

School district reorganization in Minnesota.

Minnesota.

[St. Paul] : Minnesota Legislative Research Committee, [1952]

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MINNESOTA

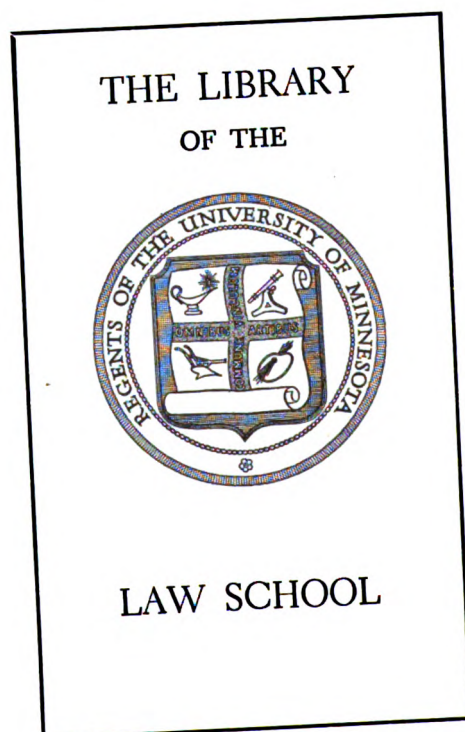
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LEGISLATIVE ^{RE} RESEARCH COMMITTEE

SCHOOL DISTRICT REORGANIZATION

1952

Pub. #56



MINNESOTA



LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH COMMITTEE

SCHOOL DISTRICT REORGANIZATION IN MINNESOTA

Publication No. 56

December 1952

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LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH COMMITTEE

SCHOOL DISTRICT REORGANIZATION
IN MINNESOTA

Research Report issued pursuant to Proposal No. 59:

A PROPOSAL that the Legislative Research Committee make a study of the School District Reorganization Laws of Minnesota, Illinois, North Dakota, Wisconsin and any other state having such a law upon its books to ascertain the progress made to date, changes and amendments proposed, and the reception and attitude of school officials and citizens in general toward the program proposed. The study should bring out the strengths and weaknesses of the present law as it has operated up to the present time in connection with such items as costs, relationship of local to state contributions, improvement of programs offered and other pertinent factors.

Publication No. 56

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B R I E F L Y

Enlargement of school district units has been taking place in the United States since 1838, but it was not until the beginning of the twentieth century that the reorganization movement became more or less national in character. The American public school system in both origin and development is local in nature, and Americans have generally resisted any attempts to remove the control of their schools from local government units. This feeling of distrust for outside interference has prevented in the past, and still is retarding, school district reorganization in many states.

There are new educational needs and services to be fulfilled, and more educational opportunities must be offered to the citizens of tomorrow. The problem facing school authorities is how to develop school units which can offer and maintain these adequate educational programs and services for their citizens at the most economical cost to the taxpayer.

Minnesota is second in the nation in number of school districts. The U. S. Census Bureau reported that in 1951, Nebraska was first among the states with 6,690 school districts, and Minnesota was a close second with 6,479. The third ranking state, Wisconsin, had 5,375 districts or 1,104 less than the Minnesota total.

In Minnesota there are three methods to effect school district enlargement. These are consolidation, annexation-dissolution, and school district reorganization under the School Reorganization Law of 1947. All three methods require local initiative and action. School district reorganization provides for district enlargement based on an over-all county plan; however, the other two methods originate in certain areas of a county only and are based upon limited area rather than any over-all county plan.

The 1947 School Reorganization Law provides for the optional survey of the educational organization in each county by a lay committee selected by school board members in the county and for the subsequent reorganization of these school units if approved by the committee and the citizens residing in these areas at a general election. The method is not a mandatory re-districting law, and local counties could refuse to organize committees. At the present time, 63 of Minnesota's 87 counties have survey committees, 20 counties do not have committees, and in 4 counties the reorganization law did not apply.

The Minnesota Reorganization Law gives rural areas a majority voice in reorganization proposals. County survey committees, by law, must be composed of five rural members and four urban members. In addition, the reorganization proposals must receive a majority vote approval in both the rural and urban areas of the proposed districts.

From July 1, 1947 to July 1, 1952, progress in enlarging and reducing school district units took place in 76 of Minnesota's 87 counties, but the rate of progress varied considerably within these counties. Kittson County reported the largest percentage reduction (86.5%) in school districts during this interval, and Renville County reported the largest numerical reduction (93 units) in school districts. Twelve counties in the state reported a 50% or more reduction in school district units.

On July 1, 1952, there were 6,018 school districts in Minnesota. On July 1, 1947, Minnesota's school districts totaled 7,606. This is a reduction of 1,588 units, or 20.9%, in five years. Of the total numerical reduction in school units, approximately 1,009 units, or 63.5% of the total, were reduced by the reorganization method, and approximately 579 units, or 36.5%, were reduced by consolidation or annexation-dissolution. However, much of the impetus for district enlargement activity in the state can be traced to the 1947 Reorganization Law. Prior to 1947, district enlargement in Minnesota proceeded at a very slow pace.

Under the Minnesota Reorganization Law, the state advisory commission and the county survey committees terminate July 1, 1953. All elections on proposed district reorganization must be held prior to April 1, 1953. Thus, unless the law is re-enacted, enlargement of school districts by this method will be terminated as of July 1, 1953.

Patterns of school district organization and the laws providing for the reorganization of these districts vary widely among the 48 states. Fourteen states have enacted permissive redistricting laws similar to the Minnesota Reorganization Law. Other states have adopted mandatory redistricting laws and others have established financial incentives in their state aid programs which encourage consolidated districts and penalize districts which fail to reorganize.

The LRC contacted seven states, Illinois, Iowa, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, and Wisconsin, in regard to their reorganization laws and the progress of school district enlargement in their states. The degree of local initiative and control, the question of permissive or mandatory county committees, the power of the state commission, if any, and the type of units formed varied considerably. The Minnesota law was quite similar to the Illinois law and in many respects to a model reorganization law developed by the National Education Association.

At least six states, Illinois, Kansas, Montana, Oklahoma, South Carolina, and Texas, have enacted laws providing that school districts which are not or did not maintain a school for a number of years as of a certain date should be disorganized and abolished, and county superintendents or elections should determine to what districts these disorganized areas should be assigned.

INTRODUCTION

The process of school district reorganization is not new in the United States. Reorganization laws were passed as early as 1838 in Massachusetts; however, it was not until the beginning of the twentieth century that the reorganization movement became more or less national in character.

When the need for reorganization of school districts first arose in the states, attempts were made to resolve the problem through local action. Various laws were passed which provided for the merging, consolidation, or annexation of existing districts through local initiative and action. The state merely established procedures to be employed by local citizens and/or local units of government if they desired to combine all or parts of school governmental units. These local methods were responsible for a significant reduction in the total number of school district units in some of the states, but were not too successful in other states.

Regardless of how successful these various early procedures were in reducing the number of district units, they generally did not solve many of the problems of school administration. Reorganization of school districts under these methods often proceeded in a haphazard and inadequate manner since it was not governed by any uniform or over-all state or county plan. In fact, in some instances the consolidated districts created additional problems rather than providing solutions to the school problems.

In origin and development, the American public school system is local in nature, and American citizens have generally resisted any attempts to remove the control of their schools from local government units. This feeling of distrust of outside interference and the resulting resistance has prevented in the past, and still is preventing, school district reorganization in many states.

In order to overcome this distrust some of the states have attempted to develop a method or methods of school district reorganization which would leave the initiative for such changes in the hands of local

citizenry, but would have reorganization which does take place be developed along the lines of an over-all county and/or state plan. Some states, after repeated attempts and efforts to eliminate or reduce the number of small school districts by permissive methods, have adopted mandatory redistricting laws. Others have established financial incentives in their state aid programs which encourage consolidated districts and penalize districts which fail to reorganize.

Need for School District Reorganization

Like all other aspects of our culture, education must advance to meet the needs of a modern technological society. There are new educational needs and services to be fulfilled, and more educational opportunities must be offered to the citizens of tomorrow. The problem facing school authorities is how to develop school governmental units which can offer and maintain these adequate educational programs and services for their citizens at the most economical cost to the taxpayer. Until larger units are established, the newer and expanded educational services cannot be made economically available in all sections of the country. The small rural school districts are often unable to obtain these needed services and facilities, and if they were able to, the excessively high cost per pupil would prevent the adoption of such programs in many areas.

In addition, advancements in the transportation and communication fields have made it possible to bring the children to these new educational services with a minimum of cost and inconvenience. These same advancements have drawn the people away from their small local community groups to larger community centers for employment, recreation, and religious activities, and it is natural that the schools should follow this trend.

Coupled with the demand for new educational services is the marked decline in the number of children of school age in the farming areas and the migration of the farm population to the cities and small villages. Thus, the one- and two-room schools are getting smaller in terms of attendance and more expensive in terms of per pupil costs. The cost of operating all phases of governmental activity has increased tremendously

and taxpayers are surveying all operations of government with a view to lowering costs through more efficient operations. Larger units of school administration give the necessary educational services at the lowest per pupil cost.

