during September 1985 requesting responses to various questions. In one section of the survey the respondents were asked to rank ten options that the school district could implement to provide educational programs and services to students. The superintendent's analysis of the responses indicated that the options were favored in the following order, with the greatest support for the first option listed:

1. Work for a three-way merger among the Bessemer, Ironwood, and Wakefield school districts, with construction of a new high school which would serve students from all three communities.

2. Maintain a high school in Bessemer but provide additional courses to the students of the district through cooperative programming with other local school districts; raise taxes within authorized limits, if necessary.

3. Work for a three-way merger among the Wakefield, Ironwood, and Bessemer school districts, with high school students attending school in Ironwood and/or Wakefield.

4. Maintain a high school in Bessemer but have additional courses provided through an area center operated by the intermediate school district; raise taxes within

authorized limits, if necessary.

5. Work for a merger with the Ironwood Area School District, with high school students attending school in Ironwood.

6. Continue operating the district's schools the best way possible, for as long as possible, and increasing the millage within the limits authorized by the voters and the state constitution; reduce programs and services and lay off staff when necessary.

7. Work for a merger with the Wakefield Township School District, with high school students attending school in Wakefield.

8. Continue operating the schools in Bessemer the best way possible, for as long as possible, with the current tax levy; reduce programs and services and lay off staff when it becomes necessary to do so; no major renovations or additions to buildings.

9. Continue operating the schools in Bessemer the best way possible; renovate the high school, funding the renovation through long term bonds which would be repaid through additional millage over a long period of time; raise additional millage for operation within authorized limits if necessary.

10. Continue operating the schools in Bessemer the best way possible; build an addition to the Washington School to house the high school, funding the addition through long term bonds which would be repaid through

additonal millage over a long period of time; raise additional taxes for operation within authorized limits, if necessary.

The researcher did an analysis of the survey data based upon an assumption that the first two options chosen by a respondent were indicative of strong support, that the third and fourth choices denoted moderate support, that the fifth and sixth choices signified neutrality, that the seventh and eighth options chosen denoted moderate opposition and that the ninth and tenth choices suggested strong opposition. The levels of support and opposition according to this analysis are shown in Table 14.

The researcher's analysis supports the superintendent's finding that a 3-way merger, with construction of a new high school, received the greatest support from the respondents. The number of people who strongly supported this option was double the number who strongly opposed it.

The analysis indicates that maintaining a high school in Bessemer, while providing additional courses to students through cooperative programming with other local school districts and raising taxes within authorized limits, did not have as much strong support as a three-way merger with a new high school but it did have considerable moderate support. This option also had the fewest number of people who indicated that they were opposed to it, with only about one-fourth of the respondents indicating moderate or strong opposition.

TABLE 14: RESEARCHER'S ANALYSIS OF CITIZEN RESPONSES
TO VARIOUS EDUCATIONAL OPTIONS

<u>Option</u>	<u>Strong Support</u>	<u>Moderate Support</u>	<u>Neutral</u>	<u>Moderate Opposition</u>	<u>Strong Opposition</u>
1	167	58	53	62	84
2	72	130	116	59	41
3	152	76	40	72	89
4	62	116	121	77	45
5	113	83	57	56	118
6	84	45	105	78	101
7	66	106	43	70	137
8	81	50	94	72	122
9	75	51	58	94	137
10	60	44	67	96	148

Note: A complete description of the various options is found on pages 145-147. The following are abbreviated descriptions to assist the reader in studying the table.

1. 3-way merger; construction of a new high school.
2. Maintain H/S; cooperative programs with other schools.
3. 3-way merger; students attend H/S in Ironwood/Wakefield.
4. Maintain H/S; cooperative programs at area center.
5. Bessemer-Ironwood merger; students attend Ironwood H/S.
6. Maintain H/S; increase taxes; reduce programs, services, and staff when necessary.
7. Bessemer-Wakefield merger; students to Wakefield H/S.
8. Maintain H/S; maintain tax levy; reduce staff, programs, and services if necessary.
9. Renovate the high school.
10. Build an addition to the Washington School to house the high school.

A three-way merger among the Wakefield, Ironwood, and Bessemer school districts, with high school students attending school in Ironwood and/or Wakefield, was supported by a little over one-half of the respondents. There was, however, considerably greater opposition indicated to this option than was shown to the second and fourth options.

Maintaining a high school in Bessemer, with additional courses provided through an area center operated by the intermediate school district, did not have as much strong support as several of the other options. It did, nevertheless, have considerable moderate support and it had less opposition than all options except maintaining a high school in Bessemer while providing addition courses through cooperative programming with other local school districts.

A merger with the Ironwood School District, with high school students attending school in Ironwood, had both strong support and strong opposition. The support for a merger with the Wakefield School District, with students attending the Wakefield High School, was more moderate and the opposition was greater. The respondents to the survey indicated considerably greater opposition than support to the remaining options.

Comments relating to the options included:

"If our system cannot afford to give our children a well rounded education then we need to merge with someone to see that our children are properly served."

"I would rather see a good class B sized school than 3 mediocre small schools."

The new high school be built "in Bessemer - the county seat."

A three-way merger would be supported, "Only if the new school is NOT built in Ironwood."

This will not be an easy problem to solve. Cooperation among all three districts is vital and the focus should be on what would be best for the area in the next 50 years and not just the next 5.

"Ironwood has room for our kids all read [sic]. Burn down the Bessemer High School. The fire department needs the practice."

"I don't think the high school and Washington should no way be together. . . ."

Support for an area center operated by the intermediate school district was indicated, "only if controlled by local boards - too wide an area with intermediate board."

A merger in which students would attend school in Ironwood or Wakefield is opposed because, "It would be impossible to get this done - we don't want another Bergland situation in our community."

The new high school, with a three-way merger, "could be built on GCC" [Gogebic Community College] "campus grounds. Avoids extra busing."

"I believe we should think of building a new K thru 12 school between Bessemer and Wakefield. Leave out Ironwood. Centrally located."

"Join Ironwood as soon as possible. This is the only viable alternative to provide future quality education to Bessemer students."

"Our problems have been in existence for the past several years. Consolidation is inevitable! Let's get on with it!"

"Why merge with Wakefield when in the future we will end up with Ironwood anyway. All three will be together. Make one move, not two."

Buy the St. Sebastian school. (state tuition will pay for it in time) Use it for grades 1-6. Use Washington school for Jr. High and H. S. Tear down old high school and use the space for parking lot for the gym.

I think we should strongly encourage all people concerned to think about closing St. Sebastian grade school so that Bessemer doesn't lose so much state aid each year. We would be in a stable condition then. I think the majority of the people in Bessemer would rather lose one of the elementary schools and keep their high school, rather than keep two grade schools and lose their high school. (A town without a high school slowly dies out.)

"I would like to see a new school built for the area. The high school [A.D. Johnston] is a fire hazard and should not be used."

When it becomes necessary to start cutting our programs and curriculum, then I believe it is time for a change. Our children's quality education should be more important than maintaining a building.

"Contact bishop in Marquette about closing the Catholic school."

"I do think consolidation will have to be the bottom line. All area schools are faced with the same problems."

"We are the county seat. Let us renovate and keep our high school. Freeze all wages including teachers and administrators."

"I believe a new high school located in a NEUTRAL ZONE would be the best way to go, with the following districts participating: Bessemer, Bergland, Marenisco, and Wakefield."

"Cooperative programs should be investigated before closing of high school."

"Possibly include Marenisco in a merger with Bessemer and Wakefield."

Would like to see our high school continue as long as possible, but I feel any decision should take into consideration an eventual merger in the future. Could such a center [operated by the intermediate school district] be situated and designed to allow the option of future additions to the building to have a consolidated high school for Bessemer, Ironwood and Wakefield?

I feel this should be brought out to the public as the means of saving the Bessemer School

District. . . . 1. Continue to operate as best we can with a slight increase in millage and work towards the closing of the Catholic School which will greatly increase our revenues. This is the only salvation for our district.

"I also think its the Board's responsibility to let the public know how much revenues is [sic] actually lost having the Catholic school operating."

"The reason we bought our house in the city of Bessemer is that we wanted our children to be able to walk to the school we chose for them instead of being bused at random to different schools."

"Do anything, but keep our school!"

"Why not put" the new high school "on GCC campus?"

Our population is decreasing - we have new schools that are closing - that could be made use of instead [of] getting new ones. Too much emphasis is on money - fringe benefits and how much they can spend but never where it could be cut down.

With poor economic times, consolidation is inevitable, might as well do it now rather than reduce programs and quality education. Our kids deserve a top education, especially in these hi-tech times. A failing district cannot provide this.

"Educating the youth of our town is of paramount importance. Consolidation is the answer."

"If additional courses are needed have them provided by the junior college - not the intermediate school district, which could well be eliminated as a clearing house."

"It is now time to consolidate, after 30 or 40 years of 'bickering' over who should go first!!"

"They can buy the St. Ambrose School. We must avoid building a new complex. The economy of this area does not make it feasible."

"Increase all classes by a few students to save space and save the endangered species 'the tax payer [sic].'"

The researcher, as he talked to residents throughout

the district, heard many of the same types of statements that were made in response to the board's questionnaire. Many retired citizens are firm in their conviction that taxes are too high. A large number favor consolidation because they believe their taxes will be lower. One retired township resident indicated, 'The people from Bessemer want to keep the high school open but they have to face up to the declining enrollments, declining funds and deteriorating buildings just like we did in the township.'

Many people support merger because they believe it will provide improved educational opportunities to the children of the district. Some are torn between keeping their own high school and maintaining a quality education. One mother stated, 'I would like to keep our own high school but I have children in school. I have to think about what is best for them.'

There is considerable disagreement among citizens who favor a merger, as suggested in the board's study, concerning which school districts should be involved. One city resident stated, 'Some people say there should be a three-way merger, others want to go to Wakefield and some want to go to Ironwood. Most people downtown want to keep the school open.'

Many people however, who at first indicated that they were in favor of merger, were not firm in their belief that it is the best option. For example, one professional woman, when asked what she thought would be the best option for

Bessemer, indicated that she favors a consolidation with Ironwood and Wakefield, but that if that was not possible, she would prefer a merger with Ironwood because it would offer Bessemer students a better curriculum. She added, as an afterthought, "Of course my first choice would be to keep our own high school if we could offer an adequate education."

Likewise, a male alumnus of A.D. Johnston, when asked what he thought needed to be done with the school situation stated, 'I guess the only real option is a merger with Ironwood. I don't see how we can keep adequate programs any other way. Do you?' After further discussion he added, 'If it were possible I would like to keep our high school. It is important to the community. It kind of draws people together. When you lose your high school the town loses something. I don't mean it dies. There are other communities that have lost their schools and didn't die but you begin to lose population. The people who live in the community don't move out but you don't get young people with children moving in.'

