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**SIXTH REPORT**  
**of the**  
**STATE ADVISORY COMMISSION ON**  
**SCHOOL REORGANIZATION**



**to the**  
**SIXTY-FIRST LEGISLATURE**  
**of the**  
**STATE OF MINNESOTA**

**January, 1959**

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## LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

To the Senators and Representatives  
of the 1959 Legislature

We submit to you our sixth report on school district reorganization. This report covers the 1957-1959 biennium, and is made pursuant to provisions of Minnesota Statutes, Section 122.019, Subd. 1. Information and data covering the period from July 1, 1947 is included, and will indicate the comparative gains in school district enlargement since the passage that year of the original act pertaining to reorganization of school districts.

State Advisory Commission  
on School Reorganization

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## INTRODUCTION

The process of education is a continuous one, and includes various experiences that influence the development of people, young or old. One of the striking developments in recent years that holds promise of a significant effect on the educational program in our rural areas has been the establishment of the larger school district, with a school-community program that can serve town and country residents alike. With this transition is seen the passing of the small one-room neighborhood elementary school and the emerging of larger community schools offering a comprehensive educational program for both elementary and high school pupils, and with facilities for extending its services into the adult life of the community as well.

A number of trends in our rural life have contributed to the speed with which this change is taking place. The sharp reduction in the number of school-age children in our rural-farm population is the result of a combination of factors including the decrease in the number of farms, with a corresponding increase in the size of farms, which is due in turn to the mechanization of agriculture and to improved methods of agricultural production and marketing. While population density in our farm areas has decreased, isolation as measured in travel time and in means of communication has likewise decreased. Community life has followed a new pattern, on a basis far wider than the neighborhood settlements of the earlier years. And so, along with the passing of the general store at the country cross-roads, and the small country creamery, and the inland post office, there has come the passing of the small district school, even though deeply wrapped in some areas in much sentiment.

Since 1947 guidance in the program of district enlargement in Minnesota at the state level has been in the hands of the State Advisory Commission on School Reorganization and the State Department of Education. County committees elected in 63 counties have surveyed their schools, made recommendations for improved organization and, with the county superintendents, given leadership in bringing information to the local people. Interested lay citizens have served on study and advisory committees, and with the district school boards and superintendents have contributed to a better understanding of the problems of reorganization and to the attainment under democratic processes of the best organization possible. Thus has the program of strengthening Minnesota school districts advanced.

## CHAPTER I

### STATE ADVISORY COMMISSION ON SCHOOL REORGANIZATION

Under Minnesota law the determination of the type and character of the school district responsible for the education of its children has been left essentially to the people of the local communities. So also in the district reorganization law, the question of strengthening the school district is optional with the people at the local level. County committees conduct the survey of schools and make the recommendations for improved organization to the people. On the state level the legislature has provided for a commission of nine members, appointed by the State Board of Education, and the advisory nature of its functions is indicated also in its name. Since 1947 this State Advisory Commission on School Reorganization has served in the program of strengthening school districts.

Under the provisions of M.S., Section 122.019, the Advisory Commission as now constituted, is continued to consist of nine members. Terms of the present members of the Commission will expire on July 1, 1959. As of that date, the State Board of Education will appoint a qualified person to each vacancy on the Commission, three members for a term of two years, three members for a term of four years, and three members for a term of six years. Thereafter successors shall be appointed by the State Board of Education for a term of six years.

The Commissioner of Education serves as the ex-officio secretary and executive officer of the State Commission. The responsibility of directing the program of school district enlargement has been assigned to the Section Chief of Elementary and Secondary Education. Under his supervision consultant service is made available to the county school survey committees and local planning groups.

The duties of the State Advisory Commission are defined in Minnesota Statutes, Section 122.019, as follows: "The state commission shall formulate aims, goals, principles, procedures of public school organization in Minnesota. The commission shall review the tentative reports of the several county school survey committees, and within 90 days after receipt thereof shall make suggestions to the respective committees concerning their reports as may seem appropriate, giving due consideration to the educational needs of local communities and economical transportation and administration, to the future use of satisfactory school buildings and sites, to the convenience and welfare of the pupils, to the ability of the several communities to support adequate schools, to equalization of educational opportunity and to any other matters which, in their judgment, seems to be advisable. On or before October 15 of each even numbered year, the commission shall report its activities and recommendations concerning school reorganization to the legislature."

The reorganization law has a unique feature not found in the legal procedures of other states in that it provides for a hearing before an appeal board when the board of any district affected by recommendations



of any final report has, by resolution, appealed to the State Advisory Commission by filing a written brief of its grievances. The school board of an aggrieved district must appeal within 70 days after the filing of the final report. The appeal board, composed of five impartial members, is appointed by the Commission and has as its duty to consider the facts of the case at the hearing and to render a decision within 30 days. The law now provides that legal counsel may be retained by the school district and county survey committee to represent them at the hearing. During the past biennium the Commission appointed one appeal board which heard the grievance of Common School District No. 948 in Le Sueur and Scott Counties, and said appeal was denied. At the present time no appeals are pending.

This past biennium the Commission received the following reorganization proposals: (1) Mankato - North Mankato proposal presented by the Nicollet County Survey Committee, (2) Pequot-Lakes - Nisswa proposal presented by the Crow Wing County Survey Committee, (3) New Prague proposal presented by the Le Sueur and Scott County Survey Committees. These proposals were given careful study and approved by the Commission as being desirable school districts.

The State Commission being interested in all procedures of enlargement has likewise been called upon to review a number of the consolidation proposals that have been presented to the Commissioner of Education. During this past two-year period they have had for consideration and submitted recommendations on the following consolidation proposals: Thief River Falls, St. Charles-Dover, Rushford, Sebeka, Hancock, Braham, Lewiston, Plainview, Appleton and Holloway.

The State Commission has held ten official meetings during this biennium. The annual and quarterly budgets have been reviewed and recommendations made to the State Board of Education regarding the distribution of funds granted by the legislature for the conduct of the activities in connection with the program of school district enlargement. It has recommended the preparation of survey forms, leaflets and progress reports which have been available for general distribution to the public.

The Section Chief and Survey Consultants are responsible for providing information and guidance to the county survey committees, county and district superintendents, county and school personnel and local people interested in school district enlargement, preparation of bulletins and circulars containing information and data and reports, assist in conducting hearings on proposed district enlargements, serving as consultants for small discussion groups and the evaluation of data relating to proposed enlargements. During the biennium the staff attended numerous meetings held in nearly all sections of the state. A large number of hearings and conferences were held in the State Department of Education for groups who desired to have such meetings in a neutral setting. At the county school officers' meetings, regional and state-wide conferences, the consultants have been in constant demand as participants and resource persons.

With the revision of the several procedures on district enlargement by Laws of 1957, Chapter 947, Article III, it was necessary for the staff to develop bulletins and supplementary statements for the dissemination of information regarding such revisions. It has been necessary to revise the forms used for the various procedures and provide for their distribution. One of the major activities during the past biennium was the clarification of the revised procedures to the people of the state.