Factors Which Tend to Stimulate or Retard Reorganization

As has been pointed out, the most serious obstacle to overcome in formulating a district enlargement program is the resistance of people in local neighborhoods and communities to the removal of small schools. This resistance can be dispelled somewhat through education, explanations of the over-all program to the citizens, and descriptions of the advantages which their children will receive in a larger school. Another hindrance to effective reorganization is the prevalence of poor roads in many localities thus preventing effective school bus transportation systems. A third important factor which tends to retard reorganization is the liberal grants-in-aid programs to small one-room schools found in many of the states. There are other factors which also retard school district reorganization, but many of these are confined to or peculiar to certain localities.

One of the most effective means of stimulating district enlargement has been through the state aid program. In some of the states special aids are given to districts that reorganize or aid is granted for building programs in newly established districts. Another effective stimulus is the widespread distribution of information to rural and urban citizens alike on the advantages which accrue to both through larger units of school administration. Generally, it has been found that when the people of a community become aware of these advantages and increased services, they are more prone to accept reorganization proposals. Thus, school district reorganization must of necessity be a long-range program.

District Enlargement in Minnesota

There are at the present time three methods to effect enlargement of school districts in Minnesota. These are consolidation, annexation-dissolution, and school district reorganization under the school survey law of 1947. The first two methods have been in operation in the state

for a considerable period of time and were the original procedures established in the state to reduce the number of small school district units. These methods originate with the local citizens and proceed along individual district plans rather than any over-all county plan for reorganization. While some noteworthy enlarged districts were established under these methods, the progress toward larger school district units was not sufficient or rapid. However, with the passage of the school reorganization law in 1947, these methods have been used to an increasing extent in counties which did not elect to form a county survey committee under the 1947 Law.

In 1947 the Minnesota Legislature passed the School District Reorganization Law which provided another method for local citizens to enlarge their school administrative units and which provided a new impetus to the district enlargement movement in Minnesota. The law provided for the optional survey of the educational organization in each county by lay committees and for the subsequent reorganization of these school units if approved by the committee and the voters. The method is not a mandatory redistricting law, and local counties could refuse to employ the method. Final determination of all reorganization proposals was given to the people of the districts involved at special elections. This report gives a brief description of the law, the progress of school district enlargement in Minnesota under this law and by the other two methods, and a summary of the laws of selected states and their progress toward reorganization of their school districts.

SCHOOL DISTRICT REORGANIZATION IN MINNESOTA

Minnesota is second in the nation in the number of units of school administration. The U. S. Bureau of Census reported that in 1951 Nebraska was first among the states with 6,690 school districts and Minnesota was a close second with 6,479. The next closest state was Wisconsin with 5,375 districts or 1,104 less than the Minnesota total. Minnesota and Nebraska stand out among the 48 states in this regard. The following tabulation lists the top ten states in number of school districts in 1951 as reported by the U. S. Bureau of Census.

<u>State</u>	<u>School Dis- tricts--1951</u>
Nebraska	6,690
Minnesota	6,479
Wisconsin	5,375
Missouri	4,937
Michigan	4,837
Iowa	4,653
Illinois	4,580
Kansas	4,436
South Dakota	3,398
Pennsylvania	2,519

SOURCE: U. S. Bureau of Census,
Governments in the United
States 1951 (Special Study
Number 29) Washington, 1952.

It will be noted that with the exception of the tenth state, Pennsylvania, all of the states are located in the midwestern area of the United States.

Minnesota's present organization of school districts in many instances leads to inefficiency and inequality to both pupils and taxpayers. When viewed from an over-all standpoint and in comparison with the other states, the need for school district enlargement in the state is apparent and necessary.

1947 School Reorganization Law

Prior to 1947, district enlargement in Minnesota under existing methods proceeded at a very slow pace. In 1947 the Legislature passed

the School Reorganization Law in order to speed up the process of district enlargement in Minnesota.

Permissive County Committee and Advisory State Commission -- The 1947 School Reorganization Law provided for the creation, after a favorable vote of a majority of school board members in the county, of county reorganization survey committees of laymen. The law also created a State Advisory Commission on School Reorganization to assist and counsel the county committees.

Composition of Committees -- Minnesota law requires that the county survey committees be composed of five rural members and four urban members. Members of the committee are selected at meetings of school board members from their respective areas in the county with each school board allowed one vote in the selection of members to the committee. The state advisory commission is composed of nine members who are appointed by the State Board of Education with the stipulation that no more than three members on the commission shall be professionally engaged in education or employees of any school district.

Formulation of Tentative Plan -- After its organization (within 10 days after a favorable vote), the county survey committee meets to elect a chairman and vice-chairman from its membership, and the county superintendent serves as secretary ex officio. The county committees are charged with the responsibility of studying the organization of school districts within their counties and of districts which are located partially in neighboring counties. If a school district is located in more than one county, sub-committees are appointed from each county to formulate a reorganization plan agreeable to both counties. In their study of school district organization in their counties, the committees are guided by three principles formulated by the state advisory commission. These are:

1. Better educational opportunities for all the pupils and inhabitants of the county.
2. More equitable, efficient and economical administration of public schools.

3. More equitable distribution of public school revenues and costs of education.¹

After consultations with trained personnel in education from the department of education and with citizens of the various school districts, the committees draft tentative plans for reorganizing the school districts in their counties. According to law, all tentative reports were to be completed and filed prior to December 1, 1950.

Formulation of Final Plan -- The tentative plan of the county survey committee is filed with the county superintendent and the state advisory commission for advice and counsel. The law also requires that hearings be held on the plans in order that citizens may be given an opportunity to fully understand the plan and to express their views on the proposals. After giving consideration to the matter presented at the hearings and by the state advisory commission, the county survey committee prepares a final report with recommendations and with a map or maps showing the boundaries of the present school districts in the county and the boundaries of the proposed school districts in the county. The final reports of the committees are filed with the commissioner of education and the county superintendents of schools. The latter are also required to furnish each school board member in his county with a copy and to give publicity to the plan. The final reports of each county are open for public inspection in both the state education office and the offices of the county superintendents. By law, final reports were to be completed by June 1, 1951. However, the 1949 Legislature amended the law to authorize school survey committees to amend or revise their final reports when there appeared to be need and justification for such action.

Reorganization Proposals May Be Appealed -- Under the Minnesota law if the people of a district feel that they are being aggrieved by any

1. Minnesota State Advisory Commission on School Reorganization. Second Report of Commission to Minnesota Legislature. January, 1951, p. 10.

proposals in the final county plan, they may appeal to the state advisory commission. The state advisory commission then selects a board of appeals composed of five members who are not residents of the county or counties affected to determine the validity of the appeal.

Elections on Reorganization Proposals -- In the event the final report of the county survey committee recommends any reorganization of school districts, the question of whether such districts should be reorganized is submitted to the legal voters residing in the proposed district only. All elections must be called prior to April 1, 1953. Under the law, the reorganization proposals must receive a majority of votes in both the rural and urban areas.

Cost of Surveys -- County boards are authorized to levy sufficient taxes in excess of any limitations to defray the necessary expenses incurred by county survey committees. The county superintendent is also required to provide clerical and other assistance to the county survey committees. Expenses of the state advisory commission are paid from state funds. The 1947 Legislature appropriated \$50,000 for the biennium 1947-49, \$70,000 for the 1949-51 biennium, and \$66,500 for the 1951-53 biennium for the expenses of the state advisory commission.

Minnesota Law Did Not Repeal Existing Methods of Consolidation -- The 1947 reorganization law did not repeal any other existing methods for consolidating or reorganizing school districts in Minnesota. The law merely enacted another method for accomplishing enlargement of school units.

Termination Date -- Under the present Minnesota law, the state advisory commission and the county survey committees terminate July 1, 1953. All elections on proposed district reorganization must be held prior to April 1, 1953. Thus, unless the law is re-enacted, enlargement of school districts by this method will be terminated as of July 1, 1953.

Should Minnesota Law Be Re-enacted

The state advisory commission in its report to the 1953 Legislature will recommend that the school reorganization law be re-enacted with certain major changes written into the law. This report will not consider the recommendations of the state advisory commission as they will be presented in detail to the Legislature in the 1953 Report of the Commission. It is reported that the commission agreed unanimously that the law should be re-enacted and that certain major changes should be included.

SCHOOL DISTRICT ENLARGEMENT PROGRESS IN MINNESOTA

On July 1, 1952, there were, according to figures released by the Minnesota Department of Education, 6,018 school districts in Minnesota. On July 1, 1947, Minnesota's school district units totaled 7,606. This is a reduction of 1,588 units, or 20.9%, in five years.

Not all of the reduction in number of school district units came as the result of the application of one law or procedure, but much of the impetus for district enlargement activity can be traced in a large measure to the School Reorganization Law passed by the 1947 Legislature. Application of original procedures of this law brought out the need for adequate school district units directly to the people, and as a result, it increased (even in counties where survey committees were turned down) local activity in reorganizing and consolidating their smaller districts. Prior to the passage of the 1947 law, there was only minor activity in enlarging school district units.

