

SOME PROPOSALS FOR THE IMPROVEMENT
OF THE FINANCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE
SCHOOLS IN OTTAWA COUNTY

TO MY WIFE, FAY, WHOSE NEVER FAILING OPTIMISM
AND ENCOURAGEMENT HAVE BEEN MOST INSPIRING

SOME PROPOSALS FOR THE IMPROVEMENT
OF THE FINANCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE
SCHOOLS IN OTTAWA COUNTY

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1927

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INTRODUCTION

Originally each New England settlement was a unit, and the irregular area including twenty to forty square miles was called a town. At the center was a Meeting House, and later the town school, and the town hall. All citizens were required by law to live within one half-mile of the Meeting House, to attend town meetings, and to send their children to the town school.

By the close of the seventeenth century, many of the forces which at first required a compact form of settlement had begun to lose their hold. With the decline in dominance of the old religious motives, new interests arose. One of these was to scatter out and live on the farming land. New settlements arose within the towns, miles away from the meeting and school houses. It was impossible for children to attend the town schools, especially in the winter.

Due to the difficulty of communication, these little settlements tended to become isolated and independent. As the tendency to subdivide the town became marked, these sub-divisions demanded and obtained local rights. The town was next divided into road districts for the repair and maintenance of roads, and then into school districts, and the assessing and collecting of taxes was begun in these districts. All of these tendencies contributed toward the breakdown of town government, and also

contributed toward the growth of district consciousness.

In the later part of the eighteenth century, the election of school trustees, levying school taxes, and selecting a teacher began. These were legally granted in Connecticut in 1766, and in Massachusetts in 1789. The district plan spread from New England, where it was created, to all parts of the United States, and was the plan adopted by new states as they were admitted to the union.

As a simple and democratic means for providing schools for the children of people under somewhat pioneer conditions, the district system has rendered, and in some of our western states is still rendering, a useful service. Where population is sparse, communication difficult, educational ideas rather primitive, supervision lacking, and economic conditions somewhat uniform and undeveloped, the system is naturally of most importance. Under the earlier economic conditions, in the days of boarding-around arrangements, and before the evolution of our present-day ideas as to the nature and progress of education, the district system undoubtedly rendered its most useful service. The system, though, has become hallowed by age and endeared by sentiment; in a number of states few men living have known any other; and to the needs of rural people, under our complex modern conditions of life, at once meets with determined opposition.

Ottawa county is no exception, and it was divided into districts shortly after statehood. Soon there was an inequality in valuations of districts brought about by improved farm methods in some sections, more fertile soil in other parts, and finally the discovery and development of zinc mines in one part of the county which produced more ore than any other state in the union according to the 1929 census.

The purpose of this paper is to give a brief account of the financial conditions of the school districts of Ottawa county from statehood to the close of the fiscal year 1934-1935, and to show the unequal distribution of wealth in the county in regard to the enumerated children.

A few proposed changes will be offered, which if adopted will tend to equalize educational advantages and which will not throw an undue burden on the poorer parts of the county.

CHAPTER I ,

OBJECTIONS TO THE SMALL UNIT PLAN
AND HOW IT CAN BE IMPROVED

The history, development, and functions of the district plan were given in the introduction and this chapter will show wherein it has outlived its purpose, and how it should be replaced by larger units.

The small unit plan is no longer so well adapted to meet the present day conditions and needs as are other systems of larger scope. The district authorities seldom see the real needs of their schools, and the possibilities of rural education. As a system of school administration, the small unit is expensive, short-sighted, inefficient, inconsistent, and unprogressive. It leads to great and unnecessary inequalities in schools, in terms, in educational advantages, and to an unwise multiplication of schools. The taxing unit is too small, and the trustees are unqualified. The trustees, because they hold the purse strings, frequently assume authority over many matters which they are not competent to manage. Most of the progress in rural school improvement has been made without the active support of the school authorities and often against their opposition and that of the people whom they represent.¹

¹
Ellwood P. Cubberly, Rural Life and Education; VIII, p. 185.

The cost of maintaining school in some of the western states can be used to show the waste in the smaller unit. In Arizona, 52 per cent of the schools have less than fifteen in average daily attendance, which makes the per capita cost \$171 for these schools. In Nevada, 63 per cent of the schools have less than eight in average daily attendance, with a per capita cost of \$678. In Idaho 68 per cent of the schools have an average daily attendance of fifteen and a per capita cost of \$180.²

These figures seem rather high in comparison with the figures from some of the larger units. In 2,214 schools over the United States with an average daily attendance of 301 to 400 and with thirty pupils per teacher, the average per capita cost is \$40.³

This information strengthens the supposition that small schools are expensive. As schools become larger, the pupil-teacher ratio more and more closely approaches the general standard of class-size until this latter factor controls the cost rather than the number of pupils per school.⁴

² W. H. Gaumnitz, "Elimination of the Small School," U. S. Office of Education, Washington, D. C., Bulletin, 1934, No. 3, p. 6.

³ Ibid, p. 17.

⁴ Ibid, p. 31.

In some of the western states such as Arizona, Idaho, Nevada and Montana, it is very likely that the small school, (although the area of the district may be large) must remain, at least until these states are more thickly populated.

Another good example of the weakness of the rural school, is the fact that for the year 1934-1935 in twenty-five states there were 75,202 schools with terms less than seven months, and 1,945 schools were financially unable to operate at all. During the same year, there were only 11,019 independent districts with terms less than seven months, and none with terms less than two months.⁵

The excessive number of school officers required to manage the rural districts is another one of its greatest sources of weakness. In Oklahoma, there are 13,284 school board members, who control the dependent districts which have less than half of the enumerated children in the state. The independent districts have only 1,940 board members who control schools with more than half of the enumerated children, more efficiently, economically, and with a broader scope of knowledge.⁶

⁵
Circular No. 138, U. S. Office of Education,
Washington, D. C., March, 1935.

⁶
Fifteenth Biennial Report of State Superintendent
of Public Instruction of Oklahoma. June 30, 1934;
Chapter 1, p. 2.

It should be mentioned here that the small school offerings and extra-curricular services are as a rule restricted to the bare necessities of the three R's. Small schools in the rural areas have shorter terms than in the cities, salaries paid are only a little more than half as high, and housing and equipment facilities are usually very meager.⁷

Some facts have been presented which show that the rural schools are very expensive and that among them, unequal financial opportunities for education are offered. These inequalities can be reduced by replacing the small unit by a larger unit. Some examples of the larger unit system will be given. This larger unit system is called consolidation. It means the uniting of several small districts into one large district, with the children of the entire district being transported to the central school.

The United States Commissioner of Education, 1894-1895, attributed the consolidation movement to the impetus it received in the town unit of Massachusetts. It is apparent that in the early stages of school development, school transportation was not regarded as a part of the minimum educational program, but was for the immediate purpose of reducing the scattered school organization into

⁷
Circular No. 80, U. S. Office of Education,
Washington, D. C.

a competent and efficient centralized school. This tendency to combine and enlarge school districts in the interest of educational economy and efficiency has been the most influential factor affecting the enactment of transportation laws. Practically all the legislative bodies have recognized that the training in the public school may be accomplished more adequately through the centralization of educational opportunities and through transportation of pupils who reside in sparsely settled areas, than by spending a large and perhaps unwarranted⁸ sum of money for the maintenance of school facilities in such subdivisions.

Fifteen states have enacted laws, distributing state aid funds for the transportation of school children.⁹ The first state to enact a transportation law was Massachusetts. In April, 1869 the Legislature provided that: "Any town in this commonwealth may raise (by taxation or otherwise,) and appropriate money to be expended by the school committee in their discretion, in providing for the conveyance of pupils to and from the public schools." In 1890 New Hampshire provided that an amount not to

⁸
National Survey of School Finance, U. S. Office of Education, Washington, D. C., Supplement II, p. 421.

