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EIGHTH REPORT  
of the  
STATE ADVISORY COMMISSION ON  
SCHOOL REORGANIZATION



To the  
SIXTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE  
of the  
STATE OF MINNESOTA

January 1963

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LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

To the Senators and Representatives  
of the 1963 State Legislature  
State of Minnesota

We submit to you our eighth report on school district reorganization. This report covers the 1961-1963 biennium, and is made pursuant to provisions of Minnesota Statutes 1961, Section 122.24, Subdivision 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 of the original act pertaining to the reorganization of school districts.

State Advisory Commission  
on School Reorganization

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STATE ADVISORY COMMISSION ON SCHOOL REORGANIZATION

	Term Expires July 1
Mrs. C. A. Rohrer, Chairman . . . . . Winona Representative for Minnesota Congress of Parents and Teachers; Former Grade, High School, and College Teacher; Member of Commission since 1947.	1965
Honorable Donald E. Swenson . . . . . Mankato State Representative, Old Eighth District; Committee on Education; Former Chairman, Mankato School Board; Former Chairman, Minnesota Citizens Committee on Public Education	1963
Honorable A. Harold Peterson . . . . . Chisago City State Representative, Old 56th District; Attorney at Law; Former Chairman of School Board, Chisago City; Chairman, Board of Directors, Chisago Lake Hospital; Commanding Officer, Naval Reserve Law Company 9-17, Minneapolis; Captain U.S. Naval Reserve.	1967
Honorable Karl F. Grittner. . . . . St. Paul State Senator, Old 39th District; Committee on Education; Former Member House Committee on Education; Assistant Principal, Wilson High School, St. Paul.	1965
K. W. Fawcett . . . . . Minneapolis Businessman; Member Board of Directors, Minneapolis Citizens Committee on Public Education; Chairman, Community School Building Committee.	1963
J. A. Sater . . . . . Brainerd District Superintendent of Schools; Former Chairman, Legislative Committee, Minnesota Association of School Administrators; Past President, Central Minnesota School Superintendents.	1967

Term Expires  
July 1

Mrs. Virgil E. Weitgenant . . . . . Worthington Nobles County Superintendent of Schools; Past President, Minnesota Association of County Superintendents.	1965
Herbert C. Latvala. . . . . Nashwauk Member, School Board Independent School District 319, Nashwauk-Keewatin; Past President, Minnesota School Boards Association.	1963
Clarence E. Mikkelsen. . . . . Glyndon Farmer; Member School Board, Independent School District 155, Glyndon; Chairman, Clay County School Survey Committee; Past-President, District 23 School Boards Association.	1967
Dr. Erling O. Johnson . . . . . Commissioner of Education Secretary and Executive Officer of the State Advisory Commission on School Reorganization.	

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## INTRODUCTION

The American pattern of free, public and universal education rests on two fundamental ideas: first, that if the common people's government is to succeed, all the people must be enlightened; and second, that equal opportunity must be open to all to enable every child to rise to his own best potential.

Minnesota children are being denied their rights in some communities today. The public schools are failing to provide the intended equality of educational opportunity, and largely because of an outmoded district system. Fifteen years after the enactment of the school reorganization law there still remain 1800 districts distinct and apart from those local units which maintain twelve-year schools. One-third of them maintain not even a district elementary school! In view of the expanding needs for even more education, this situation is a challenge to Minnesota citizens today to match the earnest efforts of the pioneers a century ago.

Minnesota pioneers were serious about the business of education. After a Preamble which expresses gratefulness for civil and religious liberty and a desire to perpetuate the same for posterity, they wrote into Article VIII of the Minnesota Constitution that "...It shall be the duty of the legislature to establish a general and uniform system of public schools." Then, as a pledge to future generations, these pioneers underwrote their plan with the establishment of a permanent school fund, and charged the legislature with the responsibility for such additional financing as "...will secure a thorough and efficient system of public schools..."

Minnesota citizens today are examining the nature of the school organization that serves them. Are the schools capable of doing the job of education that meets the needs of today? In the evaluation of their schools, the people have been guided by certain goals and principles which have determined the nature of their schools according to the changing times.

GOAL ONE

THE EQUALIZATION OF EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

Entitles every child of Minnesota to:

1. A well-trained staff of teachers;
2. Be thoroughly grounded in the fundamental skills:

Language Arts  
Mathematics  
Science  
Social Studies

3. A high school education which permits a choice between a college preparatory program and a vocational program;
4. Develop his or her talents to the greatest extent possible;
5. Have access to a good school library, with its books, periodicals, materials and services under the supervision and instruction of a qualified librarian;
6. Complete guidance counseling service under the direction of trained personnel;
7. A health and physical educational program;
8. The development of those characteristics which are basic to good citizenship in a democracy;
9. Have access to a good hot lunch program;
10. Study in buildings that are modern and well supplied with good teaching equipment;
11. Safe transportation to and from school if he is not within reasonable walking distance to the public school.

EVERY CHILD IN MINNESOTA IS ENTITLED TO THESE BENEFITS.

GOAL TWO

A GOOD FOUNDATION PROGRAM

Requires schools with enough children to:

1. Insure an elementary school with an enrollment that is sufficient to require one teacher per grade and a pupil-teacher ratio of approximately 30 pupils per teacher in grades one through six.
2. Maintain a comprehensive secondary school with educational offerings to meet the needs of all pupils.
  - A. The U. S. Office of Education recommends that the minimum enrollment for a secondary school be 300 pupils. This figure for a satisfactory secondary school is generally accepted by school authorities.
  - B. Secondary schools with 300 or more pupils can offer a good basic foundation program with a staff of 18 to 21 teachers. Schools of this size can make maximum use of their teaching staff and it allows greater flexibility in the number of courses that are offered.
  - C. Two-hundred-pupil secondary schools are in a position to offer only the minimum foundation program with a staff of 12 to 14 teachers. In a school of this size, the course offerings are restricted and the program becomes limited.

Every child in Minnesota should have available to him this:

BASIC OR MINIMUM EDUCATIONAL OFFERING.

LANGUAGE ARTS	Literature Speech Journalism Grammar Dramatics	MATHEMATICS	General Algebra Higher Algebra Geometry-Plane and Solid Trigonometry
SCIENCE	General Biology Chemistry Physics	SOCIAL STUDIES	American History World History Introduction-Social Studies Geography
FOREIGN LANGUAGE	French German Latin Spanish	VOCATIONAL	Agriculture Business Education Home Economics Industrial Arts
LIBRARY	Adequate Materials and Books; Services of a Trained Librarian	HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION	Physical Health Safety Driver

*Continued on next page*

SERVICES	Guidance Special Education Handicapped Mentally retarded Audio Visual Extra Curricular Activities	FINE ARTS	Music Vocal Instrumental Art
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GOAL III

A DESIRABLE SCHOOL DISTRICT

to be effective, efficient and economical should have:

Human Resources:

A school population sufficiently large to provide an adequate foundation program.

To sustain a recommended six year high school of 300 pupils requires an elementary total school enrollment of approximately 350 pupils or a total resident enrollment of 650 to 750 pupils.

The State Board of Education regulations require that new schools seeking to be classified as six-year secondary schools shall have at least 200 pupils enrolled in grades 7-12. A district would need an elementary school of 250 or more pupils to support a 200-pupil high school or a total resident enrollment of 450 to 500 pupils. Schools in this group could offer only a minimum foundation program.

Financial Resources:

An adequate tax base of at least \$1,500,000 assessed valuation, which is capable of supporting a basic minimum foundation program of education at reasonable costs to the local taxpayer.

Districts having secondary schools in the 300-pupil grouping have a median tax base of about \$1,650,000 which enables them to meet their financial needs in the support of a desirable educational program.

Secondary schools in districts above the 300-pupil grouping have a progressively larger tax base which

permits them to expand their educational programs well above the accepted or minimum foundation programs with greater efficiency and economy.

Districts maintaining secondary schools in the 200-pupil grouping have a median tax base of about \$1,230,000 which means that they can support an acceptable educational program but at somewhat higher costs per pupil.

Schools having secondary enrollments below 200 have a limited tax base and cannot economically support a good minimum foundation program.

Table I shows the median assessed valuations by size of school.

TABLE I  
MEDIAN ASSESSED VALUATIONS  
BY SIZE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL  
(1961 Valuations)

Enrollment Interval	Median Assessed Valuations
Less than 100	\$ 621,753
100 - 149	888,110
150 - 199	1,025,370
200 - 299	1,231,836
300 - 399	1,649,540
400 - 499	2,142,544
500 - 599	2,195,998
600 - 999	3,120,234
1000 - 1999	6,615,256
2000 - 2999	14,313,098
3000 - Over	25,358,465

NOTE: Cities of the first class not included.

## STATE ADVISORY COMMISSION ON SCHOOL REORGANIZATION

In 1947 the Legislature enacted Chapter 421 that provided for the creation of a State Advisory Commission consisting of nine members to be appointed by the State Board of Education. Under the provisions of Chapter 122, Section 133.24, Laws of 1961, the members are appointed to a six-year term on a staggered basis. As vacancies occur in the membership the State Board of Education is authorized to fill such vacancies.

The Commissioner of Education serves as the ex-officio secretary and executive officer of the State Commission. As the name implies, the State Advisory Commission serves in an advisory capacity to the Commissioner of Education on matters pertaining to the procedure of school district reorganization. The Section Chief of Elementary and Secondary Education has been assigned the responsibility of directing the program of school district enlargement. Under his supervision consultant service is made available to the county school survey committees and planning groups.

The duties of the State Advisory Commission as set forth in chapter 122, Section 122.24, may be outlined as follows:

### DUTIES OF THE STATE ADVISORY COMMISSION

Formulate plans for sound district organization through well-established  
Aims  
Goals  
Principles  
Procedures

Appoint appeal boards to hear grievances of school districts included in a recommendation

Review tentative reports of county committees and make suggestions with respect to:  
School district boundaries  
Educational Needs  
Transportation  
Administration  
Building and sites  
Finance

Direct the preparation of:  
Manuals  
Bulletins  
Annual Reports  
Report to Legislature

During this current biennium the State Advisory Commission has held eight official meetings. The printing of two four-leaf annual reports on the progress of school district reorganization for general distribution was approved by the Commission. A Directory of County School Survey Committees was approved and distributed to all counties having a survey committee.