Progress toward enlarging and reducing school district units has been noted in 76 of the 87 counties of the state, but the rate of progress varies considerably within these individual counties. Table I presents a summary report by county of school district reductions from July 1, 1947 to July 1, 1952. It will be noted that there were no reductions in the number of school units in 11¹ counties. Kittson County reported the largest percentage reduction (86.8%) and Renville County reported the largest numerical reduction (93 units) in school districts. The following tabulation lists the counties which reported reductions of 50% or more in number of school districts from July 1, 1947 to July 1, 1952:

1. Becker, Benton, Big Stone, Brown, Fillmore, Lac qui Parle, Lake (county unit), Meeker, Olmsted, Rice, and Traverse.

TABLE I
SCHOOL DISTRICT REDUCTIONS IN MINNESOTA
JULY 1, 1947 TO JULY 1, 1952

County	Number of Districts		Reduction	
	7/1/47	7/1/52	Number	Per Cent
Aitkin	102	42	60	58.8
Anoka	57	37	20	35.1
Becker	133	133	0	-
Beltrami	59	27	32	54.2
Benton	64	64	0	-
Big Stone	60	60	0	-
Blue Earth	122	100	22	18.0
Brown	82	82	0	-
Carlton	34	15	19	55.9
Carver	66	52	14	21.2
Cass	23	16	7	30.4
Chippewa	87	76	11	12.6
Chisago	49	27	22	44.9
Clay	102	81	21	20.6
Clearwater	56	41	15	26.8
Cook	7	1	6	85.7
Cottonwood	76	72	4	5.3
Crow Wing	96	80	16	16.7
Dakota	102	53	49	48.0
Dodge	82	75	7	8.5
Douglas	96	81	15	15.6
Faribault	118	41	77	65.3
Fillmore	174	174	0	-
Freeborn	128	123	5	3.9
Goodhue	155	108	47	30.3
Grant	71	16	55	77.5
Hennepin	90	69	21	23.3
Houston	104	90	14	13.5
Hubbard	56	35	21	37.5
Isanti	68	64	4	5.9
Itasca	6	5	1	16.7
Jackson	104	95	9	8.7
Kanabec	57	49	8	14.0
Kandiyuchi	109	101	8	7.3
Kittson	68	9	59	86.8

(Continued next page)

TABLE I
SCHOOL DISTRICT REDUCTIONS IN MINNESOTA
(continued)

County	Number of Districts		Reduction	
	7/1/47	7/1/52	Number	Per Cent
Koochiching	4	3	1	25.0
Lac qui Parle	104	104	0	-
Lake	1	1	0	-
Lake of Woods	11	9	2	18.2
Le Sueur	95	55	40	42.1
Lincoln	76	57	19	25.0
Lyon	98	67	31	31.6
McLeod	83	78	5	6.0
Mahnomen	23	12	11	47.8
Marshall	140	68	72	51.4
Martin	110	81	29	26.4
Meeker	92	92	0	-
Mille Lacs	59	56	3	5.1
Morrison	139	89	50	36.0
Mower	115	91	24	20.9
Murray	113	108	5	4.4
Nicollet	62	49	13	21.0
Nobles	110	101	9	8.2
Norman	103	20	83	80.6
Olmsted	125	125	0	-
Otter Tail	281	244	37	13.2
Pennington	68	54	14	20.6
Pine	108	78	30	27.8
Pipestone	72	65	7	9.7
Polk	213	160	53	24.9
Pope	90	89	1	1.1
Ramsey	30	11	19	63.3
Red Lake	53	33	20	37.7
Redwood	112	110	2	1.8
Renville	131	38	93	71.0
Rice	106	106	0	-
Rock	68	53	15	22.1
Roseau	79	19	60	75.9
St. Louis	29	24	5	17.2
Scott	67	48	19	28.4

(Continued next page)

TABLE I
SCHOOL DISTRICT REDUCTIONS IN MINNESOTA
(continued)

County	Number of Districts		Reduction	
	7/1/47	7/1/52	Number	Per Cent
Sherburne	52	36	16	30.8
Sibley	78	48	30	38.5
Stearns	203	196	7	3.4
Steele	86	83	3	3.5
Stevens	68	66	2	2.9
Swift	93	91	2	2.2
Todd	143	137	6	4.2
Traverse	60	60	0	-
Wabasha	96	94	2	2.1
Wadena	60	59	1	1.7
Waseca	83	76	7	8.4
Washington	65	41	24	36.9
Watsonwan	62	58	4	6.5
Wilkin	80	75	5	6.3
Winona	114	110	4	3.5
Wright	138	132	6	4.3
Yellow Medicine	<u>92</u>	<u>64</u>	<u>28</u>	<u>30.4</u>
	7,606	6,018	1,588	20.9

SOURCE: Minnesota State Advisory Commission on School Reorganization.

Counties Which Reported a 50% or More Reduction
In School District Units, July 1, 1947
to July 1, 1952

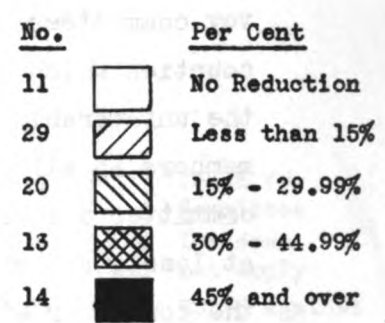
<u>County</u>	<u>Percentage Reduction</u>
Kittson	86.8
Cook	85.7
Norman	80.6
Grant	77.5
Roseau	75.9
Renville	71.0
Faribault	65.3
Ramsey	63.3
Aitkin	58.8
Carlton	55.9
Beltrami	54.2
Marshall	51.4

Map 1 illustrates where the reduction in school district units has taken place in the state. It will be noted that counties which have effected the largest percentage reduction were generally located in the northern area of the state. However, Ramsey, Renville, Faribault, and Grant counties which are located in the central and southern areas of the state effected large reductions.

Activity under 1947 Reorganization Law

The reorganization law of 1947 provided for the holding of meetings of all school board members in each county of the state for the purpose of presenting information about the law and the procedure to be followed and for voting to determine if a county survey committee should be established in the county.

Counties Forming Survey Committees -- At the meetings of school board members held in 83 of Minnesota's 87 counties in the fall of 1947, 63 counties voted to establish committees and 20 counties voted against the creation of survey committees. In the four remaining counties in the state, the law did not apply. However, the election in one of the 63



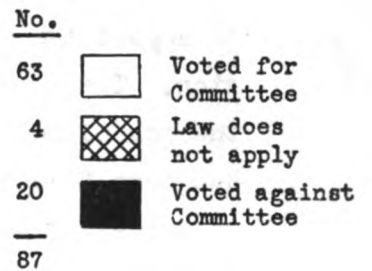
-15-

counties in which the vote was favorable was declared invalid because of a lack of proper notification, and thus, there were 62 counties in the state with functioning survey committees at the beginning of the 1948 calendar year.

The 1949 Legislature in Chapter 666, Laws 1949, provided that the twenty-one counties which did not have survey committees should be given an opportunity to vote a second time on organizing a committee. Only one county (Mahnomen -- the county in which the 1947 favorable vote was invalidated) out of the twenty-one decided to organize a committee.

In most instances the vote for establishing survey committees won with a substantial margin indicating that reorganization was favored by a large majority of school board members in these counties. Appendix Table A presents the vote by county for and against the establishment of school survey committees in the fall of 1947. It will be noted that in some of the counties which voted against establishing survey committees, the margin of the unfavorable vote was also substantial. The fact that the school board members in all twenty counties voted against the establishment of a survey committee a second time would seem to indicate that school board members, at least, are either satisfied with present school district organization in the county or with the other two methods -- consolidation or annexation-dissolution -- for effecting school district enlargement.

Map 2 indicates the counties which have voted for and against the establishment of survey committees. It will be noted that the counties which voted against the organization of the committees are more or less centered in the southwestern and central areas of the state. All the counties (to which the law applied) in the northern area of the state voted to organize survey committees. At the present time, 63 of Minnesota's 87 counties have survey committees, 20 counties do not have committees, and in 4 counties the reorganization law does not apply.



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County Survey Committee Recommendations -- Fifty-four of the 63 county survey committees in Minnesota made extensive recommendations in regard to the organization of school districts within their counties, five county survey committees made only limited recommendations regarding school district organization, and four committees made no recommendations for altering their present school district organization. The number of districts in these counties in 1947, the number of larger administrative units and unassigned districts recommended by their county committees, and the number of districts in these counties as of July 1, 1952, are presented in Table II. This Table indicates the extent to which the various counties in the state have progressed toward school district reorganization as proposed by their county survey committees. Since the county survey reports can be amended at any time, the recommended units are not necessarily the final complete goals of reorganization.

Appeals by School Districts from County Survey Committee Proposals -- Minnesota law permits school boards who feel that their districts have not been treated properly or have been aggrieved in some manner to appeal the decision of the county survey committee to the state commission. The state commission in turn appoints a board of appeals to consider the school boards' appeals. As of July 1, 1951, 81 appeals by school boards had been filed and 26 hearings had been held on their claims. The boards of appeals granted 13 of the appeals involving 21 districts and denied 13 appeals involving 37 districts. Thirteen more of the appeals were withdrawn by the districts when amendments were added to the county final reports, and 10 more were pending before boards of appeals.