⁹
National Survey of School Finance, U. S. Office of Education, Washington, D. C., Supplement II, p. 431.

exceed twenty-five per cent of the school money could be used for the transportation of pupils. In 1893, Vermont passed a similar law, and in 1894, Connecticut passed a transportation law, as did New York in 1896.¹⁰ Now all states make provisions for transportation. This has been a great factor in influencing consolidation.

In 1929-1930, there were 1,902,826 pupils transported at public expense in the forty-eight states. Two years later in 1931-1932 there were 2,342,566 pupils transported, indicating an increase of 439,640 pupils or 23 per cent for the biennium.¹¹ In 1929-1930, \$54,823,143 was spent for transportation in the United States. In 1931-1932, \$58,077,799 was spent, which was an increase of \$3,254,656 or 6 per cent. The next biennium, 1933-1934, \$53,907,774 was spent which was a decrease, although more pupils were transported. During this year there were 2,794,735 pupils transported in 77,042 vehicles provided at public expense.¹² This number of pupils transported at public expense is over three times as great as it was

¹⁰

Report of U. S. Commissioner of Education, 1894-1895, U. S. Office of Education, Washington, D. C., Vol. II, p. 1469.

¹¹

Consolidation of Schools, U. S. Office of Education, Washington, D. C., Circular No. 132, February, 1934, pp.5-6.

¹²

David T. Blose, Assistant Statistician, U. S. Office of Education, Washington, D. C., School Life, April, 1936.

during the year 1923-1924. The average transportation expenditure per pupil for states giving the number of pupils transported during the year 1923-1924 was \$35.38. In 1929-1930, it was \$28.81; in 1913-1932, it was \$24.79; and for 1933-1934, it was only \$19.29. The constant decrease in per capita cost of transportation is due to larger loads, better roads, and knowledge gained by experience.

In 1929-1930, there were 143,445 rural schools in the United States and the next biennium report showed a decrease of 5,267. The average annual decrease of rural schools in the sixteen years prior to 1931-1932 has been 3,223, and the percentage of decrease has remained practically constant throughout this time.¹³

Each biennial report of the State Superintendent of Public Schools in Oklahoma since 1907 has contained a chapter encouraging consolidation of schools. Since 1918 the title of the chapter has been changed to Centralized Schools, as the result of a law permitting union graded and independent districts to furnish transportation, but it is not required as in the consolidated school.

During the school year 1931-1932, transportation of pupils was furnished by 540 districts, in Oklahoma. Three hundred sixty-one of these were consolidated and 109 were union graded districts.

13

Consolidation of Schools, U. S. Office of Education, Washington, D. C., Circular No. 132, February, 1934.

During the school year 1933-1934, pupils were enumerated in 4,816 districts. This was a decrease of 53 districts since 1930-1931 when there were 4,869 districts in the state. The average annual loss in number of districts between 1926 and 1934 has been forty-nine.¹⁴

A comparison of the attendance in consolidated and unconsolidated schools in ten counties of Oklahoma over a period of five years will be given.¹⁵ The average length of term of the rural schools was 157 days, and for the consolidated schools it was 167 days. The per cent of enumerated children enrolled in the rural schools was 76.7, and in the consolidated schools, 79.9 per cent.

The per cent of enumerated children in average daily attendance in the rural one and two-teacher schools was 46.4, and in the consolidated schools, 54.4 per cent. The per cent of pupils enrolled in average daily attendance in the rural schools was 59.4, and in the consolidated schools, 69.7 per cent.

The second method of comparison in a representative number of schools is given for the five years immediately preceeding consolidation with the five years immediately succeeding it. The average length of term before consolidation was 131 days, and after consolidation, it was 145

¹⁴

Fifteenth Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, III, 26-27.

¹⁵

Ibid, p. 28.

days in twenty-one consolidations. The per cent of enumerated children enrolled in school before consolidation was 83.4, and after consolidation, it was 84.4, in seventeen consolidations. The per cent of pupils enrolled in average daily attendance before consolidation was 59.4, and after consolidation, it was 65.7 per cent in the seventeen consolidations. There was a gain of attendance by consolidation of 38.2 per cent.¹⁶

These facts and figures show clearly some of the advantages of consolidation in the United States and in Oklahoma, and they also show that the trend of school organization is toward the larger unit. To remain in step with the trends of education, Ottawa county should be consolidated and the small rural schools be abandoned. This paper will show the need of consolidation, and how it will improve the financial advantages of equal education as well as equalize the tax burden. Before going into this, it will be necessary to give the history of the small units in Ottawa county by showing how they were created and how few changes have been made since that time.

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Fifteenth Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instructions, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, 1935, p. 28.

CHAPTER II

THE FORMATION OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS
IN OTTAWA COUNTY

Ottawa county as defined¹ lies in the extreme north-east corner of the state of Oklahoma, running along the Kansas line on the north, westward to the Neosho River, then southward along the east line of range 21 east to the south line of Township 26 north, then eastward to the Arkansas line and back north to the Kansas line, bordering Missouri on the southwest corner. The area of this county is 464 square miles.²

The eastern half of the county is very rough, hilly, and is composed chiefly of timber land, which lies at the foot of the Ozark mountains. The western half is level country, with very fertile soil, good for farming and stock raising. The county is traversed by the Neosho River entering at the northwest corner and coming out just east of the south central line. The Spring River empties into the Neosho River in about the central part of the county from the north. These rivers were used as district boundary lines in many cases because of necessity, and this was a handicap in equalizing the size of districts. Miami was designated as the county seat.³

¹ Constitution of Oklahoma, July 16, 1907, Sec. 8, Article 17, p. 95.

² United States Geological Survey, 1895-1899.

³ Constitution of Oklahoma, Op. Cit., Sec. 8, Article 17, p. 96.

The State Constitution authorized the county superintendents in each of the seventy-seven counties of the state to organize school districts and lay out the boundaries.⁴ On May 15, 1908, the county superintendent of Ottawa county entered into his duty of laying out district boundaries, and continued until April 21, 1909, at which time 38 dependent and two independent district had been formed.⁵ The valuation of these districts was from \$20,284 in district 12, the poorest, to \$1,800,870 in district 23, Miami, the wealthiest.⁶ Table I shows the assessed valuation and the area of the school districts for the year 1910-1911. The figures in Table I were taken from the first available records in the county showing anything about the school districts in detail.

The total assessed valuation of the county in 1910-1911 was \$7,780,205 and the two independent district, Miami, district 23, and Afton, district 26, had over 35 per cent of the total valuation which was \$2,797,052. The area of these two districts was only 20 square miles, or 4.3 per cent of the area of the county.⁷

⁴ Constitution of Oklahoma, Op. Cit., Article XIII, Sec. I, p. 69.

⁵ Map No. I, Appendix. Map from County Surveyor's Office.

⁶ Table No. I, Excise Board Proceedings, Year 1910-1911.

⁷ Table No. II, County Superintendent's Annual Report, Year 1910-1911.

Table I also shows that there is considerable difference in the size of the districts. District 23 with an area of six square miles was the smallest, and it was only 39 per cent as large as District 15, which had an area of twenty-one square miles.

Table II shows a great difference in the enumeration. The enumeration ranged from thirty-six in District 15, to 858 in District 23. The same table also shows that the percentage in attendance of the enrollment was very low, ranging from 36 per cent, the lowest, to 90 per cent, the highest.

During the year 1911, Districts 41 to 47, inclusive, and District 72 were created as dependent districts by the reduction of other districts. Map 2 in the index shows these districts. This map also shows that there have been only two changes since 1911. Union Graded Number 1 (which will be called U. G. 1) was formed out of Districts 11 and 12, but it still remains a dependent district. This change took place in 1917.