## CHAPTER II

### COUNTY SCHOOL SURVEY COMMITTEES

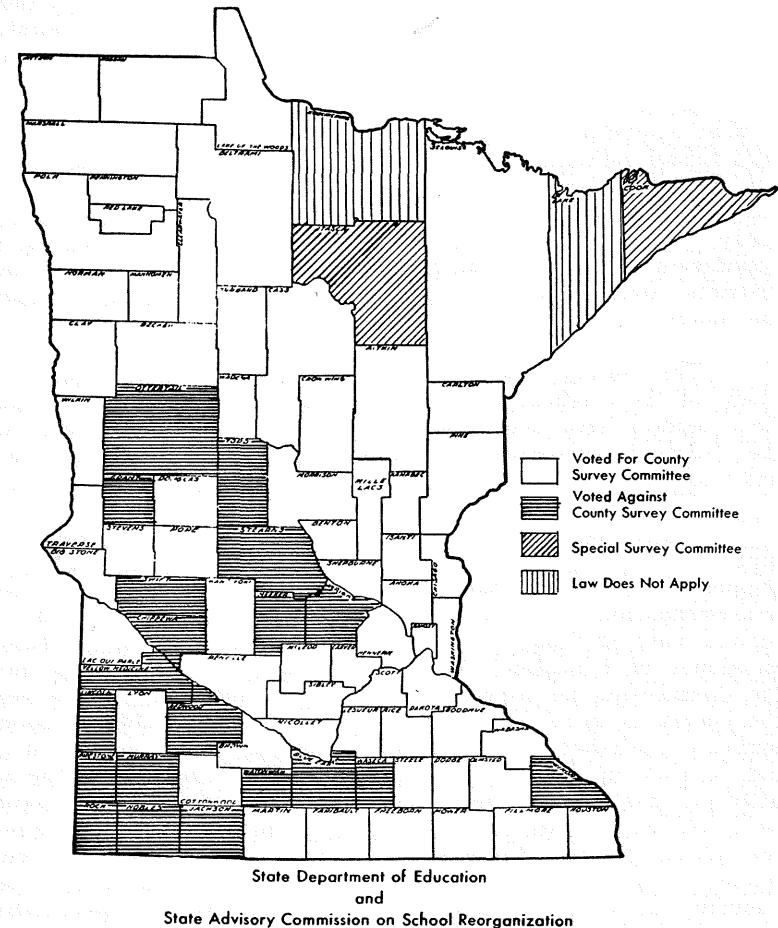
The first school district reorganization law, Chapter 421, was passed by the 1947 Legislature. It provided that a meeting of all school board members in each county was to be held for the purpose of electing a survey committee on an optional basis. At that time 62 counties voted to establish survey committees. In 1949 legislation was enacted which permitted the 21 remaining counties that did not have survey committees to vote a second time on the question of establishing such committees. Only one additional county voted to establish such a committee. As a result of these elections, 63 counties established survey committees. The reorganization law was further amended in the 1953 Session which permitted counties to abolish their survey committees by vote of the school boards, and as a result, 10 committees were abolished. The law also permitted the Advisory Commission to disband a survey committee when requested by that committee upon completion of its work. As a result, four more survey committees passed out of existence. There are at the present time 49 county school survey committees functioning. Chart I on page 6 indicates the counties in which survey committees were organized. Table I of the Appendix lists the counties that have functioning survey committees, together with those in which the committees have been disbanded by the Commission and those which were abolished by vote of the school boards.

Several significant changes were made by the 1957 Legislature in Chapter 947, Article III, pertaining to survey committees. The law now provides that the survey committee in any county will function on a permanent basis but may be dissolved on its own motion upon approval by the Commission.

The reorganization law provides that the survey committee shall be composed of nine members with five persons elected from the "rural" school districts with ungraded schools and four from the "urban" districts maintaining graded elementary or secondary schools. Survey committees established prior to July 1, 1957 will continue to function until their terms expire on July 1, 1959. The school boards in the 49 counties that have functioning survey committees must elect new committees within 30 days prior to July 1, 1959, with terms staggered as follows: (1) Rural members - five to be elected, one member for a one-year term, two members for a two-year term and two members for a three-year term; (2) Urban members - four to be elected, one member for a one-year term, one member for a two-year term, two members for a three-year term. The law further provides that no district shall have more than one member on a survey committee, which may result in a committee of less than nine members in some counties. It is to be noted also that rural members are to be elected at large instead of on a basis of county commissioner districts as in the past. Another feature of the law is that it provides for an election for the establishment of new survey committees in those counties that do not have such committees and in counties which wish

## CHART I

ORGANIZATION OF COUNTY SURVEY COMMITTEES  
State of Minnesota



to re-establish them. Upon presentation of a petition signed by 15% of the school board members to the county superintendent of schools, the county superintendent must call a meeting of the school board members for the purpose of voting on establishing a survey committee. If they vote to establish a survey committee, then members are elected to staggered terms as the law provides.

Committees have three principal functions to perform as follows: (1) To study the school districts and unorganized territory of the county and their organization for the purpose of recommending desirable reorganization which in their judgment will afford better educational opportunities for the pupils and inhabitants of the county, and a more equitable, efficient and economical administration of public schools, and a more equitable distribution of public school revenues; (2) To confer with school authorities and residents of the county, hold public hearings, and furnish to board members and to the public information concerning reorganization of districts in the county; and (3) To make reports of its study and recommendations including a map or maps showing existing boundaries of districts and the boundaries of proposed or recommended districts concerning the reorganization and financing of the districts of the county.

The survey committees in 63 counties made a comprehensive study of their school districts in 1948. Copies of their tentative and final reports have been placed on file with the Commission and with the County Superintendents. These reports should be brought up-to-date and thus will continue to be of value in setting up new proposals.

Under the present provisions of Laws 1957, Chapter 947, the procedure of reorganizing school districts into one large school district requires first that the survey committee prepare a tentative report with recommendations on one or more proposals. Copies of such tentative reports must be filed with the county superintendent, and with the Commissioner of Education, who shall forward a copy to each member of the Commission for study and evaluation. Each school board member of the county is to be furnished with a copy of the tentative report and a summary published in the official newspaper of the county. No changes can be made for any proposed area until after completion of the hearings affecting that area. At these public hearings, residents or taxpayers will be given the opportunity to be heard by the survey committee regarding the advantages and disadvantages of the proposal as presented in the tentative report. At its hearings, the committee shall also receive and consider such suggestions as may be made by the State Commission concerning the committee's tentative report and the recommendations made therein.

Within six months after the filing of a tentative report, a final report of the committee 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 district shall be filed with the County Superintendent. A summary of the final report must be published

in the official newspaper of the county. Copies of the final report shall be filed with the Commissioner and each school board member in the county.

The boundary lines of existing high school areas have been the basis for many of the reorganization proposals that have been submitted by the survey committees. It is now recognized that in some cases these do not form a large enough district to carry on the type of program that the public demands. As a result, survey committees may be called upon to make further studies regarding the combination of districts maintaining small high schools.

Elections on proposals as recommended by the survey committee in the final report must be called by the county superintendent upon expiration of 75 days of filing the final report, unless an appeal has been taken by an aggrieved district. The matter of holding subsequent elections on reorganization proposals was clarified in Laws 1957, Chapter 947. Survey committees may direct the county superintendent to call and conduct another election on the same final report and additional elections if they deem it advisable.

The procedure of reorganization requires that survey committees continue to function as set forth in the statutes. Survey committees have been available whenever needed to study local school problems and to make recommendations for the reorganization of school districts into stronger and larger units. During this past biennium some outstanding reorganization proposals were presented to the people. A notable example of this phase of activity was the work of the Nicollet County Survey Committee and the sub-committee from Blue Earth County under whose guidance, and with the cooperative direction of the two county superintendents and the district superintendents of Mankato and North Mankato, these two districts and 13 surrounding common school districts were reorganized into one strong independent district, with an assessed valuation in excess of \$16,000,000. Mention too must be made relative to the work of the Le Sueur and Scott County survey committees along with the subcommittee of Rice County and with the active help of the county and district superintendents. The results of their work brought forth the successful reorganization of some twenty-four whole and parts of three common school districts with New Prague. This reorganized district will have an assessed valuation of about \$3,300,000.

Election on reorganization in two areas failed to win the approval of the voters, namely in Jordan and in Shakopee. A reorganization of the districts in the Hanska area was declared invalid by the Supreme Court, in reversing the District Court and holding that all statutory procedures up to and including the election are mandatory, and must be specifically followed. In another decision the Supreme Court upheld the consolidation of districts in the Murdock area.

Many of the stronger local districts could not have come into being had it not been for the outstanding work of the survey committees



guiding local people in their efforts in forming enlarged school districts. On many occasions survey committees have been requested by county commissioners to appear before them in an advisory capacity concerning matters of dissolution and attachment.

Extensive enlargement of school districts has also taken place in counties that do not have county survey committees. This has come about as a direct result of reorganization in nearby counties. These counties have elected to use the consolidation and dissolution-attachment procedures in their school district enlargement efforts.

In counties where extensive school district enlargement has taken place and where the number of common school districts has been reduced to ten or less, the board of county commissioners have been given the authority to discontinue the office of the County Superintendent under the provisions of Laws 1957, Chapter 816. As of January 1, 1959, the office of county superintendent will be discontinued as a result of action taken by the county boards in the following counties:

Anoka	Goodhue	Renville
Chisago	Itasca	Sibley
Dodge	Lincoln	Traverse
Faribault	Norman	Washington

The office of County Superintendent of Kittson County is discontinued by special law. The office of Ramsey County was discontinued under special law four years ago. Lake and Cook Counties are county units and the district superintendents serve as superintendents for the entire county.