A retired businessman from the township also stated that he favored a merger among the Bessemer, Ironwood and Wakefield districts. As he continued to talk, however, he stated that what he would really like is to see the St. Sebastian School close so that the increased state revenues from those students attending the public schools would make it possible for the high school to remain open.

Many teachers and other employees openly stated that they are concerned about losing their jobs if there is a merger but they also indicated that the education of the children should be the primary concern of everyone. Many teachers and members of the board of education indicated support for cooperative programs as a means of maintaining or improving the curriculum.

The option of building a new high school in Bessemer has begun to be discussed during the 1987-88 school year. This new option appears to have its greatest support in the city. There is, however, considerable opposition to this or any other option which would require an increase in taxes.

Do members of the board of education represent the ethnic and religious diversity, traditions, values, beliefs, social patterns, and preferences of the community they serve?

Members of the board of education were interviewed during the 1986-87 school year. Therefore, unless otherwise indicated, the responses relate to the 1986-87 board of education.

The Bessemer Area School District Board of Education has seven members who are elected at large. During the past two decades the board has generally had one or two women serving on it. The board, during the 1986-87 school year, is comprised of one woman and six men.

Six of seven members of the board live in the city and one lives in Ramsay. Four members are indigenous to the

city and one is native to the township. One member is from a nearby western Upper Peninsula community and the seventh member is from Wisconsin.

The members of the board are Finnish, Finnish-Swedish, German-Polish-Austrian, German, Italian, Polish-Slavish, and Polish-Swedish. Five members label themselves as Catholics and two stated that they are Protestants. Several indicated that they do not participate actively as members of their churches. None of the members believes that there currently is any significant degree of religious bigotry in the Bessemer area.

School prayer has not been a prominent issue with the citizens of the Bessemer Area School District, including the members of the board of education. Two members indicated that prayer should be allowed in school but they were not vociferous in their opinions. Several board members believe it would be appropriate to allow prayer in school if all students are in agreement with what the prayer is, but that it should not be permitted if any student is opposed to it. Others indicated that silent prayers can be said by a student at any time without anyone else knowing it. One member believes that public schools in the United States are not an appropriate forum for any type of state sanctioned prayer or any other religious service.

Five of the current board members attended either the Bessemer Township or Bessemer City schools. Five members have children who are graduates of the A.D. Johnston High

School, three have children who attended the St. Sebastian School, and one has two children who are currently attending the Washington School.

All seven members of the board are high school graduates, with four members being graduates of A.D. Johnston High School. Two members have college degrees and another member has five years of education beyond high school.

Three of the four board members who are A.D. Johnston High School graduates stated that they have good memories of their school years. One indicated that the discipline was strict and appropriate. Another stated, "I wish I could go back." The fourth board member who graduated from A.D. Johnston stated that those years were all right but that he does not remember them with great fondness. He indicated that he wishes he would have had an opportunity to take vocational courses in high school, rather than a strictly college preparatory curriculum, because vocational classes would have been of greater value to him.

The members of the board have varied occupations. One works for a newspaper in the printing department, another works as a maintenance man for a ski hill, a third member works independently in farming and machine repair, and another works as a postman in Bessemer. The other three members are employed as an administrator for a low income housing authority, as an anesthetist for a hospital, and as a school administrator.

Three members of the board identified themselves as

Democrats, one stated that he is a Republican, and three said they are politically independent. Most of them indicated that they often vote for the person that they think will do the best job, regardless of party affiliation.

The members of the board have served on the board of education from one to eighteen years. One member stated that the reason he ran for the board was because he felt that he should do something for the community. Another indicated that he wanted to participate in grass roots government but he did not want to serve on the city council. Several members expressed a general interest in education as their reasons for running. Two members stated that one of the reasons they wished to become members was so that they could do whatever possible to maintain a high school in Bessemer.

All of the members of the board indicated that if a new prison were to be built on the Gogebic Range, with an influx of prison employees, they would not object to having Blacks or other minority students attend the Bessemer schools. They also stated that they would not object to employing a Black teacher if that person is the best applicant. They all stated that they do not consider themselves to be prejudiced toward any any ethnic or religious groups. One member indicated, however, that he dislikes individuals who attempt to impose their religious views and standards upon others. Several members indicated that they object to giving members of minority groups preferential treatment. Another member

stated that he dislikes people who are on welfare for a long period of time and they do not attempt to get jobs.

Members of the board indicated that they believe the primary purpose of schools is to provide students with a basic education which will permit them to continue in higher education or to secure employment. One member stated, "We lack frills but I don't think they're necessary." Other members agree that the current curriculum is sufficient, with some exceptions, to provide the students of the district with a good education. Such exceptions include the need to introduce computers into the elementary school curriculum and the need to strengthen the elementary and junior high school science curriculum. Almost all members believe that the current curriculum cannot be reduced without serious damage to the education that students are receiving.

All members of the board indicated that athletics and other extracurricular activities are important to students but that they should not take precedence over academics. Some members believe, however, that the board has supported athletic programs at the expense of academic programs. They stated that no athletic programs have been cut unless there was insufficient student interest in them but that elementary school vocal music and physical education programs with teachers trained in those specialty areas were discontinued.

Most members of the board would like to maintain an independent district with a high school in Bessemer. They

are not, however, willing to maintain an independent school district if the quality of the current curriculum must be lowered. One member stated, "I'm dead set against keeping it open at any cost. If we start to cut curriculum I'll get off the board." He added, "It won't be the end of the world if the kids go to Ironwood."

Some members of the board believe that the district should participate to a greater extent in cooperative programming with other districts. They expressed concern over the small number of students in some classes and indicated that the administration should provide leadership in facilitating such participation.

None of the members of the board indicated that they have a solution to the district's fiscal problems. They are aware that the Bessemer Area School District and other units of government are assessing near the maximum millage allowed under the Michigan Constitution for operational purposes. Several members believe that the only way for the district to remain independent is for the St. Sebastian School to close or for many of the parents of current St. Sebastian students to change the attendance of their children to the Washington School. One board member stated, "Bessemer cannot support two school systems. Either the parochial school goes or the public school goes. If we don't get positive vibes from St. Sebastians during the next year we will need to look at merger." Members of the board are aware, however, that the decision relating to the attendance

of students at St. Sebastian is strictly a private matter for the parents of each student.

Only one member of the board believes that the state should not set minimum curriculum standards for local school districts. One member stated, 'The Michigan Department of Education should determine most of the curriculum for local school districts.' He then added, 'If they dictate, they should also pay.'

One member of the board believes that the role of intermediate school districts should be limited to serving as a liaison between the state department of education and local school districts. Other members indicated, however, that they view the intermediate school district role to be much larger. Several suggested that most local school districts could not afford to provide all of the special education programs and services that are mandated without assistance and that vocational education would not be available for students from small schools if they were not provided by the intermediate school district. Several members stated that an intermediate school district should provide leadership and assistance to local districts in instituting innovative programs, services, and technology.

In summary, the board of education is, in most part, representative of the community it serves. There are, however, several ways in which it does not typify the school district. For example, there is only one woman on the board and there was only one township resident on the board during

the 1986-87 school year and none during 1987-88. There also are no unemployed citizens or welfare recipients on the board. The board does, however, include Democrats, Republicans, Independents, Catholics, Protestants, natives and non-natives. Several members attended the city schools, one attended the township schools, and several attended school elsewhere.

A majority of the members of the board graduated from the A. D. Johnston High School but three members did not. Most members wish to maintain the high school in Bessemer, if possible, and a few indicated that they would do whatever possible to keep it in the city. Several members feel, however, that consolidation would provide the most cost effective way to maintain and improve education in the district. These attitudes and preferences reflect the diversity of opinion that is expressed by the citizens of the school district.

Board members agree with most residents of the school district that the primary purpose of their schools is to provide students with a basic education which will permit them to continue in higher education or to secure employment. They also agree with the majority of citizens in the community that the current curriculum cannot be reduced without serious damage to the education that students are receiving and that athletics and other extracurricular activities are important to students and necessary for maintaining school and community spirit.

Which Options for Providing an Educational Program
to the Youth of the School District are Feasible
and of Sufficient Quality to Merit Consideration?

There are numerous factors which must be considered when major, far-reaching educational decisions, such as consolidation, are being contemplated in a school district. Decisions concerning programs, services, curriculum, policy, and methodology can be reversed or modified if it is determined that a change is needed. A decision to invest large sums of money into the renovation of schools or into the construction of a new school cannot be reversed, however, once the contracts for construction or renovation have been completed. The taxpayers of the district will be obligated to pay the debt even if the new or renovated school is later closed.

Likewise, a decision to consolidate with another school district is final in Michigan once an election is held and the question is approved by the voters. Only special legislation approved by the legislature and governor can reverse such a decision. Such special legislation is very unlikely. It is, therefore, very important that the citizens of the school district conduct a comprehensive examination of the issues so that they can make an informed decision about the future education of their children. Such decisions are among the most important that citizens can make at the grass roots level.

Would the use of various technologies and other alternative methods of delivering the curriculum make it possible to enrich the current curriculum and/or to replace portions of the delivery system to make it more cost effective?

The Bessemer Area School District currently participates in several cooperative programs which greatly increase the number of educational programs, services, and curricular offerings that are made available to the students of the district. These include special education programs and services that are provided by the Gogebic-Ontonagon Intermediate School District (as outlined on pages 91-96) and participation in area vocational education programs, as listed in Appendix A.

A cooperative academic program for all of the public schools of Gogebic County was formed during the 1984-85 school year. The Wakefield Township School District made French I and II, advanced math, and physics available to the other districts and the Ironwood School District made all of its classes available. There have been no Bessemer Area School District students who have taken classes through this arrangement. Participation in this cooperative would, in effect, expand the curriculum at a relatively lower cost than attempting to provide all classes at Bessemer.

The Bessemer School District has shared a home economics teacher with the Wakefield Township School District for several years. The Wakefield High School and the Ironwood

High School are each approximately six miles from the A. D. Johnston High School. A four lane highway with relatively light traffic connects all three communities. This makes travel between the high schools easy, with minimum time spent driving. It is probable that sharing other personnel would allow the districts to reduce their costs and/or increase their program offerings.

All of the schools in Gogebic County have students who participate in the vocational classes held at the Ironwood High School and at Gogebic Community College. Advanced math, advanced science, foreign language, and other classes with small enrollments could be provided cooperatively at the Ironwood High School or at the college during the same time period, with little or no increased costs for transportation. The utilization of teachers who are currently employed by the local districts should make it possible to expand curricular offerings and possibly reduce costs to the participating districts. The local school district that currently employs the teacher could serve as the administrative agency for that class, thereby avoiding problems relating to seniority and other contractual obligations.