A plan of procedure in school district enlargement for the current biennium was adopted by the Commission which includes the following areas: 1) Bringing the official county maps of school districts up to date; 2) Developing an understanding and attitude among school people generally that all areas of the state be required to be in districts maintaining both elementary and secondary schools; 3) Working with local leaders in district reorganization to reactivate county school survey committees in making a restudy of the local school districts relative to their organization and how they may better meet the needs for a good comprehensive program of education from grades one through twelve.

The Commission received a request from the Big Stone County Survey Committee to be disbanded. This request was denied since the survey committee has not completed its work on school district reorganization.

In counties that have survey committees the program of school district reorganization has progressed to a point where committees are now considering the second step in the merging of small high schools. The survey committees as a result did not present proposals for the merger of school districts to the Commission for their review during this two-year period.

The Commission approved the sending of letters to the county commissioners and county auditors of each county calling to their attention the aims and objectives of the state program of district enlargement, encouraging them to follow the precepts regarding satisfactory district boundaries and the effective date of attachment.

The Commission is interested in the financial aspects of sound school district planning and is vitally concerned with the state aid program. To be better informed, the Commission members requested the personnel of the Business and Legal Division of the State Department of Education to explain the calculation of state aids as set forth in the Foundation Aid program. The chairman of the Governor's Committee on School Aids and Formula was invited to appear before the Commission to explain the proposed new formulas for the payment of state aids to schools.

A detailed report on the status of closed schools in Minnesota was presented to the Commission for their consideration.

The State Commission being interested in all procedures of school district enlargement has from time to time been called upon to review consolidation proposals that have been presented to the Commissioner of Education. For this biennium they have had for

consideration the following consolidations: Battle Lake; Climax; Cromwell; DeGraff and Murdock; DeGraff and Benson; Gatzke and Grygla; Halstad; Hokah and Caledonia; Hokah and Houston; Milaca; New Ulm; Nisswa and Brainerd; Nisswa and Pequot Lakes. Suggestions and recommendations were made by members of the Commission regarding the various consolidation proposals.

The Section Chief of Elementary and Secondary Education in the Division of Instruction and the Consultants on district reorganization are responsible for providing information and guidance to survey committees, county superintendents, district superintendents, local citizens groups and committees who are interested in sound school district planning. Staff members have prepared bulletins and circulars containing information regarding the overall program of school district enlargement. During the biennium consultants have been called upon to gather data and make surveys relative to the organization of school districts in local areas of the state, to evaluate their findings, and to assist school boards and district superintendents at public meetings for the purpose of presenting the results of studies made regarding their respective proposals.

Consultants have taken part in county school officers meetings throughout the state at which time they have discussed the overall program of school district enlargement. Many conferences have been held in the Department of Education whenever groups or individual citizens have requested such a meeting. Members of the reorganization staff have likewise been requested to attend hearings outstate relative to local school problems. County commissioners have requested that the consultants be present at hearings before the county board. Staff members have been requested to appear at several district court hearings relative to matters pertaining to consolidation. The consultants have worked with county auditors and county superintendents in bringing the county school district maps and boundaries up to date.

With the revision of the several procedures relating to school district enlargement by Minnesota Statutes 1961, Chapter 122, it was essential for the staff to develop bulletins and supplementary statements regarding such revision and to discuss these changes with the people of the state.

## COUNTY SCHOOL SURVEY COMMITTEES

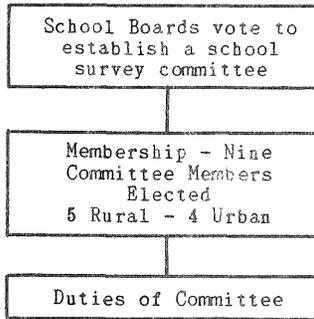
The organization and duties of county school survey committees is set forth in Minnesota Statutes 1961, Section 122.24. Provisions for the establishment of county school survey committees on an optional basis came as a result of the passage of Chapter 421 by the 1947 Legislature. At that time the school boards of 62 counties voted to establish a survey committee and in 21 counties the school boards voted against the formation of a survey committee. These same counties were given a second opportunity to form a survey committee by the 1949 Legislature and as a result one additional committee was organized. The 1953 Legislature amended the law whereby the school boards in a county could abolish the survey committee by a majority vote of the members present at such a meeting; as a result 11 survey committees were abolished. This portion of the law was repealed by the 1955 Legislature. Under the provisions of the present law the State Advisory Commission may disband a survey committee when requested by such a committee upon the completion of its work. To date, the State Advisory Commission by its action has disbanded five county survey committees. At the present time, 47 counties have duly constituted school survey committees. Chart II on page 12 indicates the counties that have school survey committees in existence as of July 1, 1962. It also shows those counties where the school boards voted to abolish their respective survey committees as well as those counties where no survey committees were established. Counties whose survey committees were disbanded by the State Advisory Commission are also indicated.

The law in its present form provides for an election for the establishment of a survey committee on an optional basis in those counties that do not have such a committee. Up to the present time none of these counties has chosen to elect a survey committee.

Chart I on pages 10 and 11 shows the manner in which county survey committees are formed and what duties they perform.

CHART I

COUNTY SCHOOL SURVEY COMMITTEES - THEIR ORGANIZATION AND DUTIES



I. To make a study of school districts as to their organization.

A. Purpose to make recommendations which will afford:

1. Better educational opportunities.
2. Equitable-Economical Administration.
3. Equitable distribution of school revenues.

B. Assemble current data relating to:

1. Financial Status
2. School Boundaries
3. Organization

II. Confer with school authorities and residents.

A. Hold public hearings.

B. Furnish information to School board members and the public concerning reorganization of districts.

III. To make reports of its study which will include

A. Recommendations for proposed reorganization of districts.

B. Maps showing boundaries of:

1. Existing districts.
2. Proposed reorganized district.

C. Organization and financial structure of reorganized district.

**TENTATIVE REPORT**

A. Prepared by Survey Committee with recommendations.

B. Report distributed to:

1. Commissioner of Education and State Advisory Commission.
2. School Board Members of the county.

C. Summary of tentative report published in newspaper.

D. Tentative report reviewed by State Advisory Commission.

E. Public hearings on tentative-report.

1. Committee shall explain advantages and disadvantages of proposal.
2. Residents of the district shall be heard.
3. Shall consider suggestions and recommendations of State Advisory Commission.

**FINAL REPORT**

A. Prepared by Survey Committee within six months after filing of tentative report.

B. Report shall contain recommendations for reorganization with maps.

C. Report distributed to:

1. Commissioner of Education and State Advisory Commission.
2. School board members.

D. Summary of final report published in newspaper.

**APPEALS**

A. School board of any district affected by recommendations in final report may appeal to State Advisory Commission by filing a written brief of its grievances.

B. Appeal board of 5 members appointed by the State Advisory Commission.

1. Appeal board conducts hearing and renders a decision granting or denying the appeal.
2. Decision is binding.

**ELECTION**

A. County superintendent calls special election after expiration of appeal period.

B. County superintendent with the approval of the Survey Committee shall determine:

1. Date of election.
2. Number of voting precincts.
3. Polling places.
4. Hours polls will be open.

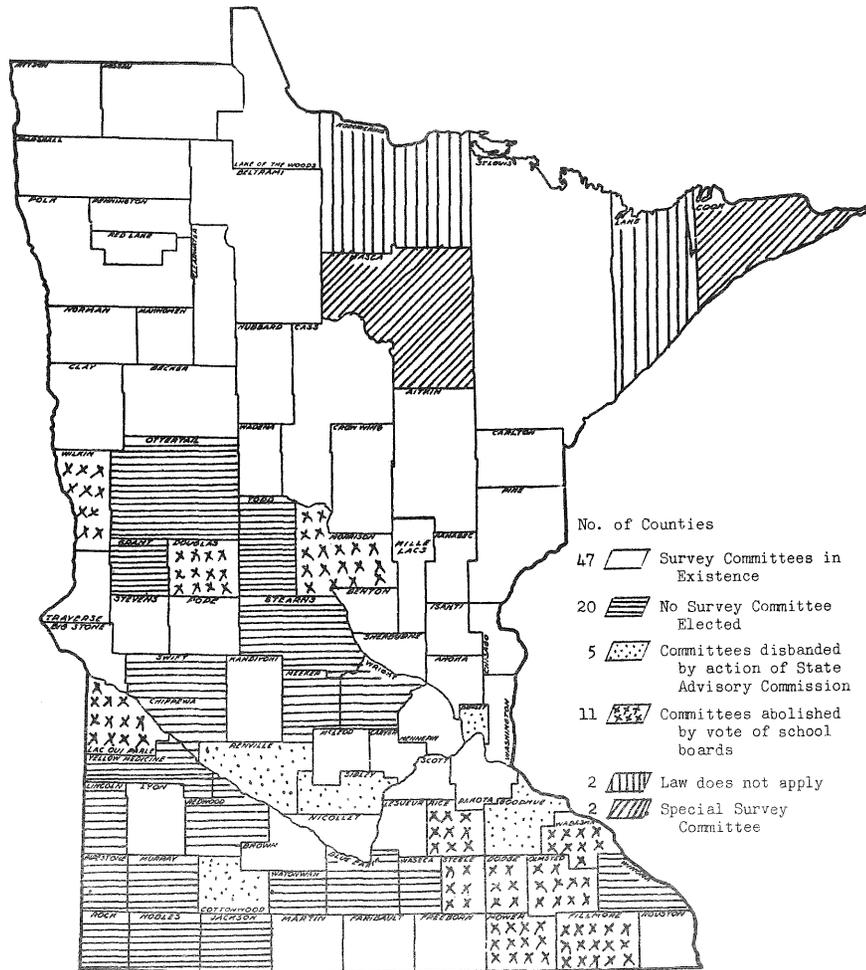
C. County superintendent with the approval of the Survey Committee shall appoint three election judges for each polling place.

D. If vote be favorable on reorganization, county superintendent certifies the results to the:

1. Commissioner of Education.
2. County Auditor.
3. Clerks of school districts.

E. Commissioner of Education assigns a number to the new district.

CHART II  
COUNTY SURVEY COMMITTEES



PROGRESS REPORT ON SCHOOL DISTRICT ENLARGEMENT

In 1947 Minnesota had 7,606 school districts.

As of July 1, 1962 there were 2,271 school districts in Minnesota.

This is a reduction of 5,335 school districts since 1947.