Results of Elections under Reorganization Proposals -- A total of 185 elections have been held on reorganization proposals from July 1, 1947 to July 1, 1952, in the counties which formed survey committees, and of this total, 105, or 56.8%, carried and 80 failed. This is a rather large percentage of failures, but it should be pointed out that defeated proposals may be presented to the voters again either in an amended form or the same form. Up to July 1, 1951, 25 proposed districts in 20 different counties in the state approved a reorganization proposal after it was

TABLE II

NUMBER OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS RECOMMENDED BY COUNTY SURVEY COMMITTEES
IN COMPARISON TO SCHOOL DISTRICT TOTALS IN THE COUNTIES
ON JULY 1, 1947 AND JULY 1, 1952

County	Number of Dists. 7/1/47	Co. Comm. Recommendations		Number of Dists. 7/1/52
		Larger Admin. Units	Districts Unassigned	
Aitkin	102	4	-	42
Anoka	57	3	-	37
Becker	133	5	1	133
Beltrami	59	5	1	27
Benton	64	2	-	64
Big Stone	60	5	-	60
Blue Earth	122	No Survey Committee		100
Brown	82	2	63	82
Carlton	34	10	-	15
Carver	66	-	64	52
Cass	23	6	-	16
Chippewa	87	No Survey Committee		76
Chisago	49	5	-	27
Clay	102	7	80	81
Clearwater	56	3	-	41
Cook	7	1	-	1
Cottonwood	76	5	5	72
Crow Wing	96	6	-	80
Dakota	102	7	-	53
Dodge	82	6	-	75
Douglas	96	5	-	81
Faribault	118	10	-	41
Fillmore	174	10	-	174
Freeborn	128	4	-	123
Goodhue	155	7	-	108
Grant	71	No Survey Committee		16
Hennepin	90	10	12	69
Houston	104	5	-	90
Hubbard	56	7	1	35
Isanti	68	2	-	64
Itasca	6	No Survey Committee		5
Jackson	104	No Survey Committee		95
Kanabec	57	2	-	49
Kandiyohi	109	-	110	101
Kittson	68	7	2	9

(Continued next page)

TABLE II
RECOMMENDED SCHOOL DISTRICTS
(Continued)

County	Number of Dists. 7/1/47	Co. Comm. Recommendations		Number of Dists. 7/1/52
		Larger Admin. Units	Districts Unassigned	
Koochiching	4	No Survey Committee		3
Lac qui Parle	104	-	104	104
Lake	1	No Survey Committee		1
Lake of Woods	11	1	-	9
Le Sueur	95	5	8	55
Lincoln	76	No Survey Committee		57
Lyon	98	7	-	67
McLeod	83	6	1	78
Mahnomen	23	- ^a	- ^a	12
Marshall	140	11	30	68
Martin	110	8	-	81
Meeker	92	No Survey Committee		92
Mille Lacs	59	4	-	56
Morrison	139	6	-	89
Mower	115	4	-	91
Murray	113	No Survey Committee		108
Nicollet	62	1	52	49
Nobles	110	No Survey Committee		101
Norman	103	6	-	20
Olmsted	125	4	38	125
Otter Tail	281	No Survey Committee		244
Pennington	68	3	34	54
Pine	108	7	1	78
Pipestone	72	No Survey Committee		65
Polk	213	10	162	160
Pope	90	7	26	89
Ramsey	30	5	-	11
Red Lake	53	3	8	33
Redwood	112	No Survey Committee		110
Renville	131	10	3	38
Rice	106	4	-	106
Rock	68	No Survey Committee		53
Roseau	79	16	2	19
St. Louis	29	4	15	24
Scott	67	-	67	48

(Continued next page)

TABLE II
RECOMMENDED SCHOOL DISTRICTS
(Continued)

County	Number of Dists. 7/1/47	Co. Comm. Recommendations		Number of Dists. 7/1/52
		Larger Admin. Units	Districts Unassigned	
Sherburne	52	6	-	36
Sibley	78	6	-	48
Stearns	203	No Survey Committee		196
Steele	86	4	-	83
Stevens	68	8	1	66
Swift	93	No Survey Committee		91
Todd	143	No Survey Committee		137
Traverse	60	3	3	60
Wabasha	96	5	-	94
Wadena	60	5	-	59
Waseca	83	No Survey Committee		76
Washington	65	6	5	41
Watsonwan	62	No Survey Committee		58
Wilkin	80	4	-	75
Winona	114	No Survey Committee		110
Wright	138	No Survey Committee		132
Yellow Medicine	<u>92</u>	<u>No Survey Committee</u>		<u>64</u>
TOTALS	7,606	330	899	6,018

(a) Not Available

SOURCE: Minnesota State Advisory Commission on School Reorganization.

defeated at the first election (these are included in the 105 total cited in the foregoing). The law permits the county superintendents to hold elections on reorganization proposals up to April 1, 1953, and thus, voters in the 80 proposed districts in which elections failed may reconsider and act favorably on the proposals.

School District Reduction -- Of the total reduction (1,588) in number of school district units which took place from July 1, 1947 to July 1, 1952, 1,009,¹ or 63.5%, came about through the reorganization law. The remaining reduction was by the process of consolidation or annexation-dissolution. The latter generally took place in counties where survey committees were not established, although they were employed to some extent in counties which had survey committees also.

School District Enlargement Activity by Other Methods

As has been pointed out previously, there are two other methods by which school districts can be enlarged in Minnesota. This report will not present a description of these procedures, but will set forth briefly the activity and the progress of school district enlargement by these two methods.

School District Reduction -- As reported previously, there has been a reduction of 1,588 in the number of school districts in Minnesota from July 1, 1947 to July 1, 1952. Of this total, it has been estimated that 579,¹ or 36.5%, of the total reduction, was accomplished by consolidation or annexation-dissolution procedures. To a large extent, these two procedures were employed in the twenty counties where there were no survey committees and generally came about through interest in school district enlargement activity which was taking place in neighboring counties under the 1947 reorganization law. These methods are for the most part cumbersome, require a considerable period of time in order to complete all steps necessary for enlargement, and are dependent upon local initial action in the form of petitions, requests, etc., signed by a certain proportion of

1. Approximate figures only.

the voters residing in the districts. A summary of the activity under consolidation and dissolution-annexation procedures from July 1, 1950 to January 1, 1952 by Minnesota county is presented in Appendix Table B.

SCHOOL REORGANIZATION LAWS IN SELECTED STATES

Patterns of school district organization and the laws providing for the reorganization of these districts vary widely among the 48 states. Broadly speaking, there are three basic types of school district units found in the states -- the county or modified county unit, the town or township unit, and the small local or community school district unit. The latter type is the most prevalent in the states, and with few exceptions, is the common type in the midwestern states.

It is generally in states where the small school district unit is found that the need for reorganization is the most urgent. Oftentimes these small districts do not even maintain schools but only exist legally to receive state aid and/or arrange transportation to surrounding schools for their few remaining pupils. Thus, the taxpayers in these districts have a small tax levy for school purposes (for transportation and/or tuition for pupils) on their property, and their children receive public education without their parents having to pay for the maintenance of a school plant or personnel. In other instances, these small districts may maintain one- or two-room schools for pupil complements of as little as ten or fifteen. This is an expensive operation, and in addition, pupils generally are not able to receive all of the educational services which can be provided to them in a larger school plant. Some of the states have attempted to remedy this problem by establishing the county unit or the modified county unit (larger cities or communities maintain their own independent school units) of school administration, and other states, including Minnesota, have attempted to reorganize present school districts into larger units that can offer and maintain adequate educational programs and services at economical costs per pupil.

Table III presents a summary of the reorganization laws of seven selected states and Minnesota and of the model reorganization law as proposed by the National Education Association. No attempt has been made to analyze all reorganization or consolidation provisions of these states'

school laws. Thus, the reorganization law of an individual state may be silent with respect to a specific procedure concerning a problem or phase of reorganization (for example, distribution or assumption of debts of various districts involved in the reorganization plan) but such function may be accomplished in another section of the state's school code. This would not be brought out in Table III. Progress in these states through the application of these school reorganization laws and by any other district enlargement procedures employed in these states is presented in the Appendix Section of this report.

A Comparison of States' Reorganization Laws

It will be noted on the Table that the Minnesota reorganization law is quite similar to the Illinois law and in many respects to the model reorganization law developed by the National Education Association. This report will not attempt to point out all the various differences prevailing among the states' laws and the model law, but some of the notable differences among them is presented in the following summary.

Permissive or Required County Survey Committees -- One of the main differences between the model law and the Minnesota law is that the county survey committees are optional under Minnesota law and required under the model law. The Illinois and South Dakota reorganization laws are similar to the Minnesota law in this respect, and the laws of Nebraska, North Dakota, Oregon, and Wisconsin follow the model law. Under Iowa law, reorganization surveys and plans have been delegated to the existing County Boards of Education.