Several two-way interactive instructional television systems, funded by the Michigan Department of Education on an experimental basis, are currently being used to teach students in several schools simultaneously, with reported success. One project is located in the eastern Upper Peninsula and another in the rural, northern part of the Lower

Peninsula of Michigan. These projects use transmission towers and are, consequently, very costly. It is possible, however, that the Ironwood, Bessemer, and Wakefield school districts could provide instruction to students in all three districts using the existing cable television network for one-way television, coupled with an interactive telephone system that would allow students in the satellite classes to communicate with the teacher.

Twelve rural school districts in northern Wisconsin are currently using interactive telephone instruction to teach Spanish to students in those districts. The administrator of the Cooperative Educational Service Agency which serves those districts stated that the data indicate the students are learning at a higher rate than students in a traditional foreign language classroom. Expanding the curriculum at Bessemer and other school districts in the western Upper Peninsula should be possible by using this option, at a relatively low cost.

Is maintaining the status quo a feasible option?

Maintaining the current educational programs, services, and curriculum in the current buildings is not a feasible option because of the unsafe and unhealthy physical condition of the buildings. The problems relating to the inadequacy and unsafe condition of the schools (as detailed on pages 116-123) are of such magnitude that other factors do not have to be considered to reach this conclusion.

Is providing an educational program in a new K-12 school, without merger, a feasible option?

There would be numerous advantages and disadvantages associated with maintaining an educational program in a new K-12 school in Bessemer. The advantages include:

1. An independent school system would continue the education-is-important tradition that exists in the community and schools. This focus upon the importance of education would, in all probability, be continued in a new school.

2. The feeling of community that is associated with the schools at Bessemer would be maintained, including the informal support system that exists among teachers, administrators, and members of the community. Parents and citizens would probably be involved in the affairs of the school to a greater degree than they would be if the high school were located in another community.

3. The good relationship that exists, in most part, among the students, faculty, and administration would be maintained.

4. A new facility would provide a safe, healthy, and barrier free environment that would be conducive to learning, with adequate space for regular classes and supportive programs and services. A new facility would be adequate to meet the needs of the new school district for many decades.

5. Maintaining a high school in Bessemer would keep transportation costs and time in transit at a minimum.

6. Maintaining a high school in Bessemer would allow greater participation in extracurricular activities because most students would be able to walk to and from school.

7. Maintaining a high school in Bessemer would allow more Bessemer students to participate actively as members of athletic teams. The 12 varsity basketball players who make the team, for example, would probably be reduced to two or three players in a three-way merger, with possibly one or none as starters on the team.

8. Maintaining a high school in Bessemer would allow continuation of the Gogebic Range athletic rivalry. A consolidated high school would require traveling much longer distances to compete against schools of the same size.

9. The good discipline that exists in the schools would be maintained. It would be easier to control problems relating to substance abuse in a smaller school.

10. A new school would provide a larger play and outdoor activity area if it were constructed on a 20 acre site, as proposed by Daverman (1987).

11. Maintaining a high school in Bessemer would help to maintain the community economically, socially, and culturally. It would continue to serve as the center of many community activities.

12. The education of students in the Bessemer Area School District would remain, to a large degree, under the local control of school board members from the city and township.

The disadvantages that would be associated with maintaining an educational program in a new K-12 school, without merger, include:

1. A weaker curriculum would probably be available than would be provided in a consolidated school district.

2. A quality educational program would probably be more difficult to maintain, if there were an additional decline in student enrollments and state aid, than in a consolidated school district.

3. Fewer opportunities would be available to develop new friends and relationships than would be available at a larger consolidated high school.

4. Fewer extracurricular activities would be available than would be available at a consolidated high school.

5. There would be an additional substantial tax burden to pay for the cost of a new facility. The taxes to pay the debt retirement would probably have to be assessed for 30 years.

Is providing an educational program in renovated schools a feasible option?

Renovation of the Washington School and the A. D. Johnston High School is a feasible option if the citizens of the district are willing to pay for the substantial costs that would be involved in the project. The advantages of renovating the schools are:

1. The costs of renovation, if the Daverman (1987)

estimates are accurate, are less than constructing a new school.

2. Renovated buildings would provide a safe, healthy, and accessible learning environment to the students of the school district. Renovated buildings should be adequate to meet the needs of the district for many decades.

3. Renovation of the high school, without demolition of the old portion of the building, would maintain a building that is of historical importance to the community.

4. Many of the advantages that were listed previously with the construction of a new school would also apply to renovated schools. Those advantages include: maintenance of the education-is-important tradition, maintenance of the feeling of community that is associated with the schools at Bessemer, maintenance of the good relationship that exists among the students, faculty, and administration, keeping transportation costs and time in transit to a minimum, greater participation in extracurricular activities, greater active participation as members of athletic teams, continuation of the Gogebic Range athletic rivalry, maintenance of good discipline, helping to maintain the community economically, socially, and culturally, and maintaining control of education at the city and township level.

The disadvantages associated with renovating the Washington School and the A.D. Johnston High School include many of the ones associated with the construction of a new school in Bessemer. The disadvantages include a more restricted

curriculum than would be provided in a consolidated school district, difficulty in maintaining a quality program if there were an additional decline in student enrollments and state aid, fewer opportunities for students to develop new friends and relationships, fewer extracurricular activities for students, and a substantial tax increase to pay the costs of renovation. An additional disadvantage of renovation, in comparison to new construction, is the lack of adequate outdoor play and activity areas at the Washington School.

Is a three-way merger of the Bessemer, Ironwood, and Wakefield school districts a feasible option?

The Bessemer, Ironwood, and Wakefield school districts have a combined high school enrollment during the 1987-88 school year of 908 students. This student population falls within the 750-1200 high school enrollment range that is recommended by Kehoe (1984). Kehoe states that a high school enrolling 900 students requires 206 square feet per student, on an average.

The Luther L. Wright Junior and Senior High School at Ironwood, which was constructed in 1924, contains 150,892 square feet. There would be 166 square feet per student if all of the high school students who are currently enrolled at the three high schools attended the Ironwood High School, which is 40 square feet per student less than the recommended amount. The Wakefield Junior and Senior High School

contains only 77,000 square feet. It would provide less than one-half of the total area needed to house all of the high school students. The A. D. Johnston High School, if it were renovated, would also provide less than one-half of the total area needed to house all high school students in a three-way merger.

It appears that a three-way consolidation is possible under three different circumstances. First, a merger with all high school students attending the Ironwood High School is feasible if an addition to that school is built to provide additional space and the junior high school students from Ironwood are transported to Bessemer or Wakefield or a new junior high school is constructed or purchased in Ironwood. Second, a three-way merger, with students housed at two high schools, would also be possible if additional space were acquired. Two high schools would not, however, provide many of the advantages of a consolidated high school, including an expanded curriculum. A third option is the construction of a new high school.

The distance from Wakefield to Ironwood is approximately 12 miles, with Bessemer located midway between them. A new high school, located near the population center between Ironwood and Bessemer, would require some additional transportation of students from all three communities. None of the additional travel would be excessive, however. Some students from Wakefield and Bessemer are already transported to the Ironwood High School and to Gogebic Community College

to participate in area vocational education programs. There would, therefore, be very little additional travel involved for them.

The advantages of a new high school to serve students from Ironwood, Bessemer, and Wakefield are:

1. A new high school that is not located in any of the three cities would give students and other citizens from throughout the new district an opportunity to establish equal ownership in the school. It would not be the Ironwood High School or the Bessemer High School or the Wakefield High School. It would be the Gogebic High School.

2. Many civic leaders and other citizens have stated that the Gogebic Range communities would have a better opportunity to prosper if there were more cooperation among the communities and less competition. A new high school that served students from all three districts would be a major step in promoting Gogebic Range cooperation.

3. The Gogebic Range contains numerous old, dilapidated buildings, miles of poor streets and roads, and a general infrastructure that is in need of considerable repair. The construction of a new high school would help to give the Gogebic Range a progressive look and its citizens a feeling that the area is capable of sustaining and improving itself. People would be more desirous of living in an area that has demonstrated a commitment to education and to its future. New businesses would also be more apt to locate in such a community. A new high school would not only help to sustain

the Gogebic community economically, but also socially and culturally. It would serve as the center for many Gogebic community activities.

4. A new facility would provide a safe, healthy, and accessible learning environment, with adequate space for regular classes and various support programs and services. A new facility would be adequate to meet the needs of the Gogebic community for many decades.

5. A larger consolidated school district would be able to provide a more comprehensive curriculum, programs, and services to students at all grade levels.

6. A larger consolidated school district would be able to provide classes near the optimum size rather than having some classes with too many students and others with too few.

7. A new high school would alleviate the crowded conditions that currently exist in many of the Gogebic Range schools. Administrators and teachers would have an opportunity to use the additional space in creative ways for the benefit of elementary and junior high school students. The current Ironwood High School could possibly house a 5-8 middle school for the entire consolidated district, which would include approximately 675 students. This student population falls within the 600-900 range for middle schools that is recommended by Kehoe (1984).

8. The programs for severely and trainable mentally impaired pupils that are operated by the intermediate school district could be moved to a public school, in accordance

with state and federal least restrictive environment policy.

9. If there were an additional decline in student enrollments and state aid it would be easier to maintain a quality educational program in a larger consolidated school district than in three smaller districts.

10. Greater opportunities would be available to the students to develop new friends and relationships in a larger high school than are currently available.

11. More extracurricular activities would be available than are currently available.

The disadvantages associated with having a new consolidated high school include:

1. There would be substantial additional taxes to pay for the cost of the new high school.

2. The feeling of community that is associated with the schools at Bessemer would be diminished, including the informal support system that exists among teachers, administrators, and other citizens. Parents and citizens would probably be involved less in the affairs of the high school than they would be if the high school were located in their home community.

5. Transportation costs and time in transit would increase.

6. The number of students who would participate in extracurricular activities would probably decrease because students could not walk to and from school.

7. Fewer Bessemer Township and Bessemer City students

would participate as members of athletic teams because the number of positions available would be shared by students from throughout the consolidated district.

8. The Gogebic Range athletic rivalry would be over for all practical purposes. Only the Hurley High School, which would be considerably smaller than the consolidated high school, would remain to compete against. Traveling much longer distances to compete against schools of the same size would be required.

9. It could be more difficult to maintain good discipline and to control problems relating to substance abuse in a larger high school.

10. The Bessemer community might be negatively impacted economically, socially, and culturally with the loss of its high school. The center of many community activities would be closed.

11. Board policy decisions would no longer be exclusively under the control of school board members from the city and township. Local control and grass roots participation in government would be diminished.

Is a merger between the Bessemer and Ironwood school districts a feasible option?