District 9 dissolved, and on July 5, 1921, Consolidated District 1 was formed out of Districts 6, 25, 9, and 10. This is the only consolidated district in the county, and is one of the seven independent districts.⁸ (As a matter of convenience it will hereafter be called Con. No. 1.).

⁸

Map 2, Appendix, Map from the County Surveyor's Office.

TABLE I
VALUATION AND SIZE OF THE SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN
OTTAWA COUNTY AT THE TIME OF THEIR ORGANIZATION
1910-1911

District Number	Size Square Miles	Valuation
1	20.2	\$35,585
2	10	30,986
3	14	71,366
4	10.5	38,693
5	9	43,550
6	8	27,014
7	11.1	218,497
8	17.3	47,047
9	11	297,264
10	12	36,068
11	15.5	39,193
12	8	20,284
13	10	158,076
14	10	219,922
15	21	37,550
16	19	70,949
17	13.5	108,680
18	9	207,031
19	10.2	220,886
20	7	274,418
21	9	108,922
22	7.3	126,582
23	6	1,800,870
24	14.8	34,939
25	8	37,046
26	14	996,182
27	15.6	290,953
28	12.4	107,126
29	8.2	29,819
30	10.4	66,583
31	17	343,115
32	14	253,598
33	9	64,636
34	10.5	250,855
35	9.2	134,200
36	8.4	332,417
37	9.7	114,201
38	10.1	269,805
39	10.2	90,498
40	14	125,827
TOTAL	464.1	\$7,780,205

After the election of school board members, and the construction of school houses, the free school of the small district type started in Ottawa county. At the present time, the same size units are functioning as when created with the two exceptions previously mentioned.

This district setup, although not entirely satisfactory from the first, is getting more and more out of date as time moves on because of the agricultural and industrial changes, the population and wealth increase, and the demand for more socialized education. The small unit does not meet these requirements, but brings about a more unequal opportunity to finance education, as will be shown later.

The disadvantages of the small district plan are many: One of these inequalities is brought about by an inequality of financial ability per unit of need which can be overcome by nothing short of the equalizing auspices of the state. It has become imperative that these inequalities be supplanted through the equity-giving resources of the state.⁹ The acuteness of the effect of present economic conditions renders perilous any further postponement of making larger units of financial support

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National Conference on the Financing of Education, U. S. Office of Education, Washington, D.C., 1933, Chap. III, p. 21

TABLE II
ATTENDANCE RECORD OF THE INDIVIDUAL DISTRICTS
IN OTTAWA COUNTY FOR THE YEAR 1910-1911

District Number	Enumeration	Average Daily Attendance	Per Cent of Attendance
1	120	35	67
2	55	30	64
3	82	55	63
4	82	35	67
5	47	25	57
6	62	34	67
7	66	30	46
8	65	24	47
9	228	116	66
10	54	17	55
11	92	37	52
12	63	25	52
13	70	25	47
14	96	53	71
15	36	11	50
16	57	21	61
17	66	33	56
18	252	163	70
19	66	18	41
20	270	109	59
21	90	45	90
22	39	21	48
23	858	586	66
24	43	27	63
25	83	39	58
26	596	339	64
27	100	43	47
28	99	35	47
29	76	13	35
30	60	38	50
31	286	201	72
32	57	22	52
33	45	19	60
34	61	29	61
35	66	30	51
36	73	25	73
37	82	49	60
38	51	24	70
39	41	14	66
40	66	22	36
AVERAGE	4,819	2,517	58

This table shows the school enumeration, average daily attendance, and per cent of the enrollment in daily attendance. This is according to the first Annual Report made by the County Superintendent.

for education. Tax delinquencies, unemployment, decreased property values, bank and business failures, credit shortage, personal financial losses, and the like have rendered many localities impotent in school support.¹⁰

Members of the State Department of Education, who have studied the problem in its practical aspects are fairly well agreed that a high school should have at least six teachers if it is to offer to its pupils a course of study with opportunities equal to that of high schools in the middle-sized towns and cities.¹¹

Although Oklahoma has had an average annual loss of 49 dependent districts since 1926, there still remains 4,428 of these districts with only 49.3 per cent of the scholastics of the state enumerated in them. The other 50.7 per cent are enumerated in the 388 independent districts. The independent districts make a much better showing than do the dependent districts in percentage enrolled and in average daily attendance, in the amount spent per teacher, in the average teacher's salary, in the length of term, in the number of years of school work provided for its pupils, and in the average amount spent per pupil enumerated and enrolled.¹²

¹⁰

Ibid, Chapter III, p. 22

¹¹

State Department of Education, Bulletin No. 103, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, Chapter I, p. 1.

¹²

Fifteenth Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Instruction, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, Chapter I, p. 2.

After discussing the disadvantages of the small unit system and giving some advantages of the larger unit, we shall now see how the schools of Oklahoma are financed, and how this effects the schools of Ottawa county.

CHAPTER III

FAILURE OF THE SCHOOL FINANCE PLAN TO
EQUALIZE SCHOOLS IN OTTAWA COUNTY PRIOR TO 1935-1936

A brief outline will be given of the taxing system in Oklahoma and the sources of school income.

The State Constitution provides that the county excise board shall make the necessary levy, not to exceed five mills on all assessed property in the county, to maintain a school. The people of the district may vote an additional ten mills on all taxable property within the district boundary if it is needed. This is supplemented by a state apportionment and a county apportionment, allocated according to the school enumeration of the district.¹ The Federal Government pays about fourteen cents per day Indian tuition, which aids only those schools with Indian children enrolled.² The state beverage tax raises about ninety cents per enumerated child which is added to the school budget.³

Those districts containing natural resources are benefitted by a Gross Production Tax of one-half of one

¹ Constitution of Oklahoma, First Edition, 1907, Article X, Section 9, pp. 61-62.

² Federal Aid Appropriated Annually by Congress.

³ Beverage Law of 1933.

per cent on the cash value of all mineral resources produced from that county.⁴

Several appropriations have been made to aid weak schools. In 1923 the legislature appropriated \$650,000 for this purpose,⁵ and in 1925, \$500,000 was appropriated.⁶ In 1927, one and one-half million dollars was appropriated but later repealed. The Legislature then created the special common school equalization fund of one and one-half million dollars.⁷

These sources of school revenue, although they may seem very large, have not increased proportionately with the school enumeration which increases the school demands. A minimum program of \$1,150 per elementary unit and \$1,450 per high school unit cannot be maintained in many of the schools.⁸

A constitutional limit of 15 mills on advalorem property for school purposes raises only 36 per cent of the money necessary to run the schools in Ottawa county.⁹ The reason for this is that the assessed valuation on real

⁴ School Laws of Oklahoma, 1925, Section 455, p. 99.

⁵ Session Law of Oklahoma, Article X, Section 9, pp. 61-62, 1923-1924.

⁶ Ibid, 1925, Chapter 2, pp. 2-4.

⁷ Ibid, 1927, Chapter 4, p. 21.

⁸ Paul R. Mort, "Financing Oklahoma Schools," Bulletin No. 110.

⁹ Statistical Circular No. 53, February 22, 1935. U. S. Office of Education, Washington, D. C.

estate and public service property is only 45 per cent of its actual cash value, and the assessed valuation of personal property is only 25 per cent of its actual cash value.¹⁰

Another distinct disadvantage in Oklahoma of the basic taxing unit being ad valorem is that it has a "deficit" of people in the period of greater tax paying ability. To make this clear the three age groups will be used. From one to four, the age of infancy, from five to twenty years representing the period of education, and ages thirty to sixty representing the period of production and earning power. We find that in Oklahoma 31.4 people are paying taxes to educate 33.2 children; in the rest of the country 35.8 people are paying taxes to educate 29.5 children.¹¹

The schools of Ottawa county are financed according to the plan previously explained and the inequalities of this plan will be studied. The information for this study will cover a period of ten years, from 1924-1925 to 1934-1935, inclusive. In this period, two extreme financial conditions occurred: The peak of prosperity for the schools in 1928-1929, and the school depression in 1933-1934.