The model law does not state that a certain number of members on the county committee must be from the rural or urban areas as does the Minnesota law. However, five (Illinois, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oregon, and Wisconsin) of the seven states' laws are similar to the Minnesota law in this regard.

TABLE III

SUMMARY OF SCHOOL DISTRICT REORGANIZATION LAWS
IN SELECTED STATES AND THE MODEL LAW

	MINNESOTA	ILLINOIS	IOWA	NEBRASKA	NORTH DAKOTA	OREGON	SOUTH DAKOTA	WISCONSIN	MODEL LAW
Date of Enactment	1947	1945	1945	1949	1947	1951 ^a	1951	1947	
County Committees	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Name	Co. Sch. Survey Comm.	Co. Sch. Survey Comm.	Co. Bd. of Edu.	Co. Comm. for Reorg. of Sch. Dist.	Co. Comm. for Sch. Dist. Reorg.	Co. Comm. for Sch. Dist. Reorg.	Co. Comm. for Co. Sch. Dist. Reorg.	Co. Comm. for Co. Sch. Comm.	Co. Comm. for Reorg. of Sch. Dist.
Required in Each County	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes ^b	No	Yes	Yes
Established by	Maj. vote of Sch. Bd. members in Co.	Maj. vote of Sch. Bd. members in Co.	Statute	Statute	Statute	Statute	Petition of 10% of Sch. Bd. members in Co.	Statute	Statute
No. of Members	9 - Rural 5 Urban 4	9 - Rural 5 Urban 4	5	6-10 ^c (Rural Maj. Req.)	3-5 (1 member from each co. comm. dist.)	5-9 Rural 5 and add'l 2-4 if co. has 1st class dist.	7	6 - Rural 3 Urban 3	7
Method of Selection	Elected by Sch. Bd. members of rural and urban dists., resp., at co. mtg.	Elected by Sch. Bd. members of rural and urban dists., resp., at co. mtg.	Elected by people for definite terms.	Elected by mtg. of Sch. Bd. members of co. Bds. at co. mtg.	Elected by reps. of Sch. Dist.	Nominated by Sch. Bd. members and by petition. Elected by people	Elected by Sch. Bd. members of co. in joint mtg.	Elected by Co. Bd. members of co. in joint mtg.	Selected by Bd. members of co. in joint mtg.
Term	Up to 7/1/53	9 mos. after final report.	Co. Bd. of Edu. is a permanent body. Members have 6 yr. terms.	4 yrs. Co. Comm. is a continuous body.	6 yrs. after effective date of Act or earlier if reorg. complete.	Up to 7/1/54	Until reorg. completed with maximum of 5 yrs.	3 yrs. - continuous comm.	Until reorg. is completed with a maximum of 5 yrs.
Compensation	Actual Expenses	Actual Expenses	No add'l to reg. compensation as Bd. member.	Actual expenses	Actual expenses	Not stated	Actual expenses \$4-\$8 per day plus expenses and 6¢ per mi. travel.	Actual expenses	Actual expenses
State Commission	Yes	Yes	No ^d	Yes	Yes	Yes	No ^d	No	Yes
Name	State Advisory Comm. on Sch. Reorg.	State Advisory Comm. on Sch. Reorg.	State Supt. of Public Instruction ^d	State Comm. for Reorg. of Sch. Dist.	State Comm. for State Comm. for Reorg. of Sch. Dist.	State Bd. of Edu. & State Advisory Comm. for Sch. Dist. Reorg.	State Supt. of Public Instruction ^d	State Supt. of Public Instruction ^d	State Comm. for Reorg. of Sch. Dist.
No. of Members	9	9	-----	6 ^e	3	7	-----	-----	9
Majority Membership	Lay	Lay	Professional ^d	Lay	Professional	Lay	Professional ^d	-----	Lay
Method of Selection	Appointed by St. Bd. of Edu.	Appointed by Supt. of Public Instr.	----- ^d	Appointed by Governor	Designated in law (ex officio)	Advisory Bd. appointed by St. Bd. of Edu.	----- ^d	-----	Appointed by Governor
Term	Up to 7/1/53	1/1/52	-----	5 yr. overlapping terms-continuous body.	Indefinite	7/1/54	Indefinite	-----	Until reorg. completed with a maximum of 5 years.

TABLE III (cont'd)

	MINNESOTA	ILLINOIS	IOWA	NEBRASKA	NORTH DAKOTA	OREGON	SOUTH DAKOTA	WISCONSIN	MODEL LAW
<u>Powers and Duties Co. Comm.</u> <u>Prepare a Tentative Plan</u>	Yes	Yes	No	-----	Yes	Yes	Yes	-----	Yes
Required to Hold Public Hearings	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Required to Submit Final Report to State Comm. For Approval For Advice	No Yes	No Yes	No Yes	No Yes	Yes Yes	Yes Yes	Yes Yes	No provision No provision	Yes Yes
May Action of Comm. be Appealed: To State Comm. To Courts	Yes No provision	No provision No provision	----- ^f ----- ^f	No provision No provision	Yes Yes	No provision No provision	Yes Yes	No provision Yes	Yes Yes
<u>Powers and Duties State Comm. Provide Technical Assistance to Co. Comm.</u>	Yes	Yes	Only if re- quested.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No provision	Yes
Have Advisory Powers Only	Yes	Yes	Only if re- quested.	Yes	No	No	No	No provision	No
Have Approval Power	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No provision	Yes
Report on Progress to Leg.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No provision	Yes
<u>Election Procedure</u> <u>Time Limit After Approval</u> <u>to Call Special Election</u>	Prior to 4/1/53 ^g	Within 9 mos.	None specified	60-120 days	None specified	None specified	Within 30 days	Within 30 days, if requested ^h	Within 30 days
Majority Vote Approval Req. in Each Component Dist. Involved in Reorg.	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No
Majority Vote Approval Req. of All Those Voting	No	----- ⁱ	No	No	No	Yes	Yes ^j	No	Yes
Rural and Urban Votes Counted Separately and a Majority of Each Required to Effect Reorg.	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes ^j	Yes	No
Are Debt Assumption and Other Financial Adjust- ments among Districts Determined by Ballot?	No	May be placed	No provision	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	-----	Yes
If Vote Fails, May New Election be Called?	Yes	No provision	No provision	No provision	Yes	No provision	Yes	Yes	Yes
How Soon?	No time limit		-----	-----	No time limit	-----	Same plan - after 1 yr. has elapsed Amended plan - no time limit.	Same plan - after 1 yr. has elapsed Amended plan - no time limit.	Same plan - after 1 yr. has elapsed Amended plan - no time limit

(footnotes on following page)

Source: States' Departments of Public Instruction or Education

FOOTNOTES TO TABLE

- (a) The Oregon State Grange has invoked the referendum law on the Reorganization Act passed by the 1951 Legislature by filing the necessary petition (signed by approximately 25,000 people) within the statutory 90-day period following adjournment of the Legislature.
- (b) Required in all, except counties in which the entire county is organized into a single unified school district.
- (c) 6-10 membership includes the county superintendent as a non-voting member.
- (d) In Iowa and South Dakota, the law does not provide for the creation of state advisory commissions but the State Department of Public Instruction is required to cooperate with the county commissions.
- (e) Membership includes the Superintendent of Public Instruction who is an ex officio member of the State Committee for Reorganization of School Districts.
- (f) In the case of a controversy arising over the organization of joint districts, the matter is submitted to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction for a decision. Any party who is aggrieved by the decision of the State Superintendent may appeal the decision within 30 days to a court of record in one of the counties involved.
- (g) However, the election date cannot be determined until at least 30 days after the last public meeting on the reorganization proposals.
- (h) All reorganization orders are subject to referendum action but such action must be taken within 30 days after an order is issued. If referendum action is not taken within the required time limit, the reorganization order becomes effective without an election.
- (i) The vote of an entire area effected by reorganization is considered as a unit except when it contains a city, village or incorporate town with a population of 500 or more inhabitants. In the latter case the votes within the corporate limits are counted separately from votes outside such areas and a majority vote is required in each before the proposal can be accepted.
- (j) Majority of electors residing within boundaries of the proposed new school district is required except that when the proposed school district contains an Independent School District or an Independent Consolidated School District -- a majority vote outside these districts and within these districts is required.

SOURCE: State's Departments of Public Instruction or Education.

Continuous County Committees -- As has been pointed out, the reorganization law of Minnesota provides for the termination of county committees and the state advisory commission on July 1, 1953. Since the law became effective on July 1, 1947, the length of existence of committees in Minnesota (unless the law is re-enacted) would be six years. The model law provides for county committees to be in existence until reorganization is completed in the county with a maximum of five years. The South Dakota law follows the model law's provision. County committees are terminated 6 years after the effective date of the act or earlier if reorganization is completed according to North Dakota law; they are terminated 9 months after the final report is completed under Illinois law; and they function up to July 1, 1954, under Oregon law. The Nebraska and Wisconsin laws provide for continuous county survey committees with definite terms set for members on these committees. The trend in other states appears to be toward making county committees continuous bodies.