The Bessemer and Ironwood school districts have a combined high school enrollment during the 1987-88 school year of 739 students. This student population is near the optimum 750-1200 senior high school enrollment range that is

recommended by Kehoe (1984). Kehoe states that a high school enrolling 900 students requires 206 square feet per student, on an average, and that a high school with 600 students requires 232 square feet per student. A high school with 739 students would, therefore, require about 220 square feet per student.

The Luther L. Wright Junior/Senior High School at Ironwood contains 150,892 square feet. There would be 204 square feet per student if the Bessemer and Ironwood high school students attended that school and the junior high school students from Ironwood attended a school elsewhere. If the Ironwood 7th and 8th grades remained at the high school the number of square feet per student would drop to 152, which is considerably below the acceptable minimum.

A merger of the Ironwood and Bessemer districts, with all high school students attending the Ironwood High School, is, consequently, feasible if the 7th and 8th grade students from Ironwood attend another school. The recommended minimum space per student would not be met at the high school but it would be reasonably close. The Washington School student population is at or near the maximum number recommended for a facility of that size. It, consequently, would not be feasible to have the junior high school students from Ironwood attend the Washington School unless some elementary school students at that school were enrolled elsewhere.

In summary, a merger of the Ironwood and Bessemer districts could not be accomplished by simply closing the

A. D. Johnston High School and having the students attend the Luther L. Wright Junior/Senior High School. A consolidation of the districts would require that additional space be acquired through construction, renovation, lease, or purchase.

The advantages of a two-way merger of the Ironwood and Bessemer school districts are:

1. A larger consolidated school district would be able to provide a more comprehensive curriculum, programs, and services to students at all grade levels.

2. A larger consolidated school district would be able to provide classes near the optimum size rather than having some classes with too many students and others with too few.

3. It would be easier to maintain a quality educational program in a larger consolidated school district than in two smaller districts, if there were an additional decline in student enrollments and state aid.

4. Greater opportunities would be available to the students to develop new friends and relationships than is currently available.

5. More extracurricular activities would be available.

6. If a new high school were constructed it would provide a safe, healthy, and barrier free environment that would be conducive to learning for many decades.

7. The other advantages that were listed under a three-way merger would also apply to a two-way merger. These include the promotion of Gogebic Range cooperation,

helping to give the Gogebic Range a more prosperous look, promotion of a more positive attitude among the citizens of the Gogebic Range, and providing people and businesses with an incentive to settle on the Gogebic Range.

The disadvantages associated with a consolidation of the Bessemer and Ironwood school districts include:

1. The Washington School would have to be renovated and a new high school, junior high school, and/or elementary school would have to be constructed or purchased in order to meet minimum space requirements. This would require a substantial increase in school taxes.

2. The feeling of community that is associated with the schools at Bessemer would be diminished, including the informal support system that exists among teachers, administrators, and citizens in the community. Parents and other citizens would probably be involved less in the affairs of the high school than they would be if the high school were located in their home community.

3. The education is important tradition that has been sustained in the community during the past century could be adversely affected in a consolidation.

4. Transportation costs and time in transit would increase, albeit minimally.

5. The number of students who would participate in extracurricular activities would probably decrease because students could not walk to and from school.

6. Fewer Bessemer Township and Bessemer City students

would participate as members of athletic teams because the number of positions available would be shared by students from throughout the consolidated district.

7. It would be necessary for athletic teams to travel much longer distances to compete against schools of the same size.

8. It could be more difficult to maintain good discipline and to control problems relating to substance abuse in a larger high school.

9. Bessemer would be negatively impacted economically, socially, and culturally with the loss of its high school. The primary center of many community activities would be closed.

10. Board policy decisions would no longer be made exclusively by school board members from the city and township. Local control and grass roots participation in government would be diminished in the city and township.

Is a merger between the Bessemer and Wakefield school districts a feasible option?

The Bessemer and Wakefield school districts have a combined high school enrollment during the 1987-88 school year of 354 students. This student population is considerably below the 750 to 1200 high school enrollment range that is recommended by Kehoe (1984).

Kehoe states that a high school enrolling 600 students requires 232 square feet per student, on an average, and

that a high school with fewer students requires more space per student. The Daverman (1987) study recommends that approximately 275 square feet per student be provided in a high school with 200 students. A high school with 354 students requires an estimated 250 square feet per student to meet program requirements.

The Wakefield Junior/Senior High School is approximately 77,000 square feet. That would equal about 218 square feet per student if the senior high school students from Bessemer and Wakefield were in attendance there during the 1987-88 school year and the junior high school students from Wakefield attended a school elsewhere. However, if the Wakefield 7th and 8th grade students remained at the high school the space would be reduced to about 174 square feet per student, which is considerably below the acceptable minimum.

It is feasible for the Wakefield and Bessemer senior high school students to attend the Wakefield Junior/Senior High School because the available space per student would be reasonably close to the minimum required. The space per student would become closer to the recommended minimum within a few years if current student enrollment projections remain unchanged. It is not feasible, however, to have all of the senior high school students and the Wakefield junior high school students attend that facility.

The 1987-88 student population at the Washington School is at or near the number of pupils recommended for a school

that size. It, consequently, would not be feasible to have the Wakefield junior high school students attend the Washington School unless some of the elementary school students at the Washington School were enrolled elsewhere.

In summary, a merger of the Wakefield and Bessemer school districts could not be accomplished by simply closing the A.D. Johnston High School and having all students attend the other schools in the consolidated district. Additional space would have to be provided through construction, lease, renovation, or purchase.

The advantages of a two-way merger of the Wakefield and Bessemer school districts are:

1. A larger consolidated school district would be able to provide a more comprehensive curriculum, programs, and services to students at all grade levels.

2. A larger school district would be able to provide classes nearer the optimum size, rather than having some classes with too many students and others with too few.

3. It would be easier to maintain a quality educational program in a larger consolidated school district than in two smaller districts if there is an additional decline in student enrollments and state aid.

4. Greater opportunities would be available to the students of the school district to develop new friends and relationships than is currently available.

5. More extracurricular activities would be available to the students.

6. If a new high school were constructed it would provide a safe, healthy, and barrier free learning environment for many decades.

7. Other advantages associated with a new high school that were listed under a three-way merger would also apply to a two-way merger. These include promotion of Gogebic Range cooperation, helping to give the Gogebic Range a more prosperous look, promotion of a more positive attitude among the citizens of the new school district, and providing people and businesses with an incentive to settle in the school district.

The disadvantages associated with a consolidation of the Bessemer and Wakefield school districts include:

1. Renovation, construction, purchase, and/or lease of facilities would be required. This would require a substantial increase in school taxes.

2. The feeling of community that is associated with the schools at Bessemer would be diminished, including the informal support system that exists among teachers, administrators, and citizens in the community. Parents and other citizens would probably be involved less in the affairs of the high school than they would be if the high school is located in their home community.

3. The education is important tradition that has been sustained in the community during the past century could be adversely affected in a consolidation.

4. Fewer high school students would participate in

extracurricular activities because students could not walk to and from school.

5. A Bessemer/Wakefield consolidated high school would contain only about one-half of the minimum student population recommended by Kehoe (1984). This merger could not provide the comprehensive program that a three-way merger would be able to provide.

6. Transportation costs and time in transit would increase, albeit minimally.

7. There would be fewer Bessemer City and Bessemer Township students who could participate as members of athletic teams because the number of positions available would be shared by students from throughout the consolidated district.

8. Bessemer would be negatively impacted economically, socially, and culturally with the loss of its high school. The primary center of many community activities would be closed.

9. Board policy decisions would no longer be made exclusively by school board members from the city and township. Local control and grass roots participation in government would be diminished.

10. The Wakefield High School was constructed in 1926. It does not meet current code requirements relating to barrier free access for physically handicapped persons nor does it have enclosed stairways or an automatic fire protection system.

Would it be feasible to have the high school students attend the Ironwood and/or Wakefield schools on a tuition basis while continuing to operate an elementary and junior high school program?

Michigan law allows the voters of a school district to approve having their students educated in another school district on a tuition basis. The high school at Bessemer could, therefore, be closed and high school students could be transported to the high schools at Ironwood and/or Wakefield, if there were sufficient space to accommodate them and if those districts agreed to accept them.

The Michigan State Aid Act authorizes the payment of state membership aid to a school district which educates nonresident students, when the district of residence pays the tuition, if certain conditions are met. These include the requirement that the district of residence has a millage rate equal to or greater than the providing school district. The Bessemer, Ironwood and Wakefield school districts all receive state membership aid. The Bessemer district levies 33 mills of property tax, the Ironwood district levies 31 mills, and the Wakefield district levies 33 mills during the 1987-88 school year. The Ironwood and Wakefield districts are, therefore, eligible to receive state membership aid for the students from Bessemer that they educate.

If the Bessemer high school students were attending the high schools at Ironwood and/or Wakefield on a tuition

basis during the 1987-88 school year those districts would have received the gross state membership allowance for them. Wakefield would have received \$2828.30 and Ironwood would have received \$2678.10 per student. The Bessemer district also would have had to pay tuition to those districts, the amount being that sum approved by each district.

The Luther L. Wright Junior/Senior High School at Ironwood contains 150,892 square feet and the 7-12 population at that school during the 1987-88 school year is 807 students. A junior/senior high school with 807 students should provide approximately 200 square feet per student, or a total area of 161,400 square feet. It is evident that the Luther L. Wright Junior/Senior High School does not have adequate space to accommodate a large number of tuition students.

The Wakefield Junior/Senior High School contains 77,000 square feet and the 7-12 population during the 1987-88 school year is 258 students. A junior/senior high school with 258 students should provide approximately 250 square feet per student, or a total of about 64,500 square feet. The remaining 12,500 square feet would be able to accommodate about 50 additional students without overcrowding. The 1987-88 A. D. Johnston High School population is, however, 185 students. It is obvious that the problems of the Bessemer District cannot be solved by having the Ironwood and/or Wakefield school districts educate the high school students of the district unless those districts are able to provide additional space.

Summary

Research, using ethnographic methodology, was conducted in the Bessemer Area School District. The objectives of the research were to determine what the district's problems were, to examine the manner in which the community's traditions, values, beliefs, social patterns, preferences, and economics interface with schooling in the community, and to determine which options for providing education to the youth of the district might be feasible.

The Bessemer community was founded in the 1880s when iron ore was discovered. Hardworking and adventurous men and women from Europe and Canada made Bessemer and the surrounding communities boom towns. The ethnic composition today is almost exclusively of mixed European ancestry.

Education was important to the citizens of the community from the earliest days of settlement. Schools were built in most mining locations and residents developed loyalty to the school in their area. They often expressed frustration and anger when the school in their community was closed.

The virgin forests had been harvested on the Gogebic Range by the fifties, iron mining ceased in the sixties, and almost all farming had stopped by the eighties. Winter tourism, with low paying seasonal wages, provides many of the jobs that are available on the Gogebic Range today. A high rate of unemployment has persisted since the sixties. Numerous businessmen and other citizens, in spite of the

high rate of unemployment and the low paying jobs, continue to believe that the area will survive and prosper.