10

Brookings Institute Report on Oklahoma, 1935, Part V, Chapter XXV, p. 413.

11

Brookings Institute Report for Oklahoma, August 17, 1935, Part V, Chapter XXV, p. 847.

This county presents another unusual problem which makes it difficult for three of the independent districts to support schools; that is, they are located in the center of a zinc mining district. The mines do not raise the property valuation in proportion to the number of enumerated children of the miners.

The year calculated (1924-1925) was a peak year for Picher, District 15, in property valuation while the wealth per enumerated child was only \$385, which was the lowest in the county.¹² Table III shows that even the independent districts are very unequal in wealth per enumerated child. Picher, District 15, had an assessed valuation of \$1,475,061 and an enumeration of 3,833, making an assessed valuation of only \$385 per enumerated child. The same year Fairland, District 31, had an assessed valuation of \$608,588, and an enumeration of 229, making an assessed valuation of \$2,657 per enumerated child.

Table IV shows that in 1924-1925 the assessed valuation of the county was \$16,771,156 and that the enumeration was 12,606; this makes an assessed valuation of \$1,330 for each enumerated child.¹³ Of the assessed valuation of the county, \$10,251,599 was in the seven

12

Table III, County Superintendent's Annual Report, 1924-1925.

13

Table IV, County Superintendent's Annual Report, 1924-1925.

TABLE III
 ASSESSED VALUATION FOR EACH ENUMERATED CHILD
 DURING THE YEAR 1924-1925
 INDEPENDENT DISTRICTS

District Number	Valuation	Enumeration	Wealth Per Child
31	\$608,588	229	\$2,657
26	1,089,633	503	2,166
23	4,356,189	2,250	1,936
14	1,110,464	1,176	944
18	804,544	1,381	582
15	1,475,061	3,833	385
Con. 1	607,120	441	1,376
TOTAL	\$10,251,599	9,813	\$1,044

This table shows the inequality of the wealth distribution in the independent districts.

independent districts¹⁴ with a school enumeration of 9,813 children; or \$1,044 per enumerated child.¹⁵ During the same year the thirty-seven dependent districts with an enumeration of 2,793 children had an assessed valuation of \$6,519,557, or \$2,335 per enumerated child. This shows more wealth back of each child enumerated in the rural districts than is back of those enumerated in the independent districts.

To continue with the wealth distribution, Table V shows that the combined assessed valuation of the seven wealthiest dependent districts was \$2,162,989 which gave an assessed valuation of \$5,359 for each enumerated child.¹⁶ The valuation of these seven districts was 33.2 per cent of the total for the thirty-seven dependent district. Table VI shows the seven poorest dependent districts with a total assessed valuation of only \$671,199 and 744 children enumerated which gives \$886 in wealth for each enumerated child.¹⁷ The children in the seven poorest districts had only 16 per cent of the financial advantages for an education as those in the seven wealthiest districts.

14

Wyandotte is an independent and consolidated district.

15

Table III, p. 20, Ibid.

16

Table V, County Superintendent's Annual Report, 1924-1925.

17

Table VI, County Superintendent's Annual Report, 1924-1925.

TABLE IV

ASSESSED VALUATION FOR EACH ENUMERATED CHILD IN
OTTAWA COUNTY DURING THE YEAR 1924-1925

District Number	Valuation	Enumeration	Wealth Per Child
Con. 1	\$ 607,120	441	\$1,376
U. G. 1	168,764	203	831
1	178,895	136	1,315
2	65,900	90	732
3	121,555	119	1,214
4	97,580	81	1,204
5	72,205	68	1,062
7	295,430	87	3,395
8	125,819	93	1,348
12	38,060	53	718
13	448,053	90	4,977
14	1,110,464	1,176	944
15	1,475,061	3,833	385
16	150,115	59	2,544
17	266,155	60	4,434
18	804,544	1,381	582
19	337,349	58	6,687
20	131,678	131	1,006
21	177,615	57	3,115
22	177,393	69	2,570
23	4,356,189	2,250	1,936
24	65,350	36	1,815
26	1,089,635	503	2,166
27	375,569	90	4,175
28	197,333	82	2,406
29	74,910	81	924
30	105,740	85	1,237
31	608,588	229	2,657
32	315,345	41	7,691
33	120,205	26	4,623
34	315,566	69	4,570
35	187,920	66	2,847
36	349,820	87	4,021
37	179,143	56	3,199
38	306,816	68	4,541
39	120,310	37	3,251
40	158,914	57	2,788
41	170,745	67	2,519
43	92,480	39	2,371
44	111,365	85	1,325
45	209,429	54	3,878
47	79,840	27	2,955
48	158,057	150	1,054
72	33,830	36	940
TOTAL	\$16,771,136	12,606	\$1,330

TABLE V
 SEVEN OF THE WEALTHIEST RURAL DISTRICTS
 IN OTTAWA COUNTY IN 1925-1925

District Number	Valuation	Wealth Per child
32	\$315,845	\$7,691
19	387,849	6,687
13	448,053	4,973
33	120,205	4,623
34	315,566	4,570
38	309,816	4,541
17	266,155	4,434
TOTAL	2,162,989	37,519
Average Wealth Per Child		5,359

TABLE VI
 SEVEN OF THE POOREST RURAL DISTRICTS IN
 OTTAWA COUNTY IN 1924-1925

District Number	Valuation	Wealth Per Child
12	\$38,060	\$ 718
2	65,900	732
U. G. 1	168,764	831
29	74,910	924
72	33,830	940
20	131,678	1,005
48	158,057	1,054
TOTAL	671,199	6,204
Average Wealth Per Child		836

Another comparison can be made of the teacher maintenance cost. The year 1929-1930 will be used; however, Table VII shows,¹⁸ that any other year could be used as the valuation does not change much from year to year.

Three divisions will be used in this comparison; they are: the seven having the highest per capita cost, the seven having the lowest per capita cost, and the seven independent districts. In District 47 it costs \$12.52 per month, teaching expense for each pupil and \$3.20 per month for maintenance per pupil. Table VIII shows that the average teacher cost, per month for each child in average daily attendance of the seven dependent districts having the highest per capita cost was \$6.80, and the maintenance per month for each child in average daily attendance for the same seven dependent districts was \$4.93.¹⁹ District 12, one of the schools in the group having the lowest per capita cost, had a teacher expense of \$176 per month and had a maintenance cost of thirty-nine cents per month for each child in average daily attendance.²⁰

18

Table VII, Annual Reports of the County Superintendent for 1929-1930.

19

Table VIII, Annual Report of the County Superintendent for 1929-1930.

20

Table IX, Annual Report of the County Superintendent for 1929-1930.

TABLE VII

WEALTH PER ENUMERATED CHILD OF THE DEPENDENT
DISTRICTS IN OTTAWA COUNTY FROM
1924-1925 to 1934-1935

Year	Valuation	Wealth Per Child
1924-1925	\$6,719,555	\$2,403
1925-1926	6,733,236	2,335
1926-1927	8,002,711	2,767
1927-1928	6,674,373	2,340
1928-1929	7,260,117	2,383
1929-1930	6,915,753	2,328
1930-1931	7,086,577	2,374
1931-1932	7,170,484	2,280
1932-1933	5,532,634	1,697
1933-1934	4,874,364	1,595
1934-1935	4,825,092	1,653

Showing the range of the assessed valuation,
and the wealth per enumerated child over a
period of ten years in Ottawa County.