Degree of Local Control -- The degree of local control under the reorganization laws of the eight states and the model law varies considerably. The model school reorganization law provides for the establishment of a state committee which would have the power to formulate and adopt minimum standards which all reorganized districts would have to meet, and it would also have the power to either approve or reject county committees' reorganization plans. The Minnesota law provides for a much greater degree of local control by providing for the establishment of a state commission with advisory powers only and whose functions are mainly that of counseling county committees and acting upon appeals from county committees' plans. The laws of Nebraska and Illinois are similar to the Minnesota law, while the North Dakota and Oregon statutes grant the state commission the power to approve or reject local reorganization plans.

Reorganization laws of Iowa, South Dakota, and Wisconsin do not establish state commissions on reorganization; however, in Iowa and South Dakota, State Superintendents of Public Instruction perform many

of the functions of a state commission. In South Dakota the Superintendent of Public Instruction has the power to approve or reject county plans, but in Iowa he has not. The Wisconsin plan is entirely in the hands of local authorities.

Required Election Vote -- Under the Minnesota reorganization law, elections on reorganization proposals can be held anytime prior to April 1, 1953. Under the Illinois law, they must be called within nine months after the final report is approved. The model law calls for the holding of elections within 30 days after the approval of the county plan by the state committee. The same time limit is specified in the South Dakota and Wisconsin laws with the exception that elections are not required under the Wisconsin statute unless a referendum is called for on the proposal. The Nebraska statute provides for the calling of elections within 60 to 120 days after approval of the county plan, and in the remaining states, no definite time limit is imposed. It should be pointed out that under the laws of all the states and the model law, ample time is provided for public hearings on the reorganization proposals both before the county committees and the state committee.

Counting Election Vote -- Another major difference between the Minnesota law and the model law is in the election procedure for determining if the proposal has carried. The model law provides that the proposed reorganization plan must receive a majority vote approval of all those voting on the plan. In Minnesota the law requires that the rural and urban vote be counted separately and that a majority of each is required before the vote is declared favorable. Four other states, Illinois, Nebraska, South Dakota, and Wisconsin, follow the provision in the Minnesota law of counting rural and urban votes separately and requiring a majority vote approval in each. Oregon is the only state in the group which follows the model law provision in this respect. The Iowa and North Dakota laws require a majority vote approval in each component district involved in reorganization before the plan is considered adopted.

If a reorganization election fails, under Minnesota law, the county superintendent with the approval of the county survey committee may call another election to submit the same proposal or an amended proposal to the voters. The model law provides that one year must elapse before the same proposal that was defeated may be re-submitted to the voters, but if the defeated proposal is amended or a new plan devised, it may be submitted at any time. The North Dakota law follows the Minnesota procedure, and the laws of South Dakota and Wisconsin are similar to the model law in this respect. The laws of Illinois, Iowa, Nebraska and Oregon were silent on this procedure.

Definite Time Schedule in Law -- With the exception of the laws of Nebraska and Iowa, a definite time schedule is established in the laws of the other states and in the model law to effect reorganization. There are, of course, wide variances in the amount of time allotted for each step in the reorganization procedures in the states. The model law and the laws of North Dakota and South Dakota permit the state commission to extend the time schedule if the county committees should encounter difficulty in formulating a plan of reorganization. The South Dakota law also provides that if no reorganization is effected in the county by July 1, 1956, citizens may petition for the formation of a new survey committee.

Cancellation of Other Methods of District Enlargement -- The model law provides that during the existence of the county committees, the only legal procedure for the reorganization of school districts is to be through the reorganization act itself. The Minnesota law does not provide for the abolishment of all other methods of district enlargement, and as far as could be determined, none of the other states have such a provision in their laws. A similar provision was written into the 1945 Iowa Reorganization Act in 1947 which provided that no district boundary changes could be made except under the provisions of the reorganization act until June 30, 1953. This section of the Iowa law was repealed in 1951.

Reorganization Developments in Other States

Since 1945, redistricting of school units has taken place in at least 36 states, and of this number, 14¹ states have enacted permissive redistricting laws which are similar to the Minnesota reorganization law. The degree of local initiative and control, the power of the state commission, if any, and the type of units formed varies considerably among the states. Mandatory redistricting, especially toward county units, took place in a number of the states.

Abolition of Districts Not Maintaining Schools -- At least six states, Illinois, Kansas, Montana, Oklahoma, South Carolina, and Texas, have passed laws providing that school districts which are not or did not maintain a school for a number of years as of a certain date should be disorganized and abolished, and county superintendents or elections should determine to what school districts these disorganized areas should be assigned. Other states have provided that such districts and districts which maintain schools below a minimum pupil size should be attached to the county unit of school administration.

Other Developments -- The Michigan and Montana Legislatures passed laws which permit the merger of non-contiguous territory into school districts, and at least two states, Idaho and Wyoming, have made their county survey committees continuous bodies and have authorized the continuation of district enlargement by reorganization indefinitely. In some of the states (Kansas) certain phases of school reorganization laws have been declared unconstitutional by the courts, and in other states (for example, Colorado) survey laws have been amended to permit a greater degree of local control and initiative.

National Commission on School District Reorganization Report

After studying the experiences of seven² states in the reorganization of their school districts, the National Commission on School

1. California, Colorado, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.
2. Arkansas, Kansas, Iowa, Illinois, New York, Washington, and W. Virginia.

District Reorganization (a group of citizens and professional educators who studied school district organization under a project sponsored by the University of Chicago and the National Education Association) set forth a group of eight conclusions regarding school district reorganization. These eight principles are quoted below:

1. Enabling legislation seeking a comprehensive statewide modernization of school district organization should include effective procedures for initiating reorganization and a definite time limit for action on the part of responsible officials.
2. Programs of reorganization must be adequately financed if they are to become effective.
3. New units of school administration should bear a satisfactory relationship to long-established practices of community participation in school government.
4. Programs of school reorganization should be preceded by careful study of educational needs and of the resources available for meeting them.
5. Reorganization committees should be composed of lay personnel and should be assigned nonmember professional educators to assist them.
6. Reorganization plans should provide for local hearings to acquaint people with proposals and to permit modifications in the light of community thinking.
7. Reorganization procedure should provide for a state reviewing authority to consider proposed districts in their relation to other areas and the school system of the state as a whole.
8. School district organization should be effected by direct majority vote of the people in the area affected at a special election or in a general public meeting; or by a board or official given discretionary authority to reorganize school districts under proper safeguards as to principles and standards to be followed; or by direct action of the legislature itself.¹

1. National Commission on School District Reorganization. Your School District. Published by Department of Rural Education, National Education Association, Washington, 1948, p. 125.

APPENDIX

School District Reorganization Progress in Selected States

The following pages summarize briefly the progress of school district reorganization in seven states, Illinois, Iowa, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, and Wisconsin, and also present a description of the time schedule proposed for accomplishing school district reorganization in the Model School District Reorganization Law prepared by the National Education Association.

Information in regard to the reductions in school district units in the states was obtained from state officials or from the latest U. S. Census figures available on the number of school district units in these states. However, it should be pointed out that the school reorganization process is not entirely responsible for these reductions. There are generally other methods for effecting district enlargement in the states, and these methods, along with the school survey method, account for the decreases in school district units among the states.

Illinois

No. of Counties in state	102
Counties forming committees	101
No. of School Districts -- 1945	11,955
No. of School Districts -- March '51	3,200*
Reduction in School Districts:	
Number	8,755*
Per Cent	<u>73.2</u>

*Approximate figures -- total reduction is not due entirely to the reorganization law.

As was noted in Table III, the Illinois School Reorganization Law is similar to the Minnesota law in most of its provisions. However, Illinois has progressed more rapidly toward reducing its number of small districts than has Minnesota. This more rapid progress can be traced in part to the fact that the Illinois school reorganization law was passed two years prior to the Minnesota law and to the Illinois state school aid law which limits aid to districts of minimum enrollments, thus encouraging consolidation.

Under the Illinois law, county committees were to be organized prior to December 15, 1945 (the 1947 Legislature amended the law to permit counties which did not organize under the 1945 law to organize

committees no later than December 15, 1947). County committees formed in 1945 were required to submit a tentative report to their county superintendents before June 1, 1947, and committees organized in 1947 were required to submit their report before June 1, 1949. Final reports were due by January 1, 1948, (1945 Law), or by January 1, 1950, (if organized under the 1947 amendment). Elections were required to be held within nine months after the final report was filed. This time schedule is considerably ahead of the Minnesota schedule.

The Illinois Legislature appropriated \$115,000 for the fiscal years 1946 and 1947 to carry out the provisions of the School Reorganization Act and to assist the county survey committees. Another \$20,700 was appropriated for the 1948 and 1949 fiscal years.

There are other methods to effect school district enlargement in Illinois. In 1947 the Illinois Legislature passed the Community Unit School District Act which provided that any contiguous and compact territory having a population of not less than 2,000 nor more than 500,000 and an equalized assessed valuation of not less than six million dollars and not part of another community unit school district could petition to be organized as a community unit school district. This act and the reorganization act account for the major part of the school district enlargement in Illinois.

The Illinois Department of Public Instruction reported to the LRC that the citizens of that state were taking a very receptive attitude toward reorganization of school districts.