## CHAPTER III

### PROGRESS REPORT ON SCHOOL DISTRICT ENLARGEMENT

Minnesota has gone forward in building stronger school districts. The first official report of the State Advisory Commission was presented to the Legislature in January 1949 and each subsequent report has noted the constant downward trend in the number of school districts in the state as the stronger districts replace the smaller units. Chart II shows the situation in 1947 and the reduction in the number of districts to July 1, 1958.

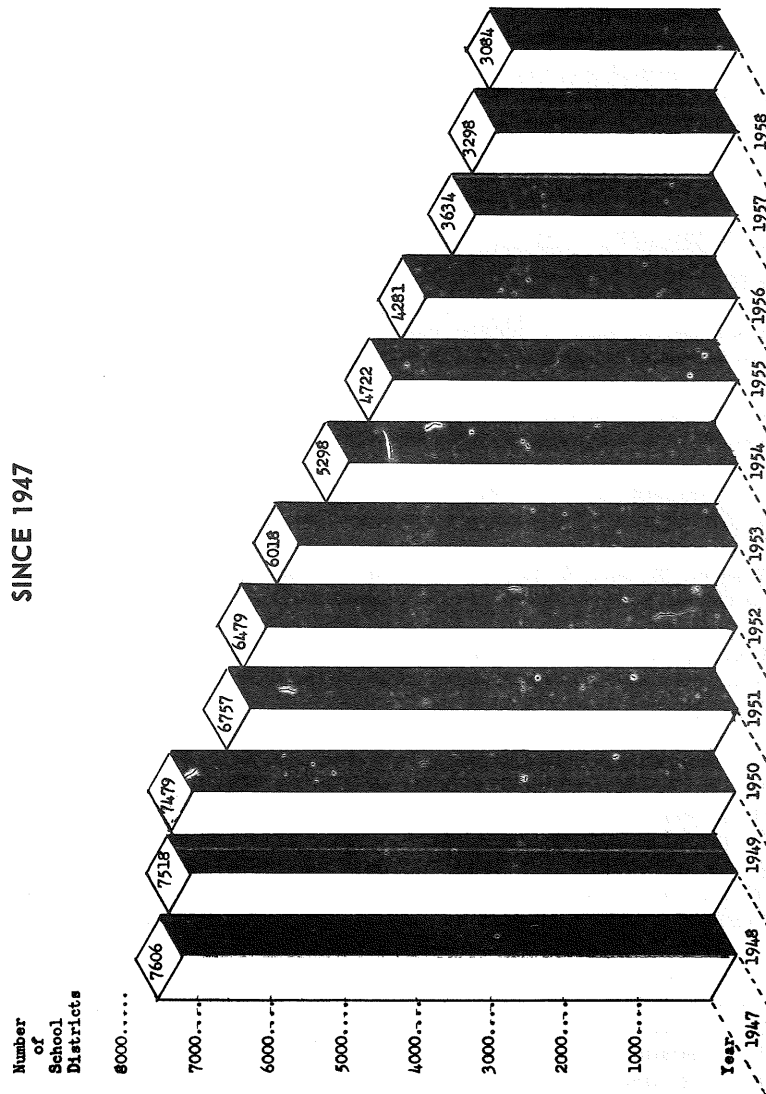
During this past biennium 550 school districts were merged with other existing districts. Small school districts find that they no longer can provide a comprehensive educational program from Kindergarten through Grade 12 with small enrollments and limited taxable valuation. The residents of these smaller districts are seeking a type of school organization with adequate enrollment and taxable valuation which can provide good education at a reasonable cost.

The progress of school district enlargement in Minnesota came directly as a result of the passage of Chapter 421 in 1947 relating to school district reorganization. This law was amended by Chapter 666 in 1949 and also by the succeeding legislatures and is now included in M.S. Sec. 122.019 as a permanent procedure for establishing strong local school districts. The reorganization act has served a very useful purpose in that it has brought to the attention of the people the need for the development of stronger school districts at the local level. It is to be noted that the people of Minnesota have had available to them two other optional procedures, that of consolidation and dissolution-attachment, both of which are extensively used throughout the state in forming larger school districts.

Minnesota had 7,606 organized school districts in 1947. As of July 1, 1958, there were 3,084 organized school districts in the state. From July 1, 1947 there has been a total reduction of 4,522 school districts which means that about 63 percent of the common school district had been merged during this period. In most instances these common school districts have become a part of an independent school district which maintains a graded elementary and secondary school.

There were 452 school districts in the state that maintained both graded elementary and secondary schools within their districts during the school year of 1957-58. Eighty-seven percent of these districts or 394 districts had the rights and benefits of consolidation, compared to only 226 districts in 1947. In 1947 there were 244 non-consolidated districts that maintained both graded elementary and secondary schools and by 1958 this number has been reduced to about 58 districts. During the past biennium eleven non-consolidated districts gained the status of consolidation. It is encouraging to note the steady progress of school district enlargement with the graded elementary and secondary school

**CHART II**  
**NUMBER OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS YEAR BY YEAR**  
**SINCE 1947**



as the core of community life. There still remains however a large number of districts with high schools in which the enrollment of non-residents exceeds that of the resident pupils. Table VIII in the Appendix will give further information in this regard.

As of July 1, 1958 some of the interesting facts relating to school district enlargement are as follows:

1. The summary of school district enlargement given by counties is listed in Table II of the Appendix. See map in center spread pages 17 and 18.
2. The year by year reduction in the number of school districts is given in Table III of the Appendix. See Chart II on page 11.
3. There are 44 counties with 25 districts or less. See Table IV in the Appendix and Chart III on page 13.
4. The list of counties which have made a reduction of 50% or more in the number of school districts is given in Table V in the Appendix and Chart IV on page 14.
5. Counties with 100 districts or more are listed in Table VI of the Appendix.
6. Counties with a reduction of 25% or less in the number of districts are indicated in Table VII.