Statewide, this represents a reduction of 70 per cent in the number of school districts.

Forty-nine counties have exceeded the state average by making reductions of over 70 per cent.

During this past biennium there were 308 school districts that merged, most of them with districts maintaining graded elementary and secondary schools. Table II below indicates the reduction of school districts over the past fifteen years.

TABLE II  
REDUCTION OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS YEAR BY YEAR SINCE 1947

Date	Total No. of Districts	Reduction During the Year	Total Reduction Since 1947 (Accumulative)
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
July 1, 1959	2,814	270	4,792
July 1, 1960	2,579	235	5,027
July 1, 1961	2,410	169	5,196
July 1, 1962	2,271	139	5,335

In the following ten counties the reorganization has been completed to the extent that all pupils residing in each county are resident pupils in districts which maintain both elementary and



SUMMARY REPORT ON SCHOOL DISTRICT ENLARGEMENT

July 1, 1947 to July 1, 1962

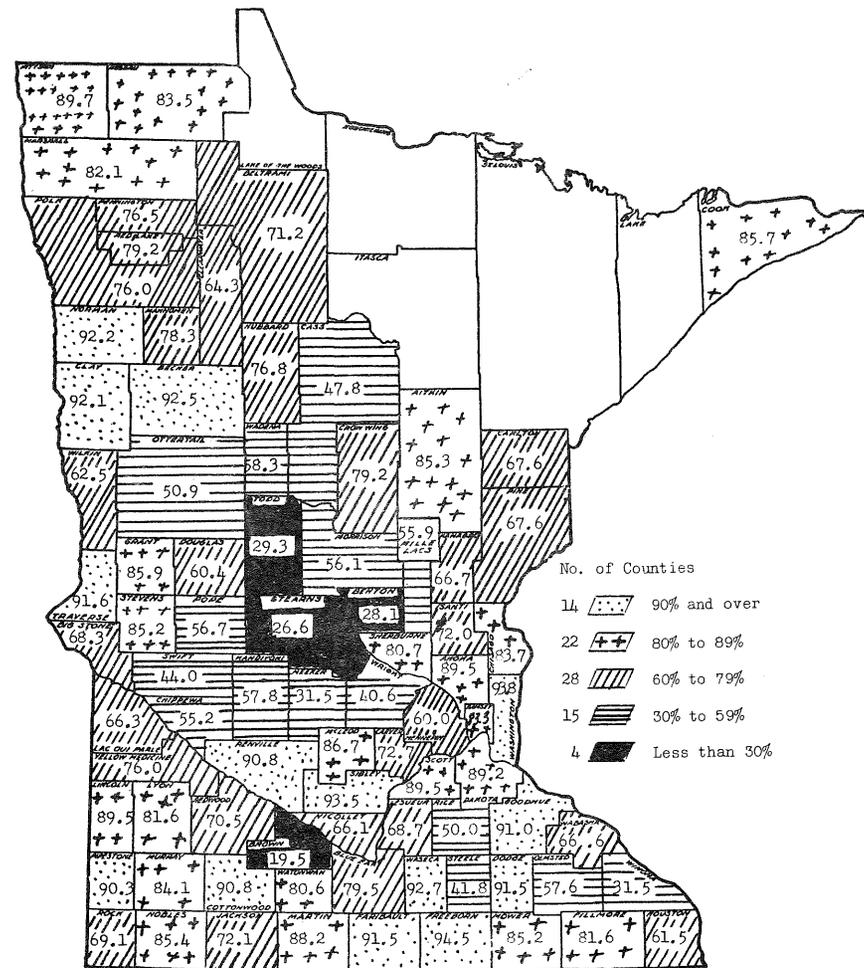
County	Number of Districts		Total Reduction	Number of Districts		Total Reduction			
	7-1-47 7-1-62			7-1-47 7-1-62					
	S	E		S	E				
Aitkin	102	4	11	87	Martin	110	8	5	97
Anoka	57	6	0	51	Meeker	92	5	58	29
Becker	133	4	6	123	Mille Lacs	59	4	22	33
Beltrami	59	4	13	42	Morrison	139	6	55	78
Benton	64	2	44	18	Mower	115	7	10	98
Big Stone	60	5	14	41	Murray	113	4	14	95
Blue Earth	122	8	17	97	Nicollet	62	2	19	41
Brown	82	5	61	16	Nobles	110	5	11	94
Carlton	34	7	4	23	Norman	103	6	2	95
Carver	66	4	14	48	Olmsted	125	5	48	72
Cass	23	7	5	11	Otter Tail	281	9	129	143
Chippewa	87	4	35	48	Pennington	68	2	14	52
Chisago	49	5	3	41	Pine	108	6	29	73
Clay	102	8	0	94	Pipestone	72	4	3	65
Clearwater	56	3	17	36	Polk	213	9	42	162
Cook	7	1	0	6	Pope	90	4	35	51
Cottonwood	76	5	2	69	Ramsey	30	5	0	25
Crow Wing	96	3	17	76	Red Lake	53	3	8	42
Dakota	102	9	2	91	Redwood	112	8	25	79
Dodge	82	5	2	75	Renville	131	10	2	119
Douglas	96	5	33	58	Rice	106	3	50	53
Faribault	118	10	0	108	Rock	68	4	17	47
Fillmore	174	9	23	142	Roseau	79	4	9	66
Freeborn	128	5	2	121	St. Louis	29	17	7	5
Goodhue	155	7	7	141	Scott	67	5	2	60
Grant	71	5	5	61	Sherburne	52	3	7	42
Hennepin	90	16	20	54	Sibley	78	5	0	73
Houston	104	3	37	64	Stearns	203	9	140	54
Hubbard	56	4	9	43	Steele	86	4	46	36
Isanti	68	2	17	49	Stevens	68	4	6	58
Itasca	6	4	0	2	Swift	93	5	47	41
Jackson	104	5	24	75	Todd	143	7	94	42
Kanabec	57	2	17	38	Traverse	60	3	2	55
Kandiyohi	109	4	42	63	Wabasha	96	5	27	64
Kittson	68	6	1	61	Wadena	60	4	21	35
Koochiching	4	3	0	1	Waseca	83	4	2	77
Lac qui Parle	104	5	30	69	Washington	65	4	0	61
Lake	1	1	0	0	Watsonwan	62	3	9	50
Lake of Woods	11	2	5	4	Wilkin	80	3	27	50
Le Sueur	95	5	25	65	Winona	104	3	75	36
Lincoln	76	5	3	68	Wright	138	8	78	52
Lyon	98	7	11	80	Yellow	92	6	16	70
McLeod	83	6	5	72	Medicine				
Mahnomen	23	2	3	18					
Marshall	140	8	17	115					
					Totals	7,606	455	1,816	5,335

(S) Districts with Elementary & Secondary Schools  
(E) Districts with Elementary Schools only

CHART IV

PERCENTAGE REDUCTION IN NUMBER OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS BY COUNTIES

July 1, 1962

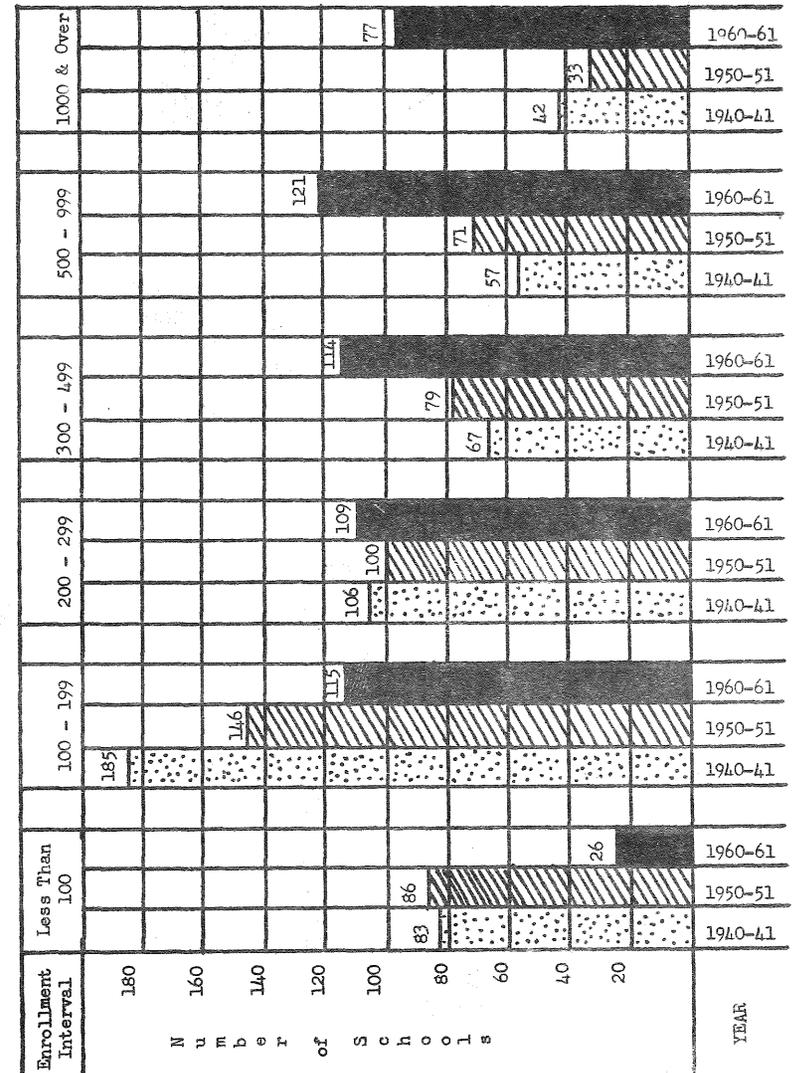


There are thirty-three counties in the state that fall below the state average of 70 per cent. Of this number eleven counties have made less than a 50 per cent reduction in the number of school districts. Within the borders of these counties there are 746 school districts or about one-third of the districts in the state. Four counties in this group have made reductions of less than 30 per cent. These counties have 362 districts or 16 per cent of the state's total number of districts. Chart IV on page 17 shows the percentage reduction of school districts by counties. Table III on page 22 ranks the counties relative to the percentage decrease in the number of districts.