Iowa

No. of Counties in state	99
Counties required to make surveys	99
No. of School Districts -- 1941	4,869*
No. of School Districts -- 1951	4,653**
Reduction in School Districts:	
Number	216
Per Cent	<u>4.4</u>

*Anderson, William. The Units of Government in the United States.

**U. S. Bureau of Census. Governments in the United States 1951.

Iowa has made only limited progress in reducing its number of school districts. This small decrease in units can be traced in part to a 1947 provision to the original Iowa reorganization act passed in 1945 which provided that no district boundary changes could be made, except under the provisions of the reorganization act itself, until June 30, 1953. This prevented any mergers or consolidations of districts until the over-all county plan was

developed, and after the plan was developed, it prevented such boundary changes unless they corresponded with the recommendations in the county plan. This provision of the law was repealed by the 1951 Iowa Legislature.

The Iowa reorganization law does not create county committees but instead directs the existing county boards of education in each county of the state to make surveys of the school districts in their counties and to formulate a reorganization plan. The county boards of education were required to initiate such studies within 6 months after May 9, 1947.

The 1947 Iowa General Assembly appropriated \$500 to each county to help defray the costs of conducting the county surveys. However, the reorganization act made no provision for special aid to reorganized districts to encourage reorganization, and school aid funds were not to be withheld from any district if it failed to comply with an order for reorganization.

It was reported to the LRC that a majority of the professional people in the educational field in Iowa are not satisfied with the present redistricting legislation and feel that it will be necessary to develop some standards for administrative units and perhaps some incentive aids in the Iowa aid program before desirable basic units can be formed.

Nebraska

All counties in Nebraska are required to form survey committees.

The State Reorganization Commission reported to the LRC that since the passage of the reorganization act in 1949, there has been eliminated 320 school districts.

No. of School Districts -- 1941	7,192*
No. of School Districts -- 1951	6,690**

Reduction in School Districts:

Number	502
Per Cent	<u>7.0</u>

*Anderson, William. The Units of Government in the United States.

**U. S. Bureau of Census. Governments in the United States 1951.

As will be noted in the tabulation above, the largest share of Nebraska's reduction in school district units has been accomplished as a result of the application of the School Reorganization Act passed in 1949. However, the rate of progress in the state toward fewer units of school administration is slow.

The Nebraska law requires all counties in the state to organize survey committees within 120 days after August 27, 1949. However, no other time schedule was established by the law. The county committees were made continuous bodies with specified terms of office for committee members.

Funds were appropriated for the expenses of the state committee only, and there is no provision in the law for granting special aid to reorganized districts to encourage reorganization of school districts.

The reorganization act did not repeal any existing methods of reorganization available to school districts in Nebraska, but from the tabulation presented in the foregoing, it would appear that other methods to effect reorganization were not used to any great extent.

Education officials in the state reported that reorganization of districts is making progress in Nebraska, but they feel that it must of necessity be slow at the start in order to sell citizens on the proposition and the benefits which are derived from reorganization.

North Dakota

All counties in North Dakota are required to form survey committees. Surveys have been completed in 52 of North Dakota's 53 counties.

No. of School Districts -- 1947	2,271
No. of School Districts -- 7/1/51	2,140

Reduction in School Districts:

Number	<u>131</u>
Per Cent	<u>5.8</u>

The North Dakota reorganization act required all counties in the state to form a county school survey committee within six months after the effective date of the Act (July 1, 1947). The law provides that within nine months after its organization, the county committee is required to make a comprehensive study of the county school system, and within a year and a half after its selection, the committee must submit to the state committee a comprehensive plan for reorganization of school districts within the county. However, the law does permit the state committee to grant an extension of time from this schedule to the county committees if they encounter difficulties in formulating their plans.

The North Dakota Department of Public Instruction reported to the LRC that as of July 1, 1951, county surveys had been completed in 52 counties and that 23 of these counties had submitted a comprehensive plan. It would appear that an extension of time has been granted to approximately 60% of the counties in the state. The Department reported that 69 elections have been held on reorganization plans in the state and that of this number, 42 have carried with 3 of these later invalidated by the courts.

The 1947 North Dakota Legislature appropriated \$60,000 to carry out the provisions of the Act, and the 1951 Legislature appropriated \$10,000 for the same purpose. The North Dakota law contains no provisions regarding special aids to reorganized districts to encourage reorganization or any exclusions of present aids to districts not meeting reorganization standards.

The law permits the county committees from time to time prior to presenting their comprehensive plans to submit to the state committee reorganization plans for one or more districts within the county. However, such plans must fit into and be part of the comprehensive county plan. The law also provides that the boundaries established under the reorganization procedure cannot be altered within 5 years except upon recommendations of the county superintendent and approval by the county committee and the state committee during their existence. Voluntary proposals for organization or alteration of school districts may be submitted by the county commissioners or the county superintendent to the county committee and to the state committee for approval.

Oregon

The Oregon Reorganization Act was passed by the 1951 Legislature, but the Oregon State Grange invoked the state's referendum provision on the law by filing the necessary petition signed by approximately 25,000 persons within the required 90-day period following adjournment of the Legislature. The effective date of the Act now depends on the outcome of the vote in the November, 1952, general election. If the vote is favorable, the law will go into effect in 30 days after the election; however, a negative vote will repeal it entirely.

The Oregon Assistant Superintendent of Public Instruction reported to the IRC that consolidations under the existing laws of Oregon are being accomplished at the rate of about 75 to 100 districts per year. He reported that in 1940 Oregon had approximately 2,100 districts, while at the present time, the total is approximately 1,033 districts. This is a reduction of 1,067 or 51.8%.

The Legislature appropriated \$60,000 per year for four years to carry out the provisions of the Act, but no mention was made in the Act of special aids to encourage reorganization or of the exclusion of aid to districts not meeting reorganization standards. The Act also provides that the Oregon State Board of Education will become responsible for continuing the development of a school reorganization program after the expiration of the present act on June 30, 1954.

South Dakota

As of January 7, 1952: 3 out of 67 counties have organized committees.
2 additional counties have scheduled meetings to select committees.

No. of School Districts -- 1941	3,429*
No. of School Districts -- 1951	3,398**

Reduction in School Districts:

Number	<u>31</u>
Per Cent	<u>.9</u>

*Anderson, William. The Units of Government in the United States.
**U. S. Bureau of Census. Governments in the United States 1951.

The South Dakota reorganization act was passed by the 1951 Legislature. Prior to the passage of this Act very little progress was made in the state toward school district enlargement. Under the South Dakota law, counties are not required to form county committees. However, in the event a county does choose to form a county survey committee, the committee must complete a preliminary written plan for reorganization in the county within one year after the date of the convening of the county convention which selects committee members. The county committee's final plan according to law must be submitted to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction within 18 months after the creation of the county committee. However, if the county committees encounter difficulties, the State Superintendent may grant a time extension up to six months. The law also provides that if no reorganization is effected in the county by the committee by July 1, 1956, a new county committee may be formed upon petition of 15% of the voters casting votes for governor in the last general election.

The South Dakota law permits the county committees to submit to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction from time to time reorganization plans for one or more districts within the county if they fit into and become part of the committee's comprehensive plan. The law does not repeal any other existing reorganization procedures in South Dakota and provides for continued reorganization activity even after the county committees are dissolved by delegating the dissolved committee's functions to the county superintendent.

The South Dakota law provides for no special state aid to reorganized districts which might encourage reorganization.

Wisconsin

All counties in Wisconsin are required to form a county school committee.

No. of School Districts -- 1941	7,394*
No. of School Districts -- 1951	5,375**

Reduction in School Districts:

Number	<u>2,019</u>
Per Cent	<u>27.3</u>

*Anderson, William. The Units of Government in the United States.

**U. S. Bureau of Census. Governments in the United States 1951.

Wisconsin has made progress in eliminating school district units. Under provisions of the Wisconsin reorganization act passed in 1947, all counties in the state were required to form a county school committee for the purpose of surveying the organization of school districts within the county.

The Wisconsin law establishes a time schedule for all the county committees. Every county committee (with the exception of the Milwaukee County Committee) was required to submit a reorganization plan by July 1, 1951, or the committee members would be automatically removed from office and a new committee elected by the county board within 90 days. Milwaukee County was given until July 1, 1953, to submit its plan. Any newly elected committee was required to prepare a reorganization plan within one year of its appointment.

The Wisconsin law contains no incentive state aid provision to reorganized districts.

It is reported that there are three different agencies legally authorized to reorganize school districts in Wisconsin. These often become competitive under certain conditions and the action of one agency can thwart the intended action of another.

Model Law¹

The Model School District Reorganization Law as proposed by the National Education Association formulates a certain time schedule to guide states which are contemplating enacting or amending reorganization laws. The model law requires a county committee to be formed in each county of the state within three months after the enactment of the law by the legislature. County committees are given one year after the date of the county convention to complete a preliminary written plan for reorganization

1. National Education Association, Research Division and Division of Rural Service (November, 1948) as reported in Tompkins, Dorothy C., Reorganization of School Districts, University of California, Bureau of Public Administration, November, 1951, pp. 32-43.

of school districts of their county. Final reorganization plans must be submitted to the state commission for approval within 18 months after the creation of the county committee, but if the county committee encounters difficulties, the state commission is empowered to grant a time extension of up to six months.