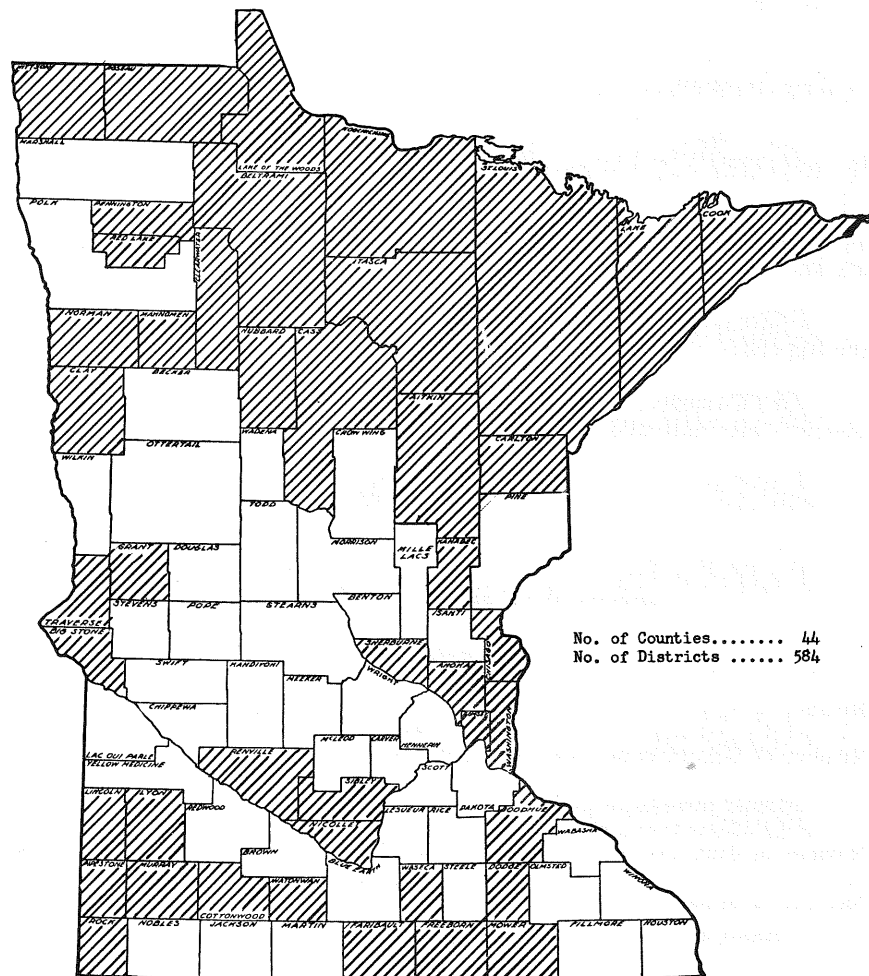
### Exhibit I

#### Summary of School District Enlargement

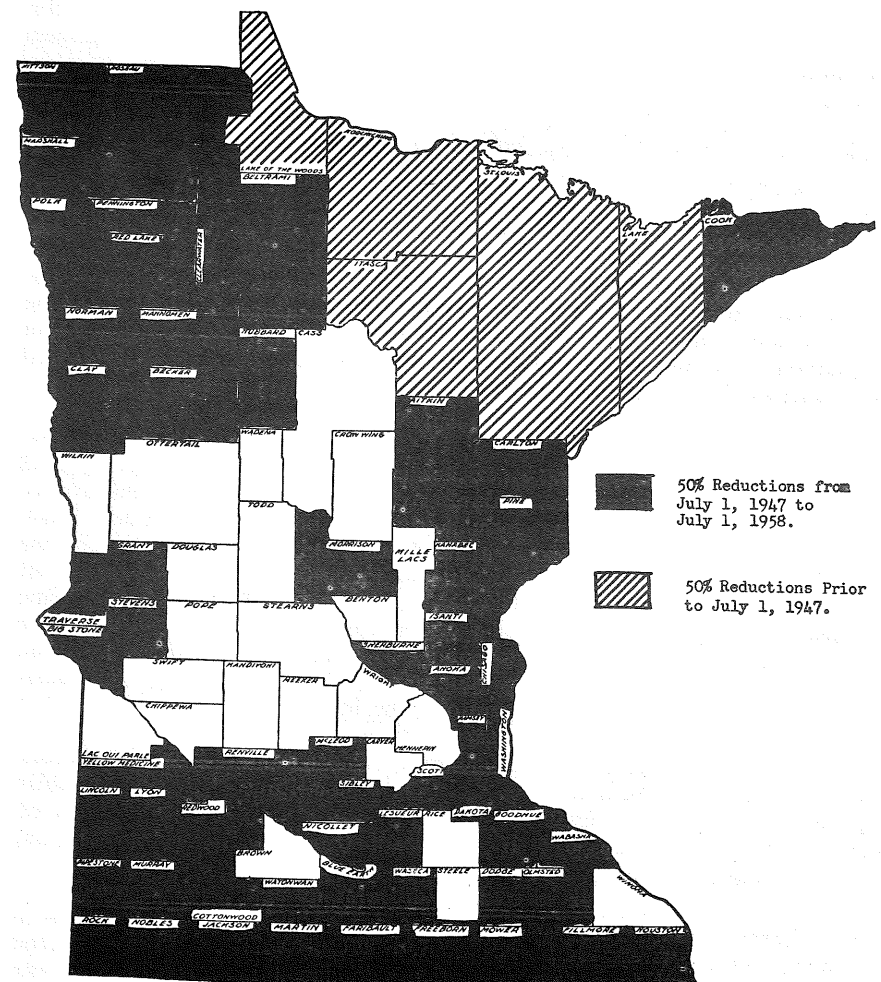
July 1, 1958

Number of School Districts, July 1, 1947 .....	7,606
Number of School Districts, July 1, 1958 .....	3,084
Total number of districts merged .....	4,522
Number of districts merged by reorganization .....	1,406
Number of districts merged by consolidation and by dissolution-annexation .....	3,116

**CHART III**  
**COUNTIES WITH 25 DISTRICTS OR LESS**  
**July 1, 1958**



**CHART IV**  
**COUNTIES WITH 50 PERCENT OR MORE**  
**REDUCTION IN SCHOOL DISTRICTS**  
**AS OF July 1, 1958**



## THE NON-OPERATING DISTRICT

A major problem in the district reorganization program in Minnesota is that of the "closed school" district. Educators generally are agreed that there is no excuse whatever for the continuance of districts that no longer operate schools. The continuance of districts with closed schools is in conflict with the concepts and principles of democratic organization. Citizens of these closed school districts have no voice in the government of the district where their children attend school. Likewise these citizens of closed school districts escape the responsibility of providing the school facilities and supporting directly the cost of school operation. They frequently escape fair taxation through the tuition system, and the cost of building the schools and operating them is increased for the taxpayers in other school districts. The taxable resources of these closed school districts could well and justifiably be used in the development of stronger school districts on a community-wide basis and in the control of which the entire citizenry is eligible to participate.

Minnesota stands near the top in the nation with its percentage of non-operating school districts. Numerous states have in recent years enacted legislation which would merge the territory of such closed districts with districts that are maintaining schools. It is held that if the local school district fails to assume the responsibility for which it was organized it is the duty of the state to see that such territory is attached to a district that is functioning.

Approximately one-third of the common school districts in Minnesota are not maintaining a school in their district. As of January 1, 1958 the number of such closed districts was 890. In 1955, when there were 8,674 non-operating school districts in the nation, Minnesota had 1389. It was estimated by the staff of the National Education Association that the nation had 4,000 closed school districts on July 1, 1957. At that time Minnesota has 1,007. While sixteen of the 87 counties have no closed school districts, there are 22 counties in which one-half or more of the existing common school districts maintain no schools. Attention is called to the map, Chart V on page 16, which illustrates the distribution of the closed school districts in the state.

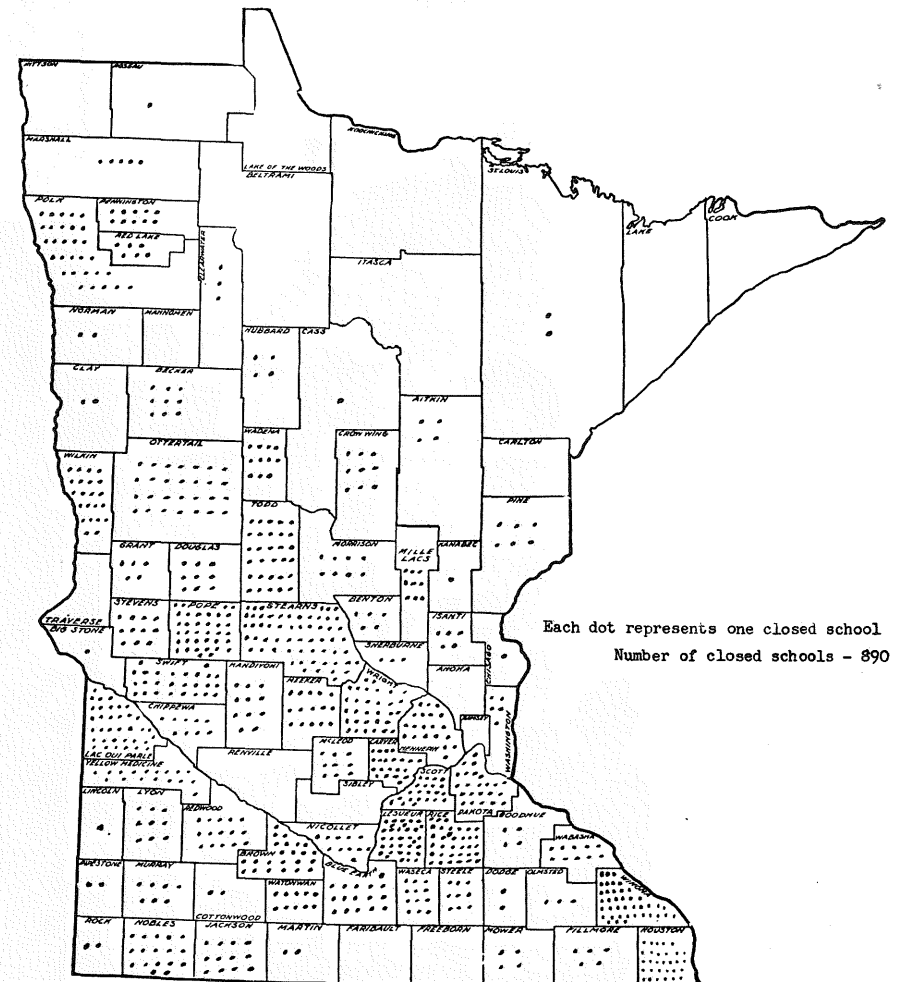
One characteristic of the non-operating district is the small enrollment of resident children. Of the 890 closed districts, 407 had public school enrollments of five or less pupils and 698 had enrollments of ten or less. The total enrollment in the 890 districts was 6,482 pupils, for an average per district of 7.28 pupils.