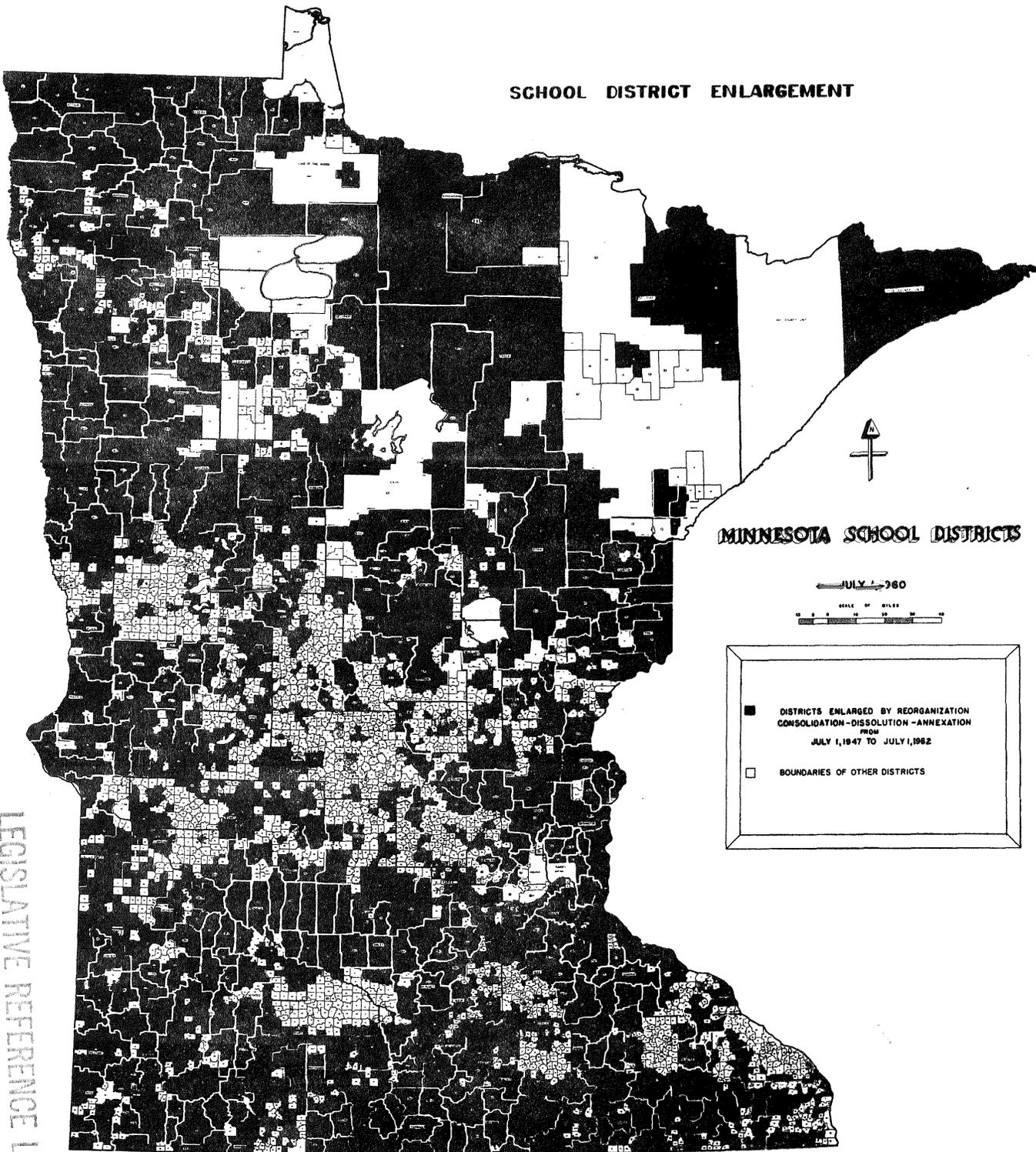
Over the past twenty years there has been a very definite trend toward the larger secondary school. The four-year high school is on the decline while the six-year and junior-senior high schools are becoming more numerous. It is to be noted that the median enrollment for the junior-senior high school increased from 488 in 1940 to 755 in 1960. This is way above the minimum national recommended enrollment of 300 pupils. For schools that are classed as six-year secondary schools the median enrollment increased from 159 pupils to 231. The schools in this group can offer only the basic essentials of the recommended foundation program. The four-year high school median enrollment has dropped from 109 pupils to 88. Schools in this category can offer but a very limited program of education.

Chart V on page 19 indicates a significant change in the number of small high schools in favor of the larger schools. In 1940 there were 268 schools with enrollments below 200 as compared to 141 in 1960. Schools with enrollments of 300 and up increased from 166 schools to 312 in this twenty-year period. Considerable progress has thus been made as a result of district reorganization in the number of high schools that can now offer a complete comprehensive program of education.

CHART V  
SIZE OF HIGH SCHOOL BY ENROLLMENT INTERVALS  
1940 - 1961



# SCHOOL DISTRICT ENLARGEMENT



## MINNESOTA SCHOOL DISTRICTS

JULY 1960

SCALE OF MILES

■ DISTRICTS ENLARGED BY REORGANIZATION  
CONSOLIDATION - DISSOLUTION - ANNEXATION  
FROM  
JULY 1, 1947 TO JULY 1, 1962

□ BOUNDARIES OF OTHER DISTRICTS

TABLE III

PER CENT OF DECREASE IN NUMBER OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS  
BY COUNTIES

July 1, 1947 to July 1, 1962

County	Percentage Decrease	County	Percentage Decrease
Freeborn	94.5%	Pennington	76.5%
Washington	93.8	Polk	76.0
Sibley	93.5	Yellow Medicine	76.0
Waseca	92.7	Carver	72.7
Becker	92.5	Jackson	72.1
Norman	92.2	Isanti	72.0
Clay	92.1	Beltrami	71.2
Traverse	91.6	Redwood	70.5
Dodge	91.5	State of Minnesota	70.1
Faribault	91.5	Rock	69.1
Goodhue	91.0	LeSueur	68.7
Cottonwood	90.8	Big Stone	68.3
Renville	90.8	Carlton	67.6
Pipestone	90.3	Pine	67.6
Kittson	89.7	Kanabec	66.7
Anoka	89.5	Wabasha	66.6
Lincoln	89.5	Lac qui Parle	66.3
Scott	89.5	Nicollet	66.1
Dakota	89.2	Clearwater	64.3
Martin	88.2	Wilkin	62.5
McLeod	86.7	Houston	61.5
Grant	85.9	Douglas	60.4
Cook	85.7	Hennepin	60.0
Nobles	85.4	Wadena	58.3
Aitkin	85.3	Kandiyohi	57.8
Mower	85.2	Olmsted	57.6
Stevens	85.2	Pope	56.7
Murray	84.1	Morrison	56.1
Chisago	83.7	Mille Lacs	55.9
Roseau	83.5	Chippewa	55.2
Ramsey	83.3	Otter Tail	50.9
Marshall	82.1	Rice	50.0
Fillmore	81.6	Cass	47.8
Lyon	81.6	Swift	44.0
Sherburne	80.7	Steele	41.8
Watsonwan	80.6	Wright	40.6
Blue Earth	79.5	Meekeer	31.5
Crow Wing	79.2	Winona	31.5
Red Lake	79.2	Todd	29.3
Mahnomen	78.3	Benton	28.1
Hubbard	76.8	Stearns	26.6
		Brown	19.5

*Itasca, Koochiching, Lake, Lake of Woods, St. Louis, made substantial reductions in the number of school districts prior to July 1, 1947 and are not included in the above list of counties.*

*Forty-nine counties have experienced a decrease in the number of school districts in excess of 70.1% since 1947.*

*Thirty-three counties are below the state average in the reduction of school districts. See Chart IV on page 17.*

## ST. JAMES, AN EXAMPLE IN DISTRICT ENLARGEMENT

Minnesota citizens can be proud of the many fine school systems that have been developed as a result of school district enlargement and which are now offering a good comprehensive program of education from grades one through twelve. These schools meet all the criteria of sound school district organization by having a sufficient student population, an adequate staff of well-trained teachers, modern buildings of good design, plus a broad tax base with which to support the whole program of education.

The school system at St. James is one illustration of many excellent ones that have been developed as a result of school district enlargement. Out of the many small districts that existed in the St. James Community prior to 1955 has come one large unified district. On pages 25 and 26 a school district map shows the district organization before and after enlargement.

The following tabulation will give some interesting facts regarding the St. James district before and after enlargement:

	Before (1955)	After (1962)
Number of districts . . . . .	29	1
Area in square miles . . . . .	8½	230
Assessed valuation . . . . .	\$1,869,391	\$5,519,418
Enrollment		
Elementary . . . . .	429	888
Secondary . . . . .	623	805
a) Resident . . . . .	316	762
b) Non-resident . . . . .	307	49
c) Per cent Non-resident. . .	49	6
Teaching staff		
Elementary teachers . . . . .	15	32
Secondary teachers . . . . .	32	46
Special teachers . . . . .	0	4

The St. James school offers a very complete program of education at the secondary level. For the school year of 1961-62 there were 55 courses available to the students. In addition there is a very broad physical education program including swimming classes for the entire community; a very complete music department; guidance program under the direction of a full-time counselor; complete library service with two full-time librarians; school nurse; driver-training program; community-wide adult education program; lunch program in all schools; and classes for the mentally retarded.

There are available some twenty different extra-curricular activities in which students may participate.