Declining enrollments have been a problem in the school district for six decades, with student populations falling from more than 2000 in the twenties to 530 during the 1987-88 school year. The student population does appear, however, to have stabilized for the foreseeable future.

Voter approval of millage requests has not been a problem to the district but there is a problem with inadequate financial resources. Two major causes of the financial problems are the inequitable funding of public education in Michigan and the lost state membership aid that results from resident students attending the St. Sebastian School.

The curriculum and educational services that are available in the district are, in most part, adequate. The absence of a physical education teacher at the elementary school, an inadequate exposure of pupils to computers at the elementary school, and only two years of a foreign language at the high school are areas in which improvements are needed. Class sizes are a problem, with some having too many students and others having too few.

All known students in the district are enrolled at the public or parochial schools. Few students drop out of school, attendance is good, student achievement is above state and national norms, and there are few problems with inappropriate student behavior. Both administrators and all

teachers meet state certification requirements and all members of the faculty teach in their major or minor areas of preparation.

There have been periods in recent years during which the relationships between the teachers and the board of education/superintendent have been poor. These problems have related primarily to contract negotiations, salaries, and job security. There also has been antagonism between some school employees and some citizens of the district, which again relate to the salaries and wages that employees receive and to the general economic condition of the school district and community.

There also is a problem with insufficient involvement in the affairs of the school district by parents and other citizens. There is, however, considerable informal contact among school employees, members of the board of education, and many residents of the district. The major problem that the school district faces, however, is the inadequacy and unsafe condition of its two schools.

Though the school district has problems, the students, employees, board of education, and citizens continue to promote the education is important tradition that has evolved in the community. School athletics, which are a component of that tradition, also remain important to most students and to many citizens in the community.

There is considerable diversity of opinion about what should be done in relation to the future of public education

in the district. Many people fear that the community will suffer if the high school is closed. Most of them indicate, however, that a good education for the youth of the district must be the primary consideration when the problems and solutions of the district are being considered.

Many residents of the school district have indicated that one of their preferences is to have a three-way merger, with the construction of a new high school, with the Ironwood and Wakefield school districts. Others wish to maintain the high school in Bessemer, if a quality program can be assured. Still others support a merger with either Wakefield or Ironwood. The members of the board of education are representative of their constituency in most ways, including the diversity of opinions about what should be done to solve the problems of the district.

Maintaining the status quo is not an acceptable alternative because of the deplorable condition of the senior high school and, to a lesser degree, the poor condition of the elementary/junior high school. The construction of a new school, without merger, and/or the renovation of one or both schools are alternatives that have many advantages and disadvantages, with the primary disadvantages being higher taxes to pay the costs of modernization and the difficulty of maintaining a quality program because of the inadequate and inequitable state funding of education in Michigan.

A three-way consolidation, with the construction of a new high school, would serve as a stimulus to the economic

growth of the Gogebic Range. It also appears to be the best alternative for providing a comprehensive education to the youth of the three districts.

A merger with the Ironwood and/or Wakefield school districts and the closing of the A. D. Johnston High School would require the construction, purchase, lease, and/or renovation of schools, because those districts do not have adequate space to meet the needs of the combined student populations. Having the high school students attend the Ironwood and/or Wakefield high schools on a tuition basis is not a feasible option either unless those school districts acquire additional space.

CHAPTER VI: ASSERTIONS, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

Numerous rural school districts in the United States face serious problems maintaining an adequate curriculum, programs, and services and keeping school buildings in good condition. Many of these problems are the result of declining student populations and insufficient financial resources. One such district is the Bessemer Area School District in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan.

Ethnographic methodology was used to study the Bessemer Area School District and the community it serves. Seventeen potential problem areas that many rural school districts face were examined to determine which are problems in the Bessemer schools. The manner in which schooling interfaces with the Bessemer community was studied, including finding answers to twelve questions about the traditions, values, beliefs, social patterns, preferences, and economics of the community. In addition, eight options that school authorities and the citizens of the Bessemer Area School District could choose to implement, as a full or partial solution to its problems, were examined.

Assertions

The researcher makes the following assertions that relate to inferences from the findings of the study and to his review of the literature:

1. The Bessemer schools, including the township and city districts prior to their merger, have done and are continuing to do, a commendable job of educating the youth of the community.

2. One important reason why the students have received a good education is because the schools and the community have successfully espoused the belief that education is important.

3. The adequacy and safety of the A. D. Johnston High School has deteriorated to a degree that requires that it be renovated, replaced, or abandoned and the Washington School is in need of major renovation.

4. The Bessemer Area School District is in danger of having its curriculum erode due to insufficient student enrollment and funds.

5. The Bessemer Area School District is in danger of having the relationships among various factions of the school and community deteriorate to a level at which there could be a negative impact upon the quality of the education that students receive.

6. The Bessemer Area School District's problems could be resolved if the Michigan legislature and governor would

fund the public schools and levy the taxes that support public education in an equitable manner.

7. The Bessemer Area School District's problems would be eased considerably if the students at the St. Sebastian School attended the Washington School.

8. A three-way merger of the Bessemer, Ironwood, and Wakefield school districts would provide the students from the Bessemer Area School District with the most comprehensive curriculum, programs, and services that could be made available to them.

9. A two-way merger of the Bessemer and Ironwood districts would provide the second best option for providing a comprehensive curriculum, programs, and services to the students from Bessemer.

10. A two-way merger of the Bessemer and Wakefield districts would provide the third best option for providing a comprehensive curriculum, programs, and services to the students from Bessemer.

11. There is insufficient space in the Wakefield and/or Ironwood schools to permit the closing of the A. D. Johnston High School and the amalgamation of Bessemer students into those high schools without the construction, purchase, or lease of additional space.

12. The construction of a new high school located between Bessemer and Ironwood or between Bessemer and Wakefield, but outside of the municipal limits of the three cities, would encourage students and other citizens from all

parts of the consolidated district to feel that they have ownership in the school. Such a location would also encourage the rapid development of a new support community from throughout the consolidated school district.

13. A three-way merger of the Bessemer, Ironwood, and Wakefield school districts would be a major step in developing cooperation among the Gogebic Range communities.

14. The adoption of alternative methods of providing instruction would make it possible to maintain or enrich the current curriculum if the citizens of the district elect to maintain an independent school district.

15. The individual decisions that the citizens will make at the polls about the future of the school district are value judgments that are relative to each person's education, experience, beliefs, values, and perspective.

Discussion

The achievement of students in rural schools has traditionally been lower than the achievement of students in general (Edington, 1979). The academic achievement of students in the Bessemer schools is, consequently, even more impressive when it is compared with rural schools nationally rather than with the average of all schools in the nation.

The success that the Bessemer schools have had in educating the youth of their community is not an isolated case, however. The rural, small town schools of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan have, as a region, outperformed the

remainder of the state, as a whole, on state educational assessments for many years.

The researcher believes that one of the primary reasons for above average academic achievement in most schools of the Upper Peninsula is the belief by most citizens in the region that education is important, that it can make a positive change in the lives of people. The Upper Peninsula schools that have been the most successful are those that have nurtured this education is important attitude.

There are some communities and schools in the Upper Peninsula in which this generally positive attitude toward education is not as dominant as it is in others. It is important, therefore, that the citizens of a school district who are considering merger realize that it is possible that a less positive attitude toward education could become prevalent in a new consolidated high school.

The inequities that exist in the funding of public K-12 education in Michigan for operational purposes are very large. About \$3,250 per student will be spent in the Bessemer Area School District during the 1987-88 school year. Examples of per pupil spending in other districts are: Lamphere School District, \$6,853; Hale School District, \$2,543; Birmingham School District, \$6,393; Detroit School District, \$3,595 (Spratling, et al., 1988).

The millage that taxpayers in Michigan pay to support their schools varies greatly. The taxpayers in Bessemer are assessed 33 mills to pay for the operation of their schools,

in the Bridgeman School District they pay only 6.28 mills, while in the Fraser School District the citizens pay 43.94 mills for education. The tax levy for schools in the Fraser district is seven times greater than it is in Bridgeman (Spratling, et al., 1988). The amount of taxes that an owner of a \$50,000 home in each of the above districts pays to support the schools in his community are: Bessemer \$825.00; Bridgeman \$157.00; and Fraser \$1098.50.

The inequities that exist for students and taxpayers in Michigan are compounded because the state provides no aid to low valuation school districts for the construction or renovation of buildings. The state aid act guarantees that the millage that is raised by a school district for operational purposes will generate a minimum number of dollars. In the Bessemer district, for example, the guarantee during the 1987-88 school year is \$2828.30 per student, with a 33 mill tax levy. The millage for renovation and construction, however, generates only revenues that the district's valuation will produce, with no matching funds from the state.

If the citizens of the Bessemer School District elect to renovate or replace the A. D. Johnston High School it will require a high debt retirement millage rate for probably 30 years because of the low valuation of the district. One mill in the school district raises only about \$26,000. In contrast, the Onkama School District has a student population that is almost identical to the Bessemer district but one mill there will generate approximately \$60,000

(Michigan Department of Education, 1985-86). The Bridgeman School District, with 843 students and the highest per pupil valuation in the state, can generate approximately \$573,000 with each mill levied (Spratling, et al., 1988).

Many of the problems that out-of-formula school districts in Michigan are having would be resolved if the legislature and governor would enact an equitable funding formula that would demonstrate that they believe that students in low valuation school districts have the same right to a quality education as students in high valuation districts and that construction and renovation costs are just as real to school districts as program costs. The researcher believes, however, that this will happen only via a constitutional amendment.

Previous attempts to amend the Michigan Constitution, which would have changed the method of funding K-12 education, have not been successful, however. It is imperative, therefore, that the citizens of out-of-formula districts work to solve their problems locally rather than waiting to have them solved by politicians in Lansing or Washington.

A danger that districts such as Bessemer face is the slow but steady erosion of class offerings and services due to the lack of adequate funds. For example, dropping the home economics program may not appear to be a very serious cut because only a few students are affected. The following year, however, it may be an advanced math class that will be dropped and then the foreign language program. In a few

years the district could be offering a minimal academic program. The researcher believes, however, that many of these problems could be avoided in the Bessemer district if school authorities aggressively pursued such alternatives as shared programs, shared personnel, and distance learning.

The operation of the St. Sebastian School provides a savings to the state of about \$263,000 during the 1987-88 school year because state membership aid is not paid for the 93 students who attend that school. Paradoxically the Bessemer district loses \$237,577 in state aid because the 84 students at St. Sebastian who are residents of the Bessemer district are not generating state membership aid for the district. The parents of students who attend the St. Sebastian School may, therefore, be the citizens who will be instrumental in deciding the fate of the Bessemer schools.