Under the model law, reorganized districts are to receive the regular school aids provided by law, but the amount a reorganized district receives cannot be less than the aggregate state aid to which the previous districts would have been entitled proportionately prior to reorganization. The law also provides an appropriation to the state commission to provide assistance to and to defray the expenses of the several county committees and the state commission.

The model law provides that during the life of the county committees, the only legal procedures for reorganization of school districts is to be through the reorganization act. All other laws in the state which provide means or procedures for reorganization of school districts and/or the change in school districts' boundaries are repealed. When the entire county has been organized or at the end of five years, whichever is earlier, the county committees are dissolved and their functions are devolved upon the county boards of education or county superintendents. If further reorganization is deemed necessary, school districts are to submit proposed changes to the state office for approval. The proposals, if approved, are to be submitted to the voters in a similar manner as prescribed in the reorganization act.

STATISTICAL APPENDIX

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APPENDIX TABLE A

REPORT OF VOTE ON ORGANIZATION OF COUNTY SCHOOL
SURVEY COMMITTEES BY MINNESOTA COUNTY

County	Vote		Margin	
	For	Against	For	Against
Aitkin	89	13	76	-
Anoka	56	5	51	-
Becker	85	43	42	-
Beltrami	72	6	66	-
Benton	86	21	65	-
Big Stone	72	45	27	-
Blue Earth	91	175	-	84
Brown	83	61	22	-
Carlton	63	3	60	-
Carver	72	20	52	-
Cass	51	6	45	-
Chippewa	91	98	-	7
Chisago	54	25	29	-
Clay	144	88	56	-
Clearwater	70	8	62	-
Cook	Special Survey Committee			
Cottonwood	91	53	38	-
Crow Wing	126	36	90	-
Dakota	132	44	88	-
Dodge	121	38	83	-
Douglas	83	54	29	-
Faribault	95	61	34	-
Fillmore	200	75	125	-
Freeborn	113	69	44	-
Goodhue	142	112	30	-
Grant	74	87	-	13
Hennepin	102	51	51	-
Houston	122	38	84	-
Hubbard	83	23	60	-
Isanti	87	28	59	-
Itasca	Special Survey Committee			
Jackson	82	107	-	25
Kanabec	71	29	42	-
Kandiyohi	119	57	62	-
Kittson	129	6	123	-

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APPENDIX TABLE A

REPORT OF VOTE ON ORGANIZATION OF COUNTY SCHOOL
SURVEY COMMITTEES BY MINNESOTA COUNTY
(Continued)

County	Vote		Margin	
	For	Against	For	Against
Koochiching		Statute Not Applicable		
Lac qui Parle	110	97	13	-
Lake		Statute Not Applicable		
Lake of Woods	23	1	22	-
Le Sueur	86	48	38	-
Lincoln	48	113	-	65
Lyon	88	63	25	-
McLeod	94	61	33	-
Mahnomen	37*	11*	26	-
Marshall	169	39	130	-
Martin	115	111	4	-
Meeker	65	137	-	72
Mille Lacs	82	13	69	-
Morrison	211	93	118	-
Mower	118	13	105	-
Murray	39	98	-	59
Nicollet	69	45	24	-
Nobles	53	81	-	28
Norman	161	54	107	-
Olsted	163	84	79	-
Otter Tail	235	480	-	245
Pennington	57	13	44	-
Pine	151	24	127	-
Pipestone	32	68	-	36
Polk	234	138	96	-
Pope	126	45	81	-
Ramsey	63	8	55	-
Red Lake	35	20	15	-
Redwood	87	129	-	42
Renville	156	53	103	-
Rice	98	44	54	-
Rock	52	77	-	25
Roseau	79	8	71	-
St. Louis	49	10	39	-
Scott	70	40	30	-

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APPENDIX TABLE A

REPORT OF VOTE ON ORGANIZATION OF COUNTY SCHOOL SURVEY COMMITTEES BY MINNESOTA COUNTY (Continued)

County	Vote		Margin	
	For	Against	For	Against
Sherburne	72	25	47	-
Sibley	96	51	45	-
Stearns	108	275	-	167
Steele	110	49	61	-
Stevens	62	36	26	-
Swift	66	69	-	3
Todd	80	88	-	8
Traverse	60	59	1	-
Wabasha	128	46	82	-
Wadena	88	39	49	-
Waseca	76	88	-	12
Washington	113	32	81	-
Watsonwan	48	87	-	39
Wilkin	109	46	63	-
Winona	98	104	-	6
Wright	76	106	-	30
Yellow Medicine	84	117	-	33

*Vote invalidated, but a favorable vote for the organization of a survey committee was recorded again in 1949. All other counties which voted against the survey in 1947 voted against it again in 1949.

SOURCE: Minnesota State Advisory Commission on School Reorganization.

APPENDIX TABLE B

SCHOOL DISTRICT ENLARGEMENT ACTIVITY BY CONSOLIDATION AND ANNEXATION-DISSOLUTION IN MINNESOTA COUNTIES JULY 1, 1950 TO JANUARY 1, 1952

County	Total	Number of Districts Merged	
		By Annexation-Dissolution	By Consolidation
Aitkin	9	9	-
Anoka	3	3	-
Becker	-	-	-
Beltrami	2	2	-
Benton	-	-	-
Big Stone	-	-	-
Blue Earth	13 & parts of 2	-	13 & parts of 2
Brown	-	-	-
Carlton	4	4	-
Carver	6	-	6
Cass	Part of U. T.	-	Part of U. T.
Chippewa	8*	-	8*
Chisago	7*	-	7*
Clay	2	2	-
Clearwater	4	1	3
Cook	-	-	-
Cottonwood	2 & parts of 2	-	2 & parts of 2
Crow Wing	8	8	-
Dakota	13	-	13
Dodge	-	-	-
Douglas	15* & parts of 3*	-	15* & parts of 3*
Faribault	16	16	-
Fillmore	-	-	-
Freeborn	-	-	-
Goodhue	13	5	8
Grant	47* & parts of 7*	5	42* & parts of 7*
Hennepin	1	1	-
Houston	-	-	-
Hubbard	4	3	1
Isanti	1	1	-
Itasca	1	1	-
Jackson	2	-	2
Kanabec	2	2	-
Kandiyohi	-	-	-
Kittson	-	-	-

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APPENDIX TABLE B

SCHOOL DISTRICT ENLARGEMENT ACTIVITY BY CONSOLIDATION AND ANNEXATION-DISSOLUTION IN MINNESOTA COUNTIES JULY 1, 1950 TO JANUARY 1, 1952 (Continued)

County	Number of Districts Merged		
	Total	By Annexation-Dissolution	By Consolidation
Koochiching	-	-	-
Lac qui Parle	-	-	-
Lake	-	-	-
Lake of Woods	2	-	2
Le Sueur	-	-	-
Lincoln	7	7	-
Lyon	-	-	-
McLeod	8	-	8
Mahnomen	4	4	-
Marshall	1 & parts of U. T.	-	1 & parts of U.T.
Martin	-	-	-
Meeker	-	-	-
Mille Lacs	4	4	-
Morrison	15	15	-
Mower	23	1	22
Murray	-	-	-
Nicollet	3	3	-
Nobles	7 & parts of 2	-	7 & parts of 2
Norman	1	-	1
Olmsted	-	-	-
Otter Tail	13 & parts of 7	-	13 & parts of 7
Pennington	7	4	3
Pine	6	6	-
Pipestone	-	-	-
Polk	16*	-	16*
Pope	-	-	-
Ramsey	1	1	-
Red Lake	-	-	-
Redwood	-	-	-
Renville	1	1	-
Rice	1	1	-
Rock	1	-	1
Roseau	1	-	1
St. Louis	-	-	-
Scott	1	1	-

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APPENDIX TABLE B

SCHOOL DISTRICT ENLARGEMENT ACTIVITY BY CONSOLIDATION AND ANNEXATION-DISSOLUTION IN MINNESOTA COUNTIES JULY 1, 1950 TO JANUARY 1, 1952 (Continued)

County	Number of Districts Merged		
	Total	By Annexation-Dissolution	By Consolidation
Sherburne	3 & parts of 3	2 & parts of 1	1 & parts of 2
Sibley	1	-	1
Stearns	-	-	-
Steele	3	2	1
Stevens	1	1	-
Swift	-	-	-
Todd	1	1	-
Traverse	-	-	-
Wabasha	1	1	-
Wadena	1	1	-
Waseca	8	-	8
Washington	-	-	-
Watsonwan	-	-	-
Wilkin	-	-	-
Winona	-	-	-
Wright	3	3	-
Yellow Medicine	8 & part of 1	1	7 & part of 1

*Includes school districts from contiguous counties which were merged with districts in these counties. Thus, the number of districts merged does not necessarily indicate the number of districts reduced in these counties by this method.

SOURCE: Minnesota State Advisory Commission on School Reorganization.