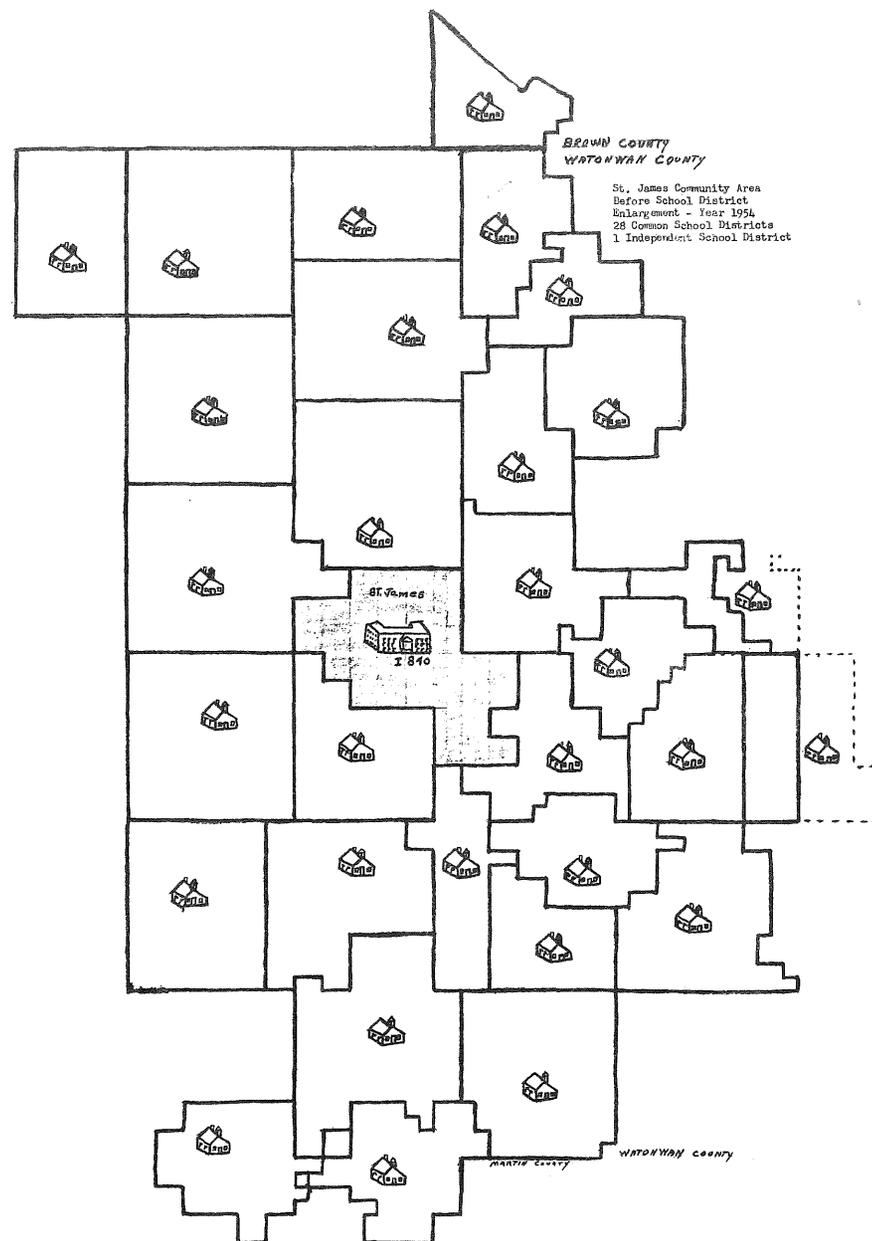
In a large district such as this, the transportation of pupils to and from school becomes an important function of the district. There are over 750 pupils transported each day in a fleet of 18 school buses and a station wagon.

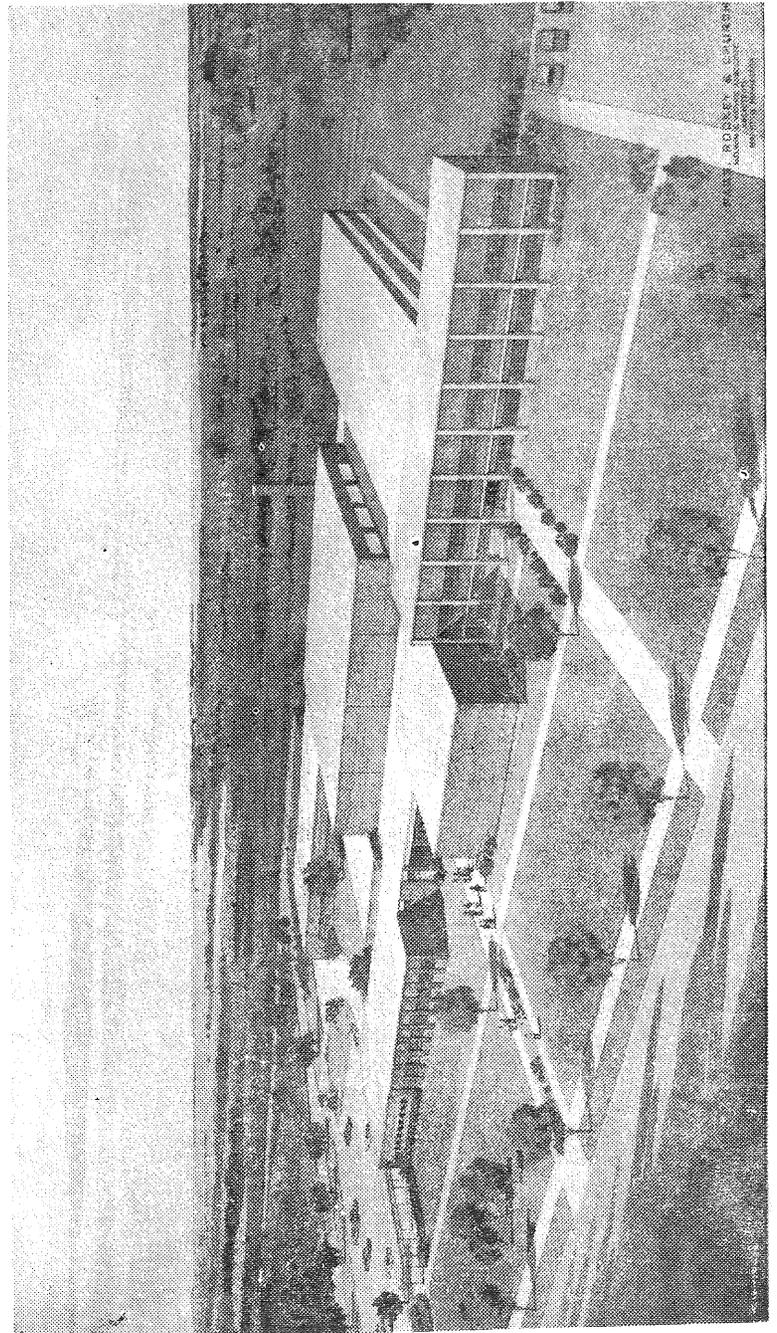
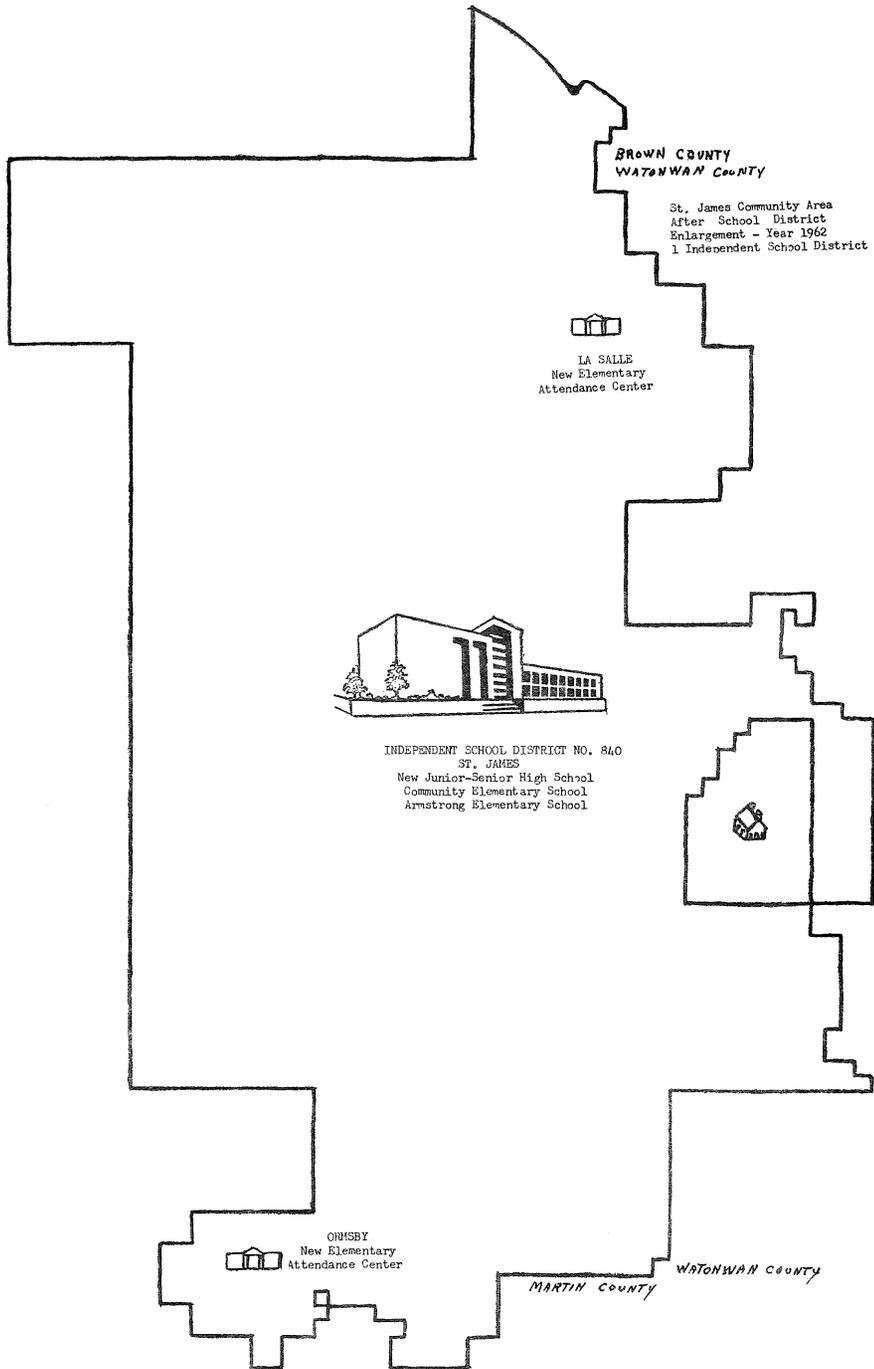
The pupils of the district have the opportunity to study in modern well-maintained school buildings that are well heated and have well-lighted pleasant classrooms. Likewise, these schools have modern teaching equipment to aid the pupils in their learning. Provisions too have been made for ample office space and rooms for the administrative and teaching staff.

At the present time there are five buildings being used for school purposes. After the district had been enlarged the patrons approved a substantial bond issue for the purpose of constructing two new elementary buildings at attendance centers located in the communities of LaSalle and Ormsby and a new complete junior-senior high school building located on a 48 acre site in the city of St. James. There are two older buildings within the city also in use as elementary schools of the district. One of these formerly housed both elementary and secondary pupils and is now used exclusively for elementary purposes.