The erosion of human relations among various groups in the Bessemer schools and its community could lead to more serious problems if an effort is not made by all parties to improve the situation. The researcher believes that the primary causes for the deterioration in human relations have been the disagreement concerning teachers' salaries and the fear by some employees that they will lose their jobs.

The teachers understandably want their salaries to be competitive with those in neighboring schools. The members of the board of education say, however, that the resources are not available to be competitive. Many workers in the district who earn \$15,000 or less per year have a difficult

time understanding why teachers would demand higher salaries when they are already making twenty-five or twenty-six thousand dollars a year for a nine month job.

The ill will that is expressed by adults in the community is often carried into the school by students and school employees. It is important that all parties reflect on the issues from the perspective of those who see things differently so that a better understanding of their points of view can be developed. The concerned parties will not, in most cases, change their opinion about an issue but they may develop a more tolerant attitude toward the other party.

A three-way merger of the Bessemer, Ironwood, and Wakefield school districts would provide the students from the Bessemer district with the most comprehensive curriculum, programs, and services that could be made available to them. A combined high school population of approximately 800-900 students would fall within the population range that is recommended for high schools by many school authorities. Many authorities believe that a high school of that size is large enough to provide comprehensive programs and services but small enough to keep the needs of individual students in mind and also small enough to maintain the good human relations that are so important in all schools.

The researcher believes that a merger with Ironwood would offer a more comprehensive program than a merger with Wakefield. The primary advantages would be a larger high school population, which would permit greater diversity in

secondary and middle school course offerings, an improved curriculum for elementary school students in such areas as specialized art, music, and physical education and more programs in special education at all grade levels to meet the needs of students with various disabilities.

It is important to note, however, that a comprehensive program is not synonymous with a quality education. There are many factors that affect the quality of education other than the number of courses, programs, and services that are provided. As has been previously stated, such elements as the feeling of ownership by students and other citizens, the feeling that school personnel care about and are responsive to the needs of individual students, and an overall attitude in the school and community which promotes the belief that education is an important and serious business are necessary if a school is going to provide a quality education.

The support that schools receive from the communities they serve and the interaction between them are, therefore, very important factors in education. This should not be construed to mean, however, that mergers should not take place because the relationships will be destroyed. The communities that support schools can grow in positive ways.

The elementary schools that once were located throughout the township and city each had their own support communities. When they were closed there usually was some anger and protest expressed. Nevertheless those small communities were successfully integrated into the larger

community that the new school served. Even the annexation of the township schools to the city schools was largely a formality for most township residents. The important factor in those mergers was that almost all students and citizens who became a part of the new community already had, or quickly developed, a feeling of ownership in the new school.

Implications for the Community

The decisions that the citizens of the Bessemer Area School District will make at the polls concerning the future of the district are value judgments. These judgments are made relative to each person's values, beliefs, education, experience, and perspectives. There are no right or wrong decisions but there are decisions that are made by informed and uninformed voters. Citizens should, therefore, do whatever they can to become as knowledgeable about the issues as possible. Reviewing and discussing the following questions provides an outline with which to start.

1. What are the student enrollment projections for the school district and how would these enrollments affect the future operation of the school district?

2. What will the economic future of the school district be and how might this affect the operation of the school district?

3. Do the current programs, services, and curriculum provide a quality education to the students of the district?

4. Would a consolidated school district provide a

greater variety of classes, programs, and services to the youth of the district than is currently being provided? What specific additional classes, programs, and services would be provided? Would the quality of education that currently exists be diminished, maintained, or improved in a consolidated school district?

5. Will the financial resources of the school district be sufficient to maintain a quality educational program? Would the financial resources of a consolidated school district be better able to maintain a quality educational program?

6. Would the positive attitude that most Bessemer School District students have toward their school and learning be diminished in a larger consolidated school? Would it become more difficult to maintain good discipline, keep the school free of drugs, and keep the student dropout rate and absenteeism at a minimum in a larger consolidated high school?

7. Are the current school buildings safe and adequate to meet the needs of the students? Would the Ironwood High School and the Wakefield High School be safe and adequate to meet the needs of the combined student population if there were a consolidation and the high school students attended those schools? Do those buildings meet fire and other state and federal building code requirements? Are all curricular and extracurricular programs accessible to physically handicapped students?

8. Who should be involved in the merger if consolidation is to take place? Would a three-way merger be best? Would a merger with either Ironwood or Wakefield be better?

9. Would the voters in a consolidated school district approve an adequate number of mills to support a quality educational program?

10. Would there be a savings to taxpayers in a consolidated school district?

11. Are the taxpayers willing to pay additional taxes for the construction of a new school and/or the renovation of the current schools?

12. Would the community be negatively impacted if the high school were closed? Would new families with children move to Bessemer if there were no high school? Would families with children, who currently live in Bessemer, move to the community where the high school is located so that their children could participate in extracurricular activities more easily? Would there be a negative economic impact upon the community if the employees who work at the high school are no longer employed in the community and no longer spend much of their income there? Would the community spirit that currently exists in Bessemer be seriously diminished if the high school were closed?

13. Would the relationship that exists between the community and schools be diminished if the high school were in another community? Would there be less parent and citizen involvement in the affairs of the school?

14. Is it more important to provide a greater variety of extracurricular activities, such as would be available in a consolidated district, so that students with different skills and interests would have an opportunity to participate, or fewer activities, such as currently exists, with more Bessemer students having an opportunity to participate in them? e.g. Only a few Bessemer players might be chosen as members of the varsity basketball team in a consolidated district rather than 11 or 12 as is currently the case. However, other Bessemer students might have an opportunity to play hockey in a consolidated school, which is an option they currently do not have.

15. Would the time and costs involved in transporting students to a consolidated high school be excessive?

16. The number of citizens from the Bessemer Area School District who would serve on the board of education of a consolidated school district would be reduced from the current number. Is such diminished grass roots participation in government of any consequence?

17. Would it be of greater benefit to the students of the district to develop new relationships with students from other communities in a consolidated school or to maintain the security and the relationships that exist at A.D. Johnston High School?

18. Would the mostly positive student/teacher/principal relationships that exist at the high school be maintained, diminished, or improved in a larger high school?

Most of these questions do not have clear cut, black and white answers. The responses will be based upon the values and perspectives that each person has. For example, a person who believes that taxes must be kept to a minimum will view the options differently from someone who believes that the costs of education are an investment that must be made if the youth of the school district are to have an opportunity to achieve their potential and the community and the nation are to prosper.

When citizens in small towns and rural communities begin to discuss and debate the pros and cons of consolidating their schools the discussion often erupts into a heated argument, with anger and enmity that often remain in the community for many decades. The researcher believes that such bitterness and rancor can be minimized in a community if citizens remember that:

1. There are no right or wrong choices concerning various educational options. The best that any citizen can do is to make an informed value judgment based upon his or her understanding of the issues.

2. Citizens in a democratic society should participate in the debate and in the legal process that is used for making decisions relating to their schools. In Michigan this involves attending meetings and hearings and then voting. However, once a decision has been made in a legal manner it should be accepted until it can be changed by using the legal procedures that are available.

Recommendations for Further Research

School districts and the communities they serve are very complicated social and political organizations which differ from one another in numerous ways. The ethnographic research methodology that was used to conduct this study provided a richness and variety of information about the Bessemer Area School District and its community that would have been impossible to collect through purely quantitative research methods. This methodology, however, lacks the structure that is found in quantitative research. It is adapted to meet the needs of the researcher and the site being studied. It is, therefore, impossible to replicate a study of this nature.

Cusick (1983) wrote, "There is a generalizability to be had from these one-of-a-kind studies, but it rests not on the promise of proposition-like laws, but on the general sociological assumption that since behavior is bound up with structure, then behavior that occurs in a particular setting may also occur in a similar setting" (p.134). It is possible, consequently, to conduct additional studies which would support or refute several of the assertions and findings made by the researcher in this study.

The researcher believes that it would be of value to have additional research conducted that would focus on the following areas:

1. The importance of communities in determining the

value that the youth of the community place upon education. That is, does the community play a major role in determining whether education is seen as important or not important.

2. The effect that human relations among students, teachers, administrators, members of the board of education, and other groups in the community have on academic achievement and on education in general.

3. The manner in which the inequitable funding of education affects the academic achievement of students.

4. The manner in which insufficient space in a school affects academic achievement and the human relations that exist there.

5. The reasons why some consolidated schools provide an excellent education and have good human relations and others do not.

6. The effect that a consolidation of schools has upon the cooperation between communities in other areas of common concern.

7. The process by which citizens reach a decision relating to their support or opposition to consolidation.

Studies in the above areas would provide school authorities with information that would be very valuable in planning for effective schools.

LIST OF REFERENCES

- Alanen, A. (1981). Finns and the corporate mining environment of the Lake Superior region. In M. Karni (Ed.), Finnish diaspora II: United States (pp.33-61). Toronto: The Multicultural History Society of Ontario.
- Barkell, W., & Salmi, W. (1983). STRIKE! In S. Pyle (Ed.), A most superior land: Life in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan (Vol. IV of the Michigan Heritage Series, pp. 34-41). Lansing: Department of Natural Resources.
- Barker, B., & Logan, S. (1985). Small high schools curricula: Alternative delivery systems for meeting essential elements. Proceedings of the Annual Conference of the Texas Association of Secondary Principals. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 252 371)
- Beck, J., & Kimmel, D. (1981). Curriculum flexibility in small high schools. Small School Forum, 2 (2), 5-6.
- Bernhardt, D. E. (1979). We knew different: The Michigan timber workers' strike of 1937. Iron Mountain, Michigan: Mid-Peninsula Library Cooperative.
- Staff. (1988, January 18). Blanchard to seek school reforms. Ironwood Daily Globe, p. 1.
- Bogdan, R. C., & Biklen, S. K. (1982). Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theory and methods. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, Inc.
- Brodinsky, B. (1981). Declining enrollment- Closing schools: Problems and solutions (AASA Critical Issues Series No. 9). Arlington, Virginia: American Association of School Administrators.
- Bruss, L., & Bryan, D. (1983). Shared programs between adjacent school districts in bordering states: A planning manual. Marquette, MI: Marquette-Alger Intermediate School District. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 251 261)

- Bussard, E. (1981). Planning for declining enrollment in single high school districts. New York: Educational Facilities Labs., Inc. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 204 100)
- Staff. (1986, February 22). Challenge - 86. Ironwood Daily Globe.
- Conant, J. (1959). The American high school today: A first report to interested citizens (1st edition). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Corrigan, G. (1976). Calked boots and cant hooks. Park Falls, WI: MacGregor Litho.
- Cusick, P. (1983). The egalitarian ideal and the American high school: Studies of three schools. New York: Longman.
- Daverman Associates, Inc. (1987, December 21). Feasibility study for Bessemer Area Schools. Ann Arbor: Daverman Associates, Inc.
- DeFoe, B. (1981). Community problem solving and small/rural schools. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 202 629)
- Edington, E. (1979). Rural education: Key policy issues. Proceedings of the Interamerican Congress on Educational Administration. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 178 235)
- Farley, R. (1981). Rural Education: The past 50 years. In G. Bailey and R. Scott (Comps.), Issues and answers in the rural and small school education movement (pp. 2-5). (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 212 448)
- Gordon, R. L. (1980). Interviewing: Strategy, techniques, and tactics. Homewood, Illinois: The Dorsey Press.
- Gregor, T. (1977). Mehinaku: The drama of daily life in a Brazilian Indian village. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Guthrie, J. & Skene, P. (1974). Local control gives way: Education power shift - II. Compact, 17-20.
- Hartzell, T. (1984). Report of the North Central Association team which visited A. D. Johnston High School February 7-8-9, 1984. Boulder, CO: North Central Association.
- Havighurst, W. (1958). Vein of iron: The Pickands-Mather story. Cleveland: World Publishing Co.