While many school districts are faced with financial problems in the operation of their schools, the 890 closed school districts reported balances totaling \$1,563,387.76 of which approximately one-tenth was invested in interest-earning securities by the 56 districts represented by such investments. The extent to which payments of "state aid" to these 56 districts contributes to this financial inconsistency is shown in Exhibit II.

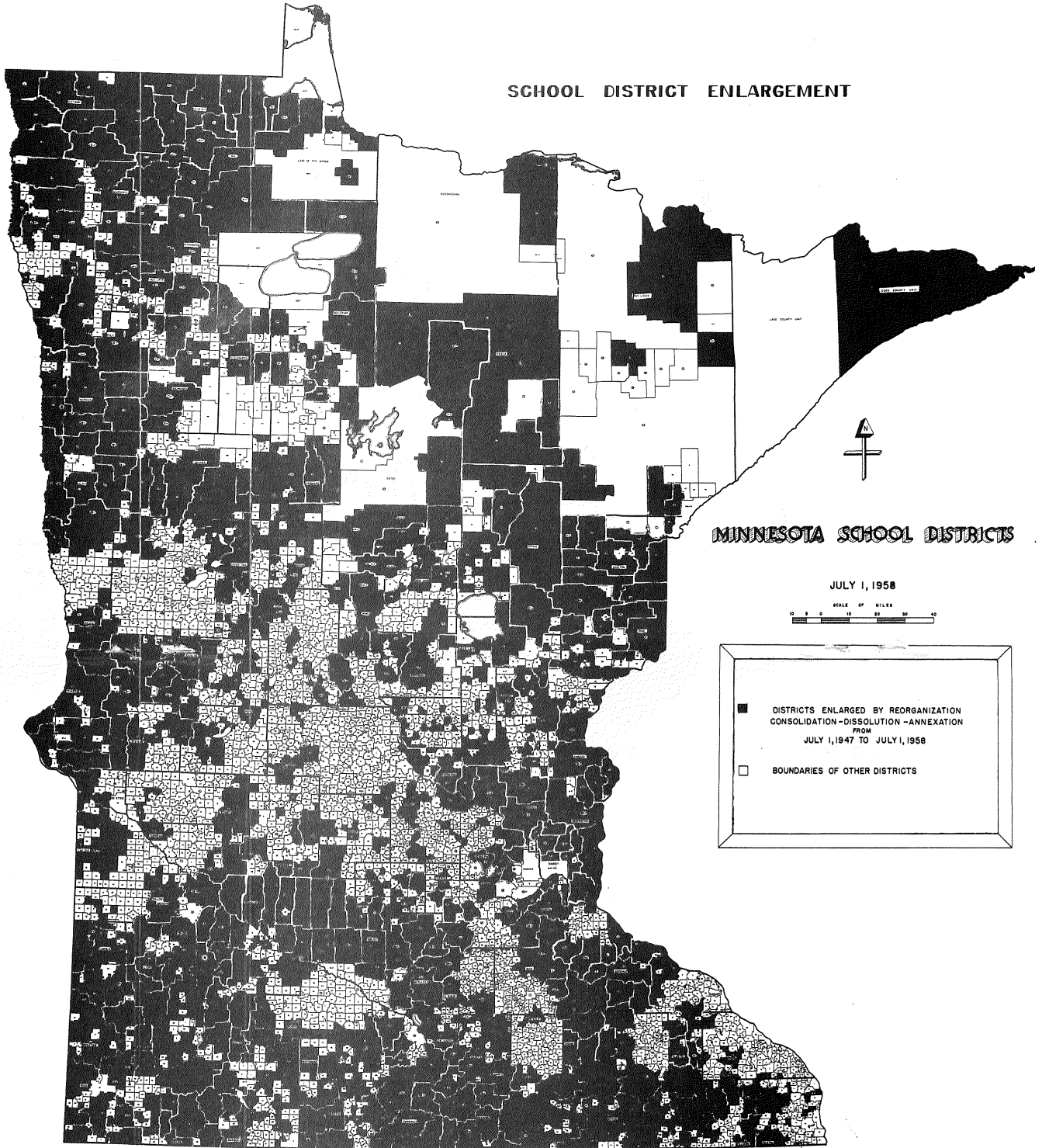
## CHART V

### CLOSED SCHOOLS IN MINNESOTA

January 1, 1958



SCHOOL DISTRICT ENLARGEMENT



## Exhibit II

### Investments Made and State Aid Received

Amount Invested	Number of Districts	Total Investments	Total Income Tax Aid Received
Under \$ 500	4	\$ 900.46	\$ 960.00
500 - 999	4	2380.20	720.00
1000 - 1499	14	16160.00	5600.26
1500 - 1999	4	6192.87	900.00
2000 - 2499	7	14574.53	840.00
2500 - 2999	6	16078.48	1780.00
3000 - 3499	4	12000.00	1880.00
3500 - 3999	2	7486.69	1080.00
4000 - 4499	2	8432.00	1130.00
4500 - 4999	1	4950.00	580.00
5000 - 9999	6	44927.91	1930.00
10000 and over	2	25000.00	4961.65
Total	56	\$ 159083.14	\$ 22361.91

The assessed valuation of the 890 closed school districts totaled \$ 61,876,031. It is significant that these valuations cannot be included in determining the bonding power of the districts where pupils from the closed school districts attend.

Further evidence of inequities in the financial status of school districts is revealed in the school maintenance tax rates in these 890 districts as follows:

## Exhibit III

### Tax Rate for School Maintenance

Levy in Mills	Number of Districts	Levy in Mills	Number of Districts
0 - 9 mills	244	60 - 69 mills	19
10 - 19 "	170	70 - 79 "	15
20 - 29 "	164	80 - 89 "	7
30 - 39 "	117	90 - 99 "	8
40 - 49 "	87	100 or more mills	6
50 - 59 "	53		

Among its recommendations the State Advisory Commission is repeating in this report that previously made relating to the closed school districts. This Commission is convinced that legislative action is necessary, and that it is justifiable because (1) these districts which do not maintain schools are failing to carry out the function for which they were created, (2) the assessed valuations of these districts do not serve as the base for bonding to provide the buildings in districts where the pupils attend, (3) it adds to inequality in the financial support of public education, and (4) the parents and taxpayers in closed districts are disfranchised in matters pertaining to the schools in which their children attend.



## CHAPTER IV

### FACTORS RELATING TO MINNESOTA SECONDARY SCHOOLS

The purpose of school district reorganization is to get more and better education for every dollar spent. Careful planning is necessary in the formation of districts so as to get sufficient land area with taxable valuation high enough to support a well-rounded program of instruction and provide adequate school facilities without placing an undue burden upon the people.

To determine the status of the administrative organization and instructional programs in Minnesota schools, a questionnaire was prepared by the State Department of Education and the State Advisory Commission on School Reorganization for a survey of those districts maintaining secondary schools. This chapter relates to some of the findings of that study.

(1) **Land Area of School Districts.** The average for all school districts in 1947 was a land area of  $10\frac{1}{2}$  sections. In 1958, with the elimination of many small districts, the average had increased to an area of 26 sections. Approximately 83% of districts maintaining secondary schools, however, were larger in extent than this over-all average. About 70% of these high school districts had land area of more than one township and up to 199 sections in extent. Exhibit IV will give further detail on the variation of area among these districts.

(2) **School Board Membership.** Most of the school boards consist of six members elected at large by the people of the district. Nearly 11% of the districts have a seven-member board. Exhibit V shows the residence distribution of board members within the rural and urban areas of the district together with the size of the board. Of the 2,611 school board members representing 416 districts in the survey group, 54% reside in the urban portion of the district and 46% reside in rural areas outside of the incorporated cities and villages. The percentage of board members who reside in rural areas has a close relationship to the size of the school enrollment. In districts with less than 300 enrolled in high school, the board membership is predominately rural. The proportion of rural members tends to decrease in the districts with schools of larger enrollments.