TABLE VIII

SHOWING THE TEACHER-MAINTENANCE COST FOR THE YEAR
1929-1930 of the SEVEN DEPENDENT DISTRICTS HAVING
THE HIGHEST PER CAPITA COST

District	Budget	Teacher	Maintenance
19	\$3,508	\$5.65	\$5.86
47	840	12.52	3.20
32	2,000	9.80	8.00
34	4,238	3.04	1.44
17	2,972	3.66	2.56
33	1,624	6.25	6.43
43	1,876	6.66	7.04
AVERAGE		6.80	4.93

This table shows the teacher-maintenance cost per month for each child in average daily attendance.

Table IX shows that the teacher-maintenance cost per month for each child in average daily attendance is less than one-third of what it is in Table VIII. Certainly there was a waste of money in District 47, or if it answers the purpose, District 12 fell short in offering its pupils what they should have received. Neither of the suppositions is correct, because there were only six in average daily attendance in District 47, which is entirely too small for efficiency and economy. There were twenty-six in average daily attendance in district 12 which comes closer to the teacher-pupil ratio, but not enough money was available to supply the actual needs of the school, and pay a living wage to the teacher.

Only an eight months term of school is offered in each of the fourteen dependent districts mentioned in Tables VIII and IX, and they are one-, two-, and three-teacher schools. The average annual teacher's salary was \$883 for those in Table IX. Some of the schools in Table IX received aid from the state, and they had to follow the State Aid regulations for teachers' salaries which is higher than the salary schedule of the schools in Table VIII.

The average monthly and yearly maintenance varies greatly, from sixty-seven cents monthly or \$5.36 annually per pupil of those in Table IX, to \$3.14 monthly or \$25.12 annually per pupil for the schools in Table VIII.

TABLE IX

SHOWING THE TEACHER-MAINTENANCE COST PER MONTH
FOR THE YEAR 1929-1930 OF THE SEVEN DEPENDENT
DISTRICTS IN OTTAWA COUNTY HAVING THE LOWEST
PER CAPITA COST

District	Budget	Teacher	Maintenance
5	\$1,307	\$2.14	\$1.74
12	1,619	1.76	.39
8	2,775	1.40	1.30
1	3,226	1.60	.99
2	1,297	3.43	1.47
29	2,292	2.25	.93
3	2,871	2.01	1.25
AVERAGE		2.08	1.15

This table shows the Teacher-Maintenance cost per month for each child in average daily attendance.

In calculating the teacher-maintenance cost of the independent districts it was necessary to include the high school teacher cost and maintenance with the grades, and even then it runs less than the average for the dependent districts. Table X will show that the highest teacher cost per month per student was \$4.73 in Fairland, and the lowest was \$2.93 in Wyandotte. The highest maintenance cost per month per student was \$1.83 in Miami, and the lowest was forty-two cents per month in Wyandotte.²¹

The average per capita cost for the elementary grades in the independent districts for the year 1929-1930 was \$52.40,²² and for the same year it was \$65.62 in the dependent districts in the county.²³ There was a great difference in the per capita cost in the independent districts for the year 1929-1930. Ficher, with a per capita cost of \$25.96, was the lowest; Fairland with a per capita cost of \$50.96, was the highest. Although a greater difference is noticeable among the dependent districts. District 5 spends \$25 on each child in average daily attendance, and District 47 spends \$138 which is highest.

²¹

Table X, Annual Report of County Superintendent for 1929-1930.

²²

Annual Report of County Superintendent, June, 1930.

²³

Annual Reports to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

TABLE X

SHOWING THE TEACHER-MAINTENANCE COST PER MONTH
 PER STUDENT FOR THE YEAR 1929-1930 OF THE
 INDEPENDENT DISTRICTS. HIGH SCHOOL A. D. A.
 INCLUDED WITH THE GRADES

District	Budget	Teacher	Maintenance
Wyandotte	\$11,375	\$2.93	\$.42
Quapaw	41,485	2.83	1.33
Picher	111,800	4.10	1.23
Commerce	32,070	3.34	.51
Miami	89,800	3.84	1.83
Afton	17,335	3.82	1.38
Fairland	13,565	4.73	.93
AVERAGE		3.65	1.09

CHAPTER IV

THE TAX BURDEN AND RETURNS

It has been shown in a previous chapter that the assessed valuation per pupil in Ottawa County is very unequal; that it costs more to teach a pupil and maintain a school in the small district than in the larger one; and that because of these, the opportunities through the county are not the same.

In this discussion an attempt will be made to show where the tax burden is unequal, and if a general county levy were placed on all the assessed valuation in the county more revenue could be raised, which is another reason for the larger unit for taxation.

The average levy over the dependent districts of the county for the period from 1924-1925 to 1934-1935, inclusive, ranged downward from 11.1 mills, the highest, in 1929-1930¹ to 5.7 mills,² the lowest, in 1934-1935. During this same period the average school levy for the independent districts was 15 mills up to 1932-1933, then it dropped down to 10.44 mills in 1934-1935 as Table XII shows. By comparing Tables XI and XII, it will be found that the general fund levy of the independent districts was almost double that of the dependent district, although

¹ Oklahoma Session Laws, 1933, H.B. No. 2, Chapter 196.

² Table XI, Excise Board Proceedings of the County.

TABLE XI

AVERAGE GENERAL FUND LEVY FOR THE DEPENDENT
DISTRICTS OF OTTAWA COUNTY FROM 1924 to 1934

Year	Mills Levy
1924-1925	8.6
1925-1926	10.51
1926-1927	9.65
1927-1928	8.87
1928-1929	10.36
1929-1930	11.1
1930-1931	10.9
1931-1932	8.7
1932-1933	9.9
1933-1934	6.54
1934-1935	5.7
Average	9.34

TABLE XII

AVERAGE GENERAL FUND LEVY FOR THE INDEPENDENT
SCHOOLS OF OTTAWA COUNTY FROM 1924-1934

Year	Mills Levy
1924-1925	13.25
1925-1926	15
1926-1927	15
1927-1928	15
1928-1929	15
1929-1930	15
1930-1931	15
1931-1932	15
1932-1933	15
1933-1934	12.97
1934-1935	10.44
Average	14.24

the per capita cost of the independent districts was only about one-half as much as the per capita cost of the dependent districts.

The average county levy for all the schools during this period, ranged from 15.05 mills in 1929-1930, downward to 8.07 mills in 1934-1935. Table XIII also shows that the general fund levy over the entire county for all the schools changed very little from year to year over the period studied up to the year 1933-1934.³ Sales Tax and Income Tax from the state were used to reduce the levies in 1933-1934 and 1934-1935; however, they did not reduce the budgets.

The year 1928-1929 will be used to show the unequal tax burden in the county by the General Fund Levy. Table XIV gives the general fund levy of all the districts in the county, and they ran from 4.5 mills in District 45 to 15 mills in fifteen of the districts.⁴ There is no indication that the district with the high levy had more money for school purposes than those with the lower levy, but it seems to act the other way. District 12 with the 15 mill limit could raise only \$444, and it had an average daily attendance of 38. District 45 could raise \$688 with only a 4.3 mill levy, and it had an average daily attendance

³ Table XIII, County Excise Board Proceedings.

⁴ Table XIV, Ibid.

TABLE XIII

AVERAGE GENERAL FUND LEVY OVER OTTAWA COUNTY
FROM 1924-1925 to 1934-1935

Year	Mill Levy
1924-1925	11.28
1925-1926	12.75
1926-1927	12.52
1927-1928	11.93
1928-1929	12.86
1929-1930	13.05
1930-1931	12.95
1931-1932	11.85
1932-1933	12.45
1933-1934	9.75
1934-1935	8.07
Average	11.75

TABLE XIV

GENERAL FUND LEVY OF EACH DISTRICT IN
OTTAWA COUNTY FOR THE YEAR 1928-1929

District Number	Mills Levied
U. G. 1	15
1	15
2	12
3	15
4	6.6
5	15
7	9.4
8	12.5
12	15
13	5.7
16	6.6
17	7.8
19	10.9
20	15
21	8.8
22	8.6
24	14.1
27	7.2
28	11.3
29	7.6
30	15
32	5.9
33	11.4
34	11.7
35	4.7
36	9.8
37	13.7
38	4.4
39	7.3
40	6.8
41	12
43	8.7
44	15
45	4.3
47	11
48	15
72	15
Con. 1 Ind.	15
Ind. 14	15
Ind. 15	15
Ind. 18	15
Ind. 23	15
Ind. 26	15
Ind. 31	15
County Average	12.86

of thirty-five. District 38 could raise \$911 with a 4.4 mill levy, and with an average daily attendance of only 27.