- Hill, W. (1983). So many different people. In S. Pyle (Ed.), A most superior land: Life in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan (Vol. IV of the Michigan Heritage Series, pp. 18-23). Lansing: Department of Natural Resources.
- Hobbs, D. (1981a). Rural education: The problems and potential of smallness. The High School Journal, 64, 292-298.
- Hobbs, D. (1981b). The school in the rural community: Issues of costs, education and values. Small School Forum, 2 (3), 7-9.
- Hon, D. (1987, January 14). Report of Accreditation Evaluation: Bessemer A. D. Johnston High School. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Bureau of Accreditation and School Improvement Studies.
- Hon, D. (1988, January 27). Report of Accreditation Evaluation: Bessemer Johnston High School. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Bureau of Accreditation and School Improvement Studies.
- Hubbell, N. (Ed.). (1986, November). Michigan education report. Lansing: Michigan Department of Education.
- Hubbell, N. (Ed.). (1987, September 22). Michigan State Board of Education News, p. 2.
- Jess, J. (1981a). The quest for better rural schools. In G. Bailey & R. Scott (Comps.), Issues and answers in the rural and small school education movement (pp. 10-12). Manhattan: Kansas State University. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 212 448)
- Jess, J. (1981b). Developing positive parent and community involvement in the schooling process. The High School Journal, 64, 284-291.
- Karpus, M. (1986, July 5). The largest crowd ever to witness Fourth of July fireworks at Bessemer.... Ironwood Daily Globe, p. 1.
- Kay, S. (1982). Considerations in evaluating school consolidation proposals. Small school Forum, 4 (1), 8-10.
- Kehoe, R. E. (1984). Options for improving educational opportunities in the Gogebic-Ontonagon Intermediate School District. Ann Arbor: Kehoe School Consulting Services, Inc.

- Kimball, S. T., & Partridge, W. L. (1979). The craft of community study. Gainesville: University of Florida Press.
- Lemmer, V. (1954). History of Gogebic County Michigan (Book one, volume two). Ann Arbor: Michigan Historical Collections.
- Michigan Department of Education. (1980, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1986). Michigan educational assessment program handbook (Reports for the 1980-81 through the 1986-78 school years). Lansing: Michigan Department of Education.
- Michigan Department of Education. (1987, June 29). Michigan public high school dropouts by county and by school district 1985-86 (Grades 9-12). Lansing: Michigan Department of Education, Office of Research and Information.
- Michigan 84th Legislature. (1987). The 1987-88 Michigan school aid act compiled. Lansing: House Fiscal Agency.
- Michigan State Board of Education. (1982). Analysis of Michigan public school revenues and expenditures 1981-82 (Bulletin 1011). Lansing: Michigan Department of Education.
- Michigan State Board of Education. (1986). Analysis of Michigan public school revenues and expenditures 1985-86 (Bulletin 1011). Lansing: Michigan Department of Education.
- Mullins, C. (1973). School district consolidation: Odds are 2 to 1 it'll get you. The American School Board Journal, pp. 23-26, 57.
- Muse, I., Barker, B., & Smith, R. (1983). Rural education in Colorado: Recent research findings. Proceedings of the 3rd Annual Colorado Rural and Small Schools Conference. (ERIC Documentation Reproduction Service No. ED 231 573)
- Peshkin, A. (1978). Growing up American: Schooling and the survival of community. The Univ. of Chicago Press, Chicago.
- Powers, B. (1979). Introduction: Fitting schools to fewer students. In Seymour, N. (Ed.), Rising above decline (p. 1). Boston: Institute for Responsive Education.

- Public high school graduates and nongraduates as a percent of ninth-grade enrollment, 1980-81. (1983, September 21). Education Week, p. 15.
- Rund, M. (Ed.). (1984). Bessemer Michigan centennial souvenir edition: 1884-1984. Ironwood, Michigan: Ironwood Daily Globe.
- Sawyer, A. (1911). A history of the northern peninsula of Michigan and its people: Its mining, lumber and agricultural industries (Volume I). Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Co.
- Schatzman, L. & Strauss, A. L. (1973). Field research: Strategies for a natural sociology. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc.
- Sher, J. (1978). Revitalizing rural education: A legislator's handbook. Washington, DC: National Institute of Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 168 750)
- Skenes, R., & Carlyle, C. (1979). Self determination for rural schools. In N. Seymour (Ed.), Rising above decline (pp. 19-48). Boston: Institute for Responsive Education.
- Spindler, G. (1982). General Introduction. In G. Spindler (Ed.), Doing the ethnography of schooling: Educational anthropology in action (pp. 1-13). New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
- Spindler, G., & Spindler, L. (1982). Roger Harker and Schonhausen: From familiar to strange and back again. In G. Spindler (Ed.), Doing the ethnography of schooling: Educational ethnography in action (pp. 20-43). New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
- Spratling, C., Musial, R., Blossom, T., Chargot, P., Hundley, T., Swickard, J., Everett, D., Heard, J., & Padiernos, M. (1988, March 6). What tax dollars buy in 100 selected Michigan districts. Detroit Free Press, pp. 10A-11A.
- Stevens, E. (1987, October 7). Rural problems jeopardize reform. Education Week, pp. 25-26.
- Swift, D. (1982). New Mexico's Very Small School Districts. Santa Fe: NM State Department of Education, Santa Fe Division of Public School Finance. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 220 256)

- Teachers and School Officers Directory of Gogebic County, Michigan, 1922-23. (1922-23). (Directory on file at the Gogebic-Ontonagon Intermediate School District, Bergland, MI)
- Trethewey, R. (1986, September 16). Declining enrollments force an end to colorful Rangeland football rivalry. The Ironwood Daily Globe, p. 2.
- Truesdell, W. (1972). The dilemma facing the small school. Cedar Falls, IA: University of Northern Iowa. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 059 833)
- Tucker, J. (1988, January 7). November jobless rate increases. The Ironwood Daily Globe, p. 1.
- Virgin, A., & Kinzinger, K. (1980). Education for North York in the eighties. Willowdale, Ontario: North York Board of Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 211 566)
- Vista...Building a better Bessemer. (1986, May 31). Ironwood Daily Globe. pp. 1-24.
- Wachtel, B. (1979). Citizens: Take part! A plan for action. In N. Seymour (Ed.), Rising above decline (pp. 161-193). Boston: Institute for Responsive Education.
- Wilson, B., & Rossman, G. (1986). Collaborative links with the community: Lessons from exemplary secondary schools. Phi Delta Kappan, 67, 708-711.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

A.D. JOHNSTON HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULUM AND REGISTRATION PACKET

APPENDIX A

A.D. JOHNSTON HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULUM AND REGISTRATION PACKET

Curriculum:

The program of studies of each student includes certain required subjects, and other subjects selected on the basis of personal interests. Courses in the curriculum are geared to assist not only those who plan to go to an institution of higher education, but also those who are interested in business education, industrial education, and home economics, and are not planning on more schooling after high school. A counselor, and/or principal, meets with each student, after the student confers with his [sic] parents, to discuss the student's schedule. Parents with questions are encouraged to call the guidance office at 667-0420.

Graduation Requirements:

A total of 18 units in grades 9-12 is required for graduation. (A unit is earned by successfully completing a subject that is taught five times a week for the entire year.)

Required units include:

1. Four years of English (communication skills)
 2. Two years of Mathematics
 3. Two years of Science
 4. Four years of Social Science
 5. One year of Health/Physical Education
 6. Two years of a Foreign Language, Fine or Performing Arts, Vocational Education or Practical Arts, or any combination thereof
 7. One-half year of Computer Education
-
- A. Students are required to take English 9, Civics, Science 9, and 9, and general math or algebra during their freshman year.
 - B. Library science will be incorporated into the English 9 course of study.
 - C. A term paper is required by seniors to meet a requirement for graduation.
 - D. The second year of math and science can be taken at any time.

**TESTING PROGRAM ADMINISTERED BY THE GUIDANCE DEPARTMENT
FOR STUDENTS OF A. D. JOHNSTON HIGH SCHOOL**

<u>GRADE LEVEL</u>	<u>TEST</u>	
9-12	Peabody Vocabulary Test	Optional
10	Vocational Aptitude Battery	Required
10	Michigan Assessment Test	Required
11	National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test- Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude	Optional
11-12	Strong Vocational Interest Inventory	Optional
11-12	Michigan Math Test	Optional
11	American College Test	Required
12	Scholastic Aptitude Test	Optional
12	Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery	Required
12	General Aptitude Test Battery	Optional

GuidelinesBusiness Education:

All students should include one year of typing in their course of study.

Typing I must be taken prior to Shorthand I.

Typing II should be taken either prior to or at the same time as Shorthand I.

To take Shorthand I a student should have a "B" grade in English.

A student should have at least a "C" average in Typing I before taking Typing II.

A two credit course in Office Practice is offered to seniors at Gogebic Community College but students should take secretarial and business courses in their first 3 years of high school before taking this course.

Driver Education:

A student may enroll in Driver Education provided he [sic] is 15 years of age and is not already qualified for a license. Generally, sophomores are enrolled in the course with classroom instruction beginning in the spring and behind-the-wheel instruction during the summer.

English:

In order to graduate a student must have successfully completed 4 years of English. Advanced Composition is highly recommended for college bound students. Speech and term papers are included in English courses.

Fine Arts:

Band, Choir, and Art are available in grades 9 through 12 for students who may be interested. Art I, II, and III are offered to 10th, 11th, and 12th grade students.

1st year Art consists of drawing, painting, and crafts.

2nd year Art consists of advanced painting, pottery, and sculpture.

3rd year Art consists of advanced art, individual problems and photography.