(3) **Instructional Program.** Information gathered from the survey indicates some rather definite trends pertaining to the curriculum offerings in relation to size of secondary school. Reports were secured from 415 districts as to the subjects offered during the school year of 1958-59. This study reveals that districts with less than 200 pupils enrolled in high school are limited in their ability to provide a well-rounded program of education, and in many cases are compelled to offer certain courses on alternate years. As the secondary school increases in enrollment, more courses can be offered, thus a more balanced program of education can be developed.

Exhibit IV

#### Land Area in Sections of School Districts Maintaining Secondary Schools

No. of Sections	0 49	50 99	100 149	150 199	200 249	250 299	300 349	350 399	400 449	450 499	500 999	1000 and Over	Total
9 or Less	-	1	4	3	7	1	7	5	1	4	5	7	45
10 - 18	-	2	1	2	1	2	-	-	-	-	5	4	17
19 - 27	-	1	1	1	-	-	1	1	-	-	5	4	14
28 - 36	-	-	3	4	2	-	-	-	-	-	4	5	18
37 - 72	1	5	33	28	10	12	7	1	2	-	12	6	117
73 - 99	-	2	10	11	12	13	7	3	7	-	4	2	71
100 - 199	-	4	11	15	16	15	15	5	7	-	22	6	116
200 - 299	-	1	2	2	1	1	4	1	1	-	6	4	23
300 - 399	-	-	2	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	2	-	6
400 - 499	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	2
500 & Over	-	-	-	1	2	2	1	-	-	-	-	2	8
Totals:	1	16	67	68	51	46	43	17	18	5	65	40	437



# Exhibit V

## School Board Membership of Districts Maintaining Secondary Schools

Enrollment Intervals	NUMBER OF DISTRICTS		RESIDENCE OF BOARD MEMBERS			
	School Board Membership		Number		Percentage	
	Six	Seven	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
50 - 999	13	-	19	59	24	76
100 - 149	54	4	110	259	30	70
150 - 199	61	6	147	261	36	64
200 - 249	40	4	141	132	52	48
250 - 299	41	7	154	148	51	49
300 - 349	37	3	155	99	61	39
350 - 399	13	4	61	46	57	43
400 - 449	17	4	71	59	55	45
450 - 499	8	1	33	22	60	40
500 - 999	51	6	271	77	78	22
1000 & Over	31	6	251*	36	87	13
Totals:	371	45	1413	1198		

\* Includes Unorganized Territory and Cities of First Class

English is a required subject and is offered in all secondary schools. Related English courses such as debate, drama, journalism and public speaking are offered on a limited basis in schools with enrollments of less than 200. For example, in the area of public speaking the following trend is indicated. Of the 142 schools in this enrollment group only 18% reported that they offered a course in public speaking. There were 179 schools that ranged in size from 200 to 499 in high school, and in this group 45% offered a course in public speaking. Ninety-four schools had enrollments of 500 or more pupils, with 88% of them having a course in public speaking. The above trend seems to hold for the other special areas of the Language Arts field.

In the area of Social Studies most of the schools in the state offer the related courses as required subjects, such as Civics, Ancient History, Consumer Education, American History, Modern History and Introduction to Social Studies.

The course offerings in the Science field are broken down as follows: General Science, Conservation, Biology, Chemistry, Consumer Science, Physics and Aeronautics. The study reveals that General Science and Biology are offered in nearly all of the schools regardless of size. In the field of Chemistry and Physics it was found that schools with enrollments below 200 did not offer these courses each year because of too small a class load, but alternated them by giving Physics one year and Chemistry the next. In the group of secondary schools with enrollments below 200, 58% offered a course in Chemistry, and 52% in Physics. Of the schools with enrollments from 200 to 499, 82% offered Chemistry and 73% Physics. In the schools with 500 or more pupils, 100% offered Chemistry and 97% Physics.

Mathematics is one of the four basic subjects in Minnesota schools of which General Mathematics, Elementary Algebra, Plane Geometry, Higher Algebra, Solid Geometry, Trigonometry, Consumer Mathematics and Refresher Mathematics are the special courses offered. Exhibit VI indicates on a percentage basis the number of schools in each enrollment group offering the listed mathematics courses.

## Exhibit VI

### Percent of Schools Offering Related Mathematics Courses

Enrollment Interval	50 - 199	200 - 499	500 and over
Elementary Algebra	87%	94%	96%
Plane Geometry	62%	82%	93%
Higher Algebra	51%	60%	89%
Solid Geometry	7%	33%	80%
Trigonometry	12%	34%	76%

Very few schools with enrollments below 200 offer courses in a foreign language and at best offer only one language. As school enrollments become larger more schools give the pupils a choice of more than one language. Exhibit VII indicates the courses offered and the percentage of schools offering each.

#### Exhibit VII

##### Percent of Schools Offering Foreign Languages

Enrollment Interval	50 - 199	200 - 499	500 and over
Spanish	1.4%	11.1%	49.0%
Latin	2.1%	14.0%	72.3%
French	2.1%	3.3%	35.1%
German	2.1%	4.4%	26.6%

Business Education with its special offerings of Typing, Book-keeping, Shorthand and other allied courses are given in most of the schools throughout the state. As the enrollments increase in a school the more courses are available to pupils who wish to specialize in the field of Business.

The vocational offerings of Agriculture, Industrial Arts and Home Economics are shown in Exhibit VIII as to the number of departments in each enrollment interval.

#### Exhibit VIII

##### Number of Vocational Departments

Enrollment Interval	No. of Schools Reporting	No. offering Agriculture	No. offering Industrial Arts	No. offering Home Economics
50 - 199	142	76	92	126
200 - 499	179	138	168	177
500 & Over	94	62	94	94

The foregoing data indicates that there is a very close relationship between the enrollment factor and the quality of the program of instruction. Secondary schools with enrollments below 200 pupils are limited as to the number of courses they can offer in the academic and vocational areas. Schools in this enrollment group include in the curriculum the required constants of English, Social Studies, Mathematics and Science but cannot offer as many of the elective courses in the above fields because of the limitations of enrollment and teaching staff. Science elective courses such as Chemistry and Physics are frequently offered only on alternate years. The advanced courses of Higher Algebra, Solid Geometry and Trigonometry are only offered in a limited number of

schools. Elective courses in the foreign languages are almost nonexistent. The number of special departments such as Agriculture, Industrial Arts, Home Economics and Business is limited to three or less. Because of the small enrollment the full complement of elective courses cannot be offered in these fields. The same limitations affect the program of Physical Education, Health, Driver Education, Art and Music.

Secondary schools with 500 or more pupils enrolled offer many more elective courses in the subject fields of English, Mathematics, Social Studies and Science. Schools of this size have the pupils and staffs needed for a well-balanced selection of courses. In the area of the foreign languages, pupils may choose courses in Spanish, French, Latin and German. Most of the schools in this enrollment group offer extensive work in the vocational fields of Industrial Arts, Agriculture, Home Economics and Business. Programs of Physical Education, Health, Driver Education, Art and Music are greatly expanded and are also providing to a greater extent for the education of the physically and mentally handicapped child.

If schools are to provide for a good program of instruction it points to the need of strong district organization and sound over-all planning. A strong school district should have sufficient land area with an adequate tax base and with a school population large enough to provide at a reasonable cost a well-balanced program of education.

## CHAPTER V

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Since the passage of Laws 1957, Chapter 947, the State Advisory Commission on School Reorganization has evaluated the statutes as they relate to the entire program of school district enlargement. County superintendents, district superintendents and county boards who have worked with the procedures of reorganization, consolidation and dissolution-attachment under the provisions of this statute, have brought to the attention of the Commission the need for further clarification of some phases as it relates to the above procedures.

The following recommendations are herewith submitted by the State Advisory Commission for consideration by the 1959 Legislature of Minnesota.

1. That debt assumption be made automatic for the procedure of dissolution-attachment as it is for all other procedures. M.S., Section 122.017, Subd. 10.