Thus the wealthiest districts shown in Table V, can levy a 67 per cent smaller levy than the poorest ones in Table VI, and raise more money for school purposes. This certainly is an unequal tax burden on the people, which cannot be justified because the districts with the highest levies do not raise sufficient money to offer educational advantages in proportion to what they pay for, in comparison to the wealthier districts.

The independent districts levy the limit every year, but the concentrated population is in the cities, and they are not always located in the center of wealth, it raises less money per capita than many of the dependent districts.

The total amount raised by taxation over the entire county during the year 1928-1929 was \$257,553 with a different levy in each district, ranging from 4.3 mills in District 45 to 15 mills in the seven independent districts and eight of the dependent districts.⁵ The same amount of money could have been raised with a general county levy of 12.86 mills, and this allocated to the

⁵ Table XIV, County Excise Board Proceedings, 1928-1929.

different districts according to the needs. This would offer financial equality for school children, and equalize the tax burden over the county.

An attempt was made by the last legislature to do this, but it failed. However, a law was passed which helps all the schools by distributing Primary Aid; this pays teachers' salaries for four months. The weaker schools are given Secondary Aid which brings all schools up to the minimum program of eight months. This helps some as a leveling factor, but more especially does it increase the budget, and help to enrich the school program.

CHAPTER V

A NEW FINANCIAL PLAN AND ITS EFFECT ON THE SCHOOLS

On April 23, 1935, the State of Oklahoma adopted a new method of paying for its free, public schools. Principles, policies and procedures followed since 1927 were revised and new ones were accepted. In the first place, new funds were provided through biennial appropriations instead of earmarked sources of revenue. Second, the principles of local initiative and economy of school organization and the importance of good teacher qualifications were recognized by the Legislature, and, finally, the policy of providing state support for schools in general, as well as for equalization, was adopted. The passage of House Bill 212 was definitely a reiteration of the fact that education is not only a function of the state, but is, also, an imperative governmental duty.

It might be well to stop, at this time, and consider the advantages and disadvantages of the new law. Every school patron, citizen and officer should know and understand problems from a state-wide point of view, as well as a local district and county point of view. First, House Bill 212 introduces the principle of local initiative into the financial administration of our school system. Under the old plan of state school support, a district was required to exhaust its local resources before participating in the equalization fund. This requirement placed all

state aided districts on a meager and inadequate state program and left them no opportunity to improve their situation. In order to conserve state funds, the State Board of Education dictated the salaries of the teachers and bus drivers, the bus routes, the expenditures for maintenance. The result was, in effect, state administration as well as state control in local school districts. Second, House Bill 212 provides that the Minimum Program shall be based on a 10-mill levy and that the remaining portion of the millage voted by the people and allocated by the county excise boards all be left free for the use of local school authorities. Such funds can be used to purchase an extra month of school, to employ an extra teacher, to buy better transportation services or to match Federal funds on Works Progress Administration projects.

The third innovation brought about by House Bill 212, is the apportionment of state aid to all school districts, notwithstanding their inability to pay. This is a definite commitment of the state that the financing of public education is an obligation of the state.

The fourth principle injected into the state school finance set-up by House Bill 212 is the principle of economy of organization. Under the old plan, the state attempted to guarantee the Minimum Program to every school district in the state. It should be noted that under the new plan the state is attempting to guarantee an equal

Minimum Program to all the children in the state, not to all the school districts.

If the children in a school district, for example, which has only ten or twelve pupils, can be transferred, transported, and taught in another school district and be given just as good or better educational opportunity for less cost than they can be taught at home, and if such a procedure does not subject them to unusual danger to their safety or health, the state will not aid the school in such small district. Of course, the people of the district can go ahead and maintain their school on their own resources, just as they have in the past.

It is well known, and generally admitted, that the present school district organization in this state is expensive. It has been estimated that it would cost at least one and one-half million dollars less to provide the same Minimum Program to children of the state, if it were organized into a relatively few large districts. To put it more concretely, our present school organization cost 200,000 children two weeks of school each year and costs 5,400 teachers two weeks of salary each year. In instances where the state pays the bill, surely local authorities should not object to the state's request to reorganize the district on an economical basis.

Finally, House Bill 212 recognizes the importance of higher teacher qualifications. It provides for the

apportionment of more state support to school districts which employ teachers with higher qualifications than to those with low qualifications.

It is too early as yet to determine whether the new principle and policies introduced by House Bill 212 are entirely desirable. Facts will be presented later showing that the trend after one year's operation, seems to be in the right direction. There is a common goal for all Oklahomans in education, that is, a nine months' term with a qualified teacher teaching a broad and enriched curriculum in an adequate school plant. The financing of this goal is a common problem.

There is a distinct feeling among superintendents in all sections of the state that House Bill 212 is a step forward in financing our schools. This feeling is justifiable because of the financial aid for the schools, which has made warrants cashable and has brought about an increase in salaries. Naturally this would raise the morale in the teaching personnel, and the teachers would go about their work with more zeal and enthusiasm and strive to do better work. This would be carried to the homes by the children and thus with the assurance of a longer term of school, the patrons would take more interest in the school and offer more support to its principles which in turn would be a stimulus for the teacher. Thus a cycle is created from the teacher to pupil, to the

patron, and back to the teacher which will lead to progress and improvement of education.

House Bill 212 calls for an annual appropriation of \$8,200,000. This is divided into two parts: Primary Aid, \$5,400,000 and Secondary Aid, \$2,800,000. A generous sum was allocated to Ottawa County from both sources. The independent districts received \$61,304, and the dependent districts received \$12,447 as Primary Aid, which could be used only for teachers' salaries. Six of the independent districts received \$41,870 and three of the dependent districts received \$3,268 as Secondary Aid. This could be used for transportation, maintenance of building or teachers' salaries. Table XV shows how much Primary and Secondary Aid was received by the dependent districts and Table XVI shows how much was received by the independent districts.

Ottawa County received \$118,889 as Primary and Secondary Aid. This huge sum of money certainly created an optimistic outlook for the future of the schools. Teachers' salaries were raised, instructional supplies and library books were purchased, buildings were repaired, and transportation facilities were improved.