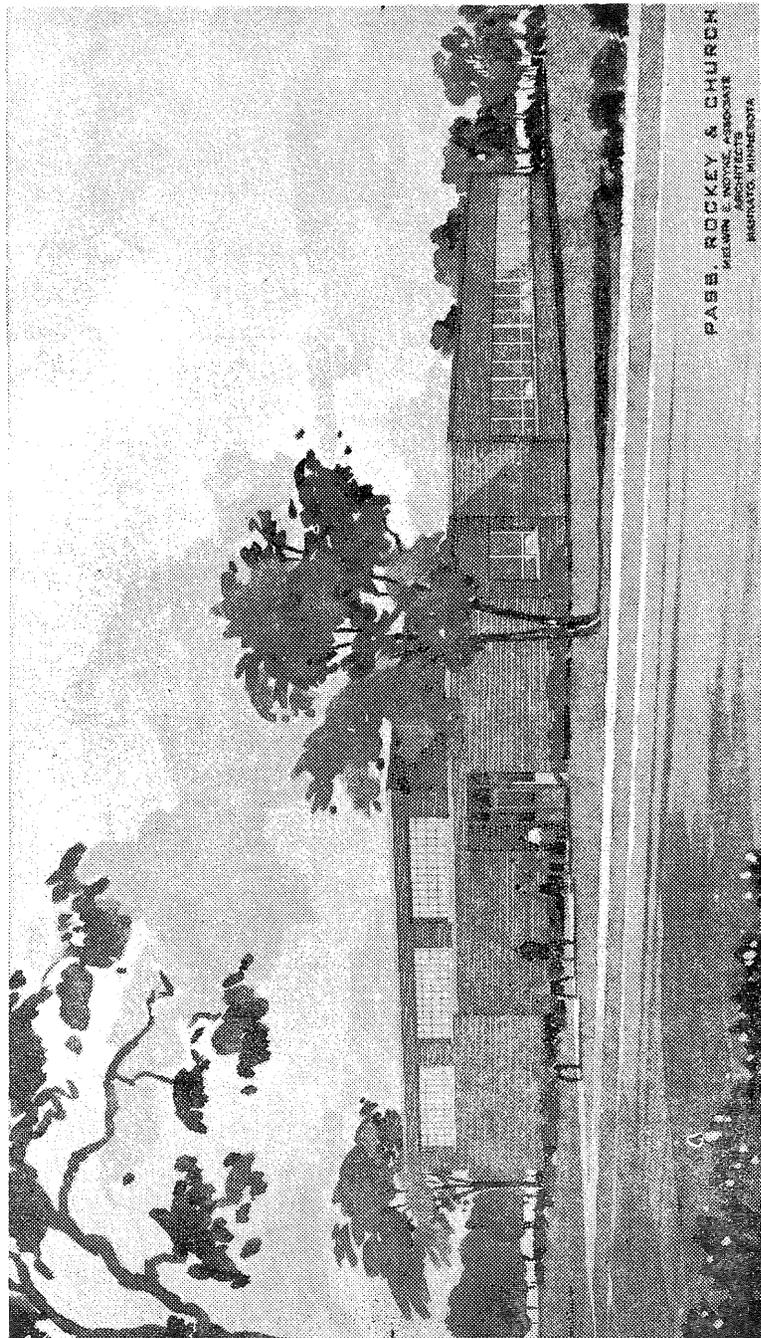
On pages 27 and 28 are pictures of the new buildings that were erected after the district was enlarged.

There are communities in the state that have not yet completed the work of district reorganization. They could well study the attainments of the St. James community and others who have met the educational needs of their children.





Junior-Senior High School at St. James



Elementary Centers at La Salle and Ormsby

PROBLEMS NEEDING FUTURE ATTENTION

While it may appear that district reorganization has made progress over the years, it is likewise true that much more remains to be done. Many of the existing secondary schools are small and costly. There are deficiencies in the educational programs of many schools. The large number of districts is of itself a deterrent to the improvement in school finance and efficient administration. The extension of the educational ladder through the secondary school years has made the small common district ineffective. Finally, the continuance of non-operating districts can no longer be justified. These are the problems that call for solution in the future.

PROBLEM ONE

Districts With Small Secondary School Enrollments Have High Per Pupil Costs

The Inefficient Use of Public Funds Stems Largely From the Improper Use of Teachers' Time.

In 130 of the 457 districts maintaining high schools the average pupil-teacher ratio is less than 15 pupils per teacher. The information in the following table is gathered from reports submitted by the various districts to the State Department of Education.

PUPIL-TEACHER RATIOS IN 457 HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICTS  
1960 - 1961

High School Enrollment	Number of Districts	Total High School Enrollment	High School Pupil-Teacher Ratio	Avg. No. of Secondary Teachers Per District	Avg. Maint. Cost Per Secondary Pupil in ADA
Less than 100	21	1,522	10.6	6.8	\$652
100 - 149	43	5,664	13.3	9.9	563
150 - 199	66	11,483	14.9	11.8	523
200 - 299	100	24,801	15.1	15.8	502
300 - 399	67	23,166	17.5	19.7	484
400 - 499	40	17,761	17.9	24.8	480
500 - 999	65	44,931	19.0	36.4	485
1,000 - 1,999	30	39,661	20.0	66.0	523
2,000 - 4,999	21	58,129	20.3	136.6	534
5,000 - Over	4	61,088	22.4	682.0	525
Totals or Averages	457	288,206	19.0	33.2	\$514

Secondary schools with enrollments below 200 have small classes at the senior high school level. In grades 10-11-12, the average academic classes, the number of pupils per class will range from 10 to 15 pupils per class. Special department classes have fewer pupils per class as compared to the academic classes. The data below gives the class size per subject area:

**Range of Class Size for Secondary Schools Below 200:**

Academic Classes	10-15 pupils
Agriculture Classes	7-13 pupils
Business Education Classes	11-16 pupils
Home Economics	7-11 pupils
Industrial Arts	9-11 pupils

Small classes are not at all uncommon as records in the State Department of Education show that some schools conduct classes for two or three pupils taking shorthand, three to four in home economics, four to seven in higher algebra, three to seven in solid geometry and trigonometry, five to eight in foreign language. These are but a few examples of inefficient use of the teacher's time and contributes to the excessive high costs per pupil.

Small enrollments contribute to high per-pupil costs because of the low pupil-teacher ratios.

**"The Number One Problem"**

"I should like to record...my conviction that in many states the number one problem is the elimination of the small high school by school district reorganization. Such reorganization has been virtually accomplished...in a few states. In all others, citizens who wish to improve public education might well devote their energies to mobilizing opinion in behalf of district reorganization directed toward the reduction of small high schools."

Dr. James B. Conant, "The American High School Today."

**PROBLEM TWO**

**Many Minnesota High Schools Offer Less Than The Recommended Basic Foundation Program.**

By today's standards the modern educational program is a twelve-year program from grades one through twelve. The secondary

school program should provide a challenge to all pupils. College bound students are entitled to a broad, well-balanced curriculum offering to prepare them for a successful college career. The student who does not plan to attend college needs the basic academic and vocational program to enable him to become a skilled worker in his chosen field.

IN MINNESOTA THERE ARE 130 HIGH SCHOOLS WITH FEWER THAN 200 PUPILS THAT PROVIDE A LIMITED MINIMUM EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM.

Per cent of schools offering the basic subjects:

Language Arts	- 100%	Science	
Social Studies	- 100%	General	- 100%
Mathematics		Biology	- 100%
Algebra	-- 95%	Chemistry	- 56%
Higher Algebra	- 62%	Physics	- 54%
Plane Geometry	- 62%		
Solid Geometry	- 23%		
Trigonometry	- 24%		

Foreign Language is NOT offered in 77 per cent of these schools. Less than 10 per cent of the schools with an enrollment below 100 offer a foreign language. Thirty-two schools in this group give only one language course. See tables IV and V.

**TABLE IV**  
**PER CENT OF SCHOOLS OFFERING FOREIGN LANGUAGES**  
**School Year 1960-1961**

Enrollment Interval	No. of Schools	No Foreign Languages	French	German	Latin	Spanish	Other
1000 & Over	51	0.0	76.6	72.6	92.1	76.6	3.9
600 - 999	44	2.3	29.5	34.1	56.8	47.7	0.0
500 - 599	20	5.0	20.0	25.0	40.0	40.0	0.0
400 - 499	40	15.0	10.0	12.5	37.5	35.0	0.0
300 - 399	67	35.8	19.4	20.9	19.4	13.4	1.5
200 - 299	97	46.4	6.2	17.5	15.4	14.4	1.0
150 - 199	68	70.6	4.4	11.7	5.9	5.9	1.4
100 - 149	42	76.2	2.3	2.3	4.7	14.3	0.0
Below 100	22	90.0	4.5	0.0	4.5	0.0	0.0

NOTE: Cities of the first class not included in above tabulation

TABLE V  
NUMBER OF SCHOOLS OFFERING ONE OR MORE FOREIGN LANGUAGE  
School Year 1960 - 1961

Enrollment Interval	No Foreign Languages	One Language	Two Languages	Three Languages	Four Languages	Five Languages
1000 & Over	0	2	7	22	18	2
600 - 999	1	18	20	4	1	-
500 - 599	1	13	6	-	-	-
400 - 499	6	26	8	-	-	-
300 - 399	24	37	5	1	-	-
200 - 299	45	51	1	-	-	-
150 - 299	48	20	-	-	-	-
100 - 149	32	10	-	-	-	-
Below 100	20	2	-	-	-	-

NOTE: Cities of the first class not included in above tabulation

Vocational Courses are NOT available in many of these small secondary schools. Approved vocational departments in secondary schools with an enrollment below 200 show that only 37 per cent have agriculture, 43 per cent industrial arts, 49 per cent business education and 72 per cent home economics. Of the 22 schools having fewer than 100 pupils in high school, 14 of them have no vocational departments. See tables VI and VII.

TABLE VI  
PER CENT OF SCHOOLS OFFERING VOCATIONAL COURSES  
School Year 1960 - 1961

Enrollment Interval	No. of Schools	No Approved Special Depts.	Agric.	Business	Home Ec.	Industrial Arts
1000 & Over	51	0	54.9	100.0	100.0	100.0
600 - 999	44	0	70.4	95.4	90.9	100.0
500 - 599	20	0	85.0	100.0	95.0	90.0
400 - 499	40	0	72.5	92.5	97.5	95.0
300 - 399	67	0	79.1	89.5	94.0	88.0
200 - 299	97	0	68.0	85.5	94.8	71.1
150 - 199	68	0	52.9	67.2	98.5	58.8
100 - 149	42	2.3	42.8	66.6	95.2	57.1
Below 200	22	63.6	18.1	13.8	22.7	13.8

NOTE: Cities of the first class not included in above tabulation

TABLE VII  
NUMBER OF SCHOOLS WITH ONE OR MORE APPROVED VOCATIONAL DEPARTMENTS  
School Year 1960 - 1961

Enrollment Interval	None	One	Two	Three	Four
1000 & Over	0	0	0	23	28
600 - 999	0	0	2	15	27
500 - 599	0	0	0	6	14
400 - 499	0	0	2	13	25
300 - 399	0	0	3	28	36
200 - 299	0	3	8	52	34
150 - 199	0	1	20	40	7
100 - 149	1	1	12	27	1
Below 100	14	2	5	1	0

NOTE: Cities of the first class not included in above tabulation

Guidance Counseling was not available under the direction of an assigned counselor in 78 per cent of these schools. In schools with an enrollment below 100, there are 19 schools that offer no guidance service out of the 22 schools in that group. See table VIII.

TABLE VIII  
PER CENT OF SCHOOLS OFFERING GUIDANCE COUNSELING  
School Year 1961 - 1962

Enrollment Interval	No. of Schools	No Guidance Service	Principal & Supt. Part-time Counseling	Counselor Assigned Part-time	Counselor Full-time
Less than 100	22	86.4	13.6	None	None
100 - 149	42	80.9	16.7	2.4	None
150 - 199	68	66.2	17.6	16.2	None
200 - 299	97	57.7	18.5	21.6	2.1
300 - 399	67	44.8	8.9	23.9	22.4
400 - 499	40	27.5	7.5	17.5	47.5
500 - 599	20	30.0	5.0	None	65.0
600 - 999	44	4.5	2.3	13.6	79.5
1000 & Over	51	None	None	None	100.

NOTE: Cities of the first class not included in above tabulation.

Special Classes for Handicapped Children. In this group of 130 secondary schools only seven had approved classes for the mentally retarded and four had approved classes in speech correction.

Table IX shows the per cent of schools having special classes for handicapped children.

TABLE IX  
PER CENT OF SCHOOLS OFFERING SPECIAL CLASSES  
FOR HANDICAPPED CHILDREN  
School Year 1960 - 1961

Enrollment Interval	Number of Schools	Retarded	Speech	Visual
Less than 100	22	None	4.5	None
100 - 149	42	None	2.4	None
150 - 199	68	8.8	4.4	None
200 - 299	97	17.5	4.1	None
300 - 399	67	26.0	4.5	None
400 - 499	40	37.5	12.5	None
500 - 599	20	60.0	10.0	None
600 - 999	44	70.5	36.4	None
1000 & Over	51	96.1	80.1	13.7

NOTE: Cities of the first class not included in tabulation.

The Library and its services are an integral part of a good educational program, but this is one of the weak links in the small secondary school. Full time librarians are too costly for the small school. Many of them have 15 or fewer library periods per week.

SMALL SECONDARY SCHOOLS ARE NOT IN A POSITION TO OFFER A COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM AT REASONABLE COSTS.

#### PROBLEM THREE

Minnesota Ranks Fourth Nationally In The Greatest Number Of School Districts.

Minnesota has the dubious honor of ranking near the top in the number of school districts in existence. See Exhibit A on page 35.

As of July 1, 1962 Minnesota had 2,271 school districts remaining. Of this number 1,816 districts maintain elementary schools only and 455 districts operate elementary and secondary schools.

The seven Midwest states composed of Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota and South Dakota had 42 per

cent of the nation's school districts. There were 36,402 school districts in the United States in 1961, and 15,227 districts were concentrated in these states. Among the seven Midwest states, Minnesota has 15 per cent of the school districts.

EXHIBIT A  
TEN STATES HAVING THE GREATEST NUMBER OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS  
School Year 1961 - 1962

Rank	State	No. of Districts
1	Nebraska	3,264
2	South Dakota	2,940
3	Pennsylvania	2,594
4	MINNESOTA	2,355
5	Kansas	2,261
6	Michigan	1,866
7	Wisconsin	1,834
8	Missouri	1,649
9	California	1,630
10	Texas	1,481

#### PROBLEM FOUR

The Common School District Can No Longer Meet The Educational Needs Of Its Children.

As of July 1, 1962 Minnesota still had 1,816 districts maintaining only elementary schools. Of this number about 1,200 operate their own schools. These schools enrolled about 4.8 per cent of the pupils in the state or about 34,000 of the total of 706,696 pupils.

Many of the common school districts do not provide an adequate elementary program for their children. Their teachers cannot devote as much time per grade and class when they have all grades from one through six or eight, in comparison with a teacher who can spend all her time teaching only one grade. They do not in many instances have the training that teachers in the graded elementary systems have. Many teachers in the rural schools have not had opportunities for training in the newer methods of teaching science and arithmetic. The library service in the one room school is inadequate. Very few of these schools provide an approved school lunch program.

A Wisconsin study showed that pupils entering a secondary school on a non-resident basis from a common school have a difficult time in adjusting to the secondary school program, due to inadequate preparation and background at the elementary level.

Every elementary child is entitled to a well-planned elementary educational program under the direction of well-trained teachers and in modern facilities.

Common school districts because of their size do not have a sufficient tax base that can provide for a comprehensive program of education from grades one through twelve. Because of the limited tax base of these districts they do not have the financial resources to provide a secondary school program for their pupils and therefore they must send them to another district which maintains a secondary school on a non-resident basis if that district is willing to receive them. This creates a problem since the taxable valuation of these districts is not available to the district that furnishes the secondary school. The total 1960 assessed valuation for all common school districts both closed and operating was \$182,775,841. Is there any valid reason why this tax base should not be available to those districts that offer a complete program of education from grades one through twelve?

**PROBLEM FIVE**

Minnesota Has Many Non-operating Schools.

For the school year of 1960-61 there were 659 non-operating districts\* in Minnesota. The nation as a whole had 4,677 non-operating districts in 1961. Of these schools 81 per cent may be found in the seven midwest states of Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota and South Dakota. Approximately 3,788 of the non-operating schools are concentrated in this area. Approximately one-third (32.2 per cent) of the common districts in Minnesota are closed and transporting their public school pupils to other districts as compared to 13 per cent for the nation as a whole.

The closed school district fails to fulfill the true function of a school district, that of maintaining a school for its resident pupils.

\*For the 1961-62 school year the number of closed districts was 618.

Closed school districts generally have small public school enrollments in the elementary grades. The following chart shows that 321 of the 659 closed school districts had public school enrollments of five or less pupils and 523 closed districts had enrollments of ten or less pupils. Only 136 districts or 20.5 per cent had enrollments of 11 or more pupils. Chart VI on page 17 shows the number of closed schools by counties.

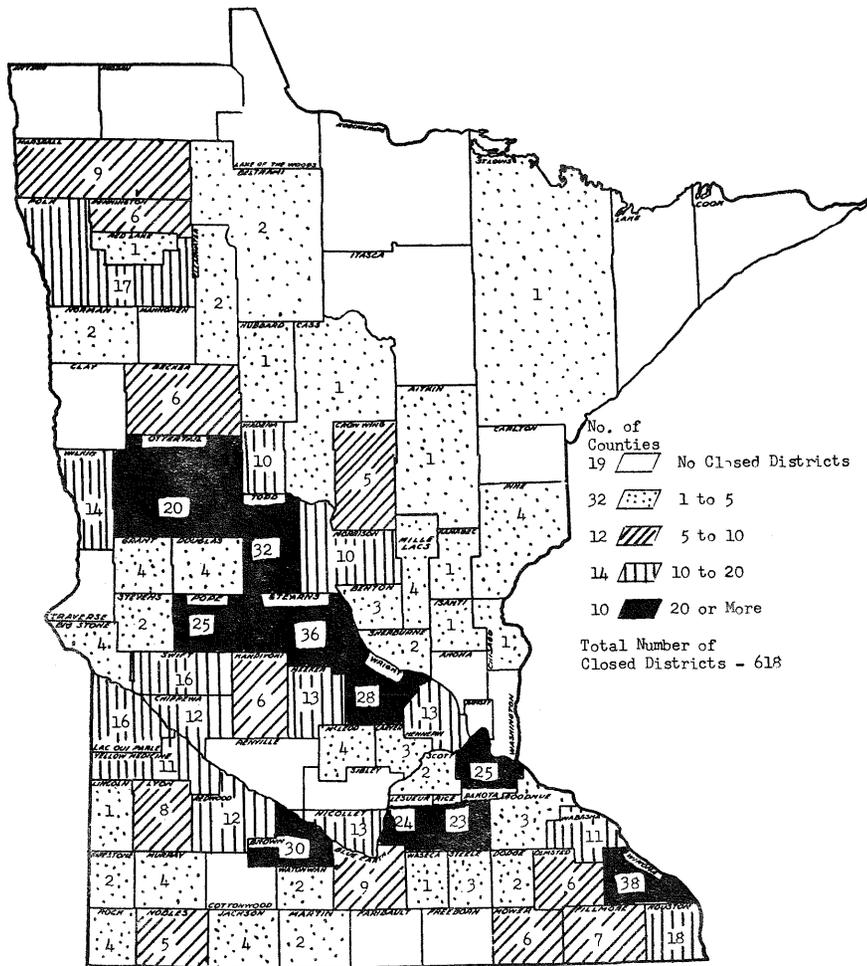
**GROUPING OF CLOSED SCHOOL DISTRICTS  
BY ELEMENTARY ENROLLMENTS**

School Year 1960 - 1961

Enrollment Interval	NUMBER OF SCHOOLS
Over 25	12
21 - 25	10
16 - 20	25
11 - 15	89
6 - 10	202
1 - 5	270
No Public School Pupils	51

For the year of 1960-61 the 659 closed school districts enrolled 4,891 pupils in the elementary grades and 4,780 pupils in the secondary schools. Of the state total enrollment only 1.3 per cent of the pupils reside in these closed districts. They account for 1.4 per cent of the pupils enrolled in the elementary grades and 1.6 per cent of the pupils at the secondary level. About 32 per cent of the pupils in the ungraded schools are residents in these non-operating districts. Many of them are enrolled in districts that maintain graded elementary and secondary schools on a tuition basis. There is no valid excuse for the closed districts to continue as organized school districts. They should be a part of a district that maintains a complete program of education from grades one through twelve.

CHART VI  
 COUNTIES WITH CLOSED DISTRICTS  
 School Year 1961 - 1962



The 659 closed school districts had a total assessed valuation of \$46,618,951 for the year of 1960. The taxable assessed valuation for all school districts in 1960 was \$2,197,571,402. Closed districts account for about 2.2% of the total valuation. The taxable assessed valuation of the closed districts is not available as a part of the tax base for bonding purposes by the districts where these pupils attend. There are cases where this becomes a real problem to those districts with graded elementary and secondary schools when they accept these pupils on a tuition basis and find that they do not have a sufficient tax base for bonding purposes to erect new buildings for the additional enrollment.

## LEGISLATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS

In 1947 the Minnesota Legislature established the State Advisory Commission on School Reorganization and charged it with the responsibility of "formulating the aims, goals, principles and procedures of public school reorganization in Minnesota". In its 1949 manual the State Advisory Commission characterized a desirable school district as one containing "a school population sufficiently large to provide an adequate and economical educational program designed to meet the needs and abilities of all children through the secondary school years".

Enlargement of school districts has progressed steadily since 1947 to the present during which time more than 5,300 districts have been merged with other units of administration. However, 15 years after the passage of the reorganization law there still remain 1,800 districts distinct and separate from those local units which maintain twelve-year schools.

The State Advisory Commission on School Reorganization is agreed that a general and uniform system of public schools for Minnesota should be based on a twelve-year educational program as the minimum offering of a school district. This is embodied in the first recommendation and is given emphasis above all others. If adopted by the Legislature, it would result in larger and more equal educational opportunities for Minnesota youth, making possible more efficient and economical administration of public schools as well as the distribution of public school revenues on a more equitable basis.

The following recommendations are made to the 1963 Legislature:

1. All area of the State should be included in school districts maintaining classified elementary and secondary schools, grades one through twelve, by July 1, 1965.

The goal of having all areas of the State included in such school districts was established by the State Advisory Commission on School Reorganization in its manual of 1949. It is basic to efficient school administration.

2. The county school transportation levies for non-resident secondary pupils should be spread only on the property of those districts that do not maintain classified secondary schools.

The area receiving the benefit of such non-resident transportation should pay the local share of the costs. It is not reasonable to add this cost to the districts which are already paying their share of resident-pupil transportation.

3. Standardization of tax-assessing practices should be required.

Reorganized school districts often includes land in more than one county. Inequities arise where a uniform school district millrate is applied to property which has been assessed under varying ratios of valuation by local assessors.

4. When the voters of a common school district at a regular or special meeting have approved the dissolution of the district and have also approved the assumption of a proportionate share of the bonded debt of the district to which attachment of this territory is desired, the county board of commissioners should be authorized to issue a final order of dissolution and attachment.

The procedure of holding a separate election on debt assumption, after the interlocutory order of the county board has been issued, is often confusing to the voters. Frequently the debt assumption question is voted down although the dissolution proposal has been approved, and the interlocutory order is thus made void. The optional interlocutory order with a separate election on debt assumption should be provided for in cases where a division of the territory of the district is part of the dissolution proposal.

5. The provisions for payment of a special equalization aid to counties for the non-resident tuition fund should be repealed.

As reorganization has taken place the assessed valuation of the discontinued districts has been placed in direct support of education in the enlarged district. The removal of such valuation from the tax base which supports the county school tax fund for non-resident tuition has frequently resulted in higher tax rates and consequently created a new incentive to district reorganization. However, the "county tuition equalization aid" counteracts the reorganization program by granting additional aid to those counties whose tax levies for

tuition is more than 150 per cent of the average for the state. An examination of the list of beneficiaries in relation to the district enlargement program raises questions of either the need or the justification of this aid. Since the equalization feature is part of the state foundation aid payment to the county tax fund in the first place, there is no valid reason for a second equalization.

6. Common and independent districts should be defined in accordance with the educational function they perform.

There is considerable confusion between the classification of school districts and the type of schools maintained. Generally, common school districts maintain ungraded elementary schools, and independent school districts maintain graded elementary and secondary schools. Laws relating to the powers and duties of school boards are written on this general premise. However, there are some independent districts maintaining ungraded schools. A few common districts maintain graded elementary schools and, until recent years, a few also maintained secondary schools. The laws designed for one kind of district are impractical in some districts of the same classification because of the type of schools maintained therein.

The Commission recommends that Minnesota Statutes, Section 120.02, be amended so as to define common school districts as those which maintain only ungraded elementary schools, and independent districts as those which maintain graded elementary or secondary schools.

7. All districts which are not operating a public school within the confines of that district should be dissolved immediately and the territory attached to districts maintaining elementary and secondary schools, grades one through twelve, within a reasonable period of time.

While we favor the inclusion of all territory in a high school district, the closing of schools in some districts may be a step toward eventual consolidation with other school districts, there are numerous cases where closed school districts have been continued in existence for many years. The interests of public education in Minnesota would be best served

by the immediate dissolution of all non-operating schools and their attachment to districts maintaining elementary and secondary schools, grades one through twelve, within a reasonable period of time.

8. The status quo should be protected for boundaries and assets of districts being merged for the interim between the issuance of official orders and the effective date of such orders.

It is recommended that the following be included in the Education Code:

No changes shall be made in the boundaries, and no property or other assets shall be disposed of in any manner or in any district or portion of a district included in proceedings of boundary change under any law after the final or interlocutory orders of the county board, or the orders of consolidation or reorganization of the county superintendent, have been issued and prior to the effective date of such order.

9. Claims against a discontinued district should be made a charge against the territory of the discontinued district.

Districts having outstanding orders or unpaid obligations issued or incurred prior to a merger should be held responsible for their payment. Some districts when considering dissolution or consolidation have made no tax levies in anticipation of being merged with another district. Under present law, the enlarged district has to assume all liabilities of the discontinued district. It is recommended that the Education Code be amended to include the substance of these former laws: M. S. 1957, Section 122.1; Section 122.27, Subd. 3; and Section 122.27, Subd. 4.

10. Current laws on the alteration of boundaries contain certain provisions which are conflicting in application and interpretation. These should be amended for clarity and for establishing a priority of procedures when the same territory is involved in more than one procedure at the same time.

It is recommended by the Commission that such amendments be made to M. S. 1961, Section 122.21, Subd. 4; Section 122.22, Subd. 7; and Section 122.23, Subd. 6.

11. Provision should be made for the selection of a site for a proposed new school to be designated and voted on as an optional part of the final report of a school survey committee, or as an optional part of the consolidation proposal involving two or more districts maintaining secondary schools.

The merging of two or more districts is sometimes delayed and defeated because of the uncertainty of locating a proposed new school. This is particularly vital in the consideration of merging districts maintaining small secondary schools. The Commission recommends the amendment of Minnesota Statutes, Section 122.24, Subd. 22, by adding a new paragraph to give a school survey committee optional authority to recommend a site to be voted upon as a part of a reorganization proposal. A similar amendment should be made to M. S. 122.23, Subd. 9, whereby the voters in the districts maintaining secondary schools might approve or reject a consolidation proposal which designates a site for the proposed new school for these districts.

## CONCLUSION

The people of Minnesota have every reason to be proud of the many fine school systems that have been developed as a result of school district reorganization. They compare favorably with the best in the nation.

BUT...

We have a right to be concerned about the MANY INEQUALITIES THAT REMAIN.

Under the optional procedures in Minnesota Laws, district reorganization has not developed uniformly among the several counties. An examination of the summary report on page 16 shows that much remains to be done. Three counties have more than 100 districts each and one of these has almost 150. Two additional counties have more than 75 districts and eight others have each more than 50 districts. There are twenty other counties with from 25 to 50 districts remaining.

The lack of satisfactory district organization often results in the inefficient operation of the schools. Notwithstanding a general teacher shortage, and in face of over-enrollments in some districts, it is found that for the 1960-61 year 50.1 per cent of the 1,170 operating one-teacher schools had fewer than 15 pupils per classroom. Inequalities in school tax rates are also very common in areas where reorganization has not brought equalization at the local level. Other financial complications result from the difficulty of designing a state aid system that can work equitably for such a large number of school districts. Inequality in the control of school matters will always exist until the non-resident status is eliminated, and elementary and secondary schools made available to all on the basis of residence in districts maintaining such schools. Pupils attending the secondary schools with small enrollments are often denied educational opportunities because of the limited and prescribed nature of the program of studies. All of these factors are among the inequalities that point to the need of district reorganization.

The demands made upon the schools today exceed those of any earlier period. The educational job is a bigger one than ever before. The schools of tomorrow must be even better than those of

the past. Atomic energy, automation, international relations, complex social problems, global communications and travel, and scientific applications to the various aspects of life place a challenge upon the schools to provide a scope and quality of education far above all previous standards. President Kennedy declared on the occasion of the orbital flight of Astronaut John Glenn, "Space is a new ocean and we must sail on it."

In these times "a general and uniform system of public schools" calls for nothing less than school districts which can maintain both elementary and secondary schools and provide a broad and comprehensive program of education. Public schools are a state concern. The welfare of all the people suffers from poor or inadequate schools in any community. Education now available to Minnesota children is uneven.

To make for "a general and uniform system of public schools" the Legislature should declare the state policy that all districts shall maintain both elementary and secondary schools, and provide adequately for the education of all pupils in grades one through twelve. Such an act would enlarge and equalize educational opportunities for Minnesota youth, make possible more efficient and economical administration of public schools, and make possible the distribution of public school revenues on a more equitable basis.

#### SMALL SCHOOL SYSTEMS ARE WASTEFUL

"One of the gravest problems today is the existence of numerous school districts too small to operate efficiently. Small school systems are wasteful of personnel. They do not provide a sound basis for school finance. And small schools cannot provide an adequate educational program.

"Experience has demonstrated that voluntary provisions for school district reorganization do not work. States should pass laws making such reorganization mandatory under the direction of the State Department of Education."

President Dwight D. Eisenhower's Commission on National Goals.

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Commission on School Reorg  
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