2. That a final order of dissolution be made by the County Board following its interlocutory order, stating the specific details relating to the attachment, with a copy of the final order to be sent to the Commissioner. M.S., Section 122.017, Subd. 14.

3. That clarification be made in the effective date of the order under the dissolution-attachment procedure by amending M.S., Section 122.017, Subd. 9 (e), substituting the word "but" for the word "and".

4. That priority of procedures in conflicting proposals be clarified by amending M.S., Section 122.017, Subd. 7, under the procedure of dissolution-attachment so as to harmonize with M.S., Section 122.018, Subd. 5, in the consolidation procedure.

5. That the requirement of "a supporting narrative statement to accompany the plat" in consolidation be amended to read "a factual statement relative to the plat." M.S., Section 122.018, Subd. 3.

6. That the Commissioner's approval of plats for consolidation be not subjected to appeal as now provided. M.S., Section 122.051.

7. That the Commissioner be permitted to assign the same district identification number to an existing independent district enlarged by consolidation when such addition includes only common school districts. M.S., Section 122.018, Subd. 14.

8. That the county board have authority, following a hearing, to assign the remaining unattached parts of districts divided through consolidation procedure when such remaining parts have less than four sections. M.S., Section 122.018.

9. That the school board of the district maintaining a secondary school continue to serve until the next annual election where two or more independent districts are consolidated, only one of which maintains a secondary school. M.S., Section 122.018, Subd. 17.

10. That the biennial report to the Legislature be due November 15th instead of October 15th. M.S., Section 122.019, Subd. 1.

11. That clarification be made in the method of certifying the election of survey committee members by amending the last sentence in the second paragraph of M.S. Section 122.019, Subd. 5, deleting the second "and", and inserting instead the word "to".

12. That clarification be made in the assignment of the identification number to a reorganized district by amending M.S., Section 122.019, Subd. 23, so that the second sentence will refer to the number and the district in the singular rather than the plural form.

13. That the procedure of reorganization be amended so as to remove the 30 day time limit of M.S., Section 122.019, Subd. 7, within which the county meetings of school boards shall be held before July 1, 1959 for the election of survey committee members.

14. That the procedure for changing district classification from common to independent be amended so as to permit the election of the new school board at a time other than that at which the vote on change of classification is taken. M.S., Section 122.021, Subd. 2.

15. That closed school districts be merged with adjacent districts which maintain secondary schools.

16. That the associated district law be repealed in toto. M.S., Sections 122.71 to 122.83 inclusive.

17. That the county levy for non-resident secondary school transportation be spread only against property situated outside of a district maintaining a secondary school, as is now done with the tuition levy. M.S., Section 128.088, Subd. 5.

18. That the classification of secondary schools be upgraded by raising the minimum enrollment for new schools seeking classification as follows:

Type of Secondary School	Minimum Enrollment for New Schools Seeking Classification
Six-year Secondary - grades 7-12	200 pupils
Junior Secondary - grades 7-9	150 pupils
Junior Secondary - grades 10-12	150 pupils

## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSION

Changes in our social and economic environment are constantly taking place as time marches on. An alerted people will want its system of public schools to be abreast with the times, and currently the best that they can afford. As the people of Minnesota have examined their schools in the various communities and discovered points of weakness, they have taken steps to correct these deficiencies.

A stronger local school organization has grown out of the elimination since 1947 of over 4,500 ineffective small school districts in Minnesota. The new and larger district is centered in most cases around the high school which serves the community. In some areas the secondary school is small and lacking in the potentials of adequacy. Here the people will need to consider the desirability of joining their resources with those of their neighbors to provide on a joint basis for their educational needs.

In the total program of providing an adequate education for all of Minnesota youth, every district must accept its share of responsibility. There is no place for non-operating school districts under the principles of democratic organization. Every parcel of land and every cent of available resource must be made part of the tax base of those districts that are carrying out the functions and responsibilities of a good school district in this age. State funds should encourage the formation of good school districts, and care should be exercised so that the continuance of ineffective units and non-operating units is not prolonged through state subsidy.

There are today some over 3,000 school districts in Minnesota. About 450 of these are organized to provide a twelve-year educational program as the minimum. As the people in these areas continue with the formation of stronger local school districts, they should keep in mind two principal standards set by the State Advisory Commission for a good school district, namely, a tax base in excess of \$1½ million and a junior-senior secondary school enrollment of 300 pupils. Such a district under one school board and one chief administrator, responsible for all the schools within the district, is in a position to operate both elementary and secondary schools efficiently and economically with a rich program of education and related services and so contribute to the continuance of a system of schools of which all Minnesota can be proud.

### APPENDIX



## TABLE 1

**Group 1 (63)**

### Counties in which School Survey Committees are Organized

County	County	County	County
Aitkin	Dakota	Lake of the Woods	Polk
Anoka	Dodge*	Le Sueur	Pope
Becker	Douglas*	Lyon	Ramsey †
Beltrami	Faribault	Mc Leod	Red Lake
Benton	Fillmore*	Mahnomen	Renville †
Big Stone	Freeborn	Marshall	Rice*
Brown	Goodhue	Martin	Roseau
Carlton	Hennepin	Mille Lacs	St. Louis
Carver	Houston	Morrison*	Scott
Cass	Hubbard	Mower*	Sherburne
Chisago	Isanti	Nicollet	Steele*
Clay	Kanabec	Norman	Sibley †
Clearwater	Kandiyohi	Olmsted*	Stevens
Cottonwood †	Kittson	Pennington	Traverse
Crow Wing	Lac qui Parle	Pine	Wabasha*
* Committees abolished by vote of school boards.			Wadena
† Committees disbanded by action of State			Washington
Advisory Commission upon request.			Wilkin*

**Group II (2)**

### Counties with Special School Survey Committees

Cook

Itasca

**Group III (20)**

### Counties Voting Against Organization of School Survey Committees

Blue Earth	Meeker	Redwood	Waseca
Chippewa	Murray	Rock	Watonswan
Grant	Nobles	Stearns	Winona
Jackson	Otter Tail	Swift	Wright
Lincoln	Pipestone	Todd	Yellow
			Medicine

**Group IV (2)**

### Counties to which the Statute is not Applicable

## Koochiching

Lake

See Map Page 6.



**TABLE II**  
**SUMMARY REPORT ON SCHOOL DISTRICT ENLARGEMENT**

July 1, 1947 to July 1, 1958

County	NUMBER OF DISTRICTS				Total Reduction
	7-1-47	July 1, 1958		Total	
		S.	E.		
Aitkin	102	4	19	23	79
Anoka	57	6	0	6	51
Becker	133	4	22	26	107
Beltrami	59	4	15	19	40
Benton	64	2	48	50	14
Big Stone	60	5	16	21	39
Blue Earth	122	9	28	37	85
Brown	82	5	67	72	10
Carlton	34	7	5	12	22
Carver	66	4	32	36	30
Cass	23	7	7	14	9
Chippewa	87	4	42	46	41
Chisago	49	5	4	9	40
Clay	102	8	6	14	88
Clearwater	56	3	20	23	33
Cook	7	1	0	1	6
Cottonwood	76	5	13	18	58
Crow Wing	96	3	49	52	44
Dakota	102	8	28	36	66
Dodge	82	5	1	6	76
Douglas	96	5	47	52	44
Faribault	118	10	0	10	108
Fillmore	174	10	35	45	129
Freeborn	128	5	9	14	114
Goodhue	155	7	9	16	139
Grant	71	5	6	11	60
Hennepin	90	14	32	46	44
Houston	104	3	49	52	52
Hubbard	56	4	14	18	38
Isanti	68	2	30	32	36
Itasca	6	4	0	4	2
Jackson	104	5	40	45	59
Kanabec	57	2	21	23	34
Kandiyohi	109	4	69	73	36
Kittson	68	6	2	8	60
Koochiching	4	3	0	3	1
Lac qui Parle	104	5	55	60	44
Lake	1	1	0	1	0
Lake of Woods	11	2	5	7	4
Le Sueur	95	5	41	46	49