Some of the dependent districts used the Primary Aid to reduce the levy instead of extending school for another month. It seems to be customary in Ottawa County for the dependent districts to maintain an eight months term of

TABLE XV

THE AMOUNT OF PRIMARY AID AND SECONDARY AID
RECEIVED BY THE DEPENDENT DISTRICTS OF OTTAWA COUNTY
1935-1936

District	Primary Aid	Secondary Aid
U. G. 1	\$1,244	\$1,818
1	584	-
2	187	-
3	534	-
4	209	-
5	167	-
7	513	-
8	473	-
12	191	1,011
13	548	-
16	260	-
17	193	-
19	267	-
20	534	-
21	240	-
22	258	-
24	260	-
27	402	-
28	487	-
29	193	-
30	220	429
32	225	-
33	265	-
34	283	-
35	254	-
36	292	-
37	228	-
38	231	-
39	236	-
40	258	-
41	268	-
43	278	-
44	244	-
45	262	-
47	280	-
48	598	-
72	281	-
Total	\$12,447	\$3,268

TABLE XVI

THE AMOUNT OF PRIMARY AID AND SECONDARY AID RECEIVED
BY THE INDEPENDENT DISTRICTS OF OTTAWA COUNTY
1935-1936

District	Primary Aid	Secondary Aid
Con. 1	\$4,932	\$8,614
14	6,442	9,013
15	17,108	8,523
18	7,873	8,894
23	19,457	-
26	3,537	2,863
31	1,955	3,963
Total	\$51,304	\$41,870

school, and even the Primary Aid did not change this custom. Three of the independent districts, (Afton, Fairland, and Quapaw) could finance only eight and one-half months of school after Primary and Secondary Aid had been received. However, this was four weeks more than they could finance for the year 1934-1935.¹

Although this gives some financial relief to all the districts, it does not equalize educational advantages in a financial way, nor does it equalize the tax burden. The only sane and safe way this can be done is to enlarge the taxing unit, and levy the same millage over the entire unit.

¹ Annual Reports to State Superintendent, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

CHAPTER VI

RECOMMENDATIONS AND PROPOSED CHANGES

I have shown: That the wealth of the county is very unevenly distributed among the districts as they are at present, and that the tax burden is very unequal on account of this uneven distribution of wealth; that there is a great variation in the student-teacher and student-maintenance cost; that the per capita cost is greater in small schools. Nothing has been said about those intangible results that come from the association of larger groups, from the better grouping of classes, from the use of specialized teachers, and by better and closer supervision, since these qualities are not capable of demonstration except in the lives of the pupils throughout a long period of time.

Results from the figures given will show that the larger unit can operate more economically with a longer term of school, and that it tends to equalize educational opportunities.

It remains now to offer a suggested grouping of the districts in the county into larger units. It is understood that any grouping made would be subject to criticism, and that many objections would be raised to any change. People in the majority hesitate to accept the new, are fearful of the strange, and nourish sentiment for the past, but the enlargement of the school unit is inevitable.

Thus we will accept the foregoing conclusion that the larger unit is inevitable. Our next problem is to decide just how large it is economically feasible to make a school unit. This cannot be governed by a definite rule as to size and shape. It is governed more by natural forces such as topography, rivers and creeks, roads, school population, trade territory, and school plants available.

The county unit plan was first adopted in Maryland in 1865. The law recommended that the minimum size district should be 36 square miles. The size of the district can be changed from time to time by the county board if they think it is necessary. The average consolidated area in Anne Arundel County, Maryland, is 100 square miles at the present time according to George Fox, the county superintendent.¹

The Tennessee schools are administered under the county unit plan, but the districts are used as a taxing unit. Miss Sue M. Powers,² representing the Shelby County, Tennessee, Board of Education, has this to say about the size of districts in her county:

We have the active cooperation of school patrons in establishing attendance areas. This

¹ Circular Number 117, U. S. Office of Education, Washington, D. C., March, 1934.

² Ibid, p. 8.

we consider very important to have and to keep. We make no attempt at absolute uniformity as to size, or shape, but adjust boundaries to suit road conditions and school population.

Cubberly takes the hypothetical county of Geola and uses it as a taxing unit. He divides the county into smaller units for school administration. These units are exact in size and shape, and each one contains 36 square miles. A school house is located in the geographical center of each district. This makes an ideal set-up for a school organization, but Cubberly says himself that it is not practical as none of the natural forces were considered.³

The writer was unable to find any definite information to assist in establishing boundaries for the larger units in Ottawa County. Therefore, a tentative grouping will be submitted with the natural forces used as a determiner for the size of the districts.

The first consideration will be economy and with this in mind, the county will be divided into seven districts, using the seven incorporated towns as the school center in each district. With the nearness of some and the distance of others, this plan will be questioned. However, when we consider the school plants available, which, with few additions, can be arranged to accommodate pupils from the added territory, this plan will be suitable

The trade territory has been changed in only a few places, and that was necessary because three of the towns are located in the mining district about seven miles apart.

Beginning in the northeast corner of the county, Quapaw district will be formed out of Districts 1, 2, 3, 13, 14, and 20. It will have an area of 712 square miles, an assessed valuation of \$1,194,662 and a school population of 1,463. The assessed valuation for each enumerated child will be \$812.

Picher will be the next district formed by consolidating Districts 15, 16, 41, 47, and 48. It will have an area of 45.5 square miles, an assessed valuation of \$1,556,822, and a school enumeration of 2,872. This gives a property valuation of \$542 for each enumerated child.

Commerce district will be formed by consolidating Districts 17, 18, 19, 21, and 22 with an area of 49 square miles. The assessed valuation will be \$1,287,143 and the school enumeration, 1,419. This gives an assessed valuation of \$907 back of each enumerated child.

Miami district will be formed by consolidating districts 23, 40, 43, 44 and the north half of District 38, with an area of 30 square miles, an assessed valuation of \$4,042,410, and a school enumeration of 2,425. This gives an assessed valuation of \$1,543 for each enumerated child.

The Wyandotte district will be formed by adding Districts U. G. 1, 4, 5, 7, 8, 12, and 24 to Con. 1. The area will be 114.4 square miles, assessed valuation, \$1,118,478 and the enumeration, 1,310. This gives an assessed valuation of \$853 back of each enumerated child.

Fairland district will be formed out of Districts 28, 29, 30, 31, 35, 36, and 37. The assessed valuation will be \$1,366,586, the enumeration, 777 and the area 67 square miles. There will be an assessed valuation of \$1,758 for each enumerated child.

Afton is formed by the consolidation of Districts 26, 27, 32, 33, 34, 39, 45, and the south half of District 38. The assessed valuation will be \$1,815,299, the enumeration 837, and the area 87 square miles. There will be an assessed valuation of \$2,168 for each enumerated child.

Table XVII gives the area, and the assessed valuation of each of the districts according to the recommended changes. There will be some comment on the size of these districts. Wyandotte with an area of 114.4 square miles is almost four times as large as Miami which is only 30 square miles. This could be solved to a certain extent by continuing U. G. 1 in the south part of the Wyandotte district as a grade school only, and transport the high school students to Wyandotte. District 12 could be added to U. G. 1. Should this be done, three buses

could transport the grade children to U. G. 1, and ten buses could handle the transportation for Wyandotte. The Wyandotte district at the present time operates eight buses. In the proposed change it would not be necessary to change the bus routes any as they are already routed through the districts added.

Afton district is a little too large, but due to the size of Miami on the north it was necessary to extend it within three miles of Miami. However, Afton could maintain a grade school at Narcissa, which would relieve the situation some. Should this be done, two buses could handle the transportation for the Narcissa grade school and Afton would need four buses.

The Fairland and Quapaw districts work out very well as they run buses through the territory added at the present time. The bus routes could in most cases remain as they are.

This proposed plan could easily be put into affect in Ottawa county as all the independent districts operate buses now and the routes have already been established through the dependent districts to transport high school students, which they have been doing for several years. The high school students' transfer fee pays for the transportation. This transfer fee would be eliminated by the new plan, and the transportation would not cost any more than the transfers do at the present time. Of

TABLE XVII
 SHOWING THE AREA, AND ASSESSED VALUATION
 OF THE DISTRICTS IN OTTAWA COUNTY AFTER
 THE PROPOSED PLAN IS ADOPTED

District	Area Square Miles	Assessed Valuation
Quapaw	71.2	\$1,195,662
Picher	45.5	1,556,822
Commerce	49	1,237,143
Miami	30	4,042,410
Wyandotte	114.4	1,118,478
Fairland	67	1,366,526
Afton	87	1,815,299
Total	465.1	12,381,400

course transportation costs would increase as more children were transported, but with the discontinuance of the dependent school districts, this would pay for transportation and better schooling in the larger system.