Foreign Language:

With growing involvement of the United States in international business and the increasing multilingual character of American society itself, the importance of a second language in nearly every occupation is evident. Other less tangible values of language study are the pleasurable effects it has on individuals because it furnishes the key to the thinking patterns, culture, and social institutions of a foreign country.

Home Economics:

Home Economics I (8th Grade)
Home Economics II
Home Economics III
Quantity Foods

Industrial Education:

Students have the opportunity to take Shop I, Mechanical Drawing, Shop II, Shop III, at A. D. Johnston High School, plus courses in Auto Mechanics, Drafting, Welding, Computers, Graphic Arts, Building Trades, and Machine Shop at Gogebic Community College in their junior and senior years. Lower level shop courses must be taken in the 9th, 10th, and 11th grades to help qualify a student for the two credit courses listed above.

Mathematics:

Students who plan to go to college should take as much math as possible. Students planning to take Physics or Chemistry should include Algebra II in their curriculum.

Physical Education:

Students have the opportunity to take Physical Education/Health in grades nine through twelve.

Science:

College bound students should take Biology, Chemistry and Physics. Students considering nursing or a career in home economics should include Biology and Chemistry in their course of study. Students who take Chemistry or Physics, should take Algebra I and II first.

Social Studies:

In order to meet graduation requirements each student must successfully complete Civics, World History, American History and Government. One semester courses are offered in Social Problems and General Psychology, which are also recommended for college bound students.

SEQUENCES

(From which majors and minors are earned)

<u>English</u>	<u>Social Sciences</u>	<u>Science</u>	<u>Mathematics</u>
English 9	World History	Gen. Science	Algebra I
English 10	American History	Biology	Plane Geometry
English 11	Civics	Physiology & Anatomy	Algebra II
English 12	Social Problems (1/2)	Chemistry	Adv. Math
Adv. Comp.	General Psych. (1/2)	Physics	Physics
	Government	Earth & Space	Computers
<u>Math-Industrial</u>	<u>Spanish</u>	<u>Home Econ.</u>	<u>Industrial</u>
Geometry	Spanish I	Home Ec. II	Shop I, II, III
Mechanical	Spanish II	Home Ec. III	Mech. Drawing
Drawing		Quantity	Bldg Trades (2)
		Foods (2)	Welding (2)
			Machine Shop (2)
			Auto Mechanics (2)
			Graphic Arts (2)
<u>Secretarial</u>	<u>Business</u>	<u>Fine Arts</u>	
Typing I & II	General Business	Art I & II	
Shorthand	Bookkeeping	Band	
Bookkeeping	Typing I & II	Choir	
	Voc. Retailing (2)		

Extracurricular Activities

Baseball	Intramurals	Ski Team
Basketball	Pep Club	Newsletter Staff
Drama	Student Government	Track
Football	Yearbook Staff	Volleyball

**GOGEBIC COUNTY
VOCATIONAL EDUCATION OFFERINGS**

Classes at the Ironwood High School:

1. Machine Shop
2. Nurse Aide/Orderly
3. Office Occupations
4. Welding

High School Classes at Gogebic Community College:

1. Auto Mechanics
2. Building Trades
3. Commercial Foods
4. Graphic Arts

Community Based Vocational Programs:

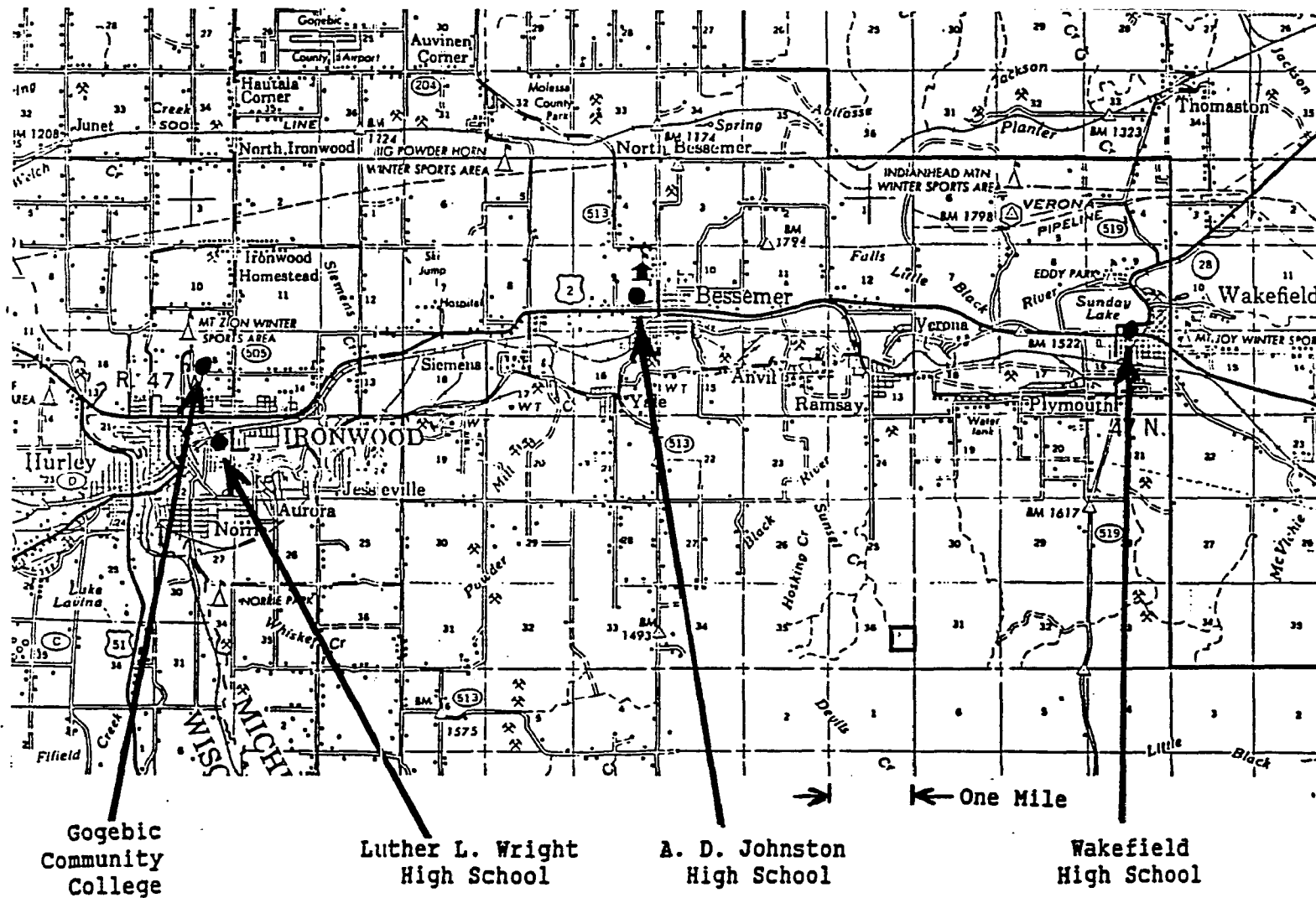
1. Appliance Repair
2. Auto Body
3. Auto Partsman
4. Auto Specialization
5. Bookkeepers
6. Business Data Processing/Programming
7. Dental Assistant
8. Diesel Mechanics
9. Distributive Education
10. Greenhouse Operation & Management
11. Hydraulics & Pneumatics
12. Meat cutting
13. Pharmacy Assistant
14. Radio & TV Broadcasting
15. Sheet Metal
16. Small Engines
17. Upholstering
18. Other

NOTE: Placement in the Community Based Vocational Training Programs depends upon available training stations.

APPENDIX B

**MAP OF THE GOGEBIC RANGE SHOWING THE LOCATION OF SCHOOLS IN
BESSEMER, WAKEFIELD AND IRONWOOD**

APPENDIX B: MAP OF THE GOGEBIC RANGE SHOWING THE LOCATION
OF SCHOOLS IN BESSEMER, WAKEFIELD AND IRONWOOD



APPENDIX C

KEHOE ANALYSIS OF THE HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULUM

APPENDIX C

KEHOE ANALYSIS OF THE HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULUM

<u>SUBJECT AREA</u>	<u>PROGRAMS RECOMMENDED BY THE BUREAU OF SCHOOL SERVICES</u>	<u>PROGRAM OFFERINGS</u>
Language Arts	Four-year sequence provided in college preparatory English.	Yes
	Instruction adapted to average students and slow learners	Yes
	Courses in speech offered	No
	Course in journalism offered	Yes
	Course in dramatics offered	Yes
Mathematics	Four-year sequence in college preparatory math offered	Yes
	One or more units offered in general math for less able students.	Yes
Social Studies	Three or more units offered in social studies including U.S. history, government, world history, geography, etc.	Yes
Science	Laboratory course offered in biology, chemistry, and physics every year.	Yes
	One other laboratory science course offered every year.	Yes
Arts & Crafts	Three or more units of arts and crafts taught in a laboratory setting.	Yes

SUBJECT AREA	PROGRAMS RECOMMENDED BY THE BUREAU OF SCHOOL SERVICES	PROGRAM OFFERINGS
Foreign Languages	At least one four-year sequence offered in a foreign language.	2 yrs. of Spanish are offered
	Foreign language classes have access to a language laboratory.	Yes
Physical Education and Health	Two or more units of physical education offered for boys and girls.	Yes
	At least 1/2 unit of health education is offered.	Yes
Music	Elective offerings in vocal music provided.	Yes, at the noon hour.
	Elective offerings in instrumental music provided.	Yes
Home Economics	Elective offerings in varied home economics programs provided.	Yes
Industrial Education	Electives in beginning and advanced drafting provided.	Yes
	Beginning and advanced courses in industrial education courses such as woods, metals, auto shop, etc. are provided.	Yes
Business Education	Beginning and advanced courses in typing provided.	Yes
	Beginning and advanced courses in shorthand provided.	Yes
	Courses in office practices and/or business machines provided.	No. Available at Skill Center.
	Course(s) in bookkeeping provided.	Yes

SUBJECT AREA	PROGRAMS RECOMMENDED BY THE BUREAU OF SCHOOL SERVICES	PROGRAM OFFERINGS
Programs for Exceptional Students	Special programs for slow learners provided.	Yes
	Special programs for academically talented students provided.	Available at college.
Guidance	Student-counselor ratio of 300 to 1 or less provided	Yes
Library Services	Trained librarian provided.	Yes
	Adequate seating in library	Yes
	Library collection provides at least 3500 volumes or 10 books per student, whichever is greater.	Yes
Co-Curricular Activities	Varied program of activities provided for boys and girls.	Yes
Administration	Full-time principal provided who has been trained for the assignment.	Yes
Vocational Education	Students have access to varied vocational programs on a half-day basis in an area vocational skill center.	Yes
Special Education	All special education students are enrolled in classes designed for them.	Yes