**TABLE II - Continued**

County	7-1-47	July 1, 1958			Total Reduction
		S.	E.	Total	
Lincoln	76	5	6	11	65
Lyon	98	7	12	19	79
McLeod	83	6	33	39	44
Mahnomen	23	2	7	9	14
Marshall	140	8	23	31	109
Martin	110	8	24	32	78
Meeker	92	5	69	74	18
Mille Lac:	59	4	33	37	22
Morrison	139	5	59	64	75
Mower	115	7	12	19	96
Murray	113	4	19	23	90
Nicollet	62	2	20	22	40
Nobles	110	5	27	32	78
Norman	103	6	4	10	93
Olmsted	125	4	50	54	71
Otter Tail	281	9	163	172	109
Pennington	68	2	19	21	47
Pine	108	6	40	46	62
Pipestone	72	4	5	9	63
Polk	213	9	66	75	138
Pope	90	4	58	62	28
Ramsey	30	5	0	5	25
Red Lake	53	3	15	18	35
Redwood	112	8	29	37	75
Renville	131	10	4	14	117
Rice	106	3	69	72	34
Rock	68	4	17	21	47
Roseau	79	4	10	14	65
St. Louis	29	17	7	24	5
Scott	67	5	28	33	34
Sherburne	52	3	9	12	40
Sibley	78	5	2	7	71
Stearns	203	9	172	181	22
Steele	86	4	68	72	14
Stevens	68	4	29	33	35
Swift	93	5	71	76	17
Todd	143	7	109	116	27
Traverse	60	3	4	7	53
Wabasha	96	5	40	45	51
Wadena	60	4	28	32	28
Waseca	83	4	11	15	68
Washington	65	4	1	5	60
Watsonwan	62	3	15	18	44
Wilkin	80	3	42	45	35
Winona	114	3	90	93	21
Wright	138	8	87	95	43
Yellow Medicine	92	6	40	46	46
Totals	7,606	452	2,632	3,084	4,522

S. - Districts with Secondary Schools.

E. - Districts with Elementary School Only.

See Map on Center Spread on Pages 17 and 18.

**TABLE III**  
**REDUCTION OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS YEAR BY YEAR SINCE 1947**

Date	Total Number of Districts	Reductions During the Year	Total Reduction Since 1947
July 1, 1947	7,606		
July 1, 1948	7,518	88	88
July 1, 1949	7,479	39	127
July 1, 1950	6,757	722	849
July 1, 1951	6,479	278	1,127
July 1, 1952	6,018	461	1,588
July 1, 1953	5,298	720	2,308
July 1, 1954	4,722	576	2,884
July 1, 1955	4,261	461	3,345
July 1, 1956	3,634	627	3,972
July 1, 1957	3,298	336	4,308
July 1, 1958	3,084	214	4,522

See Chart II page 11.

**TABLE IV**  
**COUNTIES WITH 25 DISTRICTS OR LESS**  
**July 1, 1958**

County	Number of Districts	County	Number of Districts
Aitkin	23	Lake of Woods	7
Anoka	6	Lincoln	11
Beltrami	19	Lyon	19
Big Stone	21	Mahnomen	9
Carlton	12	Mower	19
Cass	14	Murray	23
Chisago	9	Nicollet	22
Clay	14	Norman	10
Clearwater	23	Pennington	21
Cook	1	Pipestone	9
Cottonwood	18	Ramsey	5
Dodge	6	Red Lake	18
Faribault	10	Renville	14
Freeborn	14	Rock	21
Goodhue	16	Roseau	14
Grant	11	St. Louis	24
Hubbard	18	Sherburne	12
Itasca	4	Sibley	7
Kanabec	23	Traverse	7
Kittson	8	Waseca	15
Koochiching	3	Washington	5
Lake	1	Watonwan	18

Forty-four counties have 25 districts or less compared to 36 counties two years ago. This is a gain of 8 counties. These counties have 584 school districts remaining or 18.9 percent of the total. See Chart III page 13.

**TABLE V**  
**COUNTIES WITH 50 PERCENT OR MORE REDUCTIONS IN SCHOOL DISTRICTS**  
**July 1, 1958**

County	Percent Reduction	County	Percent Reduction
Aitkin	77.4	Marshall	77.8
Anoka	89.5	Martin	70.9
Becker	80.5	Morrison	54.0
Beltrami	64.4	Mower	83.5
Big Stone	63.3	Murray	79.6
Blue Earth	69.6	Nicollet	64.5
Carlton	64.7	Nobles	70.9
Chisago	81.6	Norman	90.3
Clay	86.2	Olmsted	56.8
Clearwater	58.9	Pennington	69.1
Cook	85.7	Pine	57.4
Cottonwood	75.5	Pipestone	87.5
Dakota	64.7	Polk	64.7
Dodge	92.7	Ramsey	83.3
Faribault	91.5	Red Lake	66.0
Fillmore	74.1	Redwood	66.9
Freeborn	89.1	Renville	89.3
Goodhue	89.7	Rock	69.1
Grant	84.5	Roseau	82.3
Houston	50.0	Scott	50.7
Hubbard	67.8	Sherburne	76.9
Isanti	53.0	Sibley	91.0
Jackson	56.7	Stevens	51.4
Kanabec	62.1	Traverse	88.3
Kittson	88.2	Wabasha	53.1
Le Sueur	51.5	Waseca	81.8
Lincoln	85.5	Washington	92.3
Lyon	80.6	Watonwan	70.9
McLeod	53.0	Yellow Medicine	50.0
Mahnomen	60.9		

*\* Itasca, Koochiching, Lake, Lake of the Woods and St. Louis Counties reduced the number of school districts by 50 percent or more prior to July 1, 1947 and are not included in the above list of counties.*

Over 67 percent of the counties of the state have made reductions of 50 percent or more in the number of school districts as of July 1, 1958. Since the report of two years ago 14 new counties have been added to the above table for a total of 59 counties compared to 45 counties in 1956. See Chart IV page 14.

TABLE VI

## COUNTIES WITH 100 OR MORE SCHOOL DISTRICTS

July 1, 1958

County	Number of Districts
Ottertail	172
Stearns	181
Todd	116

There are only three counties remaining in the state with 100 or more school districts. Fillmore and Wright Counties have reduced the number of districts below 100 this past two-year period. Fifteen percent or 469 of the present districts in the state are within the boundaries of these three counties.

Fillmore County reduced the number of districts from 174 in 1947 down to 45 districts in 1958 and the greater share of this reduction has come about in the last two-year period.

TABLE VII

COUNTIES THAT HAVE MADE ONLY LIMITED REDUCTION  
OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS SINCE 1947

County	Percent Reduction
Benton	21.8
Brown	12.2
Meeker	19.5
Stearns	10.8
Steele	15.6
Swift	18.2
Todd	18.8

TABLE VIII

HIGH SCHOOLS ENROLLING 50% OR MORE PUPILS  
AS NON-RESIDENTS ('56-'57)

Benton County		Otter Tail County	
Foley	67%	Battle Lake	74%
		Perham	50%
Carver County		Underwood	68%
Chaska	56%		
Norwood-Young America	63%	Pine County	
Waconia	65%	Pine City	55%
Watertown	66%		
Douglas County		Polk County	
Osakis	58%	Climax	53%
Fillmore County		Red Lake County	
Canton	56%	Red Lake Falls	52%
Chatfield	61%		
Harmony	58%	Scott County	
Lanesboro	56%	New Prague	61%
Isanti County		Stearns County	
Cambridge	70%	Albany	66%
		Brooklyn	71%
Houston County		Holdingford	71%
Caledonia	56%	Kimball	55%
		Melrose	71%
Jackson County		Paynesville	64%
Jackson	51%		
Kandiyohi County		Swift County	
New London	61%	Appleton	56%
		Benson	56%
Lac Qui Parle County		Holloway	69%
Boyd	61%		
Dawson	52%	Todd County	
Madison	50%	Browerville	63%
Marietta	52%	Eagle Bend	63%
		Long Prairie	50%
Le Sueur County		Staples	51%
Le Center	57%		
Montgomery	55%	Wabasha County	
		Wabasha	51%
Mahnomen County			
Waubun	60%	Waseca County	
		Janesville	54%
Meeker County			
Dassel	60%	Wilkin County	
Eden Valley	72%	Rothsay	61%
Grove City	51%		
		Winona County	
Mille Lacs County		St. Charles	53%
Milaca	68%		
Onamia	63%	Wright County	
		Buffalo	53%
Morrison County		Cokato	53%
Royalton	61%	Maple Lake	59%
		Rockford	
		Yellow Medicine County	
		Canby	60%