Table XVIII shows the enumeration, and the assessed valuation back of each enumerated child in each of the districts. There is still a great inequality of wealth per enumerated child, with Afton having four times more than Picher. However, both schools are better off than they were before consolidation. Table III, which was for the year 1924-1925, shows Picher with only \$385 per enumerated child and that was a peak year for Picher as the mines were running in full force. After consolidation Picher has \$542 back of each enumerated child. Afton also shows a slight increase in wealth back of each enumerated child after consolidation.

If the argument arises that transportation will increase the cost of the schools to a very great extent, it will be answered with the following information: In Oklahoma during the year 1931-1932 the average cost per pupil per day for publicly owned buses was \$0.0717.¹

The average daily attendance in the dependent districts of Ottawa county for the year 1935-1936 was 1,214 pupils.

¹
Marshall Gregory, "Statistics Pertaining to Pupil Transportation in Oklahoma, 1931-1932," Oklahoma State Department of Education, Bulletin No. 136, 1933, p. 034.

TABLE XVIII

THE ENUMERATION AND WEALTH PER CHILD AFTER
THE PROPOSED PLAN IS ADOPTED. FIGURES USED
ARE FOR THE YEAR 1935-1936. FROM THE
COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

District	Enumeration	Wealth Per Child
Quapaw	1,468	\$ 812
Picher	2,872	542
Commerce	1,419	907
Miami	2,425	1,543
Wyandotte	1,310	853
Fairland	777	1,758
Afton	834	2,168
Total	11,108	
AVERAGE WEALTH PER CHILD IN THE COUNTY: \$1,226		

The average length of term for the independent districts was 175 days. It would cost \$15,232 to transport the 1,214 children at \$0.0717 per child per day. During the same year there were fourteen grade children and three hundred eighty-three high school students transferred from the dependent districts, which cost \$17,585 to pay the transfer fees.²

Another way to show the transportation cost is to multiply the number transported by \$12 which was the annual cost of transporting a grade pupil as figured by the state, for the year 1935-1936. This will make the transportation cost \$14,568 which is \$3,020 less than the transfer fees.

Twenty-four buses would be sufficient to transport the grade children. Afton, Wyandotte, and Fairland, the three largest districts, would need only four each as some of the country is thinly populated. Picher and Quapaw will each need four, Commerce, three, and Miami, one. It may be necessary for some of these buses to make one long trip and one short trip.

Map III, in the appendix, shows the re-grouping of the proposed plan. It was attempted to make the groupings in such a manner that the districts would not be too small, and yet no pupil would be at a greater distance

²

Annual Report of County Superintendent, 1935-1936.

than ten miles from the school building. This was not always possible, because the school centers were not changed from their original location. These locations are not evenly distributed over the county: For instance, Afton is located in the southwest corner, just one mile from the Delaware county line and one mile from the Craig county line. Quapaw, Picher, and Commerce are located in the north central part of the county.

The roads of Ottawa county are improved and maintained above the average. Gravel has been so liberally used on them by government projects that almost every mile could be used as a bus route if necessary.

Therefore, from a consideration of all facts presented in the foregoing pages, it would seem that:

First, the distribution of the wealth among the districts as they now are, is very unequal.

Second, the teacher-maintenance cost per pupil is much greater in the small district.

Third, the tax burden is very uneven over the county.

Fourth, the children over the county do not have equal financial educational advantages.

Fifth, the larger unit will act as a leveling factor for all these inequalities.

Finally the proposed plan for re-grouping the schools of Ottawa county is feasible, more economical, and should be adopted.

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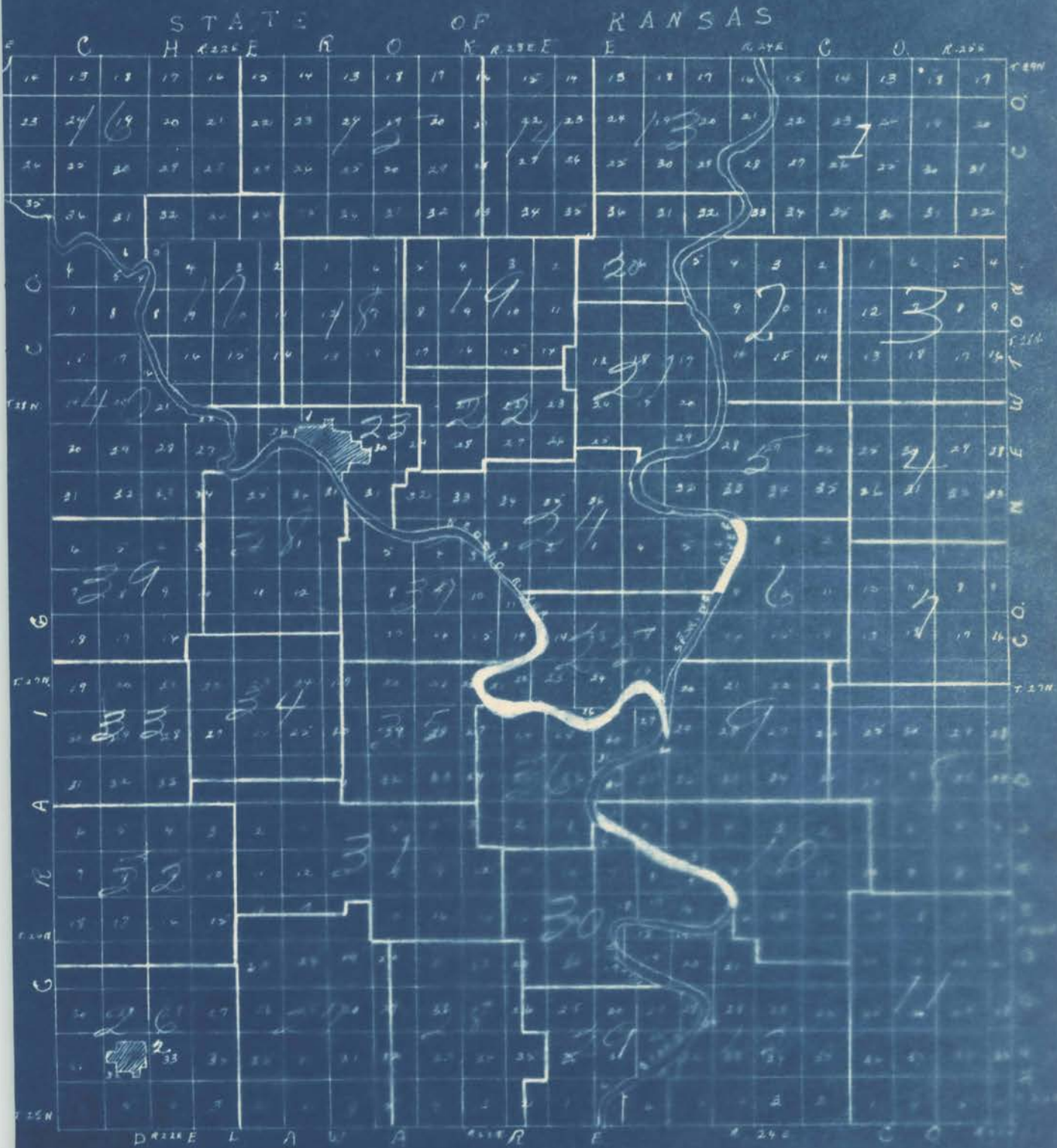
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appendix

Map. I.

MAP OF OTTAWA CO. OKLAHOMA



School Districts at time of Creation 1908

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MAP OF OTTAWA CO. OKLAHOMA

STATE OF KANSAS



School Districts at the Present Time 1936.

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Appendix Map III

MAP OF OTTAWA CO. OKLAHOMA

STATE OF KANSAS



Proposed Plan of Consolidation.

Typist:
Florence Lackey