



Code XXXII-A-3c

**Tenth Report**  
of the  
**STATE ADVISORY COMMISSION  
ON SCHOOL REORGANIZATION**



To the  
**SIXTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE**

of the  
**STATE OF MINNESOTA**

January, 1967



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BIENNIAL REPORT TO THE SIXTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

To the Senators and Representatives  
of the 1967 Legislature  
State of Minnesota

We submit to you our tenth report on school district reorganization. This report covers the 1965-67 biennium, and is made pursuant to provisions of Minnesota Statutes 1965, Section 122.24, Subdivision 1, which states:

"On or before January 15 of each odd-numbered year, the Commission shall report its activities and recommendations concerning school reorganization to the legislature."

Information and data covering the period from July 1, 1947 is included and will indicate 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
Donald E. Swenson, Chairman . . . . . Richfield Former State Representative, Committee on Education; Former Chairman, Mankato School Board; Former Chairman, Minnesota Citizens Committee on Public Education; Municipal Finance Consultant.	1969
Robert B. Gunderson . . . . . Richfield Member and Chairman, Hennepin County School Survey Committee; Member, Richfield School Board; Industrial Engineer, Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing Company.	1969
Clarence Mikkelsen . . . . . Glyndon Insurance and Real Estate; Member, Glyndon School Board; Chairman, Clay County School Survey Committee; Past President, District 23 School Boards Association.	1967
Dr. Karl F. Nolte . . . . . Hibbing Educational Consultant, Jyring and Whiteman, Architects and Engineers, Hibbing; Former Member, School Board Independent School Dis- trict No. 701, Hibbing; Former Director, Minnesota School Boards Association; Former Director, Elementary Education, Hibbing Public Schools.	1969
A. Harold Peterson . . . . . Chisago City Former State Representative; Attorney at Law; Former Chairman, Chisago City School Board; Chairman, Board of Directors, Chisago Lakes Hospital; Member, Executive Board, Minnesota Synod Lutheran Church of America; Member, Minne- sota-Wisconsin Boundary Area Commission; Captain, U. S. Naval Reserve.	1967
Walter W. Richardson . . . . . North St. Paul Superintendent of Schools, North St. Paul; Former Superintendent of Schools, Jeffers, Independent School District; Former President, Minnesota Association of School Administrators	1971

Term Expires  
July 1

Al Sater . . . . . Brainerd	1967
Former District Superintendent of Schools; Former Chairman, Legislative Committee, Minnesota Association of School Administra- tors; Past President, Central Minnesota School Superintendents.	
Honorable Harvey B. Sathre . . . . . Adams	1971
State Representative; Fifth District 5B, Mower County; Member, House Education Com- mittee; Member, State and Junior College Committee; Farmer; Member, Grange and Farm Bureau.	
Mrs. Virgil E. Weitgenant . . . . . Minneapolis	1971
Hennepin County Assistant Superintendent of Schools; Former Nobles County Superintendent of Schools; Past President, Minnesota Associa- tion of County Superintendents.	
Duane J. Mattheis . . . . .	Commissioner of Education
Secretary and Executive Officer of the State Advisory Commission on School Reorganization	

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## INTRODUCTION

During the nineteen-year period from 1947 to 1966, attention has been focused on the reorganization of school districts. One of the basic goals of school district reorganization is to secure resident status for every child in a district that can provide a broad comprehensive program of education through the elementary and secondary school levels. To meet this goal it is essential that all territory of the state be included in a district with a twelve-year program of education, wherein the taxable wealth can be used to insure the greatest return for each tax dollar expended for a quality program of instruction.

There has been a substantial reduction in the number of school districts since 1947. As of July 1, 1966, there were 1,375 school districts in existence, compared to 7,606 districts at the beginning of the reorganization program. In this span of time many rural districts have been merged with neighboring districts which maintained graded elementary and secondary school located in the villages and cities of the state. This reduction has come about by the use of the optional procedures of dissolution, consolidation and reorganization. Each of these procedures made it possible for the people residing in a district to merge with another district on a voluntary basis, and, as a result, the reorganization of school districts into larger administrative units has been slow. Financial incentives through state aids have been provided in hopes that it would encourage sound school district organization; however, in some cases, it has tended to subsidize small inefficient school districts.

Prior to July 1, 1965, about one-third of the rural districts had ceased to operate a classified school within their district and the school board arranged for the instruction of their children on a tuition basis in other near-by districts. In 1963 the Legislature enacted into law Chapter 547, which provided for the voluntary merger of districts with non-operating schools with districts maintaining a classified school before July 1, 1965. There were 197 closed schools that merged with other districts on a voluntary basis during the school year of 1964-1965. After July 1, 1965, the law provided that districts with non-operating schools would be automatically dissolved and attached by the county board to districts maintaining an operating classified school. This mandatory phase of Chapter 547 eliminated 267 school districts during the early months of the 1965-1966 school year. The people residing in these districts accepted the mandatory merger of their districts, the result being that the merger of districts with non-operating schools was accomplished without opposition.

## CHAPTER I

### STATE ADVISORY COMMISSION ON SCHOOL REORGANIZATION

The State Advisory Commission was created in 1947 by the Legislature when they enacted Chapter 421, known as the school district reorganization law. The year 1967 marks the completion of twenty years of service by the people who have served as members of this Commission. During this twenty-year period, they have assisted sixty-three county school survey committees that were established under the provisions of Chapter 421, in formulating plans for good school district reorganization in their respective counties. In counties without elected school survey committees, the Commission has rendered service to local citizen committees in their studies relating to the program of school district enlargement. As a result the Commission through their recommendations have been responsible for the formation of stronger school districts with a program of education from grades one through twelve.

#### Commission Membership

The law provides that there shall be nine members on the State Advisory Commission as set forth in Minnesota Statutes, Section 122.24. Members are appointed by the State Board of Education to a six-year term on a staggered basis. As vacancies occur on the Commission, the State Board of Education is authorized to fill such vacancies by appointment.

The Commissioner of Education serves as the ex-officio secretary and executive officer of the State Advisory Commission. The School District Organization Section has been transferred from the Division of Instruction to the Division of Administration within the Department of Education. Because of the technical and legal aspects relating to school district organization, the responsibility of directing the program has been assigned to the Section of School District Organization. Staff members of the School District Organization Section are available to assist school boards, school administrators and local citizens committees in making studies and formulating plans for sound school district organization.

#### Duties of the Commission

The duties of the State Advisory Commission are defined in Minnesota Statutes, Section 122.24, Subdivision 1, 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 seem advisable. On or before January 15 of each odd-numbered year, the Commission shall report its activities and recommendations concerning school reorganization to the legislature."

The reorganization law under Minnesota Statutes, Section 122.24, Subdivision 16, provides for a hearing before an appeal board composed of five impartial members appointed by the State Advisory Commission to hear the grievances of the people of school districts included in the recommendations as set forth in the final report of the county school survey committee. During the current biennium, no appeals were filed with the Commission.

#### Commission Meetings and Activities

During this current biennium the State Advisory Commission has held eight official quarterly meetings. The Commission approved the printing of two four-leaf annual reports: the 1964 report was entitled, "Secondary Schools and the Reorganization of Districts" and the 1965 edition was titled "Rising Educational Requirements Call for District Reorganization." These reports were available for general distribution to school administrators, school board members and to the general public. The revision of county school district maps was recommended due to the extensive merger of school districts since 1955. Being interested in the problems of the small secondary schools, the Commission requested that a comprehensive study be made under the provisions of Title V of Public Law 89-10. The study is now being conducted and recommendations will be forthcoming regarding the next step in school district organization. The Benton County School Survey Committee requested the Commission to disband their committee. Their request was denied since there is a great need for good school district reorganization in the county. During this biennium no reorganization proposals were submitted by county school survey committees for study and evaluation by the Commission.

Since the 1965 session of the Legislature, the Commission has devoted considerable time to the study of proposed legislation which would strengthen the program of school district enlargement. The chairman along with the members of the Commission have appeared before the State Board of Education, Board of Directors of the Minnesota State School Board Association, Coordinating Committee on Education and the Executive Committee of the Minnesota Parents and Teachers Association for the purpose of presenting information regarding the over-all program of school district organization.

#### Consolidation

The Commissioner of Education received 101 applications for Approval of Plans for Consolidation during this biennium. Ninety-four consolidation proposals were approved and seven consolidation proposals were rejected. Seventy-nine proposals were approved by the voters, and of the fifteen proposals that failed, twelve were rejected by the voters, two proposals were terminated as petitions for election were not filed, and one proposal was terminated by school board action.

#### Activities of Department Personnel

The Commissioner of Education and the Consultants in the Section of School District Organization are responsible for providing information and guidance to county school survey committees, county superintendents, school administrators, school boards, county auditors, county commissioners and local citizens who may be interested in the procedures of school district enlargement. Consultants prepared for distribution two annual reports consisting of four pages on the progress of school district reorganization in the state. Mimeographed materials relating to the various phases of school district boundary changes have been prepared for the use of school officials and others who desire such information. Consultants have participated in meetings with county school officers, school administrators, citizen committees, and other organizations interested in school problems and organization.

County boards have requested that Consultants be present to assist them in matters relating to the dissolution of school districts.

Many rural communities with small secondary schools are becoming concerned about their future and their ability to provide the type of an educational program which will meet present-day needs of the pupils residing in the area at a more reasonable cost per pupil unit. The following communities have requested the Consultants to assist them in making a study of their school problems and how improvement can be made for a better secondary school through the merger of two or more districts: Alberta, Chokio; Adams, Elkton, Grand Meadow, Leroy, Lyle, Rose Creek; Akeley, Laport, Nevis; Atwater, Grove City; Barnum, Moose Lake; Belgrade, Brooten; Belview, Echo; Borup, Felton Glyndon, Hawley, Hitterdal, Ulen; Brewster, Heron Lake, Okabena; Chandler, Lake Wilson; Campbell, Tintah; Canton, Mabel; Carlton, Wrenshall; Claremont, Dodge Center; Garden City, Good Thunder, Rapidan; Jeffers, Storden, Westbrook; Lake Bronson, Lancaster; Rushford, Peterson.

The Commissioner of Education, Consultants and other staff members participated in a number of conferences in the Department of Education with groups and individuals interested in the various phases of school district enlargement. The following communities were represented at these conferences: Albany, Cambridge, Canton, Cold Spring, Eden Valley, Edgerton, Foley, Harmony, Jasper, Kimball, Luverne, Mabel, Milaca, Odessa, Sartell, St. Michael and Winsted.

## CHAPTER II

### SCHOOL DISTRICT REORGANIZATION PROCEDURES

#### Aims and Objectives

The Minnesota Legislature in 1947 established the State Advisory Commission on School Reorganization and charged it with the responsibility of formulating aims, goals, principles and procedures of public school organization in Minnesota. In the 1960 revision of its "Manual for County School Survey Committee" the Commission reemphasized the characteristics of a desirable school district in these words:

"One of the primary aims and goals in the reorganization of the school district system in Minnesota is to have every child a resident of a district offering a unified and comprehensive program of elementary and secondary education with adequate standards and at reasonable cost to the taxpayers. The constantly increasing demands in our social and economic living for more and better education makes any district organization outmoded which does not maintain both elementary and secondary school for its resident pupils. The desirable school administrative unit in many areas will also have facilities for extending its educational services into the adult life of the community as well."

In the attainment of the goal, the efforts of the people are centered along two principal courses; (1) bringing into the larger district all districts which are not maintaining a secondary school, and (2) merging of small secondary schools into stronger units of operation.

#### Basic Criteria in District Reorganization

The scope and quality of public school opportunities are in a very large measure dependent upon an adequate district structure. Good school district organization provides the necessary resources which make it possible to provide well for the varying needs, interests and abilities of its population. These resources include the human as well as the fiscal elements.

The Human Element. A basic principle that has long been jealously guarded in American education is that of local control in the organization and operation of the schools. It is through the initiative and cooperation of groups of parents and teachers that new courses are introduced into the curriculum, new features added to school plants, new services provided in the instructional program, and new materials and equipment made available to teachers and pupils. If the district is too small, the parents find little interest or stimulation in working together for the improvement of education, or become frustrated at the negative influences prompted by the limitations of the small district.

(1) Enrollment potential. Another facet of the human element is the ENROLLMENT POTENTIAL within the district. The smallest district is likely to bring all of its pupils together into a single classroom. A somewhat larger district will bring together pupils of nearly the same age and developmental level in a classroom for each grade. The district with an even greater population can use its resources to provide specially organized classrooms or schools and specialized learning activities to provide for the varied needs and interests of all children as well as for those who deviate widely from the above.

(2) Minimum enrollment. To fix a minimum enrollment as the basis for district organization is difficult because of the varying conditions from one part of the state to another. The State Advisory Commission on School Reorganization has expressed belief that its recommendation of an enrollment of 300 pupils for the secondary school is one that is reasonable of attainment.

The Fiscal Element. At the local level the financial support of the educational program rests on the taxation of the real and personal property within the school district. Good reorganization would require, therefore, that the tax base be broad and sufficient to carry the cost without excessive burden to the taxpayer. A narrow tax base, limited for example to residential property alone, is not as desirable as that in which property of commercial and industrial classification is also a part of the total valuation within the district. Property valuations vary greatly within the state. It is difficult to fix a specific amount of assessed valuation as the measure of a good district reorganization. However, a minimum of one and one-half million dollars has been recommended by the State Advisory Commission in the enlargement of local districts.

### Factors in District Enlargement

General. Many school districts have found it to their advantage to combine their local resources to form districts large enough to give a full, diversified program of education for grades one through twelve. Three procedures are available to the citizens of Minnesota for strengthening of their school district organization:

- Dissolution and Attachment of Districts
- Concolidation
- Reorganization

The technical differences between them often makes one more suitable than the other according to the varying conditions and desires of the people. School administrators should be generally informed on the various procedures and they should use the available consultant services of the School District Reorganization Unit, State Department of Education, in any local project of district enlargement.

Guides for School District Enlargement. The State Advisory Commission on School Reorganization has adopted the guidelines listed below to be observed by proponents of school district enlargement and by county and school officials who have the responsibility for executing the various legal procedures relating to reorganization of school districts.

### GUIDELINES

(1) Attachment to a district maintaining a classified high school should be given preference over attachment to any other district.

(2) If attachment is to some other district having no secondary school, the existing high school area lines should be observed.

(3) Division of districts should take into consideration the roads and the establishment of economical school transportation bus routes.

(4) Boundary lines should be as regular as possible. Where a division of territory is to be made between two or more districts it is advisable to make a plat of the proposed division before action is officially taken, to see that the proposal is a reasonable one.

(5) Detachment of lands which results in leaving territory as islands separated from the rest of the district should be avoided. However, the law provides that an entire district may be attached to and become part of a district which maintains a secondary school serving the area, even though it is not contiguous to the district which maintains the secondary school.

(6) All territory of a dissolved district must be attached to some existing district including state lands, tax forfeited lands, government lands and tax exempt lands.

(7) After September 1st of any year, the transfer of lands from a school district should be avoided unless made effective the following July 1. The assessed valuation for districts lying in more than one county is determined as of September 1, and any transfer of land during the interim would disturb the ratio in valuations between the counties represented in the joint school district.

(8) State aid calculations are made on the basis of assessed valuations as of September 1. Any shifting of valuations would affect the amount of state aid which the district would otherwise receive, and complicate the computing of aids. Therefore, the transfers after September 1st should be made effective the following July 1st unless exceptional conditions warrant otherwise.

#### Procedures in District Enlargement and Change of District Boundaries

The legislature has provided four methods whereby boundaries of school districts may be modified. These include (1) Detachment and Annexation of Land, (2) Dissolution and Attachment of Districts, (3) Consolidation, and (4) Reorganization. When the owner of land desires to have his land transferred from one district to another, he will use the method of Detachment and Annexation of Land. The other three procedures involve entire or parts of districts, rather than an individual owner, and are used in school district enlargement.

Detachment and Annexation of Land (M.S. 122.21) The procedure for the "Detachment and Annexation of Land" is the responsibility of the County Board of Commissioners.

#### PROCEDURE

(1) The owner will present a petition to the County Board through the County Auditor requesting the transfer of his land from one district to an adjoining district. Several petitions may be presented at one time, provided each involves land that is adjoining the district to which the attachment is sought, or is adjoining such land included in another pending petition. If the land proposed to be detached is part of a district which maintains and operates a secondary school, the board of that district must consent to the transfer before the petition is filed with the County Board.

(2) A hearing must be held by the County Board on the petitions.

(3) The County Board will adopt a resolution either approving or denying the petition.

(4) The County Board cannot act on petitions if the lands described in such petitions are included in a plat for consolidation which has been submitted to the Commissioner of Education and a copy filed with the County Auditor. (For priority of procedures, see Supreme Court decision in Common School District 1317 etc. Norman County vs. Board of County Commissioners, Norman County etc. 127 NW (2)529.)

(5) If the district from which the land is being transferred has a bonded debt, such land will continue to carry the tax levy for the retirement of such bonded debt until it is paid. Lands attached to another district will assume all tax levies of such district including the levy for any existing bonded debt.

(6) If the County Board grants the petition, the County Auditor will provide the Commissioner of Education with a copy of the order.

Dissolution and Attachment of Districts (MS 122.22) The procedure of dissolving and annexing school districts is the responsibility of the County Board of Commissioners. a brief outline of procedure follows:

#### PROCEDURE

(1) The procedure is initiated either by an election within the school district for the purpose of adopting a resolution requesting the County Board to dissolve the district and annex it to some other adjoining district or the presentation of a petition signed by the majority of the resident freeholders of the district requesting the same disposition of the district.

(2) The County Board will set a date for a hearing on such petition or resolution at which time the proponents and opponents may present their views on the proposal.

(3) If the County Board approves the petition or resolution, an interlocutory order is issued which will become effective not less than 45 days from the date of the order, or later if an election is ordered on debt assumption.

(4) If an election on the approval of debt assumption is requested by the receiving district, then the interlocutory order will become effective only if the voters of the dissolved district approve such bonded debt assumption.

(5) The County Board cannot act on petitions or resolutions if the district is included in a plat for consolidation approved by the Commissioner.

(6) The County Auditor is required to provide the Commissioner of Education with copies of the notice of hearing, the interlocutory orders, the final orders regarding debt assumption elections, and the resolutions denying the petitions or resolutions of dissolution and attachment.

#### Consolidation (M.S.122.23)

General. Request is made to the County Superintendent for the preparation of a plat for consolidation. Following the approval of the plat by the Commissioner of Education, an election on consolidation is held for voters residing in districts not maintaining a secondary school. The consolidation is completed if the election favors the consolidation, and if the school board of the district maintaining the secondary school has adopted a resolution accepting the approved plat.

Guidelines. The following outline will serve as a guide to those who will be using this procedure in the enlargement of districts. The superintendent of the county which contains the greatest land area of the proposed new district is officially in charge of the procedures.

## GUIDELINES

### a. Requirements for a Proposed New District

(1) It must contain at least 18 sections of land.

(2) It must be composed of contiguous area unless an entire district is to be part of a district which maintains a secondary school and there is no district intervening which maintains a secondary school.

(3) It may include common or independent districts, or parts thereof, or unorganized territory, or any combination of these.

### b. Initiating the Consolidation Plat

The County Superintendent shall cause a plat to be prepared:

(1) Upon a resolution of a school board in the area proposed for consolidation, or

(2) Upon petition therefor, executed by 25 per cent of the voters resident within the area of the proposed district (or by 50 of such voters, which ever is the lesser).

### c. Preparation of the Plat and Supporting Statement

(1) The plat. The form Code VII-C-1 shall be used for the preparation of the plat and the information provided as required in the directions on the form and in the mimeographed statement.

(2) Supporting statement. The County Superintendent shall submit a supporting statement with the plat giving the reasons for the consolidation and supplementary data not on the plat.

### d. Presenting the Plat and Statement

(1) The plat shall be submitted to the Commissioner who shall approve, modify, or reject such plat within 60 days.

(2) Copies of plat and supporting statement shall be filed with the auditors of each county containing land area in the proposed consolidation.

### e. Procedures Following Approval of the Plat

(1) The County Superintendent is informed by the Commissioner of Education of the decision and a copy of the plat with endorsement is returned to the county office.

(2) The County Superintendent will inform all school boards concerned with such plat of the Commissioner's decision.

#### FOR APPROVED PLATS:

(1) School boards of districts maintaining secondary schools must adopt resolutions accepting or rejecting the approved plat within 45 days.

(2) Where there are two districts maintaining secondary schools, the school boards must publish their action in the local papers and an election may be required in cases where a petition is presented requesting a referendum vote on the question.

(3) In districts not maintaining secondary schools:

(a) Petitions signed by at least 25 per cent of the resident freeholders qualified to vote at a school election, from each district or part of district, must be presented to the County Superintendent within 60 days.

(b) When the proper petitions have been received from all districts and portions of districts the County Superintendent will:

.1 Post the proper notices specifying purpose, date, hours and place of election, and appoint three judges for each election precinct.

.2 Receive the results of the elections as certified by the judges for each election precinct and tabulate the vote for all precincts and file ballots for safekeeping.

f. Order of Consolidation

If the vote favors the consolidation and if the necessary approving resolutions have been adopted, the County Superintendent shall issue his order.

(1) The order shall set the effective date for the consolidation, not later than July 1 next following the election.

(2) Copies of the letter shall be delivered to the clerk of each district affected by the order, to each county auditor holding a copy of the plat, and to the Commissioner of Education.

Reorganization Procedures (M.S. 122.24) A new method of approach to the program of school district enlargement was provided when the 1947 legislature enacted the School District Reorganization Law. This act provided for the creation of a State Advisory Commission on School Reorganization and for County School Survey Committees. Survey Committees were elected in 63 counties. There are 47 county committees functioning at the present time. A brief outline of the provisions of the law regarding school district reorganization is given below:

a. State Advisory Commission on School Reorganization

(1) Composed of nine members appointed by the State Board of Education to staggered terms of six years.

(2) Shall serve in an advisory capacity to the State Department of Education and the County School Survey Committees.

(3) Required to prepare a manual for use of the county committees; shall determine the aims, objectives, and procedures for studying the local school conditions.

(4) Review the tentative reports of the county committees and offer suggestions for the improvement of recommendations.

(5) Submit a report with suggestions to the Legislature regarding the program of school district reorganization.

b. County School Survey Committee

(1) Composed of a number of citizens, including board members, not to exceed nine; elected by the school boards at county meetings called for that purpose by the county superintendent; the members to be apportioned to represent rural and urban members as provided by law and to serve three-year staggered terms.

(2) Study the school facilities, services and organizations of the several districts of the county and develop appropriate recommendations.

(3) Prepare tentative reports containing recommendations with supporting data and necessary maps which are to be distributed to all school boards of the county and reviewed by the State Advisory Commission.

c. The County Superintendent

(1) Serves as executive secretary to the county school survey committee.

(2) Conducts the elections in the manner provided by law on the recommendations contained in the final report.

(3) Issues the Order of Reorganization when a favorable vote has been cast at the elections on reorganization recommendations.

(4) Conducts elections for new school boards as provided by the statutes.

## CHAPTER III

### PROGRESS REPORT ON SCHOOL DISTRICT ENLARGEMENT

The first biennial report on school district reorganization issued by the State Advisory Commission to the Legislature in 1949, and including each subsequent report up to the tenth report, has shown a substantial decrease in the number of school districts in Minnesota. Two important laws were enacted by the Legislature: Chapter 421, relating to the reorganization of school districts in 1947, and Chapter 547, relating to the merger of non-operating schools in 1963, gave impetus to the existing laws on consolidation and dissolution in the formation of larger and stronger school districts. These laws provided ways and means whereby all pupils could become residents of a district with a comprehensive program of education from grades one through twelve.

Since July 1, 1947, over 6,200 districts have merged with other operating school districts. On July 1, 1966, there were 1,375 school districts in existence as compared with 7,606 in 1947. During the biennium there have been 624 districts merged, of this number 424 were non-operating districts.

Over 95 per cent of the total assessed valuation of the state is within districts that have a comprehensive program of education from grades one through twelve. The remaining five per cent or less of the assessed valuation is now in districts with only an elementary program of education.

For the school year of 1965-1966, 832,962 pupils were enrolled in the public schools of the state. The districts maintaining graded elementary and secondary schools enrolled 806,416 pupils or 96.8 per cent of the total enrollment. Ungraded elementary schools had only 26,546 pupils enrolled, which accounts for only 3.2 per cent of the total enrollment. Of the total enrollment in the ungraded schools there were 2,270 pupils enrolled in grades seven and eight who were deprived of the opportunity of being enrolled in a school with a good junior high school program. Chart I on page 14 gives the per cent of the total enrollment residing in districts maintaining grades one through twelve. Chart II on page 15 gives information relative to the resident status of pupils enrolled in the graded elementary and secondary schools of the state, plus the pupils who are residents within districts with elementary schools only.

A number of charts and tables are included in this portion of the report that give information relative to the present status of school district reorganization. Table I on page 16 shows the year-by-year reduction from July 1, 1947, to July 1, 1966. A summary report on school district enlargement for the current biennium is included in Table II on page 17. Table III on page 18 is a summary report on school district enlargement by counties.

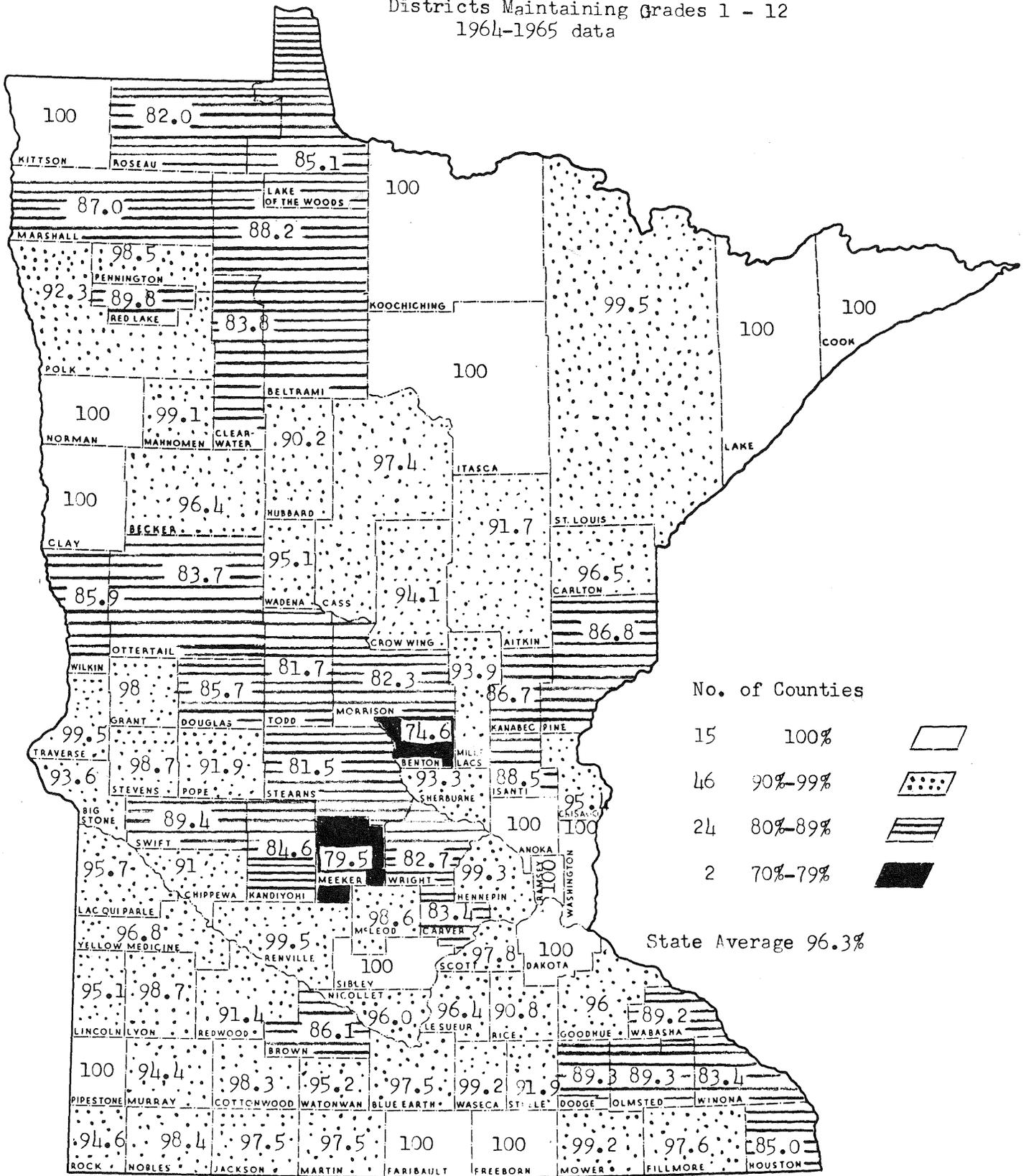
Chart III on page 19 shows the number of school districts by counties.

Considerable progress has been made in the reduction of school districts during this biennium. As of July 1, 1966, the number of districts in the state has been reduced by 81.9 per cent, compared to 73.7 per cent on July 1, 1964. This represents a gain of 8.2 per cent over the previous two-year period. Fifty-seven counties have reduced the number of districts by 80 per cent or more. Stearns county had a reduction of less than 50 per cent, while in the five counties of Benton, Cass, Meeker, Steele and Todd the reduction was less than 60 per cent.

Chart IV on page 20 shows the percentage of reduction by counties, and Table IV on page 21 ranks the counties relative to the percentage decrease in the total number of districts.

CHART I

Percent of Total Enrollment Residing in  
Districts Maintaining Grades 1 - 12  
1964-1965 data

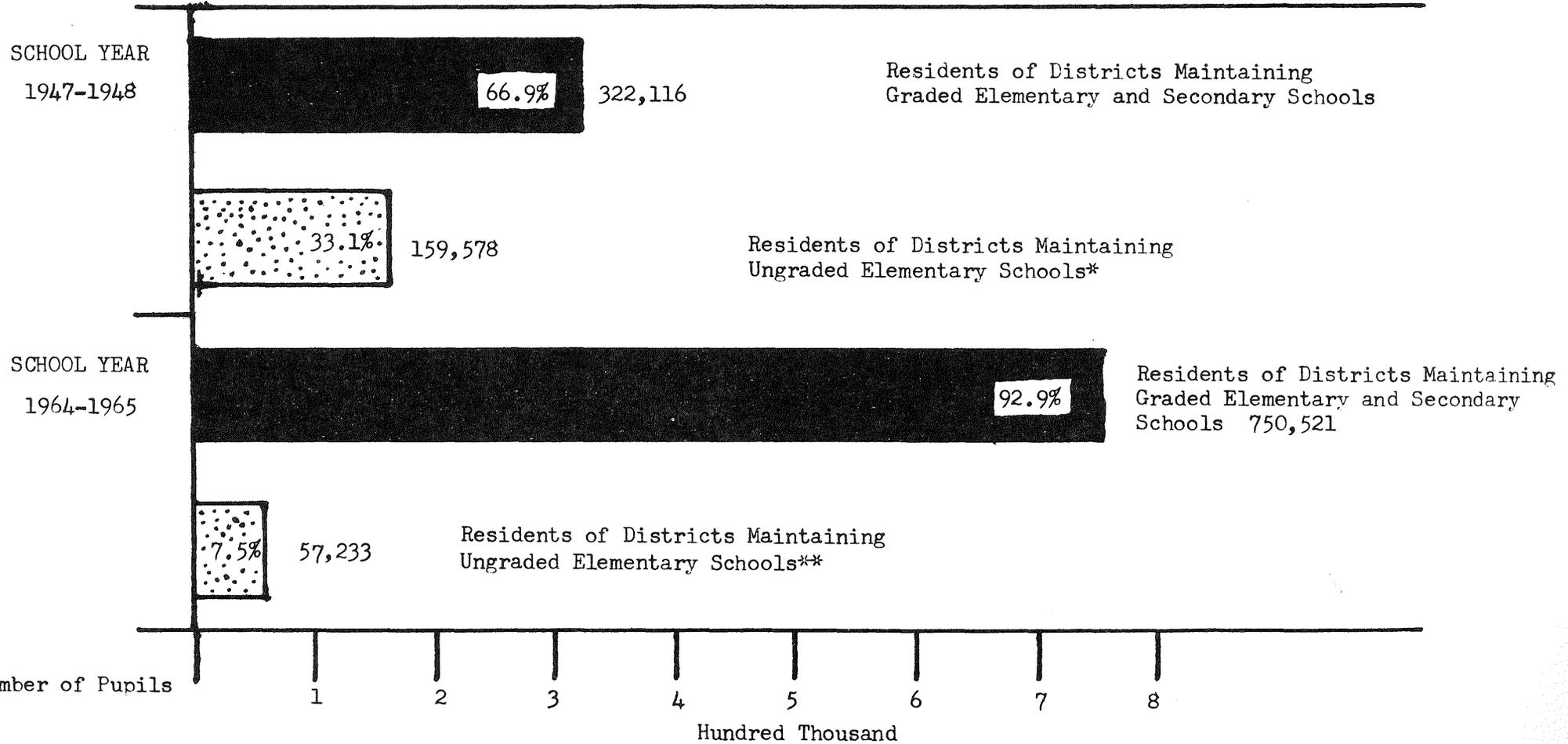


Over 96% of the total enrollment in the state  
reside in districts with a twelve year program.

CHART II

Resident Status of Pupils  
Enrolled in Minnesota Schools

1947-1948 and 1964-1965



\*Includes 45,243 Secondary Pupils Residing in Districts Not Maintaining Secondary Schools

\*\*Includes 27,300 Secondary Pupils Residing in Districts Not Maintaining Secondary Schools

TABLE I

## Reduction of School Districts Year by Year Since 1947

Date	Total Number of Districts	Reduction During the Year	Total Reduction Since 1947 (Cumulative)
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
July 1, 1963	2,148	123	5,458
July 1, 1964	1,999	149	5,607
July 1, 1965	1,742	257	5,864
July 1, 1966	1,375	367	6,231

TABLE II

Summary of School District Enlargement  
 from  
 July 1, 1964 to July 1, 1966

1.	Number of School Districts, July 1, 1964 . . . . .	1,999
2.	Number Merged from July 1, 1964 to July 1, 1966	
	By Consolidation . . . . .	93
	By Dissolution . . . . .	531
	Total Merged . . . . .	624
3.	Number of School District, July 1, 1966 . . . . .	1,375
4.	Number of Districts Merged from July 1, 1947 to July 1, 1966 . . .	6,231
5.	Number of School Districts, July 1, 1947 . . . . .	7,606
6.	Number of Districts with Classified Graded Elementary and Secondary schools, July 1, 1966 . . . . .	454
	Number of Districts with Elementary Schools Only. . . . .	921
	Total Number of Districts . . . . .	1,375
7.	Number of Non-operating Districts Merged from . . . . .	464
	July 1, 1964 to July 1, 1966 . . . . .	
	Number of Open and Operating Districts Merged from July 1, 1964 to July 1, 1966 . . . . .	160
	Total Merged . . . . .	624

TABLE III

Summary Report on School District Enlargement  
July 1, 1947 to July 1, 1966

County	'Number of Districts'			'Total' " "	County	'Number of Districts'			'Total' " "
	'7-1-47'	'7-1-66'				'7-1-47'	'7-1-66'		
		'S'	'E'	'Reduc- tion'			'S'	'E'	'Reduc- tion'
Aitkin	102	4	3	95	Martin	110	8	3	99
Anoka	57	6	0	51	Meeker	92	5	38	49
Becker	133	4	2	127	Mille Lacs	59	4	12	43
Beltrami	59	4	9	46	Morrison	139	7	41	91
Benton	64	2	28	34	Mower	115	7	1	107
Big Stone	60	5	6	49	Murray	113	4	6	103
Blue Earth	122	8	6	108	Nicollet	62	2	5	55
Brown	82	5	24	53	Nobles	110	5	5	100
Carlton	34	7	3	24	Norman	103	6	0	97
Carver	66	4	10	52	Olmsted	125	5	34	86
Cass	23	6	4	13	Otter Tail	281	9	85	187
Chippewa	87	4	16	67	Pennington	68	2	3	63
Chisago	49	5	3	41	Pine	108	6	19	83
Clay	102	8	0	94	Pipestone	72	4	0	68
Clearwater	56	3	6	47	Polk	213	9	18	186
Cook	7	1	0	6	Pope	90	4	7	79
Cottonwood	76	5	1	70	Ramsey	30	5	0	25
Crow Wing	96	3	9	84	Red Lake	53	3	1	49
Dakota	102	9	0	93	Redwood	112	8	11	93
Dodge	82	5	0	77	Renville	131	10	2	119
Douglas	96	5	19	72	Rice	106	3	24	79
Faribault	118	10	0	108	Rock	68	3	8	57
Fillmore	174	9	7	158	Roseau	79	4	8	67
Freeborn	128	5	0	123	St. Louis	29	17	5	7
Goodhue	155	7	3	145	Scott	67	5	1	61
Grant	71	5	1	65	Sherburne	52	3	3	46
Hennepin	90	16	5	69	Sibley	78	5	0	73
Houston	104	4	11	89	Stearns	203	9	97	97
Hubbard	56	4	8	44	Steele	86	4	35	47
Isanti	68	2	14	52	Stevens	68	4	2	62
Itasca	6	4	0	2	Swift	93	4	19	70
Jackson	104	5	3	96	Todd	143	7	53	83
Kanabec	57	2	6	49	Traverse	60	3	1	56
Kandiyohi	109	4	31	74	Wabasha	96	5	11	80
Kittson	68	6	0	62	Wadena	60	4	5	51
Koochiching	4	3	0	1	Waseca	83	4	0	79
Lac qui Parle	104	5	4	95	Washington	65	4	0	61
Lake	1	1	0	0	Watonwan	62	3	7	52
Lake of the Woods	11	2	4	5	Wilkin	80	3	9	68
Le Sueur	95	5	1	89	Winona	114	3	36	75
Lincoln	76	5	2	69	Wright	138	8	42	88
Lyon	98	7	3	88	Yellow Medicine	92	6	2	84
McLeod	83	6	1	76					
Mahnomen	23	2	2	19	TOTALS	7,606	454	921	6,231
Marshall	140	8	7	125					

(S) Districts with Elementary and Secondary Schools

(E) Districts with Elementary Schools Only

CHART III

Number of School Districts by Counties

July 1, 1966

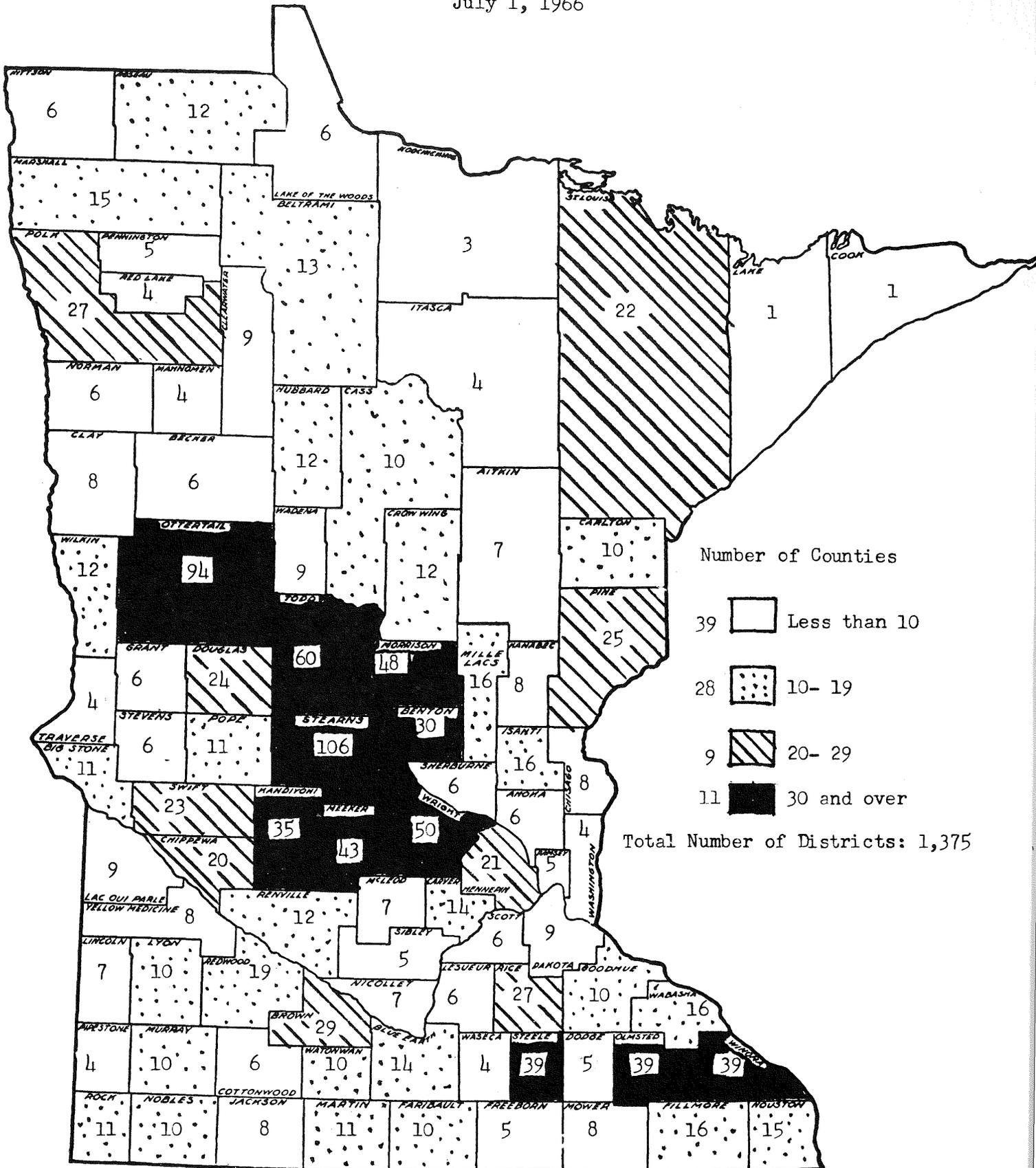
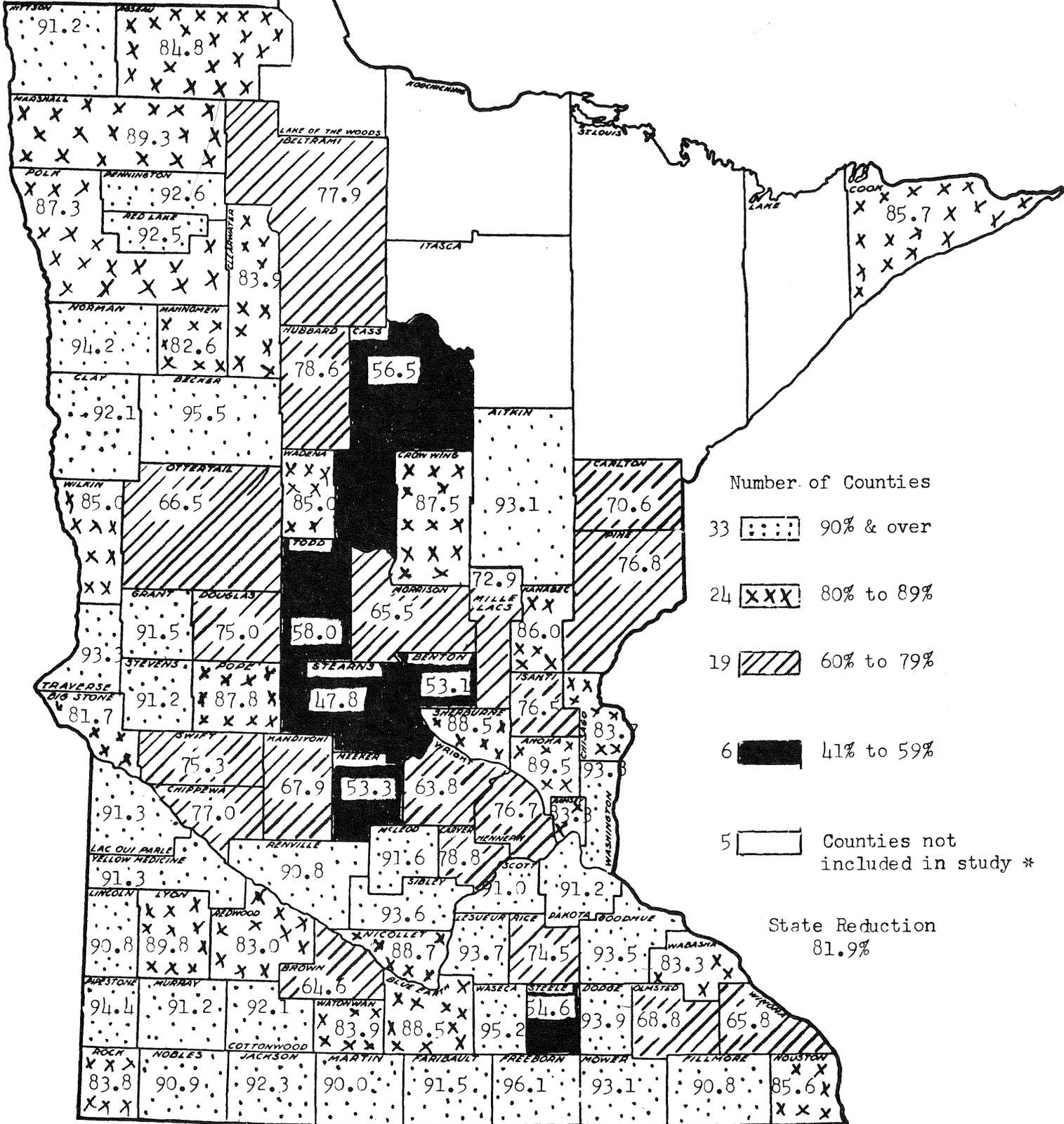


CHART IV

Percentage Reduction in Number of School Districts  
by Counties

July 1, 1966



\* The five counties not included in this study made substantial reductions prior to July 1, 1947.

TABLE IV

Percent of Decrease in Number of School Districts  
by Counties

July 1, 1966

<u>County</u>	<u>Percentage Decrease</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Percentage Decrease</u>
Freeborn	96.1	Crow Wing	87.5
Becker	95.5	Polk	87.3
Waseca	95.2	Kanabec	86.0
Pipestone	94.4	Cook	85.7
Norman	94.2	Houston	85.6
Dodge	93.9	Wadena	85.0
Washington	93.8	Wilkin	85.0
Le Sueur	93.7	Roseau	84.8
Sibley	93.6	Clearwater	83.9
Goodhue	93.5	Watonwan	83.9
Traverse	93.3	Rock	83.8
Aitkin	93.1	Chisago	83.7
Mower	93.1	Ramsey	83.3
Pennington	92.6	Wabasha	83.3
Red Lake	92.5	Redwood	83.0
Jackson	92.3	Mahnomen	82.6
Clay	92.2	State of Minnesota	81.9
Cottonwood	92.1	Big Stone	81.7
McLeod	91.6	Carver	78.8
Faribault	91.5	Hubbard	78.6
Grant	91.5	Beltrami	77.9
Lac qui Parle	91.3	Chippewa	77.0
Yellow Medicine	91.3	Pine	76.8
Dakota	91.2	Hennepin	76.7
Kittson	91.2	Isanti	76.5
Murray	91.2	Swift	75.3
Stevens	91.2	Douglas	75.0
Scott	91.0	Rice	74.5
Nobles	90.9	Mille Lacs	72.9
Fillmore	90.8	Carlton	70.6
Lincoln	90.8	Olmsted	68.8
Renville	90.8	Kandiyohi	67.9
Martin	90.0	Otter Tail	66.5
Lyon	89.8	Winona	65.8
Anoka	89.5	Morrison	65.5
Marshall	89.3	Brown	64.6
Nicollet	88.7	Wright	63.8
Blue Earth	88.5	Todd	58.0
Sherburne	88.5	Cass	56.5
Pope	87.8	Steele	54.6
		Meeker	53.3
		Benton	53.1
		Stearns	47.8

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

Fifty-six counties have experienced a decrease in the number of school districts in excess of 81.9 % since 1947.

Twenty-six counties are below the state average in the reduction of school districts. See Chart IV on page 20.

Ten years of progress is shown on the two maps on pages 25 and 26 relative to school district reorganization. These maps show the status of school district reorganization as of July 1, 1956 and July 1, 1966. Each of these maps shows the larger school districts which have been formed by the various procedures and the common school districts that are not a part of a district with a twelve-year program of education.

The fifteen counties listed below have 17.7 per cent of the land area of the state in which are located 691 school districts, or more than half of the total number within the state as of July 1, 1966.

<u>County</u>	<u>Number of Districts</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Number of Districts</u>
Stearns	106	Winona	39
Otter Tail	94	Kandiyohi	35
Todd	60	Benton	30
Wright	50	Brown	29
Morrison	48	Polk	27
Meeker	43	Rice	27
Olmsted	39	Pine	25
Steele	39		

The remaining 72 counties of the state have less than half of the total number of districts. Forty counties have less than ten districts per county compared to twenty-eight counties two years ago.

As of July 1, 1966, seventeen counties have accomplished the objective of having all pupils and the taxable valuation in districts with a classified graded elementary and secondary school with a twelve-year program of education. These counties are as follows:

Anoka	Clay	Cook	Dakota
Dodge	Faribault	Freeborn	Itasca
Kittson	Koochiching	Lake	Norman
Pipestone	Ramsey	Sibley	Waseca
Washington			

The twenty-three counties listed below have three or less elementary schools which are not a part of a district that maintains an educational program from grades one through twelve:

Aitkin	Becker	Carlton	Chisago
Cottonwood	Goodhue	Grant	Jackson
Le Sueur	Lincoln	Lyon	McLeod
Mahnomen	Martin	Mower	Pennington
Red Lake	Renville	Scott	Sherburne
Stevens	Traverse	Yellow Medicine	

The size of school districts is another indication of progress. School districts of 1966 embrace a greater land area than the typical district of 1947. It is to be noted that the average size of school districts on July 1, 1966, was 59 square miles, compared to 10.5 square miles in 1947. Since July 1, 1964, the school district size has increased from 40 square miles to 59 square miles. Chart V on page 27 shows the average size of school districts by counties on July 1, 1947, at which time the school district reorganization came into being, while Chart VI on page 28 shows the change that has taken place as of July 1, 1966. At the present time 60 counties have school districts whose average size exceeds 50 square miles, while in 1947 only seven counties were in this group.

A district which maintains a graded elementary and secondary school must have an adequate tax base to support a good comprehensive program of education. Excluding the districts within the cities of the first class, it was found that as of July 1, 1947, about 49.5 per cent of the total assessed valuation was within school districts with a twelve-year educational program, while districts with ungraded elementary schools had about 50.5 per cent of the valuation. Comparing the 1965 valuations with the 1947 level, the districts with the twelve-year program of education had 93.3 per cent of the total assessed valuation, and the districts operating ungraded elementary schools dropped to 6.7 per cent of the total. Chart VII on page 29 shows the per cent of the total taxable valuation in districts maintaining grades one through twelve.

From 1947 to 1965 the assessed valuations in the state shifted from the rural to the urban districts. The assessed valuation of the urban districts maintaining graded elementary and secondary schools increased from \$458,677,921. to \$1,587,122,376. while the rural districts with ungraded elementary schools had a decrease in the assessed valuation from \$468,357,555. to \$114,608,676. These assessed valuation changes came as a result of the school district reorganization program that was initiated in 1947 and has carried on through to the present time. Chart VII on page 29 indicates the changes in assessed valuation during this period of time.

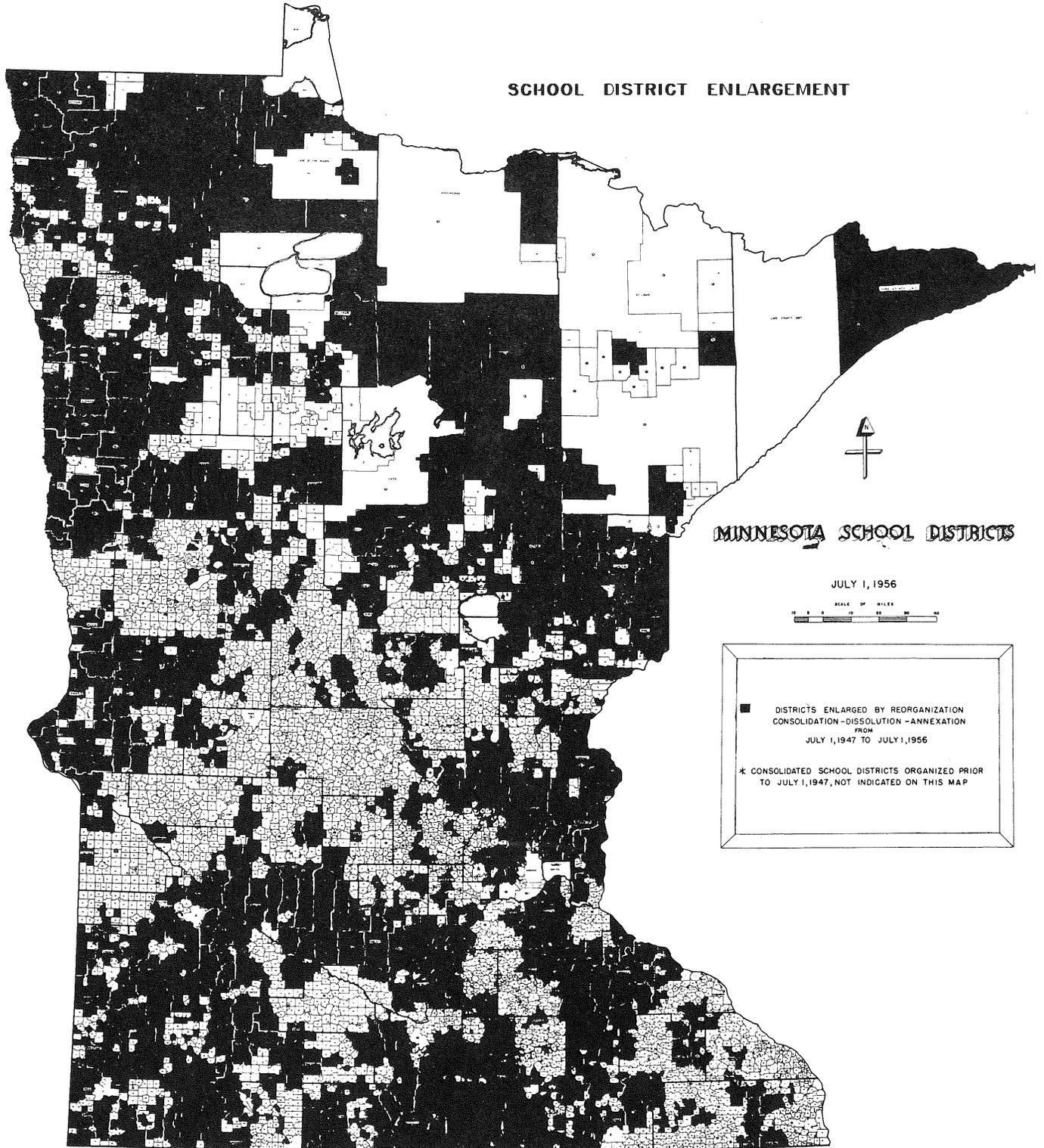
Chart VIII on page 30 gives the per cent of total taxable valuation in districts maintaining grades one through twelve by counties.

The program of school district enlargement has seemed to improve many of the secondary schools of the state. When secondary schools have an adequate number of pupils enrolled, the school program can be expanded to meet their needs. For the period from 1954-55 to 1964-65 the median secondary enrollment increased from 264 to 406 pupils. By today's standards a secondary school should have an enrollment in excess of 300 pupils, and, where ever possible a class size of 75 pupils per grade would be more desirable, so that at least three class sections in each grade can be organized. As the enrollments increase, more classes can be established and a greater number of courses can be made available. In the study, "Comparison of Enrollment in Secondary Schools by Type of School", released from the statistical section in the Department of Education, for the school year of 1964-1965, the median enrollments for the three types of secondary schools were as follows:

<u>Type of School</u>	<u>Median Enrollments</u>
Four-Year	91 pupils
Six-Year	251 pupils
Junior-Senior	801 pupils

For the school year of 1964-1965 there were 221 secondary schools which had enrollments below the 300-pupil minimum. There were 295 secondary schools in 1954-55 that had enrollments below the 300 figure. Chart IX on page 31 shows the size of high school by enrollment intervals.

# SCHOOL DISTRICT ENLARGEMENT



SCHOOL DISTRICT ENLARGEMENT

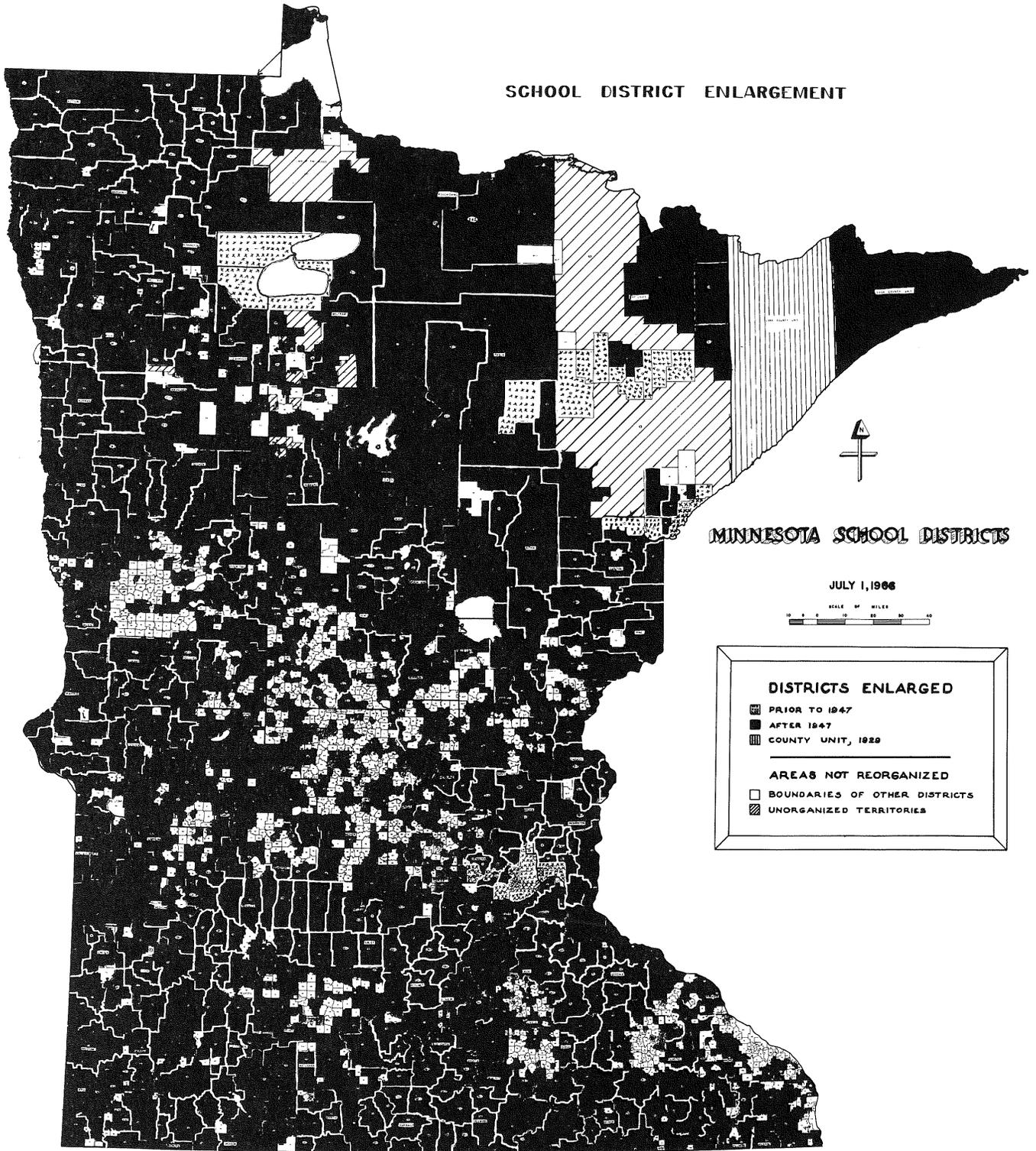


CHART V

Average Size of School Districts  
in Square Miles

July 1, 1947

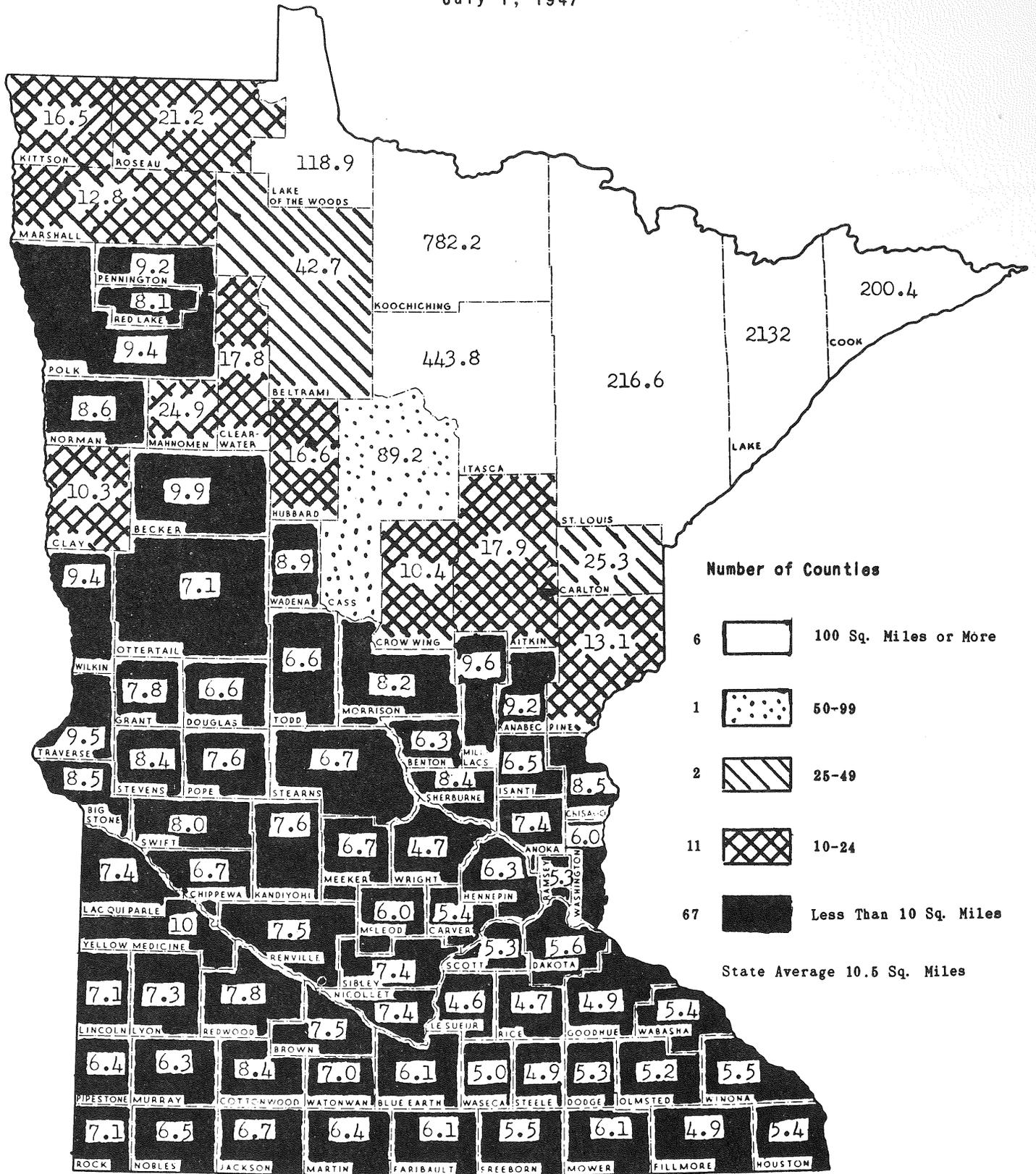


CHART VI  
Average Size of School Districts  
In Square Miles  
July 1, 1966

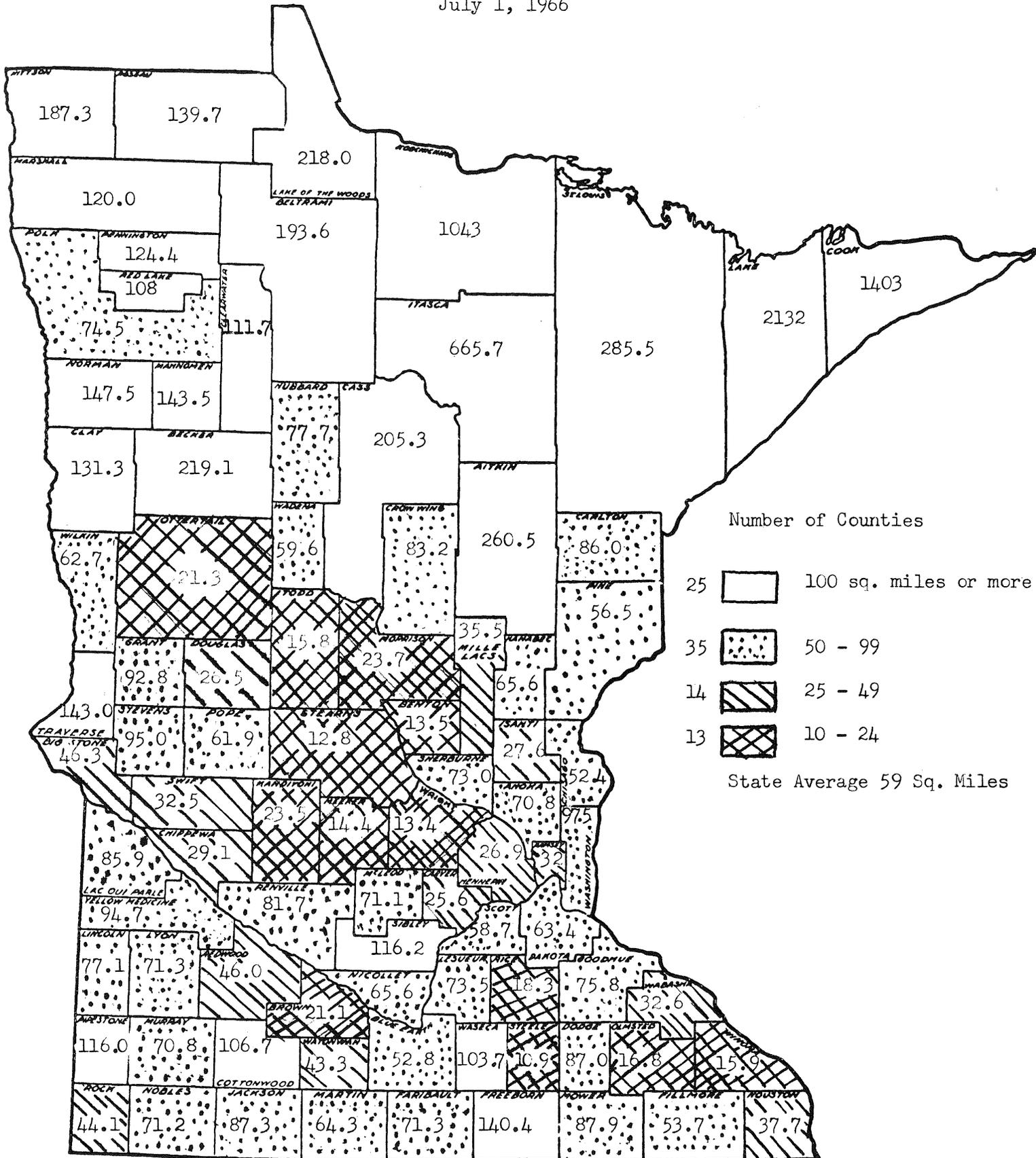
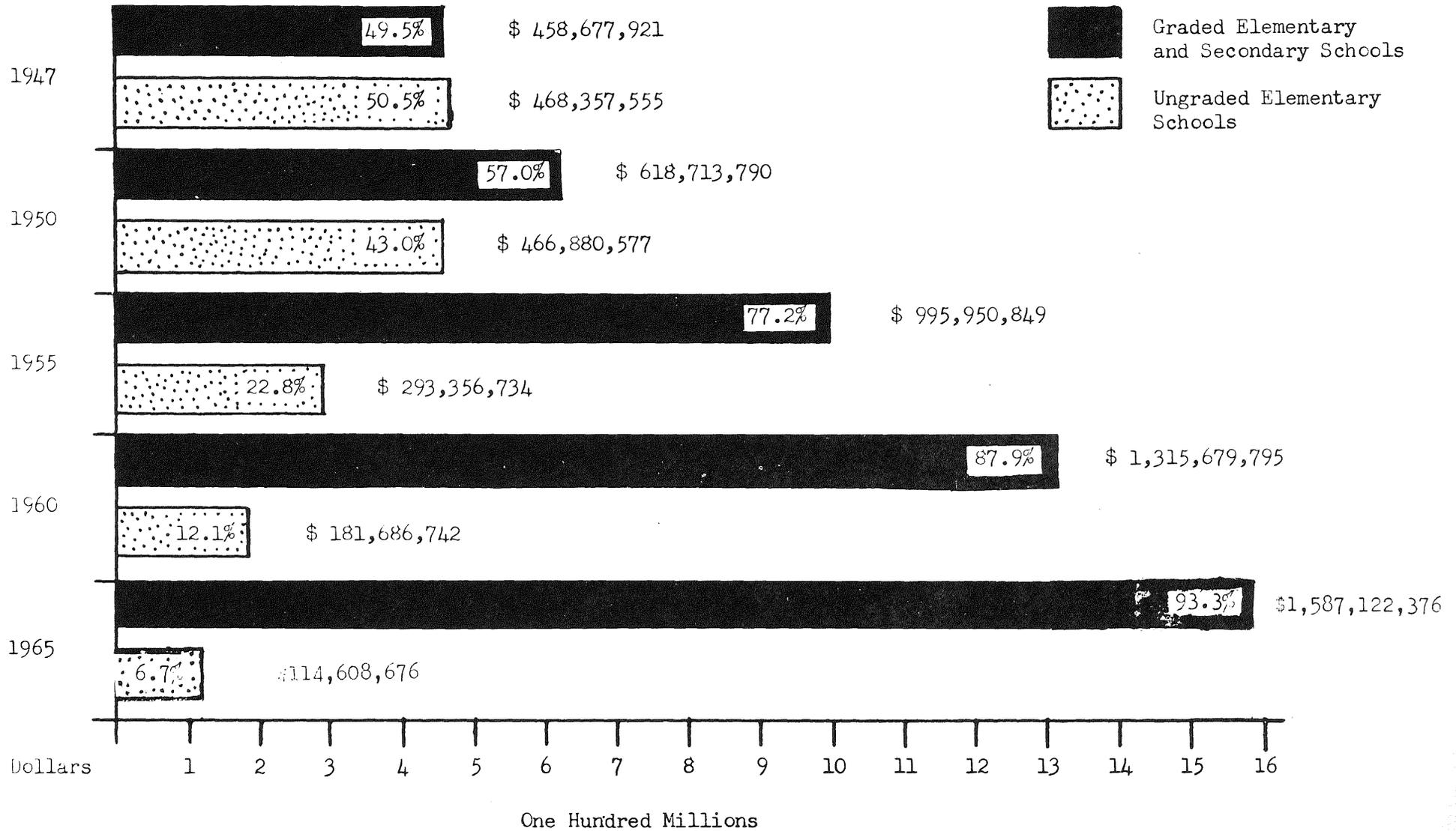


CHART VII

Assessed Valuations Shift  
From Rural to Urban Districts

Districts Maintaining



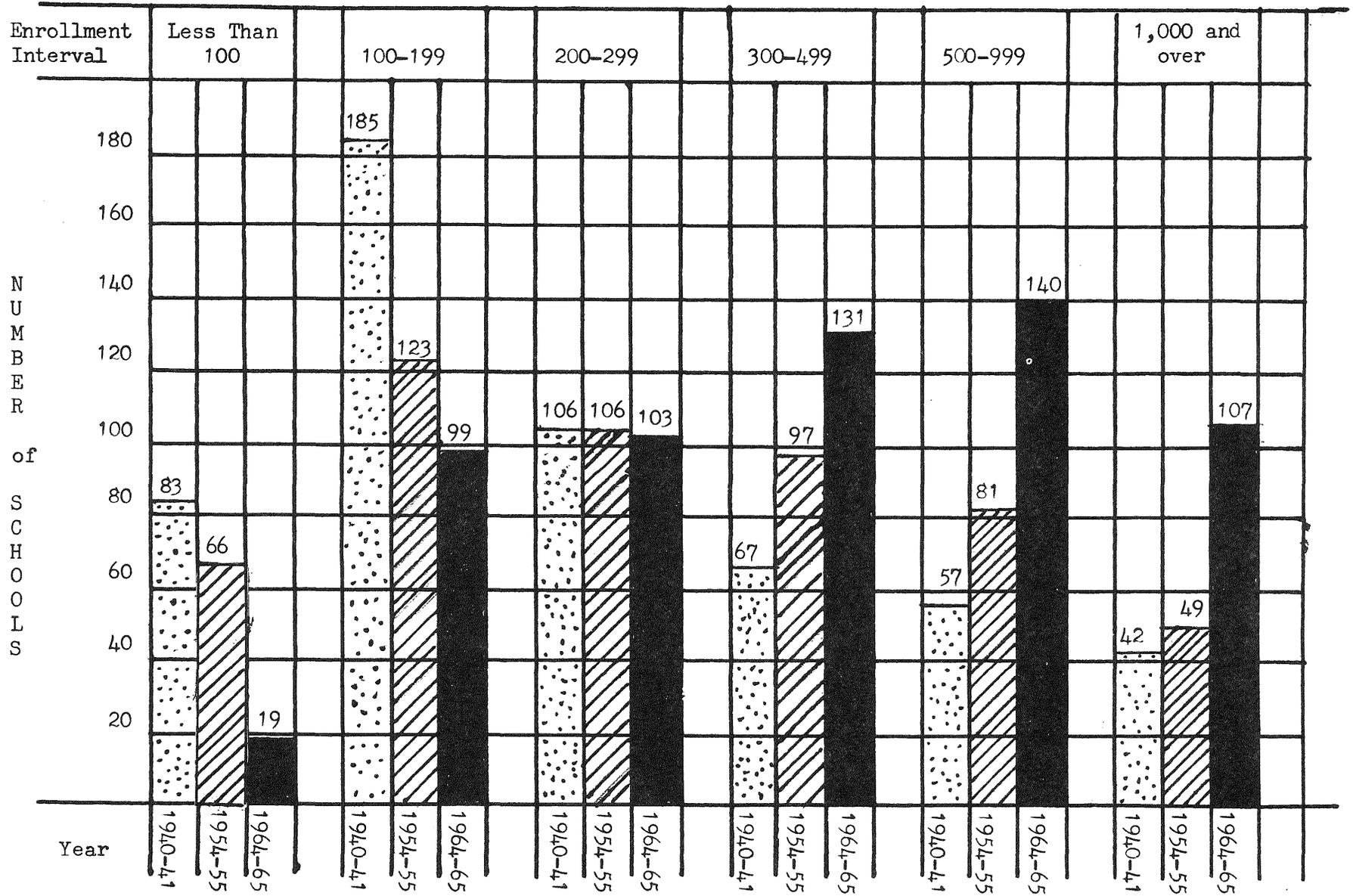
\*Assessed valuations for cities of the first class not included



CHART IX

Size of High School by Enrollment Intervals

1940 - 1965



NUMBER of SCHOOLS

Enrollment Interval

Year

## CHAPTER IV

### LEGISLATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS

The State Advisory Commission was established under the provisions of Chapter 421 by the 1947 Legislature, which provides that "the Commission shall formulate aims, goals, principles, procedures of public school organization in Minnesota." Since its formation the Commission has made recommendations concerning school reorganization to the Legislature as provided in the statutes. During this biennium the Commission has studied the need for the inclusion of all territory of the state within districts with a twelve-year program and thus making all pupils residents of such districts.

The Commission over the years has been interested in the educational needs of the pupils of the state. This is evidenced by the fact that in the "Manuals for County School Survey Committee", published in 1947 and 1949 by the State Department of Education and the State Advisory Commission on School Reorganization the following policy statements are found:

"Elementary, secondary and higher education is primarily a state function."

"Our goal should be equal educational opportunity for all Minnesota youth."

In the 1960 revised "Manual for County School Survey Committee" the State Advisory Commission set forth the "Aims and Goals of Public School Organization" as follows:

"One of the primary aims and goals in the organization of the school district system of Minnesota is to have every child a resident of a district offering a unified and comprehensive program with adequate standards and at a reasonable cost to the taxpayer."

The State Advisory Commission on School Reorganization herewith submits the following recommendation for the consideration of the Minnesota Legislature at its 1967 session:

Merging of All Territory in the State into Districts Maintaining Graded Elementary and Secondary Schools.

The above recommendation to the Legislature appeared in the seventh, eighth, and ninth biennial reports. The Commission wishes to underscore the need for equal education for all pupils of the state and strongly recommends that the Legislature enact legislation which will provide for the inclusion of all territory in school districts with a comprehensive program of education from grades one through twelve.

## CONCLUSION

It has taken nearly twenty years to reduce the number of school districts from 7,606 districts in 1947 to 1,375 districts in 1966. This reduction has come about by the use of the voluntary procedures of dissolution, consolidation and reorganization. Though the reduction has been substantial, there still remains much to be done before the formation of good school districts is completed. This includes the merger of the remaining elementary districts with districts maintaining graded elementary and secondary schools with adequate enrollments and taxable valuation.

In the publication entitled, "Education and Economic Growth The Next Steps" prepared by the Upper Midwest Research and Development Council, these statements appear which summarize the objective of school district organization:

"With education through the twelfth grade accepted as the common goal, there is no justification for the continued existence of districts which do not offer a complete elementary-secondary school program."

"Since education is a state function, reorganization of school districts for the entire state to provide a system of sound units of organization is viewed as an appropriate